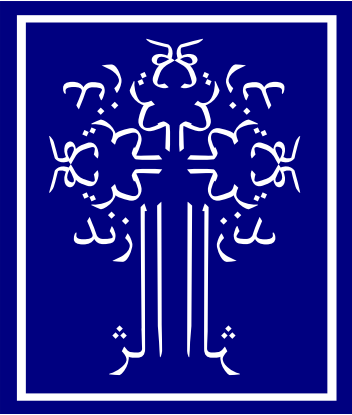


Hammers and Tongs

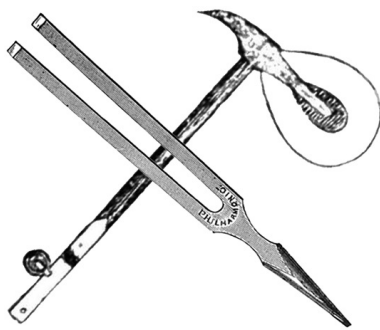
for solo piano

Karim Al-Zand



2026

Hammers and Tongs



hammer and tongs | **adverb** (colloquial): with great force, vigor, determination, or vehemence; with the greatest possible strength or force; an allusion to a blacksmith repeatedly hammering a hot piece of iron held with tongs. E.g., “When he starts a difficult job, he goes at it hammer and tongs.”

PROGRAM NOTE

Hammers and Tongs is a short and lively *moto perpetuo*. The piece was commissioned as the required contemporary work for the 2026 *George Enescu International Piano Competition*. The composition also forms a study on the musical interval of a second, with a focus on the idiosyncratic piano technique in which the thumb is used to play two adjacent pitches.

DURATION

ca. 4' 30"

THE COMPOSER

Composer Karim Al-Zand's (b.1970) music is acclaimed for its expressive power and imaginative spirit, described by the Boston Globe as “strong and startlingly lovely.” His works have been performed across North America and internationally, earning him such distinctions as the *Arts and Letters Award* from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the 2024 *Barlow Prize*. A prolific and versatile composer, Al-Zand has created a catalogue of works spanning orchestra, opera, chamber, vocal and solo repertoire. His music embraces a variety of interests, issues and influences. It explores connections between sound and other art forms, drawing inspiration from graphic art, myths and fables, folk music of the world, film, poetry, jazz, and his own Middle Eastern heritage. From compositions for young audiences to scores for dance to interdisciplinary projects, Al-Zand's music resonates with a wide range of listeners and collaborators.

www.alzand.com

commissioned by the 2026 George Enescu International Piano Competition

Hammers and Tongs

for solo piano

Karim Al-Zand
(b. 1970)

Very Swiftly; vigorous, with great energy ♩ = 176+

mp intense, focused

④ poco cresc.

⑦ mf motoric

⑩ volatile

3 ff 3 mf 3 ff 3 mp

⑬ poco

lumbering along (a bassoon!)

①6 *mf* *mp echo* *cresc.*

①9 *confident, bold* *poco f*

②2

②5 *ff* *decresc.*

②8 *mf* *poco*

③1 *f* *mf* *cresc.*

③④

poco f

③⑦

mp

④①

ff *mf*

④③

delicate *mp* *decresc.*

④⑦

mp

⑤①

pp

more flowing, smoothly (same tempo)

53 *carefree, relaxed*

mp legato

56

59

62

cresc.

poco meno mosso

65

f

mp

69

poco f

8va

73

f

8^{va}

p

accel. a

76

cresc.

tempo primo

78

mf

cresc.

poco f

80

cresc.

82

cresc.

85

heavy

f

churning vigorously

(88)

cresc.

(90)

ff

(93)

rit. - - - - -

(96) *meno mosso, con rubato*
espres., legato molto

p

(100)

(104) *flashing brightly* *poco ritenuto*

mf *f*

107 a tempo

mp

111

accel. a - - - - - poco meno mosso (as before)

115

119

122

poco *f*

125

f

128

p

accel. a - - - - -

cresc.

(130) - - - - - tempo primo

(133)

(136)

(139)

(142)

(144)

147 *big, resonant*

150

153

156 *p sub.!* *cresc. molto*

159 *ff*

162 *even more grand, sonorous*

165 *thundering*

167 *molto rit.* - - -

170 *Slowly* *Very Slowly*

175 *tempo primo*

178

181 *poco accel.* - - - - *molto pesante*