Glenn Jenks

Volume II

1987–2014



LINER NOTES

Aaron Robinson

A RECORDING BY CORTE SWEARINGEN

01 / THE MUSIC

About the Works

Glenn Jenks composed ragtime works for the piano from 1972 until his untimely death in 2016. Yet, very little is known as to the stories behind each work's creation except for the occasional dedication; and even rarer commentary from the dedicatee. Jenks did not start dedicating his compositions until 1975 with one of his most famous rags The Harbour Rag; which he dedicated to Jim and Reeny Gilbert, owners of the Harbour Inn in Camden, Maine, where he used to play and sing folk music in the 1970s. There was a slight "tip of the hat" given to Jenks's favorite ragtime composer, James Scott, to whom he dedicated his Bachelor Two-Step in 1974; but this was more of an acknowledgement to Jenks's own clever attempt in writing a rag that closely mirrored the sound and feel of the great master — which he did brilliantly.

Out of the handful of dedications Jenks attributed his ragtime works to over the years, only a dozen remembrances were collected to accompany each piece for the compilation of complete works for piano published in 2020. With a span of over 50 years, we are left with a want of understanding as to why Jenks chose the titles he did for each of his 34 ragtime works for piano or the recipients of his dedications. What is left to be said for the vast body of work lies within the musical analysis of the compositional structure and harmonic style of each piece - and the brilliant mind behind them.

Wrong Rag

1987

Reminiscent of Rodgers and Hammerstein's bouncy show tune, Surrey with the Fringe on Top, this quirky little number features a challenging left hand that keeps the pianist on their toes. By combining the traditional "even, steady, duple rhythm" along with an off-the-beat, walking bass line, Jenks creates a fascinating rhythmic play between the syncopated right hand and the "catch-the-beat" left hand. Once mastered, (similar to playing Charles Ives's pedal variation on America) it is "more fun than playing baseball!" Jenks recorded this in 1988 on his album Ragtime Alchemy, and takes the tempo at a frenetic speed; clocking in at almost double the recommended 106 to the quarter note at times. Swearingen stays to the metronomic direction; which gives the pieces a nice, leisurely, stroll-like lilt that almost places you in that musical surrey — without all the fringe.

The Alchemist 1987



William Bolcom has Graceful Ghost, Scott Joplin has Solace - A Mexican Serenade, and Glenn Jenks has The Alchemist. Perhaps one of the most well-known, performed and recorded ragtime works by Jenks (next to Planxty Jim Stewart), this Ragtime Concoction is dedicated to Canadian composer, pianist and friend, John Arpin; who Jenks once wrote: "... is one of the most interpretive pianists in North America; he is also a magnificent ragtimer. He can turn some of the most leaden melodies into pure gold." Thus the title and dedication. By the time Jenks transmutes the original key of C-minor to E-flat major — as Saul Chaplin once said of Cole Porter's I Love Paris — "It's as if the sun came out!" There are certain pianists who perform works by others and either try to re-compose the music so that it sounds as if they themselves wrote it or perform it in a way that best suits their style of playing. Swearingen is a true artist's artist in that he allows the music to speak for itself. I have said this on many occasion, and it bears saying again here: whenever I listen to Swearingen play, I not only hear Jenks's music coming through — but at times, I hear Jenks himself playing.

Nutcrackers 1988

Dedicated to Barbara Clarkson, a devoted supporter of Jenks from Mississauga, Ontario, this Novelty piano work is just — plain — fun. Written with a soft-shoe rhythm that could easily be accompanied by a variety of hand-held percussion instruments, Jenks specifically chose the timeless classic: spoons. Using the period "Stop-Time" effect in the TRIO section, Jenks leaves the rhythm up to the performer. Recorded on his album Ragtime Alchemy (1988) on Stomp Off Records, vaudevillian performer Fred Garbo (better known for his portrayal as Barkley the Dog on Sesame Street), played the spoons on the track.

