



Keystones

Two Pianos

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(2026)

Duration: c. 4 minutes

Commissioned by MTNA in celebration of their 150th Anniversary and supported by the MTNA Foundation Fund 150th Anniversary Affiliate Enrichment Grant.



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Program Notes

This celebratory music is structured around the idea of support and symbiosis between two entities. The two pianists trade roles, gestures, and musical material throughout, in service to the listening experience. This mimics the relationship between MMTA and MTNA, as well as the various roles, activities, and hard work in which they engage to serve our teachers and students in their musical endeavors.

To highlight these concepts, I've used three musical cryptograms to represent MISSOURI, MMTA, and MTNA, respectively. There are several ways in which pitches can be used to represent letters. I've chosen a blend of systems that serves my musical needs while keeping the identity of each word and abbreviation distinct.



The piece begins with simple antiphonal statements of MTNA and MMTA, the last letter/note held to frame and stabilize the music. Various iterations of MISSOURI, both forward and backward, are used throughout the piece as melodic figures. Chords, though, are the main feature of the piece and dominate the texture after the subtly conversational beginning. MMTA and MTNA feature prominently as the melodic notes of the chords.

I chose the title *Keystones* because it serves as a visual reminder of how cooperation between entities results in supportive strength and mutual success. It also represents the structural interplay and interlocking gestures of the two pianists' strong and celebratory music.

Composed for the 150th anniversary of the Music Teachers National Association.

for Hye-Jung Hong and Christopher Madden

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Luke Carlson

Allegro conversando ♩ = 132

Piano I

no ped.

Piano II

no ped.

7



13

pp

pp

This system contains measures 13 through 18. It features two grand staves. The upper staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure, followed by a long melodic line with slurs and ties. The lower staff begins with a bass clef and contains a melodic line with slurs and ties. The dynamic *pp* (pianissimo) is indicated in the first measure of the upper staff and the fourth measure of the lower staff.

19

p

use ped. only when necessary

secco

sf

use ped. only when necessary

This system contains measures 19 through 24. It features two grand staves. The upper staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure, followed by a long melodic line with slurs and ties. The lower staff begins with a bass clef and contains a melodic line with slurs and ties. The dynamic *p* (piano) is indicated in the first measure of the upper staff and the first measure of the lower staff. The instruction "use ped. only when necessary" appears below the first measure of the upper staff and the last measure of the lower staff. The instruction *secco* is written above the eighth measure of the upper staff, and *sf* (sforzando) is written above the eighth measure of the lower staff.

25

secco

p *sf* *p*

3

29

sf *cresc.* *sf* *f*

sf *cresc.* *sf* *f sf sf*

3

33 *legato*

p *mf* *p* *sf*

with ped.

15' *sf* *legato* *p* *mf*

with ped.

35 *f* *p* *sf* *sf*

8' *sf* *sf*

Detailed description of the musical score: The score consists of three systems of piano music. The first system (measures 33-34) shows a right-hand part with a continuous sixteenth-note run, starting piano (p) and becoming mezzo-forte (mf) in the second measure, then returning to p. The left hand has a few notes, including a sforzando (sf) chord in measure 34. The second system (measures 35-36) continues the right-hand run, which becomes legato and returns to p. The left hand has a sforzando (sf) chord in measure 35 and continues with sixteenth notes. The third system (measures 37-38) shows the right hand continuing the run, becoming p again. The left hand has a sforzando (sf) chord in measure 37 and continues with sixteenth notes. Fingerings of 6 and 8 are indicated for various notes. Pedal markings 'with ped.' are placed under the first and second systems. A large diagonal watermark 'PERUSAL SCORE - NOT FOR PERFORMANCE USE' is overlaid across the entire page.