

Buffalo Altar

A Texas Symphony

for Narrator, Piano and Percussion
Adapted from the full orchestra version

Text by Stephen Harrigan
Music by Jefferson Todd Frazier
Dedicated to Robert Freeman



Program Notes: Buffalo Altar; A Texas Symphony was commissioned by The Institute of American Music of The Eastman School of Music and The University of Texas at Austin and is the result of a collaboration between composer Jefferson Todd Frazier and writer Stephen Harrigan. "The Eastman School was interested in a musical piece about Texas," Harrigan says. "We both responded immediately to the idea, but soon realized what a huge subject we had been handed, and what a challenge it would be to distill that subject down to a manageable theme." Frazier and Harrigan both knew what they didn't want - an earnest, stentorian musical documentary. They wanted something that felt alive and contemporary but also visibly connected to Texas' rich and complex history. In the end, they decided the best way to tell the story of Texas was through the voice of a more-or-less representative Texan, an 81 year old oilman reminiscing about a long-ago morning in a West Texas canyon that changed his life.

The short story, "Buffalo Altar", by Stephen Harrigan, was inspired by the discovery of bison bones and hunting implements in Caprock Canyons State Park, near Canyon, Texas, which revealed evidence of the Folsom culture, dating signs of civilized life in Texas to over 10,000 years ago.