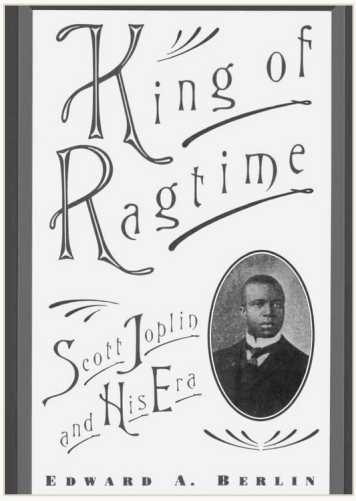
** The album Ragtime Alchemy gives the date for this piece as 1976; but the archival sheet music digitized by Jenks notes the date as 1988.*

Sosúa 1988

Brian Jones — along with his song-and-dance partner, Susan Boyce — shared the stage with Jenks for decades at numerous New Vaudeville and Ragtime Revues. Jones recalls a lifetime of "backstage conversations, rehearsal asides, post-show dinner debates, green room discussions" about "music, harmony, syncopation, creativity, and teaching." The dedication — to a piece that Jones confesses he never danced to or ever heard Jenks play in strict tempo — was given in friendship outside their professional contact: an honor which he treasures. The beauty of the first two strains are equalled only by the technical skill required to achieve the complicated rhythms found within the expanded C strain.

Desdemona

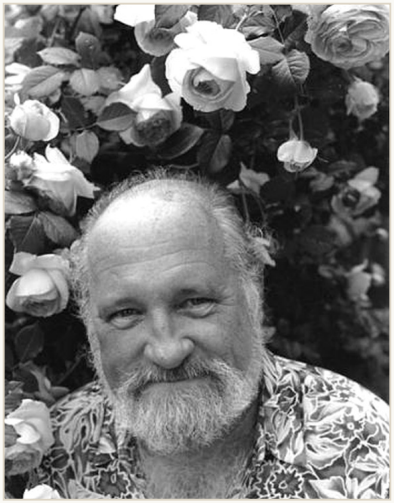
1989



Ed Berlin, the legendary ragtime historian and Joplin biographer, remembers a lifelong friendship and mutual admiration he shared with Jenks dating back to the 1980s: "Glenn and I kept up a lively correspondence; he would send me his music for comments, I would send him my articles." As for the dedication, Berlin has in his archives an original manuscript. Not in Jenks's "usual neat, inked, handwriting, but scrawled in pencil." Next to the manuscript is a letter Berlin had written, which included a single line: "I am haunted by that lovely Desdemona; I can't get it out of my head." That confession, he believes, may have been the reason for the dedication. Written in 1989, Jenks would wait ten years to record the work in 1999 on his impressive and incredibly ambitious album Invitation to the Danza on the Viridiana Productions label — a recording many believe to be his finest. With a time of nearly six minutes (the longest work for piano by Jenks), we find Jenks — the classical composer — bridging the gap between the ragtime form and the influence of Latin-American music; which found its way into the compositions of Louis Moreau Gottschalk and Jelly Roll Morton. Without a descriptive subtitle or anecdotal reasoning for the title itself, we are left to imagine that it was Jenks's love for the music of Ernesto Nazareth and Ignacio Cervantes that planted the seed for its creation. Much like when Berlin wrote to Jenks, many listeners of Swearingen's recording here will say: "I am haunted by that lovely Desdemona; I can't get it out of my head."

Queen Of Violets

1989



Once again dedicated to Barbara Clarkson and subtitled, Reine des violettes (a highly fragrant, multi-petal rose from France), this "conventional in its James Scott form" — AA-BB-A-CC-AA — rag, is anything but conventional. It is the first ragtime work to exhibit Jenks's skillful command of continuous inner-harmonic counterpoint throughout. Both sections A and B employ some of the most graceful and breathtakingly complementing musical lines that Jenks ever wrote. Section C is unique in that the left hand takes the pianist and listener on an ever-moving chordal journey that is deserving of the most proper musical theory analysis at the highest level of study. When listening to Swearingen bring this "musical rose" to life, once again, Chekov got it right when he wrote in his short story, The Darling: "It's enough to make one cry."

Triskelion

— is an ancient symbol comprising of three interlocking spirals flowing from a central point. In this musical trilogy, Jenks is the central point and the three dedicatees are the interlocking branches. It is comparative in form to a traditional piano sonata — a ragtime sonata, in this case; consisting of three movements:

I. The Old Pink Piano

1993



There is a rather famous story within the Jenks family about how a certain colored piano came to be. Color aside, it was on this piano — presented to Glenn's parents, Ted and Nancy — that a life in music began for Glenn; which he played well into his teens. The story as to how it obtained its unusual color comes from the time when the family living room required redecorating, and the paint color chosen was a pale pink (it was the early 50s, after all). When the walls were complete, Glenn's father, Ted, had paint left over; and (in his words), got "carried away" by using the remainder to paint a coat on the piano. Jenks dedicated The Old Pink Piano to his father, Edwin "Ted" Hamilton Jenks on his 70th birthday in 1993.

