PERUSAL SCORE

a song for past selves

for flugelhorn and piano

by Eris DeJarnett

Commissioned by Carrie Blosser.

eris

What do you write about somebody who no longer exists?

When Carrie Blosser and I started talking about creating this work, I knew I wanted this piece to serve as a chance for personal reflection at a turbulent time in my life. *A song for past selves* came together as my family moved from Arizona to the Pacific Northwest, very solidly closing the door on my life in Phoenix and exploring new, yet-unknown pathways. From the outset, the piece was going to be special not only due to its time of writing but because it also marked my return to writing for both flugelhorn and piano after a long break. Despite playing flugelhorn at every opportunity since eighth grade and piano for all but the first few years of my life, I found myself wondering what I could write that would possibly reflect the growth of those years back at me.

Thankfully, my past selves have a longstanding habit of keeping scrapped drafts of pieces that never came to fruition, and for this piece, that proved vital. While packing for the move, I rediscovered an ages-old draft of a flugelhorn etude I'd written sometime in early undergrad. I amused myself by picking it apart—not only articulating the original decisions that weren't working, but also taking the time to understand why I'd made those choices in the first place. In that process, I found the part of my composer self I'd loved during my education: someone who eagerly does the best they can with the tools they have at the time. So much of that outlook still permeates my writing, even though many of my early professional experiences made me want to hide that genuine energy away.

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Rather than return the entire work to the scrap pile, I dusted it off, carefully excised the material that struck me as most valuable, and wrote my own metamorphosis. *a song for past selves* is an examination of balance—for most of the piece, the flugelhorn and piano are subtly at odds, unable to decide who should lead and who should follow. Ultimately, they move toward a blend that allows both to step forward together. With every pair of performers, this will likely manifest differently, allowing for a myriad of different selves (past, present, and future) to be made real.

<u>Notes to the performers:</u>
a song for past selves is a piece best realized through open collaboration between both performers. Brass players, it is of the utmost importance that you approach your pianist counterpart as a collaborative pianist, *not* an accompanist. Though I know not everyone who performs this work will get to personally select their counterpart (no matter which of the parts you're playing), I hope that regardless of your situation you take some time to consider what you want from the performance as a whole, not just your particular notes and rhythms.

Dynamics in this piece should be treated as a general guide rather than a strict system. I care much less about what mezzo-forte means to you and more about how you move together as performers. I have in most places marked the piano slightly below the flugelhorn dynamically, but as you explore the piece together, feel free to tweak that balance if something different feels better to you. (If you are playing this piece for a jury,

I recommend handing your adjudicators a copy of these notes and highlighting this paragraph—you're following my directions and shouldn't be penalized for that!)

There are a couple instances where dotted slurs are used to indicate broader phrasing. Please read all non-dotted (solid) slurs as you normally would on your instrument. (Pianists, this is the best notational method I had to indicate the handoff of the melody. Apologies for the slightly inelegant solution.)

I highly recommend the flugelhornist read from the full score if possible. The flugelhorn part isn't always the most important thing happening! I personally find reading from a score more useful for overall understanding, but if you'd feel better marking up the part, by all means do what will make your performance the most manageable. (Oh, and use the optional lower notes if and when you want to. They're not a compromise or a failure, just another path.)

How much symbolism you do or don't want to project onto this is entirely up to you. If it helpw you to consider the parts in those abstract terms, great! If not, don't worry about it. I did not dedicate any hard-and-fast "the flugelhorn represents this and the piano represents this" ideas when putting this piece together. Both parts speak strongly to who I am and who I've been before, so there is no one answer to what something means. I hope this makes collaboration more fruitful for you; every adventure through the piece will be different.

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Should you find yourself with remaining questions, please feel free to drop me a line at eris@erisdejarnett.com or by using the current contact information on my website. Please see the end of the score for information about how you can help me out (at no cost to you!) by sending me programs when you perform my works. I'd also love to hear you play, so always feel free to send links to your performances if you'd like to!

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For Carrie and JD—
Thanks for reminding me why I love these instruments.

Transposed Score

Commissioned by Carrie Blosser.

a song for past selves

Eris DeJarnett (BMI)

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Dear reader,

Thank you so much for your investment in my work!

I hope your performance or study of this score is everything you've dreamed of and more. Need to make a copy of an awkward page? Using the piece in a solo competition where the judges need scores? Go ahead and do what you need to for the purposes of your current endeavor. If you'd like to support me further and are performing my work, there's one big thing you can do:

Please send me a copy of your program whenever you present one of my works. You can do this via email, snail mail, whatever works for you—and it's immensely helpful for my continuing work as an artist. Your programs allow me to earn performance royalties for my work, and while these can be small sums of money individually, together they sometimes well exceed my total income in commissions for that year. Don't have a program? Drop me a line anyway; sometimes other supporting documentation is submittable, and even if there's no chance at royalties, every performance of my work (that I know about) goes on my CV. Many are also listed on my website. In short: I'd really love to hear from you!

If a friend/colleague/bitter rival/student is interested in my work, feel free to let them flip through your copy if you're so inclined. However, please do encourage them to buy the music from me directly if they want their own copy. If the current price on my website exceeds what they can afford, I'm generally happy to offer discounts or free scores if folks reach out to me directly! Every once in awhile I'm not able to offer this, but especially for students and musicians coming back to the craft after a long break, I try hard to make my work as financially accessible as possible. (Teachers: I will give you discount codes for your entire studio, for as long as you want them. Please just email me.) I want that score in your buddy's hands as much as they do, so please direct them to me for Composer-Approved Discounted Copies™ instead of piracy. I am not a large corporation. I just want to feed my cats.

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Regardless of how you got here or why you stuck around, thanks for being part of my musical ecosystem. You can find me online at https://erisdejarnett.com and via email at eris [at] erisdejarnett [dot] com.

Wherever this score takes you? Have fun with it.