

Music in Blue and Green  
program note

I have been fascinated for some time by the way in which many visual artists work on a particular theme or object over and over again, in picture after picture (such as the coffee-can series of Jasper Johns or the Rouen Cathedral series of Claude Monet) - as if each successive work is an ever-deepening penetration into the most direct, elemental expression of that idea. Sometimes this happens in music as well (for example the Ode to Joy of Beethoven - which appears in less fully-formed ways in a few of his earlier pieces). But for the most part, composers treat each new piece of music as the expression of a separate musical idea. However, I have tried in my last several pieces to recast some of the same ideas - juggling them around, extending them, altering them, compressing them - toward the end of mining them for their full potential, both on their own terms as well as in the context of their colleagues.

The ideas in *Music in Blue and Green* (1991) are a combination of such themes, along with a few new ones placed into the mix. They are rather separate from each other, and therefore easily recognized. A few obviously draw from the world of bebop jazz, and one clearly refers to the atmosphere of orchestral Strauss. Still others elude classification. The point is that the order and the manner in which they are presented are as important (perhaps even more than) as the ideas themselves. One of these - a perfect fifth formed by the notes D and A, played usually by the horns - does function as a reference point, a point of both departure and return. Many sections of the work are framed by this sound - directly from the character I hear in those two notes played by horns - a noble, pure, warm and yet distant sound - the kind of sound one might imagine while standing quietly in a quiet sea, waist-high, looking out toward the horizon.

Joel Hoffman  
1991