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Violet's Invention: A Piano Piece for Violet Archer in Her Seventy-Fifth Year

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Voices of Women: Essays in Honour of Violet Archer
Voix de femmes : mélanges offerts à Violet Archer

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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.

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VIOLET'S INVENTION

a piano piece for Violet Archer in her 75th year

Larry Austin (1988)

Presto ma non troppo
(chromatics exclusive)

(c)ol podale

Susa-

subito adagio

a tempo

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