Research Grant – Fall 2009

Title or Proposal: Recording, producing, publishing, and distribution of Compact Disc entitled *Hommage à Robert Helps*

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Abstract:

This grant will cover the expenses for the recording, producing, publishing, and distribution of Compact Disc entitled *Hommage à Robert Helps*. This solo piano CD will include Robert Helps’ signature piece *Three Hommages*, as well as two world premiere recordings – David Del Tredici’s *Three Gymnopedies* (written in memory of Robert Helps) and Lyudmila German’s *Sonata for Piano* (winner of the 2009 Robert Helps Composition Competition). The CD will be published and distributed worldwide by Gega New (the label has already accepted my proposal).

Proposal:

Among other appointments, Robert Helps was a celebrated professor (and professor emeritus) at the USF School of Music and is one of the most significant American composers of the second half of the 20th Century. I was very fortunate to know Robert Helps during the last few years of his life and he remains a great inspiration for me as a person and as a musician. I have been a strong advocate of his music; have performed his complete works for piano and strings (to be recorded in 2010 for Albany Records) and my last solo CD *Naked Tango* included some of his solo piano pieces. The proposed CD *Hommage à Robert Helps* will begin with Helps’ signature piece *Three Hommages* (*Hommage à Faure, Hommage à Rachmaninov, and Hommage à Ravel*). This piece will be followed by the world premiere recording of *Three Gymnopedies* by David Del Tredici – written in memory of Robert Helps. David Del Tredici is one of the leading American composers of our time. Generally recognized as the father of the Neo-Romantic movement in music, he has received numerous awards (including the Pulitzer Prize) and has been commissioned and performed by nearly every major American and European orchestral ensemble. David Del Tredici was the featured guest for the 2009 Robert Helps Festival. He heard my performance of the *Three Gymnopedies* during the festival and is very excited about my recording the world premiere of his piece. The last piece on the CD, *Piano Sonata* by Lyudmila German, was the winner of the 2009 Robert Helps Composition Competition. The Robert Helps Festival and Competition is one of the premier annual events at the USF School of Music. This piece was written especially for the competition and was premiered by me on Feb.13, 2009.

The recording of the CD will take place at First Presbyterian Church in St. Petersburg, FL. I have reserved the sanctuary for the quiet, late hours (10pm-3am) on the following dates: January 10, 12, 15, 17 and 19. The beautiful instrument and great acoustics make this one of the best recording venues in our area for classical piano. I have already recorded three very successful CD’s (also published by Gega New) at this location. The editing and producing of the CD will be done the following month – I have been the editor and producer of all of my CD’s so far. The production of the CD will take place in March-April (this has been confirmed by Gega New). By mid Summer 2010 the CD will be on the market (web-sites and stores worldwide). This CD will not only further promote the legacy of the late USF Professor Robert Helps and the annual Robert Helps Composition Competition and Festival, but will also further establish USF as the center for the research and study of the music of this great American composer (the USF library currently holds the complete Robert Helps files and scores in “special collections”).