

# *Firmament Etudes*

I. *Horizon's Edge*

II. *Colors from a Changing Sky (1994)*

III. *Moonsprites*

Perusal Score Only

*Timothy Kramer*

1997

## FIRMAMENT ETUDES

- I. *Horizon's Edge*
- II. *Colors from a Changing Sky*
- III. *Moonsprites*

The first and last etude in this triptych were written in response to the second etude, Colors from a Changing Sky, a work completed in 1994 for the *San Antonio International Keyboard Competition*. Horizon's Edge and Moonsprites were completed in 1997 and written for pianists Audrey Andrist, Rafael Guerra, John Krebs, Max Lifchitz, and Carolyn True. These works draw on material from the central movement, and elaborate on the programmatic theme. The etudes may be performed as a triptych, or the second etude, Colors from a Changing Sky, may be performed separately. The program notes follow below:

### *Horizon's Edge*

... the break of dawn, with growing intensity, then the sun pierces the firmament. All the colors of the spectrum appear in a searing light. This work presents a slow moving crescendo which introduces gestures and harmonic color.

*Colors from a Changing Sky* (1994) - commissioned by the *San Antonio International Piano Competition*.

This work, inspired by the vivid images of a Texas sky, began under the working title Etude gris (Grey Etude). I was initially interested in how black and white keys could interlock to generate passages which would sound difficult but were very pianistic and fairly easy to learn. I was also interested in designing a competition piece that would challenge each pianist with different aspects of playing. Hence, the opening section presents questions about phrasing and quick dynamic contrasts, the central section demands sheer athletic strength, and the closing passage calls for a sensitivity to both color and line. In order to tie the sections together, a melodic "spine" runs entirely through the piece. Initially present in two and three note cells, it expands in the central section to five notes and eventually blooms against very slow harmonic movement in the ending section. Seemingly disparate elements soon coalesce into an overwhelming force and then slowly dissipate, a drama often played out in sudden changes of weather.

### *Moonsprites*

This etude was initially inspired by this poem:

At midnight, in the month of June,  
I stand beneath the mystic moon.  
An opiate vapour, dewy, dim,  
Exhales from out her golden rim,  
And, softly dripping, drop by drop,  
Upon the quiet mountain top,  
Steals drowsily and musically,  
Into the universal valley.

- Edgar Allan Poe, "The Sleeper" (1831)

The piece introduces reflections of musical characters that were associated with light in the previous etudes. It follows a quasi-rondo format and presents a number of light, capricious figures with obvious programmatic connections to the title.

## PERFORMANCE NOTES

1. Accidentals carry through the measure. Some are added for ease of reading.
2. Pedaling may be slightly altered in order to accommodate different pianos and halls.
3. While all the tempi are given with metronome markings, those marked circa(ca.) are - within reason - open to some interpretation.

4. For Colors...

If the work is performed on a smaller piano, the opening gesture may require partial use of the damper pedal (1/4 Ped.) in order to achieve the proper effect. If this is done, release the pedal slowly into the third beat of the first measure.

The expanding ligatures on page 7 represent accelerations in rhythm (not tempo) across the broader pulse of a dotted half-note or a dotted whole-note.

5. For Moonsprites

The strumming inside the piano should be elegant and not distracting. The only exception to this is near the end of the work where the player may be both bold and dramatic.

6. Durations:	<u>Horizon's Edge</u>	4'08"
	<u>Colors from a Changing Sky</u>	7'12"
	<u>Moonsprites</u>	5'10"
	Total	16'30"

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# Horizon's Edge

Timothy Kramer  
1997

(♩ = ca. 44)

*Quietly (still of pre-dawn light; small awakenings)*

*una corda*  
*pppp*

*Sos.* Ped. → *lv. sempre*  
→ *sempre*  
(depress silently)

*ppp* gently

*pp* delicate

(distant birds) *sva* - - - -

*hovering (pp)*  
(una corda)

Ped. →  
(*Sos.*) →

Ped. →  
(*Sos.*) → (hold to end)

3  
L.H.  
4  
Lighly  
soft glow (d.)  
PP  
3  
4  
(Ped.)  
1/2

This system contains the first two measures of the piece. The left hand (L.H.) is in 3/4 time. The first measure features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a single eighth note in the left hand. The second measure continues with a triplet in the right hand and a quarter note in the left hand. The tempo is marked 'Lighly' and the dynamics are 'soft glow' and 'pp'. A pedal point is indicated at the end of the system.

