

## Music for Chamber Orchestra

### Program Note

Music is design; design is music. Just as I often think of musical ideas and shapes while observing, say, a beautifully conceived complex of buildings around an Italian renaissance square, I also find that music often refers me to visual, tactile and of course, literary ideas. We process these various stimuli in different parts of our brain, but the aesthetic/artistic residue is often surprisingly similar.

Music is patterns: from the simplest scales and arpeggios to the most complex serial construction, music is made of blocks--patterns of pitch, rhythm and timbre organized in time.

I am deeply fascinated by the architecture of the Centre Pompidou in Paris, as I am by the novels of Milan Kundera; in both cases the design, the patterns are made much more apparent to the spectator/reader than is usually the case. In short, the skeleton of the organism is extremely visible. In Music for Chamber Orchestra, I have worked with the same idea. The musical structure itself is much of what the piece is "about". Many of the patterns involve various forms of temporal inversion--i.e. music that runs both forwards and backwards or vice-versa (depending, of course, on one's point of view). For example, the flute solo at the beginning of the piece (with its accompaniment by various instruments) is run almost exactly in reverse at the end. This sort of thing--and there are many such examples in the piece--fascinates me since it opens up many, many interesting and fundamental musical/artistic questions, far too complex even to begin to discuss meaningfully in a space as short as this program note. For anyone interested in this subject, I highly recommend The Time of Music by my friend Jonathan Kramer, which discusses these things in a fascinating, provocative and thoroughly readable way.

Music for Chamber Orchestra is dedicated, with great appreciation, to conductor Piotr Gajewski and the National Chamber Orchestra of Washington, D.C., which first performed the piece in 1994.

Joel Hoffman