

*For my friend and fellow composer, **John McDonald**,  
in appreciation of his artistry and advocacy of my music*

***Shake the Tree** began as an experiment. A series of ringing chords announce the work, all radiating up from a low A, following overtone patterns which result from that note as a fundamental. I then created a series of “time-molds”, each centered on a different pitch, moving up and down the A overtone-series, into which I poured music, spontaneous, but still exploring harmonies that treated each respective center as a fundamental. The durations of these “molds” and the patterns of movement through the centers is simultaneously rigorous and arbitrary; I admit, this is one of the more abstract pieces I’ve ever written, designed as a vehicle of exploration rather than an attempt to express any pre-conceived emotional or imaginative state. Instead, it’s very much about a world of sound to which I’m increasingly attracted, and compelled to return.*

*The title comes from the one motivating image of the piece. If you shake the tree, the fruit falls. The opening chords are rolled, shiver, and then begin to yield their harvest over the course of the work.*

*-----Robert Carl*

*Total time: c. 21’*

*Pedaling is indicated where a particular effect is desired; on other cases it is left up to the discretion of the performers, based on certain directions for the tonal quality to be achieved.*

*Accidentals apply through the measure, in the register where they initially occur. I have tried consistently to provide courtesy accidentals where they may be useful, but in case of any ambiguity, always apply the above rule.*

*This work is conceived as a four-hand work. At times the two players come very close to each other’s part, but the hands almost never cross. However, it is permissible if the work is performed on two pianos.*