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VIOLET'S INVENTION: A PIANO PIECE FOR VIOLET ARCHER IN HER SEVENTY-FIFTH YEAR

Larry Austin

During Violet Archer's tenure at the University of North Texas, Denton, from 1950 to 1952, I was her student in private composition and piano lessons. As my first real composition teacher, Violet was perfect. She enthusiastically encouraged and guided my efforts, from my *Sonatina* for violin and piano (1950) to my *Concertino* for flute, trumpet, and string orchestra (1952) four pieces later: five bit pieces in two years! Yes, she instilled in me, early on, a passion to invent, to explore, and to be creatively productive. What fluency and invention I have sustained through the years since then was first nurtured by her challenging model as a prolific and ingeniously inventive composer. This piano piece, *Violet's Invention,* is composed for her as a small token of thanks to and admiration for her in this, her seventy-fifth year. (Note: The premiere performance of *Violet's Invention* was presented on 7 March 1991, in Concert II of the Society of Composers, Inc., 1991 Region VI Conference, Adam Wodnicki, pianist, in Irons Recital Hall, University of Texas, Arlington, Texas.)

Violet's Invention is a canon whose pitches derive from anagrammatic extrapolations of the letters in Violet Archer's name. Form, rhythmic design and melodic/harmonic continuity were created through a "Violet Archer ordering" of virtually all of the metaphorically appropriate anagrams that can be made with the two words of her name, themselves metaphors for what I sense as the Apollonian and Dionysian sides of her nature and her music.

The indication "*chromatics exclusive*" means that all chromatic alterations affect only the immediate pitch; "*col pedale*" indicates the pianist's use of the sustaining pedal through the course of the piece to enhance the resonance and contrapuntal quality of the *presto* sections, contrasted with the quietly ringing sonorities of the *subito adagio* sections. Only the topmost pitch of the "*tr*" three-note clusters in the first part of the piece is to be trilled, a half-step higher.

Larry Austin
Denton, Texas
22 August 1988

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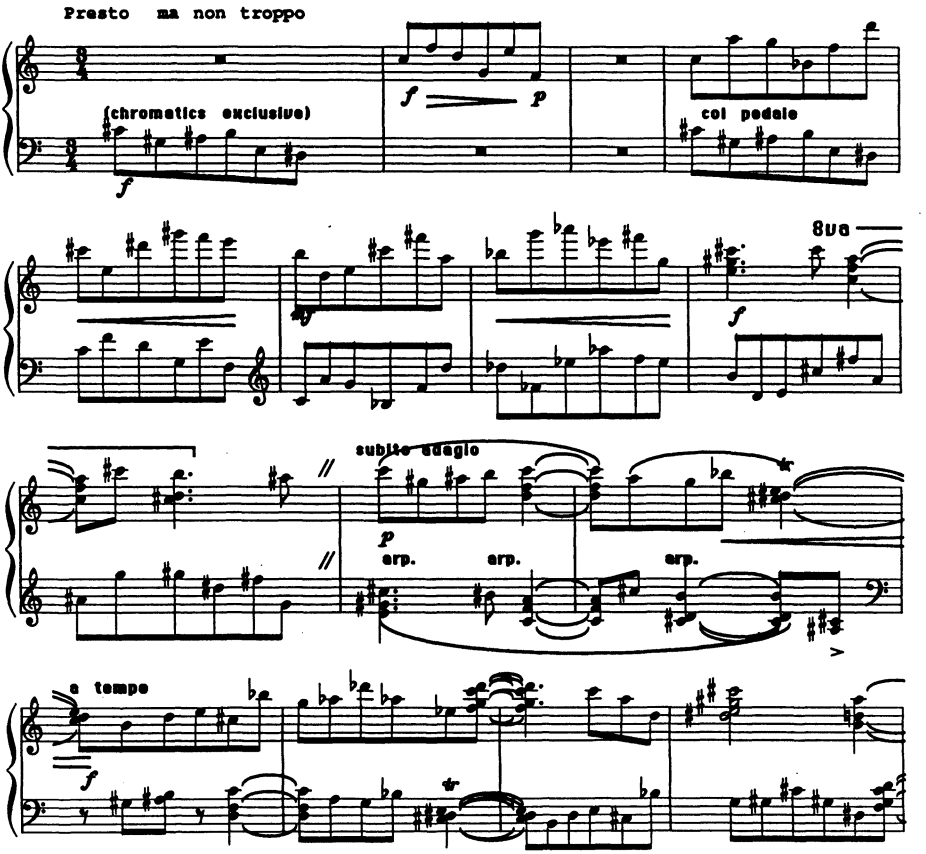
VIOLET'S INVENTION

