

Liner Notes by Kathleen Ryan

A collection of exuberant, sometimes driving, often bluesy, and yes, even (once or twice) mellow piano solos.

I dedicate this album to my friend Sandie,
the first person in my life who did not back away from my rambunctiousness; who in fact was the very model of high spirits.
This was always going to be the CD she'd like best!

Complete with Angels Which is how life and music are given to us.

Drivin'! This is a piece written by my car (the little red Toyota Tercel that considered itself to be a sports car). Back in the day, when my solo performing career was just getting off the ground, I hit the first composing dry spell of my entire life. As I am certainly not prone to exaggeration or wild mood swings, I naturally knew that never again would I compose another piece of music; and, needless to say, I found that a bit depressing. While driving home from a gig, through the Iowa vastness, I was brooding over the loss of my fledgling career as a musician, when I noticed that my car's odometer read 22122. I have always loved symmetric numbers! And I quickly realized that 22122 can be notes of the scale, say D-D-C-D-D. I listened to that, then saw that the odometer had turned over to 22123: D-D-C-D-E. The rest, as they say, is history. Oh, the total stops (rests) near the beginning are stop signs; you'll find several in every midwestern town you are wishing you could speed through! I should also say (because the red Tercel would like me to): whenever in this piece I was a bit stuck for music, all I had to do was get out on the open road and drive a bit and more music would come. Which is the other reason I say the piece was written by my car. The music travels through a landscape that is totally unexpected, before having a mellow time in the big city that night. (Again, true to life on the road in my red Tercel.)

Meanwhile on Foot Compositions are like children to me: they're all my favorites. But I have to say, this one holds a very special place in my heart. For one thing, it's just weird. Doesn't end on the "right" notes. Has a great walking pace and luscious parallel seventh chords. Is not likely to be anyone else's favorite piece, ever: my quirky, funny, lovable, strange child. I *love* to play it. Also: I only recently (ie, after recording it) realized that the "A" section of *Meanwhile, On Foot* is a perfect 12-bar blues. The chords are inverted, and flat 2 substitutes for 4, and so I've been playing this piece for ages without noticing what it was. Just a touch embarrassing, that is!

Missy Kara Surveys the Pasture, Lays Claim Which has an entire story when I perform it live, especially fun when the audience is new to my music and therefore has not a single clue what I'm talking about. But for here, let me just say that it is as much a portrait of my friend Sandie as it is of her horse, and also that Sandie commanded me to create this piece of music as her birthday present (truly: she bounced into my home and announced that she had figured out exactly what I was to give her for her birthday); and that pretty much tells you everything you need to know about the lady & the mare both. Oh, one more thing: I like to call this piece "a tacky little end of the millenium salon piece" and it quotes a scarily well-known opera aria, just for a moment or two.

It's Liquid, Though My homage to the music of George Gershwin; and my deepest thanks to Nancy who, inadvertently but brilliantly, gave me the title.

Blue Paradise "Not much happens around here, but what does is pretty good." Of course, that is closely related to, "Not much happens in a small town, but what you hear makes up for it."

Lazy K A portrait of my favorite cowboy. The **K** of the title is me; I "stole" the chord progression from a song I don't ever plan to sing in public and turned it into a piano piece that I hope is heard by everyone in the whole wide world!

