

15 January 2007

## NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2, No. 1

Dear Friends, Fans, and Colleagues,

In this issue of Happy Lemon's quarterly newsletter: *Event Horizon*, Eileen Soskin's reflections on the topic, "What I listen for in music," and a riddle!

*Karen*

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### Event Horizon

...was composed after reading William J. Kaufmann's *Black Holes and Warped Spacetime*. The title of my piece is taken from the term that astronomers use to describe the perimeter of a black hole. In theory, all matter and energy crossing this threshold cannot escape the immense gravitational pull of the hole. The event horizon is, quite literally, the point of no return.

This spring will bring two performances of *Event Horizon*....

#### THIRD MILLENNIUM ENSEMBLE

The Third Millennium Ensemble will perform the quintet version of *Event Horizon* on **February 4<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m.** at the Strathmore Mansion, 10701 Rockville Pike, North Bethesda, Maryland 20852. The concert also includes music by Judah Adashi and Alexandra Gardner.

For more information call 202-316-1646 or visit [www.thirdmillenniumensemble.org](http://www.thirdmillenniumensemble.org) or write to [thirdmillenniumensemble@earthlink.net](mailto:thirdmillenniumensemble@earthlink.net)



### Peabody Camerata

**Sunday, April 1, 2007 3:00 pm**  
**Leith Symington Griswold Hall**  
**Peabody Institute, Baltimore, Maryland**

Student Composer Contest Winning Work  
Karen Amrhein: *Event Horizon*  
Charles Ives: *Concord Sonata*  
Edward Smaldone: *Suite for Violin*

Free Admission  
[boxoffice@jhmi.edu](mailto:boxoffice@jhmi.edu)  
410-659-8100 x2

**Gene Young**, Conductor



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Thank you, Pamela Helton and Gene Young, for these performances!

## This issue's riddle

*"What do you call a very realistic painting of fake butter?"*

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**New at [www.happylemonmusicpublishing.com](http://www.happylemonmusicpublishing.com)**

*Event Horizon* is now available in three versions...

Concerto (Clarinet and Chamber Orchestra: 1-1-1-1, 2 horns, euphonium, marimba, piano, clar. solo, strings)

Chamber Orchestra (1-1-1-1, 1-1, marimba, piano, strings)

Quintet (clarinet, violin(s), cello(s), marimba, piano)

Visit the Happy Lemon Music Publishing website for new and updated pages of the following works:

*Event Horizon* 🎵 *Little Nemo in Slumberland* (for Wind Ensemble)

*Piano Concerto* (with Chamber Wind Ensemble) 🎵 *Symphony of Seasons*

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### **"What I listen for in music."**

"Listening for me is largely about expectations, both thwarted and realized. If I grasp a composer's opening gesture, what does it make me expect? Composers who meet all my expectations are failures! Great pieces continue to surprise me, no matter how well I know them.

"A concrete example of this is the relatively simple task of counting the measures in a phrase while listening to a performance. We expect four- or eight-measure phrases in tonal music, and find them much of the time. How subtle, how thrilling, how unexpected to find a six-measure phrase, or a seven-measure phrase, in the midst of a seemingly symmetrical composition. Over the years, students and I have had enormous fun counting aloud while tracking the phrasing wiles of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms. Unusual phrasing is most striking in dance movements where we expect regularity but is a regular feature of all kinds of different forms. Counting measures is a wonderful way to stay focused on the music while you listen.

"Non-tonal music offers different challenges but still raises expectations for me. As a listener, the opening of any piece is the critical moment: Can I pinpoint the literal contents of the opening gesture? Does it ascend or descend? Is it loud or soft? Is there a prominent melodic interval? Is there a pulse or the avoidance of a pulse? Is silence an important facet in the gesture? Knowing something about the opening allows me to follow the coherence of what follows (or lack thereof). Chaos can be a beautiful thing, but my strongest reactions are usually to music that is organized around beginnings, middles and endings that belong together. My job as a listener is to figure out how a piece holds together.