II. Gymnoraggy

1993

Dedicated to Canadian pianist, Mimi Blais, this sultry blues waltz is an homage to Satie's Gymnopédies. Similar to Satie, and in keeping with the blues, the left hand provides a steady, set, circular pattern of chords upon which that the right hand seemingly improvises effortlessly. Blais recalls: "He heard my composition: Ma Douce Amie, which has a Satie flavor, but Glenn really made this amazing song close to Satie style and so close to my soul." Ragtime is definitive — ending on the tonic. Jenks — in keeping with Satie — ends Gymnoraggy (which is in the minor key) on the major subdominant. As Blais says: "He is a genius."

III. Too Many Beans

1993

Consistent with the sonata form, the final movement in this musical trilogy is a lively, energetic, almost Toccata-like, showpiece that many devotees of ragtime consider to be in the top five of Jenks's best works for piano. Dedicated to Professor of piano at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, Tony Caramia, Jenks did not hold back in his virtuosic writing. Knowing Caramia had an affinity for Novelty piano rags, Jenks created a piece replete with challenging technical demands and layered with far more interesting harmonies than the typical rag would provide. As for the title, Caramia speculated that Jenks may have been thinking of Emperor Joseph II telling Mozart, "Too many notes!"

Sweet Harriet 1996

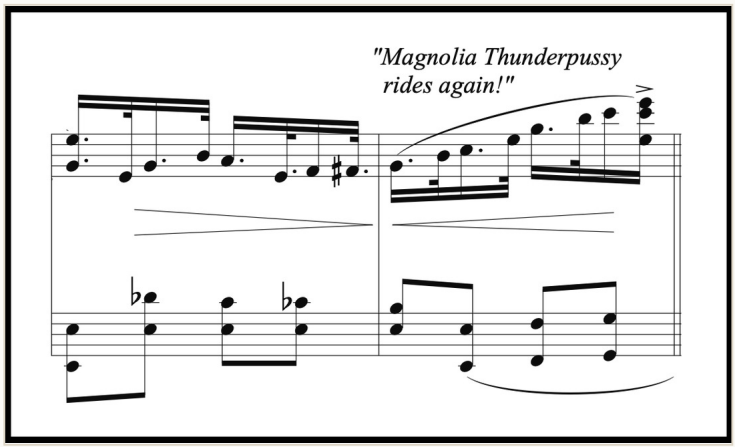
Dearly loved and greatly admired by so many, Jenks returned the mutual affection through his music; and none such work conveyed that loving reciprocation than the tender and elegant, Sweet Harriet. Dedicated to Harriet Allen, this peaceful serenade floats softly and gently amidst some of Jenks's most beautiful inner-harmonic (tenor moving line) writing. Listening to the opening strains, it evokes images of the silent film era — where bashful lovers meet shyly for the first time. On the page, referenced within the C-section, Jenks weaves in the standard tune by Maschwitz and Strachey, These Foolish Things (Remind Me of You); coupled with the African-American spiritual, Swing Low, Sweet Chariot — which Jenks annotates: "Swing low, sweet Harriet!" It is with these delicate, parlor pieces of Jenks that Swearingen really shines; and once we reach the glorious Meno mosso e grandioso trumpeting out the familiar theme with great stride, we can only imagine just how sweet Mrs. Allen must been to Mr. Jenks.

Regularity Rag 1997

Very little is known about this rag. Classic in form, it harkens back to Jenks's earlier days; following a more Joplin-esque style of writing with an AA-BB-A-CC-DD structure. Beginning with a cakewalk rhythm in the A section and followed by a complementary B-section, the Giocoso TRIO is right on the mark in providing the set up for the syncopated ragtime D-section. All-in-all, a charming little rag that one might — upon first hearing — find it difficult to date as to when it was written.

Mount Olive 1999

Considered by many to be Jenks's "magnum opus"; and more still one of the most challenging works in the ragtime repertoire, Mount Olive, stands as one of Jenks's crowning achievements. Subtitled, A Ragtime Souvenir, the work was commissioned by LaDonna Roye for her brother, Darrel Wingo, in celebration of his 50th birthday. Jenks fashioned a work designed specifically around the details Roye provided about Wingo's life and passions: "Darrel's love for the piano began in church as he watched the church pianist bang out those hymns on an old upright."