3 mp  
4  
7  
3  
P  
2  
4  
3  
4  
poco a poco  
legato;  
pp poco cantabile  
mf  
1/2  
1/2

This system contains measures 3 through 6. Measure 3 has a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a quarter note in the left hand. Measure 4 has a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a quarter note in the left hand. Measure 5 has a quarter note in the right hand and a quarter note in the left hand. Measure 6 has a quarter note in the right hand and a quarter note in the left hand. The tempo is marked 'poco a poco' and the dynamics are 'mp', 'p', and 'pp'. The instruction 'legato; poco cantabile' is present. The left hand is marked 'tre corde' and 'mf'. The system ends with a 1/2 measure rest.

Growing in intensity  
cresc.  
3  
P  
1/2  
1/2  
#

This system contains measures 7 through 10. Measure 7 has a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a quarter note in the left hand. Measure 8 has a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a quarter note in the left hand. Measure 9 has a quarter note in the right hand and a quarter note in the left hand. Measure 10 has a quarter note in the right hand and a quarter note in the left hand. The tempo is marked 'Growing in intensity' and the dynamics are 'cresc.' and 'p'. The system ends with a 1/2 measure rest.

poco - a - poco - accel. -

(softly)

pp (processional)

pp L.H. p

\* Ped. →

pp

\* 1/2

(♩ = 50) accel. molto

p cresc.

3

4/4 mp

3

1/4 1/2 1/2 3

♩ = 63

3/4

2/4

3/4

3/4 mf

11

11

Ped. →

\* always leave some strings ringing. Only partially clear damper.

rit. --- ♩ = 48

Musical score system 1, measures 1-4. The system consists of three staves: a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate bass staff. The grand staff begins with a series of ascending chords in the right hand, marked with a double bar line and a fermata. The tempo is marked 'rit.' and the quarter note is equal to 48. The first measure of the grand staff is marked with a '4' and a '4' below it, indicating a 4/4 time signature. The dynamics are marked 'f' and 'cresc.'. The system ends with a '5/4' time signature.

Ped. (Sos.) →  $\frac{1}{2}$  ad lib.

Musical score system 2, measures 5-8. The system consists of three staves. The grand staff continues with chords in the right hand, marked with a '5/4' time signature and a 'ff' dynamic. The bass staff has a melodic line. The system ends with a '3/2' time signature. The word 'Sva' is written above the staff, and '(laca)' is written below the staff.

Musical score system 3, measures 9-12. The system consists of three staves. The grand staff features chords in the right hand, marked with a '3/2' time signature and a 'fff' dynamic. The bass staff has a melodic line. The system ends with a '3/4' time signature. The phrase 'searing rays' is written above the staff.

Ped. → l.v. (no clear)



8va ----- 1 (loco) 8va -----

blazing

cresc.

fff

2 4

3

3

(Ped.) →  
(Sos.) →

8va allarg. -----

8va ----- molto -----

5

(Ped.) →  
(Sos.) →

\*  
\*

Perusal Score

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# Colors from a Changing Sky

COMMISSIONED FOR THE SAN ANTONIO  
INTERNATIONAL KEYBOARD COMPETITION  
In Memory of Andrew Russell Gurwitz

Timothy Kramer  
1994

$\text{♩} = 48$  *Quasi Fantasia*  
(flickering light, reflections, lightning, distant reverberations)

Piano

(depress silently) 5 4 *sf*

Sos. Ped. → l.v. sempre

4 (lontano) 4 *p* → *pp* → niente

5 4 *pp* cresc. - - *p*

Ped. \*

(S.P.) → 8

poco agitato ( $\text{♩} = 108$ ) rit. - - -  $\text{♩} = 48$  poco calando - (?)

