

Divertimento No. 12 (1998)

1. Playful
2. Reverie
3. Swing
4. Bird-talk
5. Arioso
6. Swing

Having frequently performed Weinzweig's *Divertimento No. 3* as the solo bassoonist, James McKay sought out Weinzweig for a commission for Symphony Hamilton, with the support of the Ontario Arts Council. The result was *Divertimento No. 12*, which, as Weinzweig explains, is "summation, a coda of a genre that had become a diary since I began the first in 1945." The work draws on many of the musical characteristics of the previous *Divertimenti*, including orchestral textures, melodic gestures, and rhythm.

The first, second, and final movements employ the woodwind quintet together, often in sharp contrast to the string orchestra. The other three movements highlight a member of the woodwind quintet. The third movement, "Swing," features the clarinet who plays jazzy figures within sufficient freedom to invoke jazz's improvisatory nature. "Bird-talk" features the flute (and piccolo) and oboe in dialogue; the flute plays melodic motives reminiscent of birdsongs. The fifth movement features the oboe's doleful timbre in a slow, lyrical "Arioso." While the final movement employs the entire woodwind quintet, Weinzweig allows each instrument to shine in a series of accompanied cadenzas. *Divertimento No. 12* achieves thematic closure as the work returns to the opening theme for its *fortissimo* ending.

Written by Alexa Woloshyn