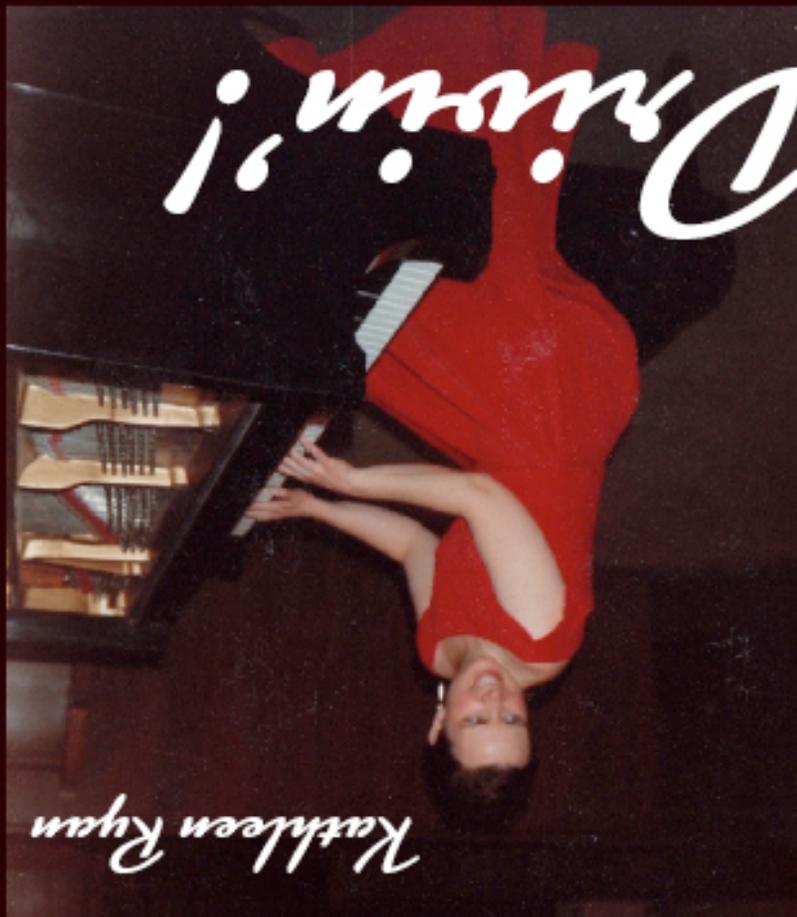
Sweet Home Chicago Robert Johnson's blues classic meets classical piano technique, and I very much hope that the result is as much fun for you as it is for the player.

The Donkey Drag (Mr Darcy's Lament) This is a musical portrait of my donkey, who does not like taking walks on a lead rope. (He loves taking walks; but the lead rope part, not so much. Mr Darcy is a free donkey.) The music includes **everything** Mr Darcy does — he runs, he kicks (playfully, of course), he brays, and then ... he stops. When Darcy stops, I do too. Of course. This 12-bar blues reveals the donkey in high spirits and fun ensues.

Summertime Composed by the incredible George Gershwin, whose *Rhapsody in Blue* was the reason I learned to play piano.

Spare Change A little high-energy something that I expected to turn into something more, or something else; and when it didn't, I decided it was a bit of spare change.

The Golden Passage Energy — Movement — Friendship — Music! (Oh, and with a teeny touch of Schubert, in homage.) If ever there was a "song of me," this is it.



First, I dedicate this album to my best friend Sandie, without whom my life would be much less colorful. This was *always* going to be her favorite CD, anyone who ever met her would know that.

To my friend and colleague [Lee Bartley](#), who supported this recording by tuning my Steinway daily during the sessions, for which he will have my eternal gratitude and free copies (yes, Lee, *free* copies; don't argue with me about that!) Also, it was Lee who put his foot down and said we're recording it this year, 2011; not 2012 or who knows when; for which he'll have my eternal gratitude in my next life, too.

To my husband Alan, aka roadie-techie-groupie, who once again took on the nerve-wracking job of sound engineer. I am blessed to be able to record at home, and that blessing comes to me by way of my favorite cowboy ever.

To my best friend Phyllis, the [Technology Cheerleader](#) & [quite a musician](#) in her own right, who reorients me when I start to go off the rails. She says I figure it all out for myself, but I just need to see her face to know whether to change direction. Every artist needs someone who has been absolutely rock-solid in support of their artistic vision, someone whose positivity never wavers. Phyllis has given me that for more decades than either of us wishes to count, and thus I am richly blessed.

To my Mountainair friends, who don't see any contradiction in my being a classical pianist who loves howling stomping crazy blues — thanks! I needed that!

Finally, to **you**:

Enjoy the music on those days you want to just break loose & have a good time. Or whenever you want to be reminded of those days. Thanks for listening!

Recorded at Tranquillity Base Studio, Mountainair, New Mexico, October 2011.
Photo of Kathleen by some unknown friend, long long ago, at a concert in Fairfield, Iowa.

All music composed by Kathleen Ryan, *except*:
Sweet Home Chicago by Robert Johnson, © MPCA, arranged by Kathleen Ryan
Summertime by George Gershwin, © WB Music Corporation, arranged by Kathleen Ryan