

# BREAD & CIRCUSES

piano music by IAN DICKE



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ARON KALLAY

# BREAD & CIRCUSES

1. Get Rich Quick (10:21)
2. White Parasol (7:30)
3. Counterpundit I. Bread (5:38)
4. Counterpundit II. Circuses (14:52)
5. Postlude (3:27)

**Bread and Circuses** presents piano music composed by Ian Dicke during the turbulent period of the subprime mortgage crisis (2008) to the unprecedented US presidential election between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump (2016). This album explores Dicke's wide ranging approaches to programmatic music, which employs a variety of technical processes while simultaneously creating an artistic experience greater than the sum of its parts.

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## Engineering, Mixing, and Mastering

Scott Fraser

## Editing

Ian Dicke

## Graphic Design

Ian Dicke

## Compositions

Ian Dicke

## Piano

Aron Kallay

## Producers

Ian Dicke and Aron Kallay

## Cover Photo

Elisa Ferrari

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## PROGRAM NOTES

**Get Rich Quick**, for piano and pre-recorded voices, samples audio of financial gurus and invites the listener to reflect on the complexities of our financial institutions. As the work progresses, the piano's motives and gestures systematically interact with the pre-recorded voices to uncover the implied pitch and rhythm embedded within everyday speech. By the end of the composition, the two disparate sources become one.

**White Parasol** was written in reaction to a BBC news article about the major loss of shelf-ice in Canada's High Arctic. The piece exploits the piano's wide range of articulations to form sonic images of melting ice and overflowing riverbanks.

The Roman poet Juvenal coined the term "panem et circenses" as a slogan to describe the rise of society's self indulgence and pettiness over heroism and civic duty. **Counterpundit** reflects on the mainstream media's role of entertaining the masses at the expense of journalistic integrity through contrasting layers of lyrical and brash electronic polyphony in tandem with video images of Gulf War era professional wrestling. The wrestling source material is laden with vivid patriarchal hegemony and clownish stereotypes, which is not unlike the personas adopted by the punditry class. The resulting two-dimensional fantasy world is both sustained and defied by the pianist in an effort to mirror our complex relationship with the media we consume.

**Postlude** is a companion piece to Chopin's A minor prelude (Op. 28, No. 2), which was characterized by the conductor/pianist Alfred Cortot as a "painful meditation; the distant, deserted sea..." In this brief tribute to the 19th century romantic piano, the eerie chromatic inner voice from Chopin's work is unearthed and dramatically stated through restless harmonic variation. While not directly programmatic, the work's tone embodies the anxieties of the present while offering a glimpse of hope within the final measures.

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## ARON KALLAY

Described as a “modern renaissance man,” (Over the Mountain Journal) Grammy® nominated pianist Aron Kallay’s playing has been called “exquisite...every sound sounded considered, alive, worthy of our wonder” (LA Times). Aron’s performances often integrate technology, video, and alternate tunings; Fanfare magazine described him as “a multiple threat: a great pianist, brainy tech wizard, and visionary promoter of a new musical practice” and wrote: “Kallay’s performance is that of a Liszt for the modern era, of a live electricity that is unforgettable.”

Aron performs throughout the United States and abroad and is a fixture on the Los Angeles new-music scene. He is the founder and artistic director of Brightwork newmusic, a non-profit organization dedicated to curating and presenting cutting-edge new work. Aron is on the faculty of Pomona and Scripps Colleges and spends his free time with his family and cycling in the San Gabriel Mountains.

## IAN DICKE

Ian Dicke is a composer, musician, and software designer inspired by the intersection of technology and social-political culture.

Praised for his “refreshingly well-structured” (Feast of Music) and “uncommonly memorable” (Sequenza 21) catalogue of works, Dicke’s music has been commissioned and performed by ensembles and soloists around the world, including the New World Symphony, Alarm Will Sound, the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, Paul Drescher Ensemble, pianist Vicky Chow, The MATA Festival, ISCM World New Music Days, and the Atlantic Coast Center Band Director’s Association. Dicke has received grants, awards, and recognition from the Hellman Foundation, Barlow Endowment, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, New Music USA, New York Youth Symphony, ASCAP, and BMI, among others. He was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to research interactive musical interfaces and environments in Stockholm, Sweden and has served as an artist in residence at various institutions, including the MacDowell Colony and Atlantic Center for the Arts. Dicke is a Professor of Composition at the University of California, Riverside and founder of Novel Music, a software company that distributes innovative Max for Live devices.