a piano piece for Violet Archer in her 75th year

Larry Austin (1988)



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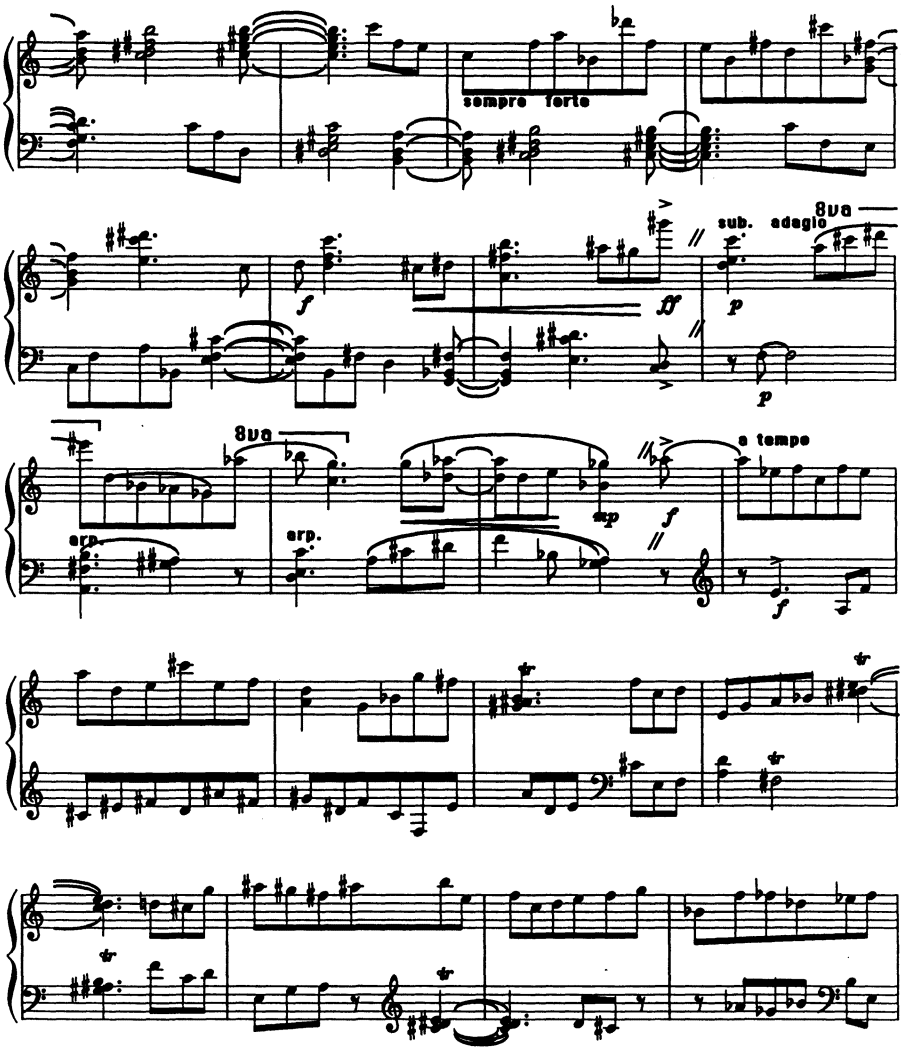

