

## **Smokin' with Cocuswood**

Cocuswood is a close-grained wood native to the West Indies, also known as American Ebony. It is one of the favorite woods, along with rosewood and grenadilla, used in the manufacture of oboes. Smokin with Cocuswood features the oboe in the manner of a chamber concerto. In the first movement, piano and strings begin with quietly syncopated chords. Upon the oboe's entrance, the music picks up tempo and begins to develop in a more contrapuntal fashion. The piano engages in a series of musical debates with the oboe, often set in relief by the melodic material in the strings. There is a strongly rhapsodic element in the second movement, which highlights the piano against sustained harmonies in the muted strings. The oboe is confined to short statements which serve to underline and reinforce the piano's soliloquizing. The third movement proceeds at a breathless pace, at times becoming almost a perpetuum mobile. The form in this movement is episodic which, together with frequent metrical reinterpretations, give the music a sense of playfulness and surprise.