

Birthday Notes (1987)

Weinzweig composed *Birthday Notes* for Dianne Aitken, daughter of Robert Aitken. Robert Aitken is the founder and Artistic Director of New Music Concerts, an organization which has commissioned and performed numerous Weinzweig works. Aitken himself has premiered and extensively performed some of Weinzweig's works. In his chapter "How to Play Weinzweig" in *Weinzweig: Essays on His Life and Music*, Aitken remembers asking Dianne about performing Weinzweig; he recalls her saying, "Well, you'd better have a sense of humour."

In *Birthday Notes*, the flute and piano play separately until the final bar where some rhythmic overlap occurs. The flute opens the work, with wide, slurred leaps and chromatic alterations. As the work progresses, the flute becomes much more aggressive and abrupt, with frequent rests and staccatos. The flute plays some fast figurations separated by fermatas before returning to the legato style of the opening. Each of these flute sections is interrupted by a dissonant piano passage with oom-pahs in the left hand and off-beat slurred gestures in the right hand.

First performed by Dianne Aitken on Weinzweig's 74th birthday, *Birthday Notes* was performed by Robert Aitken at Weinzweig's 100th birthday celebration at the Canadian Music Centre in Toronto, as part of the John Weinzweig Centenary Celebration weekend.

Written by Alexa Woloshyn