4 *sf* 5 4 *p* (echo) dim. - - - *pp*

*mp* *l.v.*

a tempo  $\text{♩} = 72$  ( $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ )

2 3 4 *mp* → *mf* → *mp*

4 *grazioso*

Ped. \*

(S.P.) →

*Lightly* *a tempo* ( $\text{♩} = 144$ )

*p* *p* ( $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ )

(S.P.) → *mp dim.* - - - *pp*

*brilliant* ( $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ )

*p* - - - *f* *sf* *sub.mf*

(S.P.) →

( $\text{♩} = 48$ ) *poco rit.*

*elegant* *mf* - - - *mf dim.* - - - *pp*

(S.P.) →

*poco presto* ( $\text{♩} = 160$ ) *Lightly* *rit.* - - - - - ( $\text{♩} = 144$ )

*sub. ff* *sub. p* - - - *pp* *sf* *mf* *dim.* -

(S.P.) → *sub. mp*

( $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ ) ( $\text{♩} = 72$ ) ( $\text{♩} = 144$ )

*p* *mp espress.* *f* "hot"

(S.P.) →

accel. - - - - rit. - - - -  $\text{♩} = 72$  calando -

*rumble*

2/8 *pp* 8 basso *f* 3 *pp* 4/4 *mp dolce*

(S.P.) →

*dim.*  $\text{♩} = 48$  *More Ominous* (♩ = ♩)

4/4 *pp* 3/4 *mf espress.* 4/8

(S.P.) → *l.v.* *Ped.* *l.v.*

*sprinkle*

4/8 *p* 2/4 *l.v. mf* 3/4 *mf* *mp cantabile*

(S.P.) →

$\text{♩} = 72$  (♩ = ♩) (♩ = 48) *becoming sprightly*  $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

*cresc.* *Ped. release* *5os. Ped.*

$\text{♩} = 108$

3/4 *f* 4/4 *sub.p* *Ped.* 6 *f* 7 *sub.p* *cresc.* *Ped.* 8 *f* 13 *f*

Heavy, Dark  
d = ca. 69 (♩ = ca. 138)

(♩ = ♩)

mp (echo) mf  
3/4 2/2 p f p  
pp # 10 slowly release 8

una corda tre corde poco - accel. mp mf cresc.  
5/4 3/4 7 8

Flowing a bit faster (d = ca. 72)

lontano ; bell-like mp cresc. mf  
5/2 3 6 5

mp cresc. sub.p  
3 6 5

mf ff f mf  
3 4 2

(♩ = ♩)

4/2 *f* *cresc.* *mf* *ff*

*ff* *sub. p* *ff* *ff* *3/4*

*poco* *a* *poco* *8*

*poco* *a* *poco* *ritard.* *di* *minuen* *do*

*rubato* *a tempo* (*d* = 69-72) *(whirlwind)* *pp* *mp* *cantabile*

Handwritten musical score system 1. Treble clef, key signature of two flats (B-flat, E-flat). The right hand plays a series of sixteenth-note runs with slurs and fingering (5, 6, 5, 5). The left hand has a few notes. Dynamics include *pp* and *simile*. There are handwritten annotations *(b)* and *(bb)* above the staff.

Handwritten musical score system 2. Treble clef, key signature of two flats. The right hand continues with sixteenth-note runs, including a section marked *mp* and *cresc.*. The left hand has a few notes. Dynamics include *sub.pp* and *mf*. There are handwritten annotations *(b)* and *(bb)* above the staff.

Handwritten musical score system 3. Treble clef, key signature of two flats. The right hand has sixteenth-note runs with slurs and fingering (5, 5, 6). The left hand has a few notes. Dynamics include *pp*, *mf*, and *P*. There is a handwritten annotation *(b)* above the staff.

Handwritten musical score system 4. Treble clef, key signature of two flats. The right hand has sixteenth-note runs with slurs and fingering (5, 5, 6). The left hand has a few notes. Dynamics include *mf*, *cresc.*, *f*, and *sub.pp*. There is a handwritten annotation *(b)* above the staff.

Handwritten musical score system 5. Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F-sharp, C-sharp). The right hand has sixteenth-note runs with slurs and fingering (6, 6). The left hand has a few notes. Dynamics include *pp*, *f*, *p*, *f sub*, *pp*, *cresc.*, and *mp*. There are handwritten annotations *(b)* and *(bb)* above the staff. A circled *f* and a circled *sub* are also present.



(♩ = ♩) *Tempestuous*

sub. pp cresc. - - - mp 3/4 sub. pp cresc. - - - f

f > f > f v sempre f v

poco - - - a - - - poco

sub. pp cresc. - - - ff sub. pp cresc. - - - ff

ff v (Ped.) → ff v

rallentando - - - (d = ca. 120)

sub. pp cresc. - - - sff sub. mf cresc. - - - sff

sff v (Ped.) → sff v

*Grandioso* (d = ca. 60)

sff

(Ped.) →

8 (1/2) →

hammering

sff

ff p

4/2 sff sub. p cresc.

