
Paths To Recovery

For Two Pianos

Jon Fielder

Program Note

Paths To Recovery traces the process of healing from years of relational trauma through dialog with a trusted partner. The narrative unfolds as a discourse between two pianos, each with its own distinct voice and character. Piano 1 presents material that is more jagged, discordant, dissonant, angular and unsettling. Piano 2, on the other hand, takes on a more stable, consonant and less aggressive presence within the texture, though not meek or reserved. The two voices interact as equals, occupying the same space but bringing different energies, in some ways baggage, to the conversation.

The composition unfolds gradually, Piano 1 reorienting itself through becoming less forceful, its harmonies less harsh and melodies less disjointed and irregular. The volatility begins to wane while Piano 2 remains vigilant in its steadiness, remaining grounded. Material that was once individualized and unique becomes shared, echoed and overlapped. Angular melodies give way to a sonic mobile of floating ever-shifting chords. However the harmonies remain bitonal and relatively without tonal function, resulting in a progression that is in constant flux, but always stable. Two trajectories of chord progressions result in the pianos remaining as two distinct voices, two identities, in consort with one another to create a single harmonic entity. The two are not completely fused nor are they in opposition. They move in tandem, each evolving individually while remaining on a unified path. Ultimately, the final chords ring out consonant and stable, even if unresolved.

Paths To Recovery is dedicated to my partner, Gwen Wenzloff. It was completed on February 27th, 2026 in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Performance Note

Players may read from score or from parts. Individual parts are available directly from the composer.

Accidentals carry through the bar, but not across octaves. For example, a B \flat 4 will remain flat through an entire measure, unless canceled out by a natural or sharp, whereas any other octave B in that same measure should be assumed to be natural, unless notated otherwise.

Players should adhere to pedal markings as they appear in the score. In some cases, pitches will bleed and create a wash of sound. This is intentional and intended to create a greater sense of chaos in the first half of the piece, and to blur the harmonic field in the second half.

Moments with the sustain pedal up should sound sharp and pointed. Piano lids should be at full stick if possible, but in the case of a particularly reverberant performance space half-stick is adequate. The goal is to provide piano resonance but not drown out the dryness in the first half of the piece so that the interaction between the two voices is articulated.

For Gwen Wenzloff

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Contemplative ♩ = 60

Aggressively ♩ = 68

Musical score for Piano 1 and Piano 2, measures 1-3. The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'Contemplative ♩ = 60' for measures 1-2 and 'Aggressively ♩ = 68' for measure 3. The key signature changes to two flats (B-flat, E-flat) in measure 3. Piano 1 starts with a piano (*p*) chord in measure 1, a piano-piano (*pp*) chord in measure 2, and a forte (*f*) melodic line in measure 3. Piano 2 provides harmonic support with chords and a bass line. Measure 3 includes a dynamic marking of mezzo-piano (*mp*) for a chord in the right hand.

Musical score for Piano 1 and Piano 2, measures 4-7. The score continues in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat, E-flat). Piano 1 features a forte (*f*) triplet in measure 4, followed by a piano (*p*) melodic line in measure 5. Piano 2 has a sixteenth-note triplet in measure 4 and a piano (*p*) melodic line in measure 5. The key signature changes to two sharps (F-sharp, C-sharp) in measure 6 and back to two flats (B-flat, E-flat) in measure 7. The piece concludes with a final chord in measure 7.

molto rubato

a tempo

Pno. 1

mp *f* *mf*

Pno. 2

mp *mf*

ped.

Pno. 1

mp (*mp*) *f* *p*

Pno. 2

f *mp* *p*

ped.

13

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

This system contains measures 13 through 16. Pno. 1 starts with a treble clef and a grand staff. Measure 13 has a treble clef and a grand staff. Measure 14 has a 4/4 time signature and a key signature of one sharp (F#). Measure 15 has a 5/4 time signature. Measure 16 has a 3/4 time signature. Pno. 2 starts with a bass clef and a grand staff. Measure 13 has a bass clef and a grand staff. Measure 14 has a 4/4 time signature and a key signature of one flat (Bb). Measure 15 has a 5/4 time signature. Measure 16 has a 3/4 time signature. Dynamics include pp, p, mf, and mp. Fingerings include 3, 5, 6, and 8. Articulation includes accents and slurs.

17

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

This system contains measures 17 through 20. Pno. 1 starts with a treble clef and a grand staff. Measure 17 has a treble clef and a grand staff. Measure 18 has a 4/4 time signature. Measure 19 has a 4/4 time signature. Measure 20 has a 4/4 time signature. Pno. 2 starts with a bass clef and a grand staff. Measure 17 has a bass clef and a grand staff. Measure 18 has a 4/4 time signature. Measure 19 has a 4/4 time signature. Measure 20 has a 4/4 time signature. Dynamics include mp, f, and p. Fingerings include 5, 7, 3, 6, and 5. Articulation includes slurs and accents.

19

Pno. 1

mf *f* *mf* *p* *sfz*

Pno. 2

mf *sfz* *p* *mf*

21

Pno. 1

f *mp* *p* *f*

Pno. 2

f

23

Pno. 1

f *sfz* *p* *mp*

Pno. 2

p

26

Pno. 1

mf

Pno. 2

mf

28

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

f

f

30

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

ff

ff

32

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

mf *mp* *p*

mf *mp* *p*

Meno Mosso ♩ = 60

37

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

pp

pp *p*

41

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

Musical score for Pno. 1 and Pno. 2, measures 41-43. Pno. 1 features a five-fingered scale in the right hand and sustained chords in the left hand. Pno. 2 features triplets and a five-fingered scale in the right hand, with sustained chords in the left hand.

44

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

p *mf* *p*

p *mf* *p*

Musical score for Pno. 1 and Pno. 2, measures 44-46. Pno. 1 features a triplet in the right hand and a five-fingered scale in the left hand. Pno. 2 features a five-fingered scale in the right hand and a triplet in the left hand. Dynamics include *p*, *mf*, and *p*.

48

Pno. 1

mp *f* *p* *mf* *f* *p* *mf* *mp* *p*

Pno. 2

mp *mf* *p* *f* *p*

51

Pno. 1

mf

Pno. 2

mf *p*

55

Pno. 1

f *p*

Pno. 2

f *p*

58

Pno. 1

mf

Pno. 2

mf

Gradual crescendo through m. 69

61

Pno. 1

f

mp

Pno. 2

f

mp

63

Pno. 1

b

b

b

Pno. 2

b

b

66

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

69

Rit. -----

Grave (~45bpm)

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

pp

pp

72

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

The musical score consists of two systems, Pno. 1 and Pno. 2, starting at measure 72. Both systems are in 6/4 time. The right hand of each piano plays chords, while the left hand plays a complex melodic line. Pno. 1's left hand features a triplet of eighth notes followed by a quintuplet of eighth notes, and then a triplet of eighth notes. Pno. 2's left hand features a quintuplet of eighth notes followed by a triplet of eighth notes. Dynamics include *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *pp* (pianissimo) for the right hand, and *ppp* (pianississimo) for the left hand. The score concludes with a double bar line.