

## **PROGRAM NOTES: "Scenes From the Poet's Dreams"**

What kind of dreams would a poet have? Because they presumably work in a world of imagination, would their dreams be different than what others might dream? Or are we all poets in our own dream worlds? The poet might be the main character or s/he might also be just a part of the fabric, observing from the sidelines. This also represents the pianist's role within a piano quintet, prominent but also just part of the story. And so, different dreams present themselves...

"Racing Through Stars" portrays a journey, beginning slowly and progressing faster and faster, of moving away from Earth, into the sky and past all sorts of small, brilliant stars. Not realizing at first where the journey is going, the dreamer becomes more and more thrilled with the view as s/he looks back to what has been and then forward to all that is coming. In the course of this trip, the quintet gets a chance to race through all 12 major keys.

"Summer Shimmers Across the Glass of Green Ponds" is quite the contrast to the previous dream...here, the stillness is glasslike, as the dreamer sits by a pond, on a Summer's eve, at twilight, watching the float, which does not even jiggle in the water, at the end of a fishing pole...even the fish are still.

"I Saw The Electric Insects Coming" is the kind of nightmare that no one likes to have, but in the poet's mind, the insects are both small and the size of buildings, and they are, regrettably, electric. Their invulnerability seems to be magnified by this presence of electricity, and the incessant hum is a reminder that they're never far away. There seems to be no escaping as they follow us from the day into the night.

"In The Blue Fields They Sing" is perhaps a vision about heaven...a place where the fields are like the sky. And somewhere in those fields, there is a sweet and wonderful singing...as Blue would sing.

"The Fast Dancers Dance Faster!" brings us the dancers, in a group ensemble and then in duets, as the pianist gets a chance to dance with each partner of the ensemble. Each string player has a different style in this dance, but having all those styles combined makes for a wonderful, frenzied romp.

"Scenes From the Poet's Dreams" was commissioned by the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, and was written with the artistry of Gary Graffman and the Lark Quartet in mind. It is dedicated to them with admiration and affection.

--Jennifer Higdon