Ten Shape Preludes

For piano

Loretta K. Notareschi

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For Piano

I.	Very Gently (5)	3
II.	Like the Wind (6-5-4-3)	6
III.	Murmuring (2-3-4)	8
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VIII.	Flowing (6+7)	19
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c. 16 minutes

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The *Ten Shape Preludes* are so named because each prelude explores a pleasing shape in the hand or hands on the piano. I sat at the instrument with my hands on the keys to conceive each one, and I let my imagination be guided by the shapes that my hands, as a pianist, are naturally drawn to make. In this way, I hope the works are both idiomatic and graceful. While I wrote them with the powerful artistry of the dedicatee, Steve Beck, in mind, I wanted them to also be approachable for everyday playing—a combination of virtuosity and ease that brings to mind the Italian word *sprezzatura* (a studied nonchalance).

Each Prelude's title contains a code for the shape(s) one or both hands make in it. I translate these here:

- I. Very Gently (5): the interval of a fifth is featured in the left hand
- II. Like the Wind (6-5-4-3): the intervals begin as a cascade of a sixth, fifth, fourth, and third against the first note in the right hand
- III. Murmuring (2-3-4): the intervals express a second, third, and fourth against the first note in the right hand
- IV. Lightly (5-4, 6-4): the accompanying figure in the left hand expresses a fifth and fourth, then a sixth and a fourth against the first note of each gesture
 - V. Driving (8): both hands feature the octave
- VI. Pumped (4-3-6): the repeated opening figure features a fourth, third, and sixth against the first note
- VII. Obsessively (6-5): the opening figure in the right hand features a sixth and then a fifth against the first note
 - VIII. Flowing (6+7): the left hand begins with a sixth and the right hand with a seventh
 - IX. Cheeky (8 vs. 7): the two hands impishly alternate octaves and sevenths
- X. Falling (HOH): instead of an interval pattern, this prelude features a hand-over-hand pianistic gesture

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