

***15 Pieces for Harp* (1983)**

1. Shadows, 2. Quick March, 3. Reverie, 4. Quarks, 5. Just Dreamin' , 6. Fine Time, 7. Bluenote, 8. Around and Around, 9. Arioso, 10. Why not?, 11. Do you remember?, 12. Echoes, 13. All these Woes! (Shakespeare), 14. Conversations, 15. (Satellite Serenade)

The *15 Pieces for Harp* were written for Judy Loman, as was Weinzwieg's other work involving solo harp, the *Harp Concerto* of 1967. In preparation for writing the concerto Weinzwieg had taken harp lessons from Ms. Loman, and so he was able to try out the present set of pieces for himself. The pieces were then further revised in consultation with Ms. Loman in order to ensure that they were idiomatically written for the instrument. Ms. Loman has played all of the pieces in public, selecting from four to eight contrasted pieces to present in any one programme. The first selection of four pieces was presented in 1984, while all 15 pieces were presented in the course of two different concerts in Toronto in 1986.

The descriptive titles of the individual pieces give an indication of the diverse styles Weinzwieg uses and the many different moods he has portrayed in the set. Some of the titles, such as "Echoes," "Conversations" and "Shadows," describe the alternation between two different musical ideas which is a feature of many of the pieces, as though the harp were involved in a dialogue with itself. The influence of the jazz idiom underlies much of the set, surfacing most notably perhaps in "Fine Time" and "Bluenote." Weinzwieg's whimsical sense of humour is evident not only in the rhythmic subtleties underlying these harp pieces, but also in the choice of titles like "Why Not?" and "Satellite Serenade." Some of the slow pieces such as "Just Dreamin'" and "Reverie" are meditative by nature, while a quicksilver unpredictability dominates the fast numbers such as "Quarks" and "Around and Around."

The lean, pared down textures which have long been a feature of Weinzwieg's music are much in evidence in these harp pieces. In addition the set as a whole explores various facets of modern harp playing techniques, and the composer has mentioned in this regard his indebtedness to the 1921 treatise *Modern Study of the Harp* by Judy Loman's noted teacher Carlos Salzedo. There are at least half a dozen different types of glissando, for instance, from the gentle, slow variety to the brusque and forceful. Percussive effects, extreme register contrasts and special playing indications abound. The many different colours and moods called forth from the harp are both challenging and rewarding for player and audience alike.

Written by Robin Elliott