

## About Adrienne

Adrienne Torf began studying piano at the age of 3 1/2, “not because my parents were hoping for a musical prodigy,” she says, “but because there was a wonderful piano teacher living on our street and all the kids took lessons from her. Beatrice Sigel taught me elementary music theory as well as how to play the piano. I learned to read and write music before I learned to read and write English, so you could say it’s my first language, as fundamental and natural as breathing for me.”

In high school she studied with Allen Barker and accompanied theater and choral performances at The Winsor School in Boston. Her musical pursuits extended to joining a disco band while at Smith College, where she continued to study piano with Monica Jakuc. “Allen Barker introduced me to the work of composers who were masters at telling stories and conveying visuals through music – Debussy, Ravel, Satie. He also brought me to the music of Bela Bartok, where I learned about the piano’s possibilities as a percussion instrument. And Monica Jakuc exposed me to the work of living composers, including John Cage, from whom I learned that even the random sounds of the city can be heard as music.”

After graduating from Stanford University with a degree in Political Science, Adrienne became a contract studio and touring keyboard player, working extensively throughout the United States, Canada, Europe and Scandinavia. Her keyboard work and arrangements appear on more than twenty commercially-released albums to date, including some by Holly Near, with whom she worked steadily from 1980-1982, Ferron, Kay Gardner and the Olivia Records’ Carnegie Hall recording with Cris Williamson and Meg Christian. (see her Selected Discography)

In 1983, Adrienne began a long-running collaboration with renowned poet, essayist and political activist June Jordan. **Bang Bang Über Alles**, their full-length contemporary opera, was produced off-Broadway in 1985 by the American Place Theater and in 1986 in by Atlanta’s Seven Stages Theater, where critics raved about the show and the Ku Klux Klan attempted to shut it down. Jordan and Torf also wrote the **Freedom Now Suite**, which premiered at Town Hall in NYC on the first celebration of the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

While living in Brooklyn, Adrienne also composed and performed for off-Broadway theater productions, radio, industrial videos, television pilots and dance troupes, and fulfilled a commission from conductor Tania Leon to write an orchestral work for the Brooklyn Philharmonic. She also regularly performed solo and with a band as part of the “Celebrate Brooklyn” series.

1986 saw the release of **Brooklyn From The Roof**, her first solo album of original music for piano and synthesizers, produced by Leslie Ann Jones on the Nippon Phonogram label, a subsidiary of Polygram Records. Of that debut, one critic wrote, “[Torf] has technique to burn (and enough artistic maturity to use it wisely).” The Boston Globe selected it as one of the year’s ten best albums, stating “*Brooklyn From The Roof* is a gem of an album...[It] shows [Torf] to be a commanding talent, by turns romantic, introspective and witty.” The album remained in demand even after it went out of print in the early 1990’s, so Torf re-issued it in 2003.

**Brooklyn From the Roof** was followed in 1990 by a cassette-only limited release of music for piano and synthesizers, **Find A Way**. That same year, Adrienne entered the Haas School of Business at UC Berkeley, where she earned an MBA in 1992.

For the next ten years, Adrienne continued to pursue a business career, working mainly in the areas of operations and technology management. “My heart remained with music and I still identified as a piano player. In my last semester of business school, though, I decided it was important to continue to learn about business beyond the classroom. I wanted to experience first hand what makes an organization tick, to deepen my understanding and knowledge beyond that of a novice.”

June Jordan and Adrienne Torf continued to write and perform together, giving their last performance in 2001 in Boston. They recorded **Collaboration (Selected Works, 1983-2000)** shortly afterwards. The studio recording includes performances by Jordan and Torf as a duo, and other pieces on which they are joined by a variety of singers and instrumentalists, including vocalists Rhiannon, Cris Williamson Jeannie Tracy and their long-time colleague Andre dos Santos Morgan.

