

Variously Blue (2009)

Gerald Cohen

"*Variously Blue* was composed for the Verdehr Trio, who gave the premiere performance of the piece on February 7, 2010 at the Kosciusko Foundation Music Room in New York. As I began sketching the piece, I happened to improvise a theme based on the 12-bar blues pattern and thought it would be fun to try writing a set of variations based on that pattern. Some of the sections sound specifically 'bluesey,' but in general the piece uses the theme and its underlying harmonic pattern as a taking-off point for a varied range of moods and textures: lyrical, mysterious, playful, boisterous. The particular combination of the Verdehr Trio—clarinet, violin and piano, with its wide variety of colors within a small group of players—also played a vital part in composing the piece."

—Gerald Cohen

The world premiere of *Variously Blue* was on February 7, 2010 at Kosciusko Foundation Hall, New York, New York.

Gerald Cohen (born 1960, New York, New York) has earned distinction as a composer of both concert and liturgical music and as a cantor and performer. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in music degree from Yale University where he received the Sudler Prize for outstanding achievement in the creative arts. He completed the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in composition at Columbia University. He has held residencies at The MacDowell Colony, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and Yaddo.

Honors in composition include the 2008 Copland House Borromeo String Quartet Award, a 2007 Aaron Copland Award, a Westchester Prize for a New Work, the American Composers Forum *Faith Partners* residency, and the Cantors Assembly's Max Wohlberg Award for distinguished achievement in the field of Jewish composition.

Cohen has received commissioning grants from Meet the Composer, National Endowment for the Arts, and the New York State Council on the Arts/Westchester Arts Council. His music has been commissioned by choruses including the New York Virtuoso Singers, the Canticum Novum Singers, the Syracuse Children's Chorus, St. Bartholomew's Church (New York), the Zamir Chorale (Boston), and the Usdan Center Chorus. Chamber ensemble commissions have come from the Franciscan String Quartet, the Eastern Shore Chamber Music Festival, the Degas String Quartet (with trombonist Haim Avitsur), the Wave Hill Trio, the Bronx Arts Ensemble, and the Brooklyn Philharmonic Brass Quintet. Other commissions include those from the Cantors Assembly of America, the Westchester Youth Symphony, and the Battery Dance Company which performed his *Songs of Tagore* on tours of India and Eastern Europe.

Cohen's music has also been performed by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the San Diego Symphony, the Westchester Philharmonic, the Riverside Symphony, the Plymouth Music Series Orchestra, the New York Concert Singers, Princeton Pro Musica, and many other ensembles and soloists. His first opera, *Sarah and Hagar*, was performed in concert version in New York in May 2005.

Cohen is Cantor at Shaarei Tikvah Congregation in Scarsdale, New York and is on the faculty of the H.L. Miller Cantorial School of The Jewish Theological Seminary. His compositions are published by G. Schirmer/AMP, Oxford University Press, and Transcontinental Music Publications. A CD of his compositions, entitled *Generations*, is on the Composers Recordings, Inc. label, and includes choral and solo vocal music, two large-scale chamber works, and performances by the composer.

Additional information and recorded excerpts are available at www.geraldcohenmusic.com.