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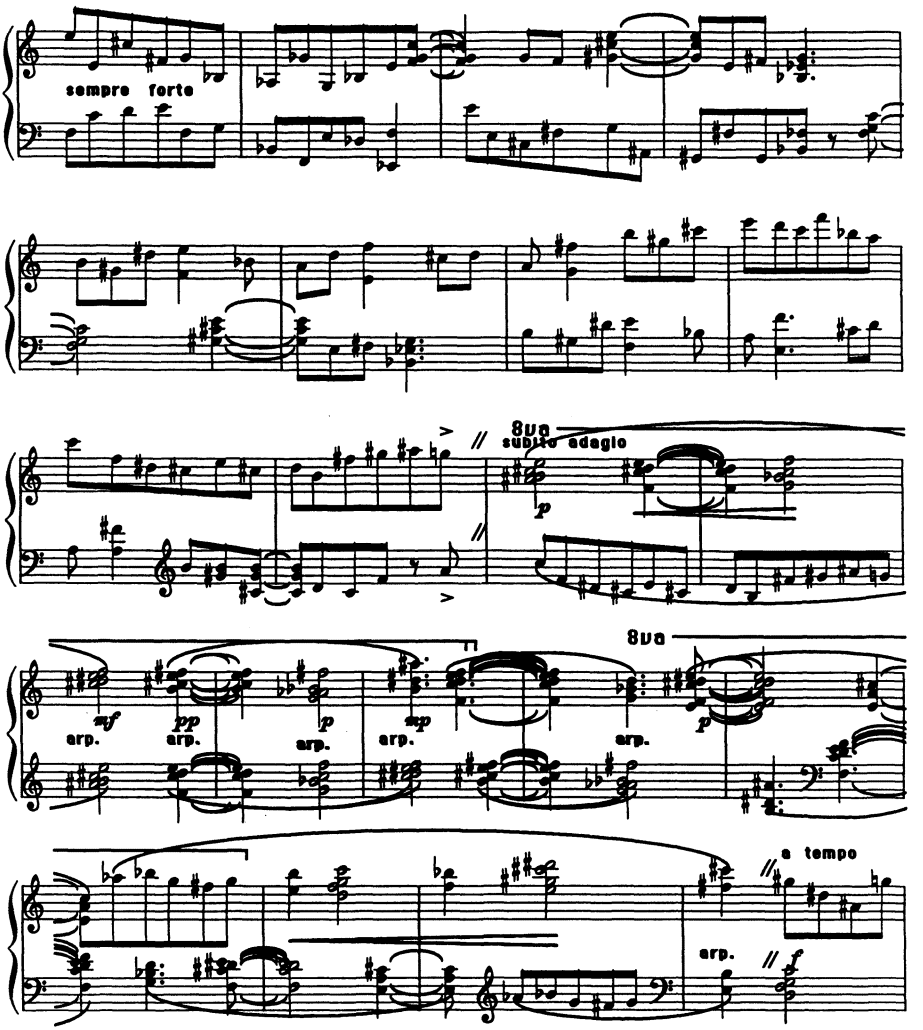