\* 8. v. l.v. 3

Ped. →

3  
ff fff sfff (loco) 8  
(Ped.) → 3  
poco rall. - - - a tempo

5 2 fff l.v. 2 2 sfff sub. pp r.h. P → 3 2  
8 Ped. (slap with palm) \* Ped. (sempre) l.v. gliss

3 una corda PPP (almost inaudible) PP  
2 6 6 6 6 6  
(Ped.) → slightly relax the tempo

p dolce (pp) espress. poco  
(Ped.) → 3 3  
poco - a - poco - calando - - - (d=ca 45)

diminuendo (pp) al niente  
(Ped.) → 3 3 3 3 3

Tranquil (open, luminous, clearing, receding)

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 90$  ( $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 30$ ) *accel.*

*tre corde*

(*ppp*) (*lunga*)  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 90$  ( $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 30$ ) *mp Lyrico*

*3 pp 3 3 cresc.*

(*Ped.*) \* *Ped.*

$\text{♩} = 104$

*ritard.*

*delicato* *f* *dim.* *mp (echo)*

(*Ped.*) →

*sparkle*

$\text{♩} = 88$  *accel.*

*hesitating* *mp* *sub. sf*

(*Ped.*) → \* *Ped.*

$\text{♩} = 104$  *molto calando*  $\text{♩} = 108$

*poch. sub. mp* *dim.* *ppp* *mp*

(*Ped.*) → \*

( $\text{♩} = 36$ )

*mf* *dim.* *P* *mp* *mf* *dim.*

*Ped.*

ritard. - - - - - calando - - -  
 (♩ = ca. 76)

3/4 4/4 *p* dreamy 4/4 poco dim. - - (pp) 3/4

(♩ = 76) molto calando - - - - - (♩ = 76) a tempo calando - - -  
 a tempo

3/4 *mp* dim. - - 4/4 (pp) P 5 calando - - - - - PP

a tempo molto calando - - - - - (♩ = 38) a tempo gently rolling ritard. - - -  
 espess. (PPP) una corda poco

pp espess. (PPP) 3/4 una corda 3/2 poco

calando - - - - - (♩ = 33) PPP (lontano) niente  
 8 - - - - - slowly release

(Ped.) 3/4 PPP (lontano) niente 8 - - - - - slowly release

San Antonio  
 July 25, 1994

# Moonsprites

Timothy Kramer  
1997

$\text{♩} = 48$

Slow; Hazy ("...opiate vapor, dewy dim..."; dripping)

8va  
3 *ppp*  
4  
Ped. → sempre  
calmo  
8va  
mf = ca. 60 (poco andante)  
3  
4

3  
4 *dim.*  
4  
(loco)  
(Ped.) →  
mf = ca. 60 (poco andante)  
P  
3  
4

3  
4  
delicate  
P  
11  
2  
4  
(p)  
dim.  
(Ped.) →  
una corda  
tre corde  
mf  
tr  
meno mosso

3  
4  
P  
pp  
3  
5  
(echoes, waves)  
3  
5  
sim.  
3  
7  
11  
5  
una corda  
(Ped.) →