Breaking all the conventional structure in the ragtime tradition, it is a culmination of twenty-seven well-crafted years, honing an art form to a level of sheer genius. The piece is filled with subtle inner-harmonies, bathed in contrapuntal beauty; shaping the most exquisite cascade of sounds and almost etude-like quality at times. Jenks takes the performer and listener on an incredible journey filled with emotion — including his signature humor: found sharply within the musical direction, "raucamente (raucously)". If anyone ever had the pleasure of witnessing Jenks perform in person, a great smile instantly would come across their face envisioning the wonderful man seated at the piano, bringing up the bass line turn-around into the repeated theme at the octaves, while shouting the in-score line:

"Magnolia Thunderpussy rides again!" As for that rather cryptic, yet comically intriguing, accompanying text, written over the D-flat section of the piece, Roye explains, "One of [my brother's] endeavors was a business where he sold plants. The name was "Magnolia Thunderpussy's Plant Palace". They wouldn't even put the whole name in the telephone book! (Hence the inclusion of "Magnolia Thunderpussy rides again!")" Mount Olive was debuted on March 30, 2000 by Canada's "Queen of Ragtime", pianist and performer, Mimi Blais, in Savannah, Georgia, for Wingo's 50th birthday. Few pianists have attempted to perform this virtuosic musical tour-de-force; none have recorded it — until now.

Urbana Fox Trot 2001

Commissioned by Neil Blaze for his parents' 25th wedding anniversary, Blaze recalls that "after a few false starts", Jenks finally finished the piece and sent a "Xerox copy and cassette tape recording of himself playing through it" just before their anniversary. The only Fox Trot ever written by Jenks, the fact that he settled on this ballroom style was because he thought the piece should be danced to — in keeping with a wedding celebration. Although Tempo markings given are somewhat contradicting in their direction: Moderato "Swing it!" — Blaze recalls that Jenks initially urged him to "keep a lid on the tempo." In one of his final emails to him, however, Jenks confessed that he had revisited the piece and "taken to a slightly faster tempo!" Swearingen delivers a charming dance tune; swaying easily and efficiently with great expression and syncopated etiquette; all the while punctuating the syncopated drive when necessary and swinging the jazz elements perfectly.

Stolen Moments 2003

is perhaps Jenks at his most playful. With an index listing the specific "stolen moments" that runs the gamut from Beethoven's Waldenstein and Tempest sonatas, Chopin's F-major Etude and Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 20 in D-minor to Louis Moreau Gottschalk's The Banjo, (a showpiece that Jenks performed throughout his career as a stage performer) Greig's In the Hall of the Mountain King and even Adler & Ross's Hernando's Hideaway, one comes away from Stolen Moments with the sneaking feeling that Jenks wrote this undedicated piece solely for himself and especially for the enjoyment of anyone lucky enough to play it. Jenks even wickedly informs the performer that they "may choose a flashier ending" with "tremolo chords" and even added that a "double glissando would not be out of line." Jenks takes "ragging the classics" to a whole new level; and Swearingen follows suit brilliantly by applying his lifelong devotion and study as both a serious classical pianist and ardent ragtime enthusiast to the score — honoring every note penned by Jenks and each composer's work dating back to 1785. The cleverness of the piece comes from the many years Jenks devoted his life as a piano teacher — always striving to connect the musical bridge between the classical world and the world of ragtime.

A Breeze From Damariscotta 2004

In keeping with Scott Joplin's manual on how to play ragtime, School of Ragtime — 6 Exercises for Piano (1908), Jenks wrote an instructional folio entitled, Play Ragtime!, which provides a step-by-step gradual progression for beginner to advanced piano student on how to play ragtime. Each piece is dedicated to either a student of Glenn's, family member or friend. A Breeze From Damariscotta (dedicated to Danji) is No. 22 in the series and the only "true" ragtime piece in form and structure. Acclaimed author and editor, Jack Rummel, reviewed the folio upon publication and pointed out that the titles are "take-offs on the titles of famous rags, i.e., The Ragtime Bounce (from The Ragtime Dance), and students are encouraged to locate the famous rags and explore them. In short, [Jenks] has created a wonderful method of learning ragtime and having fun doing it. Now the challenge will be to convince those many clueless piano teachers that they need this book!"

