

Congress), New York City, and Washington D.C., during the 1992-93 season.

The four movements, referred to as stages, of **Abiding Passions** for woodwind quintet relate to many aspects of life. Firstly, to the stages of human relationships from start to finish, secondly to the imaginary theatrical stages upon which these dramas are acted out, and lastly as a metaphor for the four seasons and the powerful effect they have on human behavior. The Italian word for season is, coincidentally, *stagione*.

Stage one, titled "Awakening," relates to spring and is constructed from opposites: a pastoral chorale against a driven, sometimes savage, pulsed music. Both areas are obstinately centered on D, a tonality I have often associated with the earth and natural beauty (c.f., my work *Pax in terra*). In the fast portions I have used all manner of unison couplings and alliances among the instruments in an attempt to make the disparate sounds of the ensemble cohere.

"Ardor" (summer) is a simple song with tight harmonic range and multiple instrumental overlappings. It is to be played *con amore*; the tonality is C. By contrast the third movement is a romping scherzo, a playful piece for my favorite season, fall. Its title "Play by Play" is a term used frequently during autumn's sports broadcasts of college football and pro baseball.

Just as the tonal center for the third "stage" is a dual D $\flat$ /C, the fourth movement grinds on C and B. The entire work's descent by half-step from D to B from beginning to end is mirrored in the descending half-steps in the last movement "Loss" (winter). Alternating tutti sections with solos for each of the five players, the piece attempts a passionate yet bitter statement.

The work was written in 1988 for the Sierra Wind Quintet, Quintet-in-residence at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, with support from the Nevada State Council on the Arts.

Romance, for organ and horn, was commissioned by John Holtz and premiered at the Hart College International Festival of Contemporary Organ Music on June 22, 1981. It also won First Prize in the International Horn Society Composition Contest in 1982.

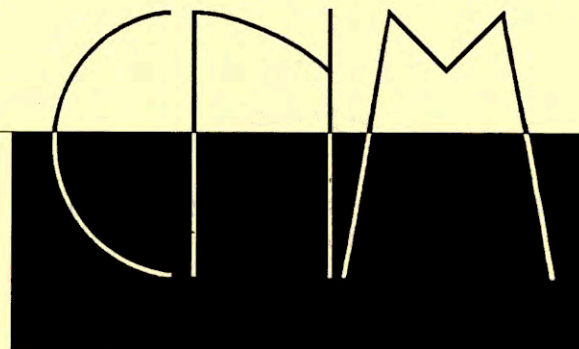
Rustles of Spring, 1994 was inspired by several events of the season that passed while I was composing: spring's beginning, an eclipse, a wedding, and a death. Although begun with all the glorious anticipation one feels as winter cracks into the time of rebirth, the work soon took on an ambiguous quality. This might be related to the fact that the piece, composed as it was at the end of a cycle of three commissions for saxophone, has a slight *fin-de-siècle*, exhausted quality; more likely, however, is the fact that occurrences during these months kept leading me away from any initial exultation.

"Vernal Equinox" reflects enthusiasm and anticipation in its quick flitting from one idea to another: dances, sighs, longings, eagernesses...the fragmented nature of it all is stitched together with a peaceful hymn, the residue of winter. Eventually the piece settles into a blues-y, swing-era recollection. "The Wedding Dance" was inspired by one of the prized paintings in the Detroit Institute, the 1565 masterpiece of the same name by the Flemish artist Brueghel. This portrait of a peasant bacchanal in the spring is loaded with witty and salacious detail. But there is a tragic quality behind the revelry, and the violin in my tribute represents both the gaiety and the unease of the "last judgment" damnation lurking just below the surface.

"Solar Eclipse (*in memoriam*, FSA)" was originally inspired by the much bally-hooed event of May 10 — the mid-day eclipse witnessed by much of the USA. Most remarkable to me was the other-worldly appearance of strange "winter-light" from a high spring sun. This unsettling paradox eventually became a metaphor for the events of July 9, a day that saw the joyous events of my wedding at 12 noon contradicted by the unexpected death of my father two hours later. I was very close to my dad, and he was my biggest fan. July 9, for me, was definitively spring's end. (The tonal levels of the three movements, by the way, ended up, by chance, as D-A-D).

The title "Rustles of Spring" will strike a chord with musicians of a certain generation who grew up playing piano pieces from such collections as *Fifty-nine Piano Solos You Like to Play*. The piece "Rustles of Spring" (by Christian Sinding) is perfect chestnut from the parlor piano character-piece repertoire: sentimental melody in the left hand accompanied by swirling filigree in the right. Bring it back.

