

Preface

“You have provided an attractive set of pieces to introduce them to contemporary music. What you have done shows the mark of a good musician and teacher.”

David Tunley, at the time a professor of music at the University of WA, referring to Child's Play.

This set of eight varied and accessible pieces was written to introduce students and teachers to the 12-tone or 12-note serial technique. These character works show that serial music can be more than just pleasant but also fun, interesting, and stimulating to the imagination.

The pieces cover a range of levels from pre-initial to about grade 6 or 7, and include a trio where a novice can sit at the piano between experienced students and play a previously-learnt solo which fits into a new piece.

Though the dodecaphonic technique has been the basis of an enormous amount of music composed since the 1920s there are few other sets of educational 12-tone pieces.

The composer took delight in finding unexpected melodic shapes and novel chords in the 12-tone row, stretching the technique in unusual ways to produce great variety. Most listeners would not recognise that the same tone row is used in almost every piece (only *Clouds* has a derivative row).

The Greedy Row Snake from *Child's Play* has been played by many thousands of Australian students. This piece has sold over 23,000 copies since it was published by the AMEB and Allans Music (now AMPD) in the Series 12 Pianoforte Grade One exam book in the 1990s.

Several pieces from *Child's Play* are published by Currency Press in *Australian Piano Music* volumes 1, 2 & 4, edited by Sally Mays. Volume 1 is in the AMEB's piano syllabus for preliminary and second grades but *The Greedy Row Snake* dropped out of the exam list many years ago.

Ideas for programme notes

To write your own programme see the preface, the study instructions, notes about the composer (page 30), their website, and the notes accompanying each piece.

YouTube videos

www.youtube.com/c/MixMargaretDylanJones1
or search YouTube for “Mx Margaret Dylan Jones” or click on the red links below.

Child's Play 1/3 with Upside-Downs.

Child's Play 2/3 Greedy Row Snake, Reuben's Big Day Out.

Child's Play 3/3 Webern, Schoenberg; Clouds (duet or solo), Alone in the Dark Forest (trio, duet or solo).

Study instructions

A partially completed chart is included on page 6 for studying the tone row. Students can fill-in some of the missing rows using a pencil and match them to the pieces they are learning.

For example, *Upside-Downs*, the first piece, uses P 0 (prime zero) in the first four bars and I 7 (inversion seven) in the final four bars. These are already printed in the chart and students can be asked to find them there and write 'original' for P 0 and 'inversion' or 'upside down' for I 7 in the appropriate places in the piece.

Clouds uses a slightly different row (see page 19), derived from the shape of the row in notes 4 to 6.

The 12-tone style or method was developed in the 1920s by Arnold Schoenberg. Typically, such music is freely dissonant and, unlike *Child's Play*, deliberately atonal. For much of the century it was developed further by many composers. See more on pages 12, 13, 16 and 17.

Performance grouping suggestions

The eight pieces of *Child's Play* were originally intended to be played as individual items in programmes with a mix of pieces chosen from the works of many composers, not as a complete set. However, they can well be grouped into small sets. Here are some suggestions.

Four Easy Pieces from Child's Play (or Three... or Two... etc)

Pre-initial to about grade one or two

Upside-Downs (played twice)

A Lazy Day

The Greedy Row Snake

Reuben's Big Day Out

Five Pieces from Child's Play (or Four... etc)

About grade two to grade seven

Reuben's Big Day Out

Homage to Webern

Homage to Schoenberg

Clouds (as a solo)

Alone in the Dark Forest (as a solo)

Clouds was conceived as a duet (one piano, two players) but a very skilful pianist can play it solo. *Alone in the Dark Forest*, here given as a trio and a duet, can also be played solo by a pianist with a big hand span using the adjustments shown in bars 20, 21, 39 & 40 (pages 21 & 22).

Duets from Child's Play (or Duet and Trio from Child's Play)

Play *Clouds* and *Alone in the Dark Forest* as written, perhaps prefaced by *Upside-Downs* and other pieces.