Spider In The Tub 2005

written for Alex Hassan, Spider in the Tub shared the title with Jenks's final release on the Bonnie Banks Records label in 2007. It is written in conventional AA-BB-A-CC-DD (A) form; but, once again, there is nothing conventional about this cleverly inventive musical romp that inspires visual images of a tiny, yet persistent, spider crawling rhythmically around the tub — always managing to dodge the intended SWAT! (represented by a dramatic A-7 chord) by those meaning to do him harm. In the end, the spider is triumphant — with the introductory chord becoming the prevailing chord. Hassan recalled having received the piece, along with Mount Olive (1999), from Jenks, and "licking his chops" in anticipating the first sight-reading session. Coming back to it years later and seeing the dedication under the playfully titled gem, the same flood of emotions re-affirmed that Jenks was and still is: the master. Hearing Swearingen perform with just the exact delicate balance that contrasts the ever-so-essential light touch (don't swing) with the pulled-out-stops (Swing it!), confirms, as well, that when it comes to Jenks, he, too, is: the master. As before, if I close my eyes, I believe it is Glenn himself playing.

Duffy 2014

Commissioned by ragtime enthusiast Danny Matson for Volume 2 of his Ragtime Wizardry series on the Rivermont label, Jenks wrote this sweet little musical vignette for his good friend, composer, John Duffy. Sadly, Duffy succumbed to his long battle with cancer just a year later in December 2015; while Glenn himself would pass unexpected shortly thereafter in January 2016. Duffy would become Jenks's last ragtime composition. Befittingly, hidden away within the C-strain, in true Jenksian style, one can find a nod to a very familiar theme from the 1940s Disney film Pinocchio by Harline and Washington: When You Wish Upon a Star.

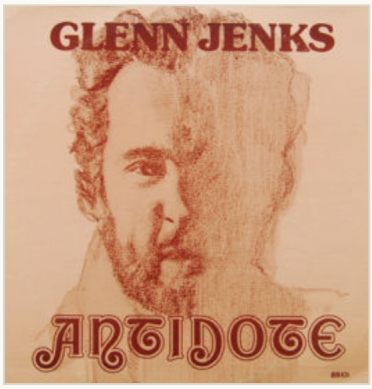


And much like Joplin's masterpiece, Magnetic Rag, Jenks includes a rare but poignant Coda at the end of Duffy; as if to say: "... and with this, my dear friends, I bid you farewell." Like Hassan, this one brought tears to these weary eyes.

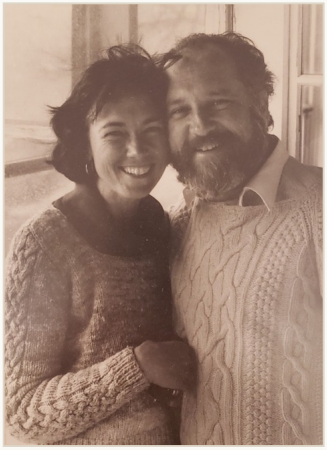
02 / GLENN A. JENKS • 1947–2016

About the Composer

Glenn A. Jenks (1947 - 2016) was born in Boston, Massachusetts. Early photographs reveal that music was a powerful influence with images capturing the young Jenks at age 2 seated at the piano, hands poised correctly over the keyboard and conducting Rossini in front of the family phonograph. Growing up in Wellesley, where he graduated from local schools, as a teen Jenks studied at the Wellesley branch of the New England Conservatory and went on to graduate Phi Beta Kappa with a degree in music from Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana.



Between 1975 and 1978, Jenks joined forces with singer-songwriter and comedian Jud Strunk, touring for three years across North America. He performed with such acts as Manhattan Transfer, Dick Hyman, Gordon Bok and Andy Williams before launching his own solo performing career in 1978 when he released his first album Antidote. During the 1980s, Jenks was an integral figure in the New Vaudeville Revival, performing as pianist with the New England Revue and serving as a key member for the annual Ragtime Festivals. From 1999-2000, he produced the Annual Harvest Ragtime Revue at the Camden Opera House in Camden, Maine where leading ragtime and vaudeville performers of the day were presented; including Dick Zimmerman, Mimi Blais, Max Morath, Tony Montanaro and Susan Boyce.