"Listening for me is an intense experience. I do not seek an emotional state of bliss but rather an informed state of bliss! I always want to be wide awake when I encounter a piece of music, and I wish the same to you."

**Eileen Soskin, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Peabody Institute**

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The answer to this issue's riddle is:

*Trapped butter*



15 April 2007

## NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2, No. 2

Dear Friends, Fans, and Colleagues,

In this issue of Happy Lemon's quarterly newsletter: *Dance Card* (part one), Jeffrey James' reflections on the topic, "What I listen for in music," and, of course, a riddle!

*Karen*

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### Dance Card

My most recent work (completed just last Saturday) is a set of 7 dances for piano, entitled *Dance Card*. Each dance takes its inspiration and structure from a dance style that either originated in America or emigrated here. Some of my dances cleave fairly closely to the sound and structure, meter and mood of their mother dances. Others travel far from their origins, keeping the essential rhythmic or metrical aspects of the mother dances, but sounding like something else altogether.

In this newsletter, I'll share a little bit about the first four dances, leaving the other three for next issue!

#### Consolation Rag

For my friend Bruce Allen Hardy

Ragtime is considered to be the first distinctly American music genre. The style means essentially a syncopated (or ragged) tune over a solid, march-like accompaniment, usually in 2/4 meter. Most commonly, the structure of a rag is AABBACC or AABBCDD or AABBCCA, with each letter corresponding to an individual 16-measure theme, and each theme divided into 4-measure phrases.

The structure of my *Consolation Rag* is: Intro-A-B-Intro-C-D-Intro-A-B-Coda, where D is a canon and the Coda is a variation on the Intro. I christened this dance *Consolation Rag* because it was my third, and finally successful, try at writing a rag — the previous two efforts (*Splash Rag* and *Hesitation Rag*) failing to be "ragged" enough and ending up far too complex.



#### A Certain Way to Beguine

For my friend Francesca Monroe

The beguine has its 19th C. origins in the melding of polka with Dominican folk dance, evolving from a bolero rhythm into a slow and sensual rumba, and coming to the U.S. in the early 20<sup>th</sup> C. from Guadeloupe and Martinique. If it is remembered today, that is due to Cole Porter's 1935 song *Begin the Beguine*. Indeed, my own efforts at researching the style found little reward beyond Mr. Porter's classic.

My beguine (French for flirtation) doesn't stray far from the rhythmic structure and romance (think palm trees swaying in the moonlight) of the beguine model. The characteristic slow-quick-quick rhythm occurs in 3 layers: sinuous melody, syncopated middle voice wherein the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of each measure finds the rhythmic pulse quickening, and a bass line emphasizing the 4/4 meter with its dependable half note / quarter note / quarter note rhythm.

## This issue's *riddle*

*"Why did the tree need to see the doctor more often than the shrub?"*

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Listen to **Dance Card** at:  
[www.happylemonmusicpublishing.com](http://www.happylemonmusicpublishing.com)

### **MISTER CHARLESTON BUTLER**

Dedicated to my friend Charles Butler

The Charleston rhythm first became popular with James P. Johnson's 1923 tune of the same name, which in turn took its name from the South Carolina city. Today the Charleston epitomizes the era known as the Roaring '20s, with its speakeasies, gangsters, molls, and flappers.

My goal with my own Charleston was to turn up the electricity on the neon dazzle of the jazz age. *Mister Charleston Butler* uses the syncopated Charleston rhythm and adds the bright dissonance of bitonality. The phrases in two simultaneous keys are relieved by phrases in a single key, albeit spiced with jazzy harmonies. My Charleston's overall structure is A-B-A, with the A section further divided into exposition and development sub-sections and the B section itself in a-b-a form.

### **Lemon Merengue Lullaby**

Dedicated to my friend Mario A. Garcia Briseño

Effectively synthesizing the European minuet with the rhythms of Africa, the national dance of the Dominican Republic has two legends explaining its origins. The first holds that the merengue's drag step originated with slaves laboring on sugar plantations, their legs heavy with iron manacles. The second tells of the war hero come home to find his village celebrating his return with a limp-footed dance to honor his wounded leg.

