

# Three Preludes

*for*

*Flute solo*

John Newell

ABIERTO MUSIC



## Three Preludes for Flute

Suzanne Gilchrest, a wonderful flutist, asked me in the summer of 2011: “Have you ever written a work for solo flute?” Honestly it had never occurred to me. What else is there to say after such iconic works as Claude Debussy’s *Syrinx* or Edgard Varese’s *Density 21.5*? (I have a tendency to revere the past.) But what a silly thought. Here was an opportunity, and so I took it.

The three movements were easy and fun to compose, almost literally improvisations. I hope that they are equally enjoyable for player and audience.

I. *Song of the Air*. The basic musical idea, a quick sixteenth note pattern, came to me while having dinner alone (while on a business trip). The title came later. It’s pretty descriptive, so your imagination can take it from there.

II. *Such blue sky! Such blue waters!* Sometimes nature is heartbreakingly beautiful. That is often the case where I lived at the time – in downeast Maine. Envision the intensity of a clear fall day, with the waters of the bay reflecting and deepening the unclouded blue of the sky. The musical utterances of this movement are inspired by the Japanese style of composition for the shakuhachi (bamboo flute). I have always been awestruck by its stress on tonal color and concentrated intensity of expression.

III. *Quoddy Jig*. The jig is a lively folk dance that appears to have developed in England in the 16<sup>th</sup> century; it is now most familiar in Celtic music. Traditional (or “roots”) music is quite popular in Maine, so it seemed natural for me to compose a pretty straightforward jig. The word “quoddy” is adapted from the Native American Micmac word meaning “fertile or beautiful,” and most aptly describes the region.

– John Newell

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Born in Charlotte, North Carolina, composer John Newell graduated from Duke University, having pursued studies in composition, piano and conducting. He earned his M.F.A. from California Institute of the Arts, where his primary teacher was Mel Powell. John completed his formal training at SUNY Buffalo, working with Morton Feldman as recipient of the first Edgard Varèse Fellowship. Since earning his Ph.D. in 1979 he has pursued an independent creative path, composing works for orchestra, solo instruments, vocal ensembles and chamber groups.

Organizations that have commissioned works include Eight Strings & a Whistle, Bowery Ensemble and Atlantic Sinfonietta (New York), Monday Evening Concerts (Los Angeles), Enid Symphony Orchestra (Oklahoma), Resinosa Ensemble, Passamaquoddy Bay Symphony Orchestra and Songs From Here (Maine). His work has received support from the American Music Center, the Massachusetts Cultural Council and Meet the Composer.

An accomplished pianist and conductor, John is experienced in collaborating with performers to create and present new works. More information about his work is available at [johnnewellmusic.com](http://johnnewellmusic.com).

To Suzanne Gilcrest  
Three Preludes  
I. Song of the Air

John Newell

$\text{♩} = 80$   
*lightly, poco espressivo*

*p*

5

9

13 *p sempre*

17

$\text{♩} = 46$  *broader and more lyrical*

20 *f* *secco* *p*

23 *poco rit.*

26 *a tempo* *p*

28 *p* 5 *p* 5 8

30 *p* *poco accel.* *a tempo* *f* sempre ed espressivo

34 *f*

37  $\text{♩} = 80$  *p* gracefully, as at the beginning

41

44

47

50

53

## II. Such blue sky! Such blue waters!

$\text{♩} = 48$  *molto espressivo e vibrato* *poco accel.* *a tempo*

The musical score consists of seven staves of music in treble clef. The first staff begins with a tempo marking of  $\text{♩} = 48$  and performance instructions: *molto espressivo e vibrato*, *poco accel.*, and *a tempo*. The score is divided into measures by bar lines, with measure numbers 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, and 19 indicated at the start of their respective staves. The music features various time signatures: 4/4, 3/4, 5/4, and 4/4. Dynamic markings include *pp*, *f*, and *ff*. Performance techniques such as triplets (marked with a '3' and a bracket) and accents (marked with a '>') are used throughout. The score concludes with a final measure on the seventh staff.

Performance Note: At the breath marks take a generous amount of time, except where indicated.

21 *pp* *mf* 3

23 *pp* *f* *pp* *mf* 3 evenly

26 *pp* *f* *ff* sempre

29 (short) *rubato* 3 5 5 *a tempo*

31 *ff* *poco accel.* *a tempo* 3 3 *p*

34 (short) *pp* 7 3 *pp* 3

36 *pp* 3 7 3 *pp*

39 3 *p*

## III. Quoddy Jig

$\text{♩} = 104$

*mf\** always bright, lively and graceful

5

9

1x *p*  
2x *pp*

13

17

1x *mf*  
2x *p*

21

25

*mf*

29

33

37

\*Suggested dynamics.

41

45

49

*p*

53

57

*mf*

61

65

69

73

*p*

77

*mf* *crescendo*





# John Newell

## *Selected Solo and Chamber Works*

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- Scenes From Here and There** 'cello, piano  
**On the Way** violin, 'cello, piano  
**Pieces of Time** viola solo  
**Of Time and Place** clarinet solo  
**Trails** piano (four hands)  
**Night Songs** mezzo-soprano, 'cello, piano  
**Summer Music** flute, oboe, 'cello  
**Peace** piano solo  
**Fantasy** viola, 'cello, piano  
**In Autumn** violin, piano  
**On Impermanence** flute, viola, 'cello  
**Three Preludes** flute solo  
**Variations on Praise to the Lord** organ solo  
**A Day's Journey** string quartet  
**The Signature of All Things** baritone, oboe, piano  
**Variations on Amazing Grace** piano solo  
**Sequoia Quintet** flute/piccolo, clarinet, oboe, horn, bassoon  
**Sky Music** flute, clarinet, harp  
**Companions I & II** piano solo  
**Song of Compassion** 2 violas, keyboard, percussion  
**Rhapsody** horn, piano  
**Lavender Axis** flute/picc, clarinet, oboe/eh, bassoon, percussion, piano  
**Knossos** piano solo  
**Horizons** piano solo  
**Text** soprano, violin, flute, clarinet, guitar, percussion  
**Image, Song, Vision** flute, clarinet, violin, 'cello

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