*molto rit.*

*d. = 44 poco a*

*gentle*

*p dim. tre corde*

*3 4 PPP*

*3 p*

*tr*

*(Ped.)*

*poco accel.*

*8va*

*(d. = 56)*

*mp p R.H.*

*p mp (3) cresc. mf*

*tr*

*(Ped.)*

*(d. = 72)*

*(accel.)*

*(d. = 80)*

*5 (L.H.--) cresc. tr brillante 5 3*

*d. = 84*

*8va*

*(1) sf f dim.*

*scurrying Ped.*

*vanishing*

*3 > sf sub. p tr*

*2*

*sf Ped. p 1/4*

rit. - - ♩ = 60 molto rit. - - ♩ = 46 rall. - - - - - 4" ♩ = 108  
move on →

capriccioso

2/4 *lontano* *mp* *p* *sub.* *strum* *lv.* *mf*

*pp* *pp* *mp* *p* *mp* *ppp una corda*

*feather-light* *trmm* *trmm* *trmm*

*sub pp* *(dust)* *sub. p* *(Ped.)*

*poco a poco accel.*

*2 mp* *cresc.* *tre corde* *sim.*

*playful* *f dim.* *p* *mf dim.*

*Ped.* *\* Ped. ad lib.*

*L.H.* *cresc.* *3/4 sf* *p* *2/4 sf sub.p*

\* strum strings inside piano with flesh of fingertip; approximate pitch

First system of the score, including a treble clef staff with a sixteenth-note melody and a bass clef staff with chords. Dynamic markings include *sf sub.p*, *3*, *dim.*, and *PP*. There are several triplet markings (3) over notes.

Second system of the score, including a treble clef staff with a sixteenth-note melody and a bass clef staff with chords. Dynamic markings include *f*, *sub.p dim.*, and *4pp*. There are several triplet markings (3) over notes. A *una corda* marking and a *Ped.* pedal symbol are present at the bottom right.

Third system of the score, including a treble clef staff with a sixteenth-note melody and a bass clef staff with chords. Dynamic markings include *p cresc.* and *f*. There are several triplet markings (3) over notes and a *6* marking over a chord.

Fourth system of the score, including a treble clef staff with a sixteenth-note melody and a bass clef staff with chords. Dynamic markings include *molto rit.*, *f*, *dim.*, *(mp)*, *trb*, *calando*, *PP*, and *pp*. There are several triplet markings (3) over notes and a *4* marking over a chord.

Fifth system of the score, including a treble clef staff with a sixteenth-note melody and a bass clef staff with chords. Dynamic markings include *p*, *mf*, *p*, *mf*, and *simile*. There are several triplet markings (3) over notes and a *trb* marking.

\*all trills very light, very rapid (spooky!) but fluid



*poco rit. - - - - - rall. - -*

*trills*

*p* *mf* *mp* *mf* *p*

*(Ped.)* →

*♩ = 48 floating*

*cantabile*

*p* *pp* *pp* *pp*

*(Sempre lontano)*

*Ped.* *\* Ped.* *\* Ped.* *\* Ped.*

*poco rall.* - - - - - *a tempo*

*poco*

*mp* *pp*

*\* Ped.* *\* Ped.* *\* Ped.*

*pp* *pp*

*\* Ped.* *\* Ped.*

*l.v.*

*(♩ = 144)*

*poco accel.*

*cresc.* *f*

*(Ped.)* →

\* very muted (sub-tone); use *una corda* if necessary

*tr*  $\text{♩} = 176$  *accel.*  $\text{♩} = 200$

*sf* *ff* *mf* *f* *mf* *sf* *mf* *f* *mf*

(Ped.)

$\text{♩} = 100$  *molto accel.*  $\text{♩} = 120$

*mf* *mf* *mp* *cresc.*

$\text{♩} = 126$  *poco a poco ritard.*

*ff* *mf* *dim.*

*molto rit.*  
 $\text{♩} = 54$

*(mp)* *(p)* *p*

*calando*  
 $\text{♩} = 72$

*Very Still*  
 $\text{♩} = 56$  ( $\text{♩} = 28$ )

*dim.* *PP* *PPP* *una corda* *Ped.*

8va

*Drunken, (♩=58) poco rubato*

*p poco cantabile*

*(pp)*

*Ped.* \* *Ped.* \*

*rallentando - -*

*Ped.* \* *Ped.* \*

*♩ = 40 accel. - - - - ♩ = 120 - - - - ♩ = 126*

*cresc.* \*

*♩ = 112 (♩ = 224)*

*ff subp (secco)*

*sf* *p*

*2 sf - p*  
*4 furious*

*Ped. ad lib.*

sf — p  
 (delicate)  
 sub p

sva  
 ff

\* tr  
 with nail; (backhand) R.H.  
 with nail  
 L.H. snap pizz.  
 3/8  
 mp — ff  
 mf — ff

\*"super-trill", use both hands, if necessary.

ff — sv  
 Ped. sv — sempre

mp dim.

(Ped.)

vanishing, delicate  
 p — (pp)  
 slowly release (string buzz OK!)  
 1/2

(Ped.)

\* \* Snap pizz. — pull lowest string to right and let it buzz. all other pitches are approximate.

San Antonio Sept., 1997