In *Lemon Merengue Lullaby*, the merengue rhythm appears as something of a memory or the hushed sound of a distant celebration, while a gentle lullaby melody is sung. Here, the sound of the merengue has vanished; only its plodding bass drum pulse and tambora and accordion rolls remain as the lilting, almost Schubertian tune beckons the weary dancer to sleep.

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### **"What I listen for in music."**

"Harmony does it for me.

"When I was in high school, I was a really bad orchestral bass player. I was never particularly interested in playing the stuff on the page - there were several other section players to do that. I wanted to play the harmonies that I thought sounded much more interesting.

"Now that I'm well more than 30 years out of high school, I still listen for interesting harmony. Vocal performances by Take Six or Rare Silk or the Singers Unlimited or the Roche Sisters, or the Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds*, or Marvin Gaye's *What's Goin' On*, or Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*, or Arthur Honegger's symphonies, or the music of Roy Harris or Malcolm Arnold or Gosta Nystroem, or a Georgian men's choir, or 'Le Mystère des Voix Bulgares or even an interesting confluence of natural or street sounds and much, much more — it's all extraordinary to me and a great, almost sacred mystery as to why it affects me the way it does.

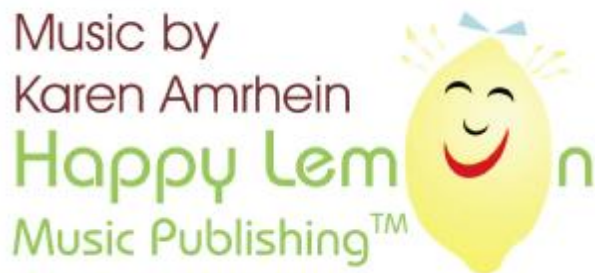
"But I don't ask why, I just keep listening for the interesting harmony."

**Jeffrey James, Arts Consultant**  
[www.jamesarts.com](http://www.jamesarts.com)

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The answer to this issue's riddle is:

*Because it was syncopated!*



15 July 2007

## NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2, No. 3

Dear Friends, Fans, and Colleagues,

In this issue of Happy Lemon's quarterly newsletter: *Dance Card* (part two), my husband Stephen's reflections on the topic, "What I listen for in music," and, of course, a riddle!

*Karen*

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### Dance Card

A set of 7 dances for piano, *Dance Card*, includes a rag, a beguine, a Charleston, a merengue, a rumba, a reel, and a waltz. Each dance takes its inspiration and structure from a dance style that either originated in America or emigrated here.

In this newsletter, I'll talk a bit about the final three dances in the set.

#### Rumba in Fives

As with *Lemon Merengue Lullaby*, my *Rumba in Fives* makes use of a basic African rhythm, while sounding entirely unlike its progenitor, in this case the Cuban rumba. I've varied the clave rhythm of five beats within a pulse of eight (two 4/4 measures with beats on 1, 2b, and 4 in measure one and beats on 2 and 3 in measure two) by creating five rhythmic-melodic units of eighth notes that repeat every two measures (on beats 1, 2b, and 3b, and 2 and 3). Five of these units occur within each section, and there are five sections, for a total of fifty measures. The right-hand melody is varied and developed over the five sections, making the fifth dance in the set, *Rumba in Fives*, essentially a passacaglia.



#### Waltz for One

Dedicated to Constance Amrhein (in memory of James W. Amrhein, her husband of 61 years)

The final dance (an epilogue really) in *Dance Card* is a very slow *Waltz for One*, written in memory of my father-in-law. I haven't much to say about this very American, elegiac waltz — hopefully it will speak for me and be pleasing to the gracious widow of a gentle, generous man.

Listen to **Dance Card** at:  
[www.happylemonmusicpublishing.com](http://www.happylemonmusicpublishing.com)

This issue's *riddle*  
"Why do kangaroos like to drink beer?"