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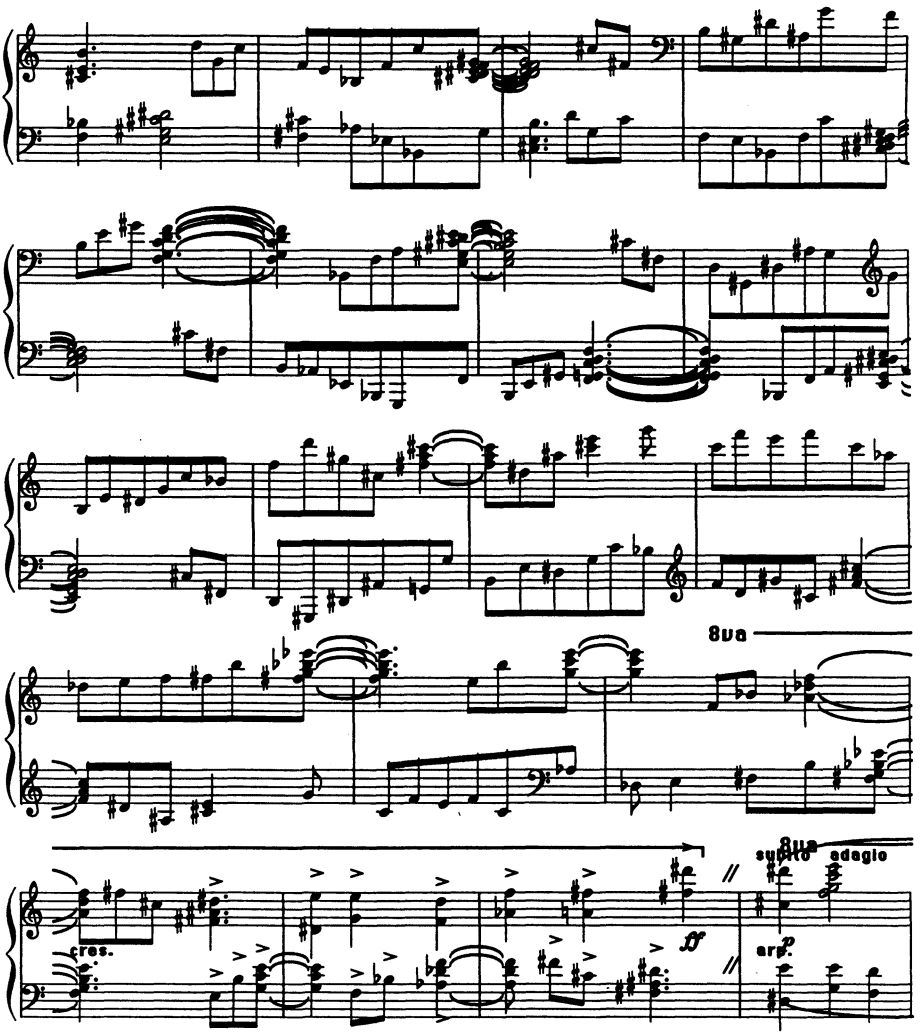

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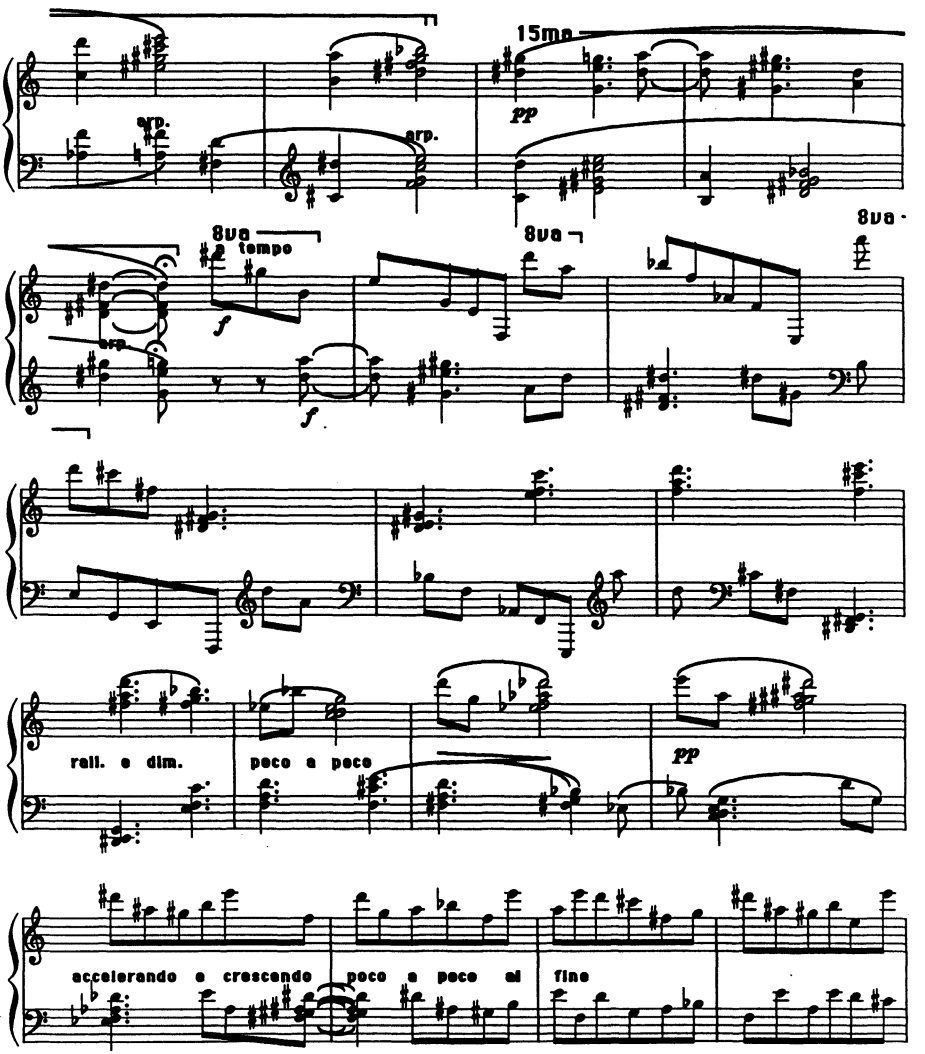

