Eric Chasalow

A Loose Translation

for piano (1995-96)
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*A Loose Translation*

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I. Presto  
II. Slow Blues  
III. Rondo

**Performance Notes**

Accidentals DO NOT carry through the measure. Many cautionary accidentals have been added for clarification. These are sometimes, but not always, enclosed in parenthesis. While the piece should swing, the notation is calculated to make this happen. Only the passages with constant sixteenths, notably the first movement, may need some interpretation. In no way is the piece a parody (in the modern comic sense of the word).

**Program Notes**

I first heard jazz, and learned to love it, when I was in high school -- at the same time that I began composing. Of all the important musical experiences I had during that time, from playing baroque flute literature, to experimenting with tapes recorders and early synthesizers, it was jazz that had the biggest impact. At Newport Jazz Festival concerts and big band festivals (where I was playing guitar) I first heard how great improvisers can build breathtakingly long phrases. That kind of dramatic pacing is something I wanted to capture in my big band arrangements then, and continue to strive for now. The pieces that I have written in the last few years draw on jazz very specifically. I have found that most music that attempts this ends up being a collection clichés. I get around this by using material "informed" by jazz -- not lifted from it. My structures are mostly classical, including Sonata Form. *A Loose Translation* has the most specific jazz reference yet. The first movement is a perpetual mobile. The texture is often contrapuntal with a mostly sixteenth-note surface, like a baroque keyboard piece, but there is a lot of syncopation and I was thinking about both Bud Powell and Thelonius Monk. While there are no direct quotes, the Monk is imbedded in the motivic use of the tritone and major second. The second movement is a slow blues. A flexible tune floats over a constant quarter-note pulse. The way this pulse gets broken, both rhythmically and harmonically, then returns, makes the dramatic shape of the movement. Movement three is a Rondo. The theme is a melody with chordal accompaniment in something like stride style. Both the melody and the style are important to the way the theme works. We hear the melody repeated frequently, but it only returns intact at the biggest dramatic moments. Eric Chasalow
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Presto $\frac{108}{4}$ (think hop!)

Piano

*poco rit.* a tempo

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4/27/2009 print date
\( l = 108 \)

\( \frac{91}{\text{pp}} \)

\( \frac{93}{\text{mf}} \)
resonant, cantabile

\( p \text{ sub} \)
Andante $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$

legato throughout
III  Rondo

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{with weight}
\end{array}
\end{array} \]
poco rit.

a tempo
Faster, playful, quirky
poco rit.

a tempo

Broadly

fff