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Mycklorf's Folly (Reel & Semi-Quadrille)

Stephen suggested that I write a square dance for the sixth (and penultimate) dance in this series, so I did a little research and learned that square dancing is traditionally performed to 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century folk music: jigs, reels, country dances, and quadrilles. I thought it would be fun to write a reel that holds pretty strictly to the form without sounding like *The Sailor's Hornpipe* (remember Popeye the Sailor?) and which serves as the basis for a quadrille.

A reel is very similar to a hornpipe, but has more even beats, and typically consists of two sections of eight measures each, with each 4/4 or 2/4 section evenly divided into two question-and-answer phrases. A quadrille is also comprised of 8-measure themes, some in 2/4 time and some in 6/8.

Born in the 1600s, quadrille (meaning both four and square) began as a military parade for four horsemen. Its popularity was such that two-legged dancers took to it in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The form is quite regimented (no surprise) and rather long-winded:

1. *Le Pantalon* (a pair of trousers) — three themes in 2/4 or 6/8 time arranged in the sequence ABACA
2. *L'été* (summer) — 2/4, ABBA

3. *La Poule* (hen) — 6/8, 2 measure introduction followed by ABACABA
4. Optional: *Trénis* (named for the dance master Trenitz) — 2/4, ABBA
5. *La Pastourelle* (shepherd girl) — 2/4, ABCBA
6. Finale — 2/4, 2 measure introduction followed by AABBA

Adhering strictly to such a structure would have yielded a very long and repetitive dance, so I chose to use half of the form (movements 1, 3, and 5) and entitled each continuous movement *A New Pair of Trousers*, *Happy Hen*, and *The Shepherdess Tries the Trousers*. I also used the ABACA form for *Happy Hen*, rather than the rambling ABACABA structure. Furthermore, the B and C sections of *Happy Hen* and *The Shepherdess Tries the Trousers* are variations on the B and C sections of *A New Pair of Trousers*, while the A sections (the reel mentioned above) of the first and last movements are identical and the *Happy Hen* gets her own hen-like A theme.

Yee-hah!

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**"What I listen for in music."**

"I need a lot going on, without its going on too much. I tire of being in the same harmonic territory for too long or standing on the same one, two, or three chords, no matter how numerous the inversions. (I'm talking to you, Mr. Beethoven!) I need tunes, lots of tunes, simultaneous tunes. In orchestral music, I quickly grow tired by melody lines that are simply being supported one at a time by the rest of the orchestra. I need counterpoint: the more melody lines going on at the same time, the better, provided of course that they all make musical sense. I listen for an old fashioned sense of a journey, with a discernable beginning, middle, and end. I need conciseness; please don't make me wait too long for the next bit. I'm not interested in experiments in extending the capabilities of instruments; it's a concert hall, not a laboratory. Such experiments are usually ugly and generally torment both the instrument and the audience. I need music that feels like something, not stuff that could just as well be compiled by and for machines. To sum up, I prefer music that's roughly as engaging, as full of variety and invention, and as beautiful and admirable as Bach's. To say it again (and I don't care how self-serving this seems), I listen for music that's pretty much like Karen's."

**Stephen Amrhein**

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The answer to this issue's riddle is:

*Because it's made with hops!*



15 October 2007

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2, No. 4

Dear Friends, Fans, and Colleagues,

In this issue of Happy Lemon's quarterly newsletter: Upcoming performances, Paul Schlitz's reflections on the topic, "What I listen for in music," and, of course, a riddle!

*Karen*

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## Mark Your Calendar - Upcoming Performances!

We happy few in the Happy Lemon household are pleased and excited to announce some upcoming performances that have blessed our autumn calendar.

### Lynda Dembowski Recital

The original quintet version of my clarinet concerto *Event Horizon* will be performed by Lynda on her 2<sup>nd</sup> U. of MD D.M.A. recital on November 11<sup>th</sup>. The topic of Lynda's dissertation is American women composers for the clarinet, and her recital will feature various new works for clarinet and chamber ensemble.

*Event Horizon* began life in 2001 as a single-movement work for quintet (clarinet, violin, cello, marimba, and piano). When in 2003 the opportunity arose to write a concerto for Richard Stoltzman, I orchestrated this movement and added two more: *Prelude* and *Night*. Later, I created quintet versions of the newer movements, eventually finding myself with 3 versions: quintet, concerto, and (non-concerto) chamber orchestra.

