

Partenze  
program note

*Partenze* is an extended one-movement work for solo violin, divided into ten parts. Composed in 1990 in Florence, Italy, its title translates into English as “Departures”. I arrived with my wife Dorotea at the seaside a little southwest of Florence on a sunny June morning after a grueling transatlantic trip with our little boy of three months (he’s now a 14-year-old!). Almost immediately upon arrival, I was refreshed by the beauty of the pine forest which stretches all along the coast.

Fairly soon, I began to be aware of a bird that kept singing a pretty little tune, and I was startled by the fact that it was both tonally oriented as well as virtually equal-tempered! I had already decided to begin work on a solo violin piece, and it just felt right to make this tune the starting—and returning—point for a series of musical departures; hence the title. This tune can be heard at the very beginning of the work, and it does indeed return quite clearly between the various subsequent parts. There is a broad range of musical characters among the various sections: parts 1 and 4 allude to the fresh, open sounds of the Italian baroque; part 3 is introspective and brooding; part 6 is a mercurial, almost Mendelssohnian scherzo; part 10 starts firmly on lyrical, solid ground before winding its way brilliantly and rapidly upwards towards an almost inaudible vanishing point.

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