

## **Butterflies & Bobcats**

for piano solo (2004)

Commissioned by the 2004 Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition

with the kind assistance of the Saskatchewan Arts Board

“I am always wonder struck with the physical and expressive act of playing the piano. It is such an amazing instrument, one of the truly great inventions in the history of our civilization. A wondrous machine that is capable of translating such refined emotional nuance that expresses things about being human that one can scarcely say in words.

I am fascinated with the way that energy and weight can be channelled through the piano in such varied ways as to produce the exhilarating sensations of leaping and flying or the tenderly caressing or trudging. All tributes to *movement*, that wondrous quality that declares and celebrates life! I’ve been consciously preoccupied with movement and music for years, from my earlier suites of piano pieces called Pro-Motion or E-Motion to my writing for dancers, most recently a liturgical piece for Organ and Dancers.

The title was chosen for several reasons: apparently first as a totally unconscious tribute to the mascot of Brandon University!

I played with several titles that evoked contrasts, the male/female contrasts and the necessity of both qualities being present in any single player. I finally settled on the vividness of 2 wonders of the the animal kingdom, a leaper and a flyer. I am struck with the variety of colour patterns and seeming unpredictable flight of the butterfly as much as by the suppleness and strength of the big cat.

The piece was inspired no doubt by the vitality of youth and the image of the strong, flexible and sensitive young players that this competition attracts.

It is also important to me that the human voice be heard in my music...by that I mean the capacity to feel gradations of joy or sorrow. So colours, patterns, movements don’t exist in isolation from the human, they are what animates the deep spirit of what we are as sacred beings.”