In 2003, ABongo Music, Adrienne’s label, released **Two Hands Open**, a new album of music for the piano music, **June Jordan and Adrienne Torf: Collaboration (Selected Works, 1983-2000)** and the re-issue of **Brooklyn From the Roof**.

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## WHAT THE CRITICS SAY...

Each piece on *Brooklyn From The Roof* is stylistically unique...[Torf] has technique to burn (and enough artistic maturity to use it wisely). *Brooklyn* is a strong contribution, imbued with emotional intensity and impressive aesthetic awareness.

*Lee Underwood, Tower Pulse!*

*Brooklyn From The Roof* is a gem of an album...[It] shows her to be a commanding talent, by turns romantic, introspective and witty.

*Jeff McLaughlin, The Boston Globe*

...[a] gifted young American composer and keyboard artist...

*The New York Times*

Adrienne Torf is a true musician. Her compositions go beyond the frame of jazz and the classics to create a free and unique world. Yet, she maintains a dignity essential in music. *Brooklyn From The Roof* is colorful, mysterious and profound.

*ADLIB Magazine*

Move over George Winston and Philip Glass. Adrienne Torf is coming into her own.

*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

Adrienne is an incredible pianist.

*Holly Near*

One of 1988's 10 best albums...

*Susan Wilson, The Boston Globe*

Torf succeeds in communicating her love of music, and in pulling us into it with her.

*Tatiana Schreiber, GCN*

Torf's delicately skilled touch blended perfectly, no matter what the style...[In] the evening show-stopper, "Hay Una Mujer"...Torf performed an amazing, complex arrangement of the tune [which] brilliantly and eloquently conveyed the horror and loss.

*S.L. Guthrie, Anchorage Daily News*

## **Adrienne Torf**

### **SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY**

**TWO HANDS OPEN** (ABongo Music, 2003). Original music for piano;  
Leslie Ann Jones, producer.

**JUNE JORDAN and ADRIENNE TORF: COLLABORATION (Selected Works, 1983-2000)**, (2003). Poetry and lyrics by June Jordan, music by Adrienne B. Torf. Featuring performances by Jordan and Torf, Cris Williamson, Rhiannon, Andre dos Santos Morgan, Jeanie Tracy and others; Adrienne Torf, producer.

**BROOKLYN FROM THE ROOF**, ABongo Music (1988; re-issued 2003) and Nippon Phonogram (1987). Original music for piano and synthesizers; Leslie Ann Jones, producer.

**FIND A WAY**, ABongo Music (1990). Original music for piano and synthesizers; Adrienne Torf and Patrice Perkins, producers.

### **WITH OTHERS**

**SIMPLY LOVE**, Holly Near, Calico Tracks Music (2000)

**INSIDE OUT, The IMA Sessions**, Ferron, IMA (1999)

**DREAM FORWARD**, DreamForward (1998).

**DRIVER**, Ferron, Cherrywood Station (1994).

**ANOTHER PLACE**, Margie Adam, Pleiades Records (1993).

**GARDEN OF ECSTASY**, Kay Gardner, Ladyslipper Records (1989).

**MOTHER WIT and INNER DANCE**, Diane Mariechild and Shuli Goodman, in conjunction with Mother Wit books (1987).

**SHADOWS ON A DIME**, Ferron, Lucy Records (1984).

**FROM THE HEART**, Meg Christian, Olivia Records (1984).

**LIVE AT CARNEGIE HALL**, Meg Christian and Cris Williamson, Olivia Records (1983).

**SPEED OF LIGHT**, Holly Near, Redwood Records (1982).

**FIRE IN THE RAIN**, Holly Near, Redwood Records (1981).

## **COMPILATIONS**

**NWMF Silver**, Women In The Arts (1999)

**A LOVE WORTH FIGHTING FOR**, with Holly Near, Streeter Productions (1995)

**FRUIT COCKTAIL**, with Holly Near, Streeter Productions (1997)

**MICHIGAN LIVE '85**, with Holly Near, August Night Records (1986).