Come hear *Event Horizon*:

**Sunday, Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>, 3 p.m.**  
**University United Methodist**  
3621 Campus Drive  
College Park, Maryland



### Princess Paliné & Friends

On Friday, November 30<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m., Stephen and I will be hosting a concert of my music and stories performed by a chamber ensemble of instrumentalists and narrators:

Tracey Schutty, *Flute*

Mary Poling, *Oboe*

Lynda Dembowski, *Clarinet*

Maria Schwartz, *Cello*

Stephen Amrhein, Tom Brantigan,  
and Ruth Williams, *Piano*

Stephen Amrhein, Annie Brantigan,  
and Jeannie Ogborn, *Narrators*

The program includes:

*Autumn* (arr. from *Sym. of Seasons*)

*Princess Paliné* (for Narr. and Sextet)

*3 Piano Pieces* (by Paul Schlitz)

*The Christmas Mirror*

Join us the week after Thanksgiving:

**Friday, Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Central Presbyterian Church**  
7308 York Road, Towson, MD

This issue's *riddle*  
*"How did the doctor know the bucket was sick?"*

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Coming soon to:

[www.happylemonmusicpublishing.com](http://www.happylemonmusicpublishing.com)

A Season in Prickleblossom Wood  
Princess Paliné

Agnus Dei  
Jude Doxology

Stay tuned!

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**"What I listen for in music."**

"To me the best analogy to listening to musick is pitching: Baseball that is. Bear with me on this subject. Pitching a baseball is a form of artifice, deception, cunning and distortion. The batter has to be enticed to swing at something, much like the ear is. A pitch has to appeal to the batter's sense of looking like something to hit. Elsewise it is unattractive, and if enough unattractive pitches go nowhere near the plate the bases are suddenly full of baserunners and a lot of bad things can happen. The ear has to be enticed too by good materials. Cliché is death to musick and to pitching. If the batter knows what is coming, the pitch is going to be hit very hard and very far. If the ear hears "cliché", it turns off. Mine certainly does. I don't have a lot of interest at that point and want to hear something else.

"So, musick has to charm the ear into thinking something is familiar, but then suddenly, unexpectedly, and hopefully with wit and verve it goes off in another direction. Yet the attraction is still there. Pitchers use a lot of things to keep the batter interested but off-balance. They change speeds. They vary their location (although they have to be quite accurate when they do this). They can make the ball spin differently or break in different ways. So it is with musick. One of the things I love about Renaissance musick is the way that the rhythm varies seamlessly. All of a sudden we're in the middle of 3/2 instead of 4/4. [Renaissance composers] had to do this to break up the monotony in a harmonic world where modulation and even-temperament hadn't been thought out yet. The secret of John Phillip Sousa's marches is that he always puts his best melody in the trio. He has you so off balance in a world where everyone puts their best foot forward. Delius takes even longer to throw you his best pitch. It's at a moment where you'd never expect to be hit in the gut with such concentrated beauty – worth waiting for. It reminds me of an Oriole relief pitcher who couldn't seem to pitch well at all unless the sacks were loaded, and then he bore down and got everybody out.

"It seems the composers I always like the best are those where I'm attracted, but don't know where they are going. There's nothing worse than a well-crafted but predictable piece of musick.

"I should conclude with an accounting of my prejudices: Small forms favored over large forms; brevity and clarity over the prolix and bathos (sometimes the best musical symbol is a double bar line); major over minor keys; renaissance/medieval and baroque polyphony as an organizational factor over the later sonata-allegro form; variety over literal repetition. [I dislike] theories pushed to extremes, virtuosity for its own sake, and worst of all, somebody telling me what to listen for in musick!"

**Paul R. Schlitz, Jr.**  
**Composer, Pianist, and Singer**

(Three of Paul's Christmas piano pieces will be heard on our November 30<sup>th</sup> *Princess Paliné & Friends* concert)

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The answer to this issue's riddle is:

*Because it had turned pale!*