Settling at 9 Bonnie Brae in the quaint little harbor town of Camden, Maine in 1975 where he lived for over 40 years; Jenks enjoyed performing in piano-bars and honky-tonk saloons across New England with top folk artists. The most memorable establishment was "The Thirsty Whale" at the Camden Harbour Inn, where, in 1981, he met his wife-to-be: Faith P. Getchell. A respected ornithologist, botany specialist and expert rosarian, Jenks held guided tours of neighboring rose gardens throughout the area and founded the annual Rose Day celebration at the Merryspring Nature Center.

As a composer, Jenks wrote - in addition to dozens of sophisticated works in the ragtime idiom - classical chambers works, art songs, orchestral and choral works, and pieces for solo piano in various musical genre;

including a string quartet, piano concerto, collection of waltzes, hundreds of folk songs, and a folio of original maxixes and choros (Brazilian tangos). As a recording artist, Jenks released 11 albums: Antidote (1979), Background Music (1981), Ragtime Project - Volume One (1983), Ragtime Project - Volume Two (1985), Ragtime Alchemy (1988), American Beauties (1991), Easy Winners (1994), Ragtime Bigtime (1995), Invitation to the Danza (1999), Ragtime Sweets (1999), Spider in the Tub (2007). As a musicologist, he lectured on the history of early jazz and ragtime around the United States.

In 2019, the Glenn Jenks Ragtime Revue was founded and premiered at the Camden Opera House in honor of Jenks. It revived the tradition that Jenks started 30 years prior, bringing nationally known artists to midcoast Maine together in "song, dance, humor and ragtime." The Revue continues to sponsor an annual scholarship to a Maine-based young artist who has chosen a future career in music. The complete printed collection of ragtime works for piano by Jenks was released in 2020; compiled of 35 piano pieces and 2 rags for guitar.

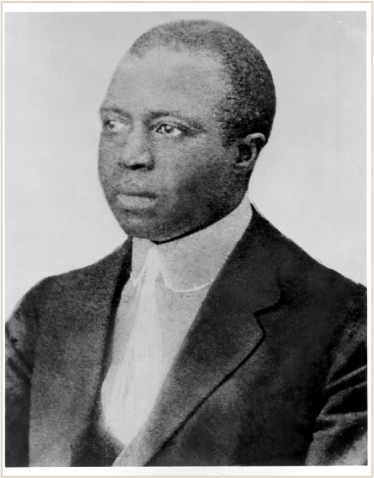


When Glenn Jenks died unexpectedly in 2016, a great loss was felt throughout the ragtime community. Legendary composer and pianist Max Morath wrote: "We have a way of saying upon the loss of a friend or colleague: 'He was a good guy.' Glenn Jenks was one of the 'good guys,' and so much more. He was a generous and joyful man - a man of great talent, eager to share it with others." It is remembered that when heated debates broke out at Ragtime Festivals, it was Jenks - the most trusted and neutral arbitrator - who was sought out by those in disagreement to serve as mediator.
Jenks shared a life motto with ragtime legend Eubie Blake, who once said: "Be sure you take the time and smell the roses."

03 / THE RECORDING

About the Album

Recording the complete works of any composer is a feat that is held in high esteem and with great regard. In the classical world, pianists may focus on a specific element and choose to record a singular form; such as the etude, nocturne or prelude and fugue. In the world of Ragtime, to record the complete works of a single composer is all-encompassing for that genre: Rags, Cakewalks, Two-Steps, Marches, Waltzes, Songs, Novelty, et al.



Only a handful of pianists have released the complete recordings of the works by the "Big Three": Scott Joplin, James Scott and Joseph Lamb. Joshua Rifkin made history with his collection of 3-Volumes of works by Scott Joplin in 1970 for Nonesuch Records; placing the ragtime composer in the category of Classical music for the first time ever and earning Rifkin two Grammy Award nominations. Richard Zimmerman followed shortly thereafter in 1974 with the complete works of Joplin; including all the composer's songs and even selections from his opera Treemonisha. Fewer still have recorded the complete works of Joseph Lamb and James Scott; with pianist Guido Neilson recording both in 1999 and 2001 respectively. Until the Ragtime Revival in the 1970s, no other ragtime composer had contributed substantially enough to the repertoire to warrant a complete recording compilation.

Then came the next generation of composers and pianists who valiantly took up the torch and continued the tradition of writing and performing ragtime; but with a modern sound and present-day approach. Composers such as William Bolcom and Max Morath; who combined the early ragtime era style of writing with a modern flare that called upon contemporary composing techniques such as complex polyrhythm and even atonality; and required a high degree of performance ability only found at the conservatory level.