12-tone row

as devised by Margaret Dylan Jones and used in *Child's Play*

See study instructions on page 5

Prime 11 (Original shape, transposed 11 semitones)	Retrograde 11 (Backwards)	Inversion 11 (Upside down)	Retrograde Inversion 11 (Backwards and upside down)

Child's Play

Eight dodecaphonic piano solos and ensembles.
Available as individual pieces or as a complete book.

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Other Music by Margaret Dylan Jones

mixmargaret.com/pdf

Androgyne Prophecy. Soulful piano solo, composed in 1977 when Mx Jones was aged 16. Also published in an easy arrangement (about grade three or four) in D minor with no octaves and a simplified accompaniment.

Colourfast Piano Music (up to about grade two). Ten easy pieces featuring frequent use of F sharp and B flat. As at 2021 *Prayer of the Swinging Mantis* (from *Colourfast*) was still in the piano exam syllabus for the preliminary grade of the Australian Music Examination Board (AMEB).

Professional level

Three Parkerville Pieces

1) DNA in the Valley: the Evolution of Self-Awareness (based on *Song of Shadows* from *Colourfast Piano Music*)

2) Puck at Parkerville. A lively piano solo ca. grade 7 or 8, in traditional harmony and counterpoint somewhat in the style of Bach with a few harmonic surprises. Evokes the mischievous Shakespearean character, *Puck*, from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

3) Rainbows Over Hovea. Exciting diploma-standard solo (based on *Hovea Air* from *Colourfast Piano Music*).

Sonatina (1981, rev. 1998) (advanced grade level piano)
Very dark and written at a time of personal crisis.
Neo-tonal and atonal.

Song & Dance of the Conscious & Unconscious (2021).

LINKS

mixmargaret.com/blog Articles where you can post comments or replies.

soundcloud.com/mix-margaret-dylan-jones/sets Listen free to Margaret's music.

YouTube videos

Search YouTube for "Mx Margaret Dylan Jones" or click on [MDJ Originals](#)

Choral and Vocal Music

Music for choir, solo voice, or duet voices.
Multiple arrangements with new lyrics by MDJ.

Amazing Grace, The Sweet Sound of Children (Einstein was a Refugee).

Amazing Grace, A Song for All (Harvey Milk Gave Us Hope).

Amazing Grace, [3rd set, title in progress, humanist]
mixmargaret.com/amazing-grace

Androgyne Prophecy with Akhenaten.

A Prophecy of Beauty in Ruins (same music as *Androgyne Prophecy with Akhenaten*)

Beside the Foyle.

Beside the Foyle with My Mix.

(based on same melody as *Londonderry Air*, *Irish Tune from County Derry*, and *Danny Boy*; includes a sing-along version) mixmargaret.com/beside

Greensleeves In Love.

Greensleeves When I Was Young.

Greensleeves Marries.

mixmargaret.com/greensleeves

Yellow Tingle Tree (lyrics by John Joseph Jones, the composer's father). From a song cycle for choir, piano and speaking voices called *Where Eucalypts Green-Tip the Sky*. mixmargaret.com/compositions.html#wegtts

About the composer

MARGARET D. JONES studied composition with Roger Smalley at the University of Western Australia for five years beginning in 1979. She founded and conducted two choirs and played in many piano recitals and other performances.

Margaret is an androgyne. Since 2002 she has been consistently using a non-binary transgender title, Mx. In 2015 she published a [major article about Mx](#) on her website some months after Mx appeared in dictionaries. The article also has a little about the [singular they](#).

Mx Margaret Dylan Jones,¹ MusB(comp), DipEd, LTCL(pno teach), ATCL, AMusTCL, AMusA. WWCC.

¹Mx, or Mix, is the composer's title rather than Miss, Mrs, Ms or Mr. Mx is best pronounced as 'mix.'

Margaret, assumed male at birth (AMAB), is referred to as 'she' or 'they' (using the singular they).

parkerville-amphitheatre.com A brief history 1966-2001, myth busting, and a free documentary. The composer's family built and ran the amphitheatre in Hovea, Western Australia.