

PROGRAM NOTES: “wissahickon poeTrees”

Nature is ominous. It is everything. Everything that exists has in some form sprung from nature. It is powerful, omnipotent and omnipresent. And to try to describe or depict nature in musical language is a nearly impossible task, because even as musicians issue forth choreographed notes from instruments, which themselves are made of materials of nature, no one can even begin to accurately portray that most phenomenal of phenomena. And to attempt to do so, even the most successful musicalization, is to barely scratch the surface of a beautiful reality. Therefore, I humbly submit to you this work as homage to that piece of nature within the city of Philadelphia, the Wissahickon Park. As words and titles feel very insignificant in this endeavor, I have decided to use lower case letters (except where a Tree began to grow in my title). And since time and nature consistently march along, regardless of man's attempts to mark or defame, I have connected the season movements with "progressing clock" movements. The music has been composed to proceed without breaks, as nature's seasons never cease to blend from one into another.

"wissahickon poeTrees" was commissioned in 1998 by Network for New Music.

--Jennifer Higdon

About the Wissahickon Park:

A deep, forested gorge cut over the last million years by the Wisshickon Creek, this seven-mile valley is the “jewel in the crown” of Philadelphia’s Fairmount Park system. “The Wissahickon”, as it is familiarly known, attracts thousands every week to its 1,800 acres to walk, hike, bike, bird watch, and ride horseback on more than 45 miles of trails. In 1964, the Wissahickon Park was designated a National Natural Landmark, and it is one of the few urban wilderness areas left in the United States.