Every so often, the occasional ragtime work of these modern greats would appear on record or in the concert hall; such as Bolcom's Graceful Ghost Rag or Morath's Cripple Creek Suite. But it would take another three to four decades before these giants of modern day ragtime would see their complete works for piano recorded and released. Bolcom's complete ragtime works were first recorded in 1999 by pianist John Murphy and then again in 2022 by Marc-Andre Hamelin; and Morath's complete works were released in 2014. In 2024, American pianist Corte Swearingen joined the ranks of world class pianists by taking on the monumental task of recording the entire library of ragtime works for piano by Glenn Jenks. VOLUME I was released in 2024 and presented the early years from 1972, when Jenks was first experimenting with the form, to 1986 when he was hitting his stride as an experienced composer not only in the genre of ragtime but within his own style and voice that was clearly unique and distinctive. With VOLUME II, we are introduced to the remaining works Jenks composed between 1987 — Wrong Rag — and 2014 — Duffy — his last ragtime composition.

04 / CORTE SWEARINGEN

About the Performer

As a pianist, Swearingen learned ragtime the way most pianists of a certain generation did: pre-PDF internet downloads, one was inclined to reach out to the composer directly via snail mail, request a certain piece or folio of music, enclose a check, and hopefully within a few weeks: receive the music in the post. Such was the way he became familiar with the ragtime works of William Albright, William Bolcom, Hal Isbitz, Donald Ashwander, Max Morath, and of course, Glenn Jenks. The folio he received from Jenks was "A Garden of Ragtime", a publication by Squanlake Music containing Jenks 12 rags. Upon receiving the folio, Swearingen was instantly taken by the harmonic sophistication and beautiful syncopated melodies.

Starting in 2021, a series of online exchanges between Jenks colleague and long-time friend, Aaron Robinson, led Swearingen to consider recording a few pieces for his on-going recording project: the American Piano Music series. Before long, a "few pieces" became all 34 ragtime works for piano, including the collaboration with fellow ragtime enthusiasts Ed Berlin, Wally Rose and Peter Lundberg, known as "Sedalia Joys".

Swearingen spent two full years immersed in the music of Jenks. His personal upbringing and musical studies aided in his understanding of the musical style and writing. At the early age of 15, Swearingen began his musical studies at the St. Louis Conservatory of Music. His dream was to become a concert pianist; but he changed his mind at the last minute to study physics and mathematics at the University of Illinois. When it came to ragtime, a chance encounter at Walt Disney World in 1978, when he was just starting to learn piano at 10 years old and the advanced world of Chopin and Liszt were at his fingertips, placed Swearingen on Main Street U.S.A where he heard piano music coming from a little spot called "Coke Corner" (now "Casey's Corner"). Although unfamiliar to his ear, little Corte was enthralled by what he was hearing, and no amount of coaxing from his parents to go on rides could pull him away from that piano. Standing there for a full hour until the piano player went on break, little Corte resigned himself then and there to go home and demand that his piano teacher introduce him to ragtime.



Over the years, although expertly proficient at the keyboard, piano was not a consistency due to work and raising two daughters. It wasn't until 2018 that a geographical move allowed Swearingen to revisit his musical endeavors and focus his interests on American music: in particular, the music of lesser known composers such as Amy Beach, Florence Price and Judith Lang Zaimont. Swearingen recently released VOLUME I of an ambitious four-volume collection featuring the complete solo piano works of American composer Donald Ashwander.

It is this combination of Classical training and technical virtuosity, along with his life-long appreciation and love for ragtime music, that places Swearingen as a top interpreter and authentic expert of Jenks's ragtime works for piano; which, in turn, combine the same two elements. Swearingen's diligent conviction, tireless devotion and meticulous attention to the study of Jenks's music reveals that there are times while listening to this album that one not only hears the composer himself but is elevated to a new height of performance and level of personal uniqueness that presents a rendition unlike anything heard before.

With the release of this second and final volume, we now have the complete ragtime works for piano by Glenn Jenks. This recording places Jenks among the Greats: Joplin, Lamb, Scott, Morath, and Bolcom; and earns Swearingen the accolade attributed to the piano masters: Zimmerman, Nielsen and Rifkin. This album will introduce the music of Jenks to whole new generations for decades to come; and re-introduce the genius to those who remember him with great fondness and hold him in such high admiration.