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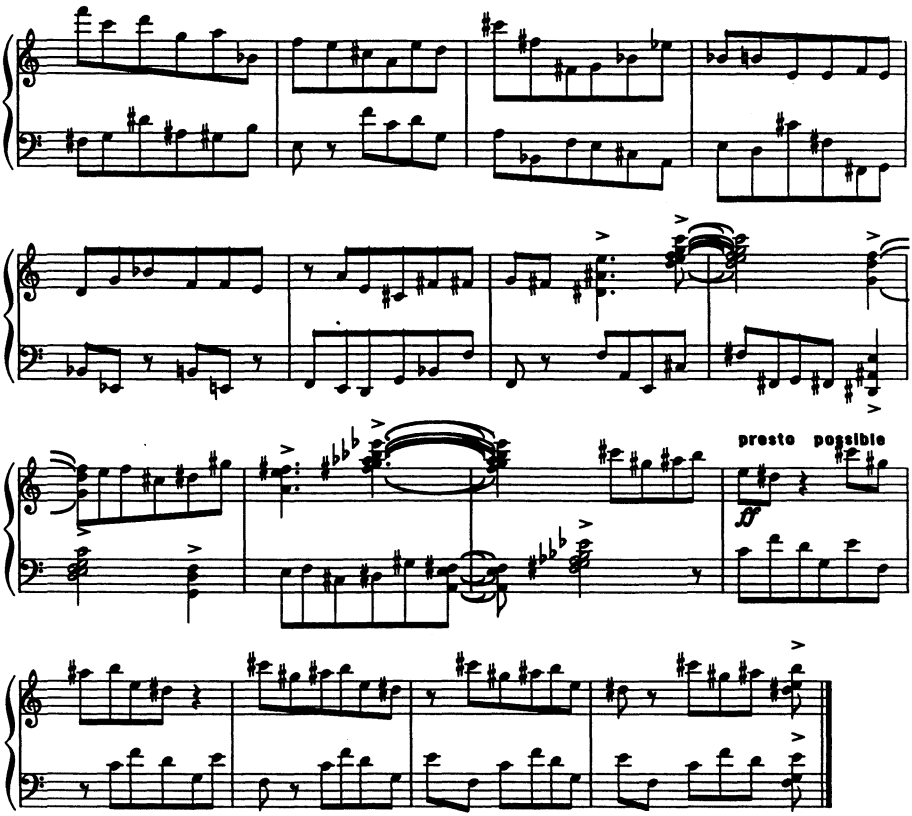

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