More substantial is the influence of the early work by George Crumb called, similarly, **Echoes of Autumn, 1965**, a piece for nearly the same combination of instruments and of which I gave one of the first performances. George's music has always been a great inspiration to me, and **Rustles of Spring, 1994**, is dedicated to him.



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31st Season

Concert III

featuring the works of guest composer

William Albright

University of Michigan

Sunday, December 8, 1996

8:00 p.m.

Clapp Recital Hall

Free and open to the public

center for new music

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program

Take That (1972)

Joe Rebik, Tom Keck, Tim Sievers, Joe Rich, *percussion*
Daniel Moore*, *musical director*

The Great Amen (1992)

Claudia Anderson, *flute*, Daniel Shapiro*, *piano*

Abiding Passions (1988)

Stage One: Awakening

Stage Two: Ardor

Stage Three: Play by Play

Stage Four: Loss

Elizabeth Sadilek, *flute*, Mark Weiger*, *oboe*,
Jocelyn Langworthy, *clarinet*, Kristin Thelander*, *horn*,
John Max Wharton, *bassoon*

intermission

Romance (1981)

Kristin Thelander*, *horn*, Delbert Disselhorst*, *organ*

Rustles of Spring, 1994

I. Vernal Equinox

II. The Wedding Dance (after Brueghel)

III. Solar Eclipse (*in memoriam* FSA)

Sergio Barrenechea, *flute*, Christine Bellomy, *clarinet*
Andrew Carlson, *violin*, Hsien-Liang Lien, *cello*
Katarina Stamatelos, *piano*
David K. Gompper*, *conductor*

* denotes member of faculty

composer biography

William Albright (born 1944, Gary, Indiana), composer and performer, has concertized widely in Europe, Canada, and the United States specializing in concerts of recent music for organ. While he has premiered over thirty new works written by American and European composers, he is also highly regarded as an interpreter of classic piano ragtime and early jazz styles such as Harlem stride and boogie woogie.



As a composer, he is well-known for his keyboard works, though he has produced works for every medium, several of which involve electronic, visual and theatrical elements. He has been the recipient of many commissions and awards, among them the Queen Marie-José Prize, an award from the American Academy of the Arts and Letters, two Fulbright and two Guggenheim Fellowships, the Symphonic Composition Award of Niagara University, two National Endowment of the Arts Grants, and two Koussevitzky Composition Awards. He has received commissions from the Koussevitzky Foundation, Chamber Music America, and Meet the Composer/Reader's Digest. In 1979 he held the post Composer-in-Residence at the American Academy in Rome; in 1993 he was honored with the Composer of the Year Award from the American Guild of Organists, and in 1995 he won the Robert Wagner Center for Choral Studies Competition. His works have been selected for performance at the 1970, 1979, and 1990 International Society for Contemporary Music Festivals. Major orchestras which have performed Albright works have included the Syracuse Symphony, the Detroit Symphony (the opening work for their 1990 subscription series season in Orchestra Hall), the Budapest Philharmonic, the Aus-

trian Radio Orchestra, the Buffalo Philharmonic, the Bergen Symphony, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Lansing Symphony, the Eugene Symphony, the Kiev Philharmonic, and the American Composers Orchestra.

William Albright is presently Professor of Music and Chair of the Composition Department at the University of Michigan. In 1973 he was honored with a Distinguished Service Award from that institution, and in 1990 he received a Faculty Recognition Award. Albright has pursued research in live electronic music and is Associate Director of the University's Electronic Music Studio. His organ commissioning series has already made substantial contributions to the literature for that instrument.

program notes

Take That is for 4 drummers with 16 drums. It was originally written for the Blackearth Percussion Group and is dedicated to Russell Peck.

The Great Amen is dedicated to three of my teachers all of whom passed away in the last few years: Max Deutsch in 1985, Aaron Copland in 1990, and Olivier Messiaen in 1992. Copland and Messiaen are well known through their compositions and are both giants in this century's creative artists; Deutsch is known primarily through his many students (Deutsch, a Viennese, was a disciple of Arnold Schoenberg and taught in Paris for several decades). The craft of imparting knowledge and enthusiasm to young composers through teaching is a rare gift, and my admiration and gratitude for their guidance has grown through the years.

The title of the work derives partly from a line of the old song "The Lost Chord": "Seated one day at the organ...like the sound of a great amen." In keeping with this sentiment, much of the material is derived from the plagal cadence, the subdominant/tonic relation which is the essence of the amen formula. After an introduction there follow four linked, brief movements: "Chaconne plaintive," "Chemin de fer," "Cortège," and "Danse générale."

The work was commissioned by a consortium of three American virtuoso flutists, Jill Felber, Penelope Fischer, and Karen Johnson. The three premieres took place in Los Angeles (as part of the International Flute