

Epitaph and Scherzo (1989)

Sydney Hodkinson

“The *Epitaph* (a ‘hymn’ surrounded by two cadenzas for clarinet and violin respectively) functions as a lengthy introduction to the core of the piece, the *Scherzo* proper. The *Scherzo* is very traditional: the initial *fortissimo* statements of the 9/8 thematic fragment undergo extensive development before proceeding into a rather macabre trio in simple time. A varied recapitulation, now *pianissimo*, dissipates into a brief reprise of the opening hymn and a further variant of the trio serves as a coda for the entire piece. The duration is approximately fourteen minutes.

Epitaph and Scherzo was completed in July, 1988 in Ormond Beach, Florida. It was written in memory of the American composer Vincent Persichetti (1915–1987) who offered to me—and to many others—artistic encouragement in my youth. He will be greatly missed.”

—Sydney Hodkinson

The world premiere of *Epitaph and Scherzo* was on October 15, 1989 at Canadian Union College, Lacombe, Alberta, Canada.

Sydney Hodkinson (born 1934, Winnipeg, Manitoba) received the Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees from the Eastman School of Music where he studied composition with Louis Minnini and Bernard Rogers. He continued studies at the Princeton Seminars with Elliott Carter, Roger Sessions, and Milton Babbitt. After completing the Doctor of Musical Arts at the University of Michigan where he studied with Leslie Bassett, Niccolò Castiglioni, Ross Lee Finney, and George B. Wilson, he had brief private studies with Benjamin Britten and Luigi Dallapiccola.

Hodkinson has written over two hundred fifty works covering a vast range of genres: educational pieces, a wide variety of chamber music including six string quartets, and a prolific output of choral, operatic, and vocal music. His large orchestral works include concerti for piano, English horn, violin, and clarinet. His seventh and ninth symphonies are scored for large wind ensemble.

Among the commissions Hodkinson has received are those from the Hanson Institute for American Music, the University of Evansville, Banff Centre for the Arts, Montreal Symphony, New York Philharmonic, and National Arts Centre Orchestra of Ottawa. He has received awards from the National Institute of Arts and Letters; Guggenheim, Danforth, and Ford Foundations; Canada Council; National Endowment for the Arts; International Congress of Jeunesses Musicales; and Farnsley Prize of the Louisville Orchestra. *Monumentum Pro Umbri* for winds was awarded the 2004 Audience Prize and second place in the International Harmonