# *Floating City*

## *Toccata for solo piano*

2011

(ca. 8:00)

Christopher Gainey (b. 1981)

Commissioned in 2011 by the Music Teachers National Association
and the Iowa Music Teachers Association

Special Thanks to:
Alan Huckleberry, David Gompper, Bruno Amato, Ray Chester, and Kristin Gainey

Performance Notes:

- This music vacillates between strictly notated rhythms, and sections of unmetered/unmeasured proportional notation. This allows for a certain amount of latitude in particular performer's realization of the music. Each performer is encouraged to develop his or her interpretation of this notational flexibility in order to find a way to support the musical link between the metered and unmetered portions of the piece.
- In the unmeasured sections, durations are proportional both in the relative durations implied by the type of notehead used (e.g., filled noteheads are shorter than unfilled noteheads) and in the way in which the music has been arranged on the page (i.e., more space on the page equals more time).
- Pedal markings have been provided in the score. These pedal marking show which sections of the piece are to use the sustain pedal. However, the pedal marking *within* these sections are suggestions. Each performer may choose to make pedaling choices (within the sections that use the sustain pedal) that are somewhat different than those indicated in the score if he/she feels that it supports their interpretation of the music.

Program Note:

In preparation for *Floating City*, I listened to numerous pieces that were either explicitly identified as toccatas or seemed to exhibit stylistic features associated with this type of piece. I noticed that many of these pieces give the impression of going texturally in and out of focus in a way that helps determine the dramatic shape of the music. *Floating City* takes this idea of juxtaposing tightly organized contrapuntal textures with more free-form constructions and applies it to the domains of pitch centricity, rhythm, and harmony. The music fluctuates between direct and ambiguous establishment of pitch centers, as well as strictly notated and more flexibly notated rhythms. The relative levels of textural clarity created by the interaction of pitch and rhythm are supported by a malleable harmonic foundation that shifts between functional diatonic models, a frequential conception of harmony, and dense chromatic clusters.

As *Floating City* began to take shape, I was reminded of long drives across the country, during which the land often stretched for miles around in a view obstructed only by my rather poor eyesight and the interference of the atmosphere. Significant features of the landscape seemed to rise up from the haze around the horizon in a way that lent an otherworldly feel to the experience. Skylines and mountains seemed to change considerably and unpredictably as various details were revealed. *Floating City* also unfolds slowly as different features are presented in variety of musical contexts that form the flexible dramatic arc of the music.

I would like to thank the Music Teachers National Association and the Iowa Music Teachers Association for commissioning this work. I would also like to thank Alan Huckleberry for performing this piece and for providing valuable insight into the shaping of the piece.

For more information, please visit:
www.christophergainey.com

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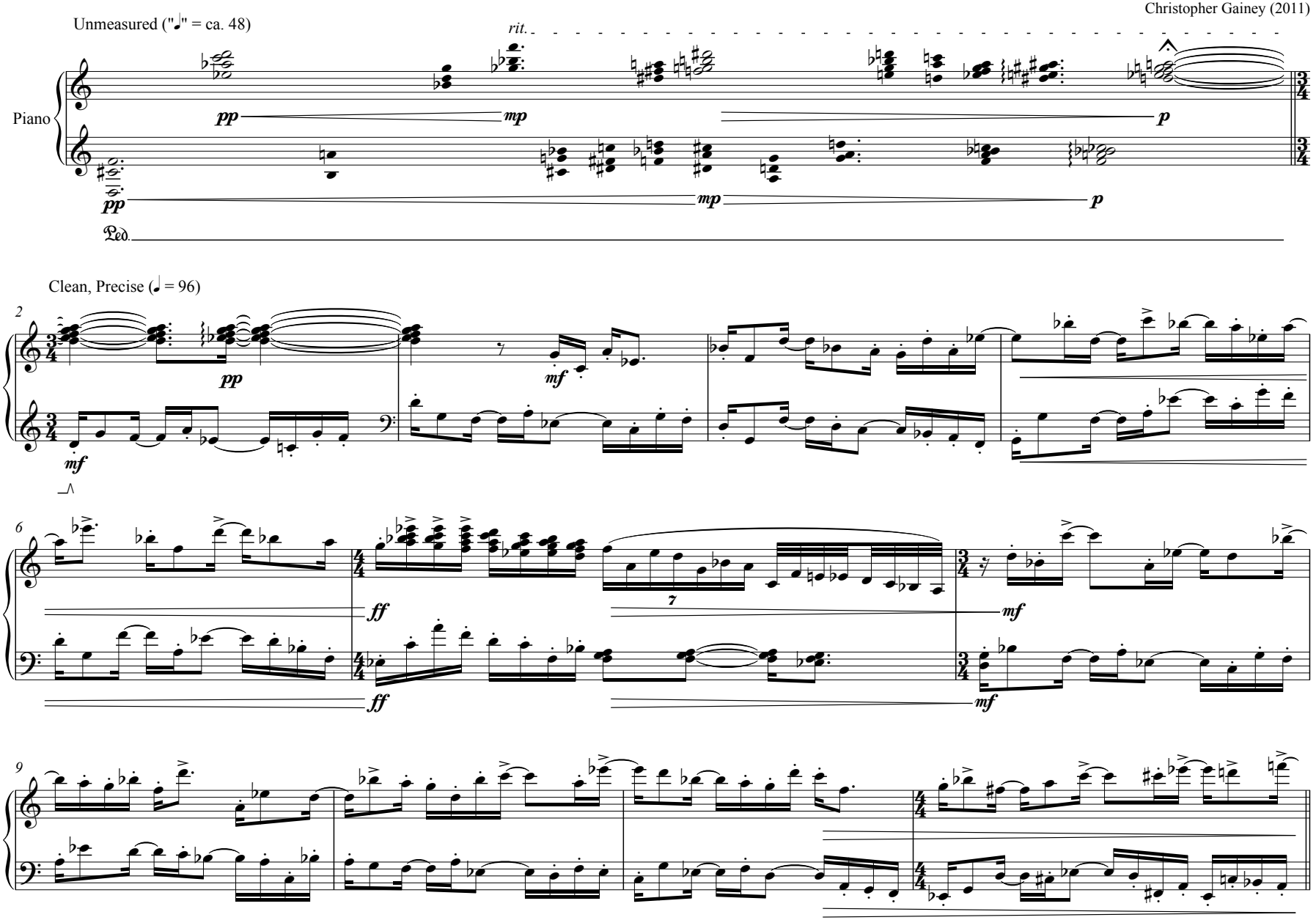


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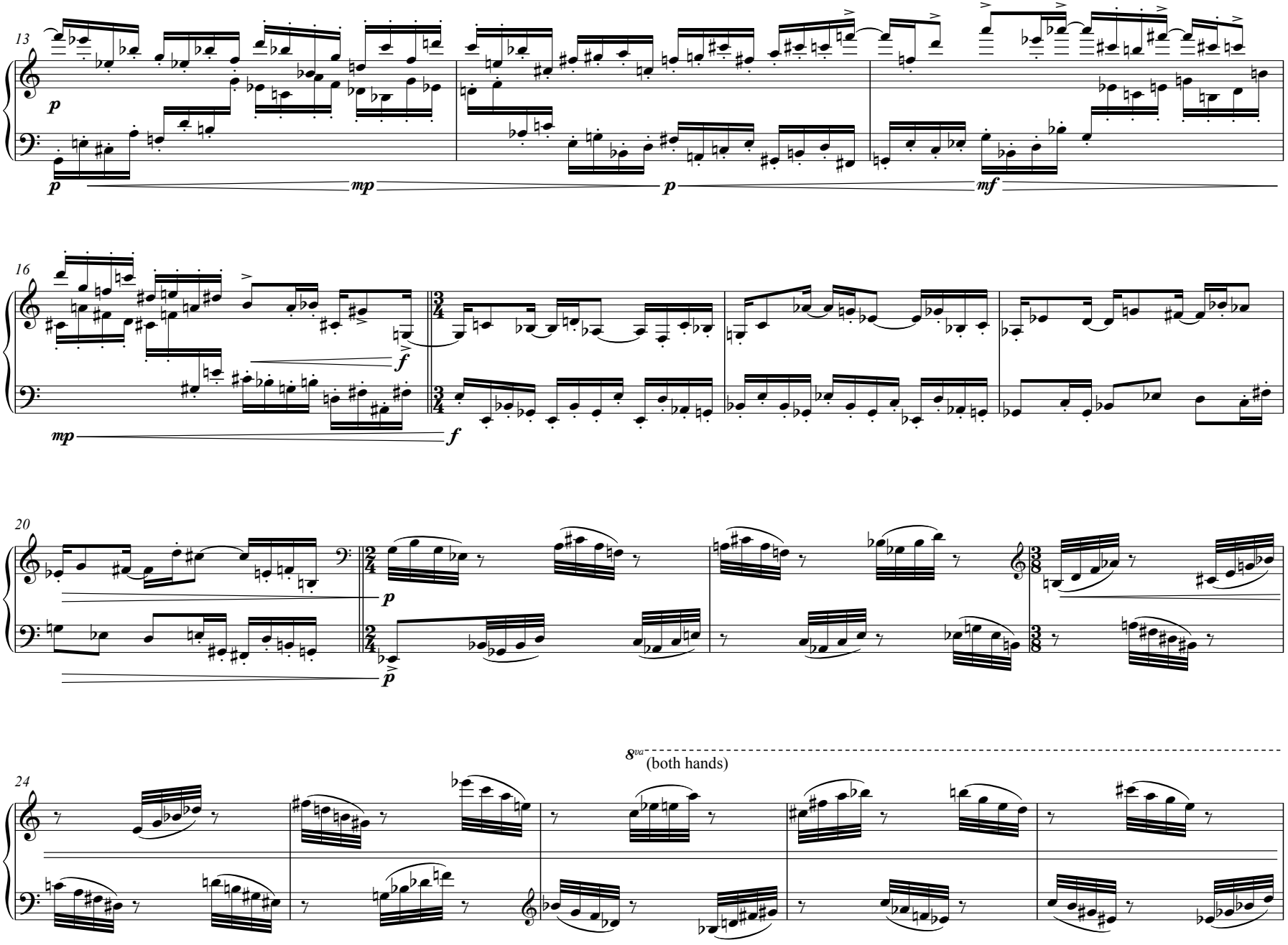
13
p
p
mp
p
mf
16
f
mp
f
20
p
p
24
8va
(both hands)

rit.

(8)

29

ff

A bit slower (♩ = 84)

33

p

mf

p

mf

(♪ = ♪)

p

p

Ped.

molto rit.

37

(♪ = ♪)

mf

mf

(♪ = ♪)

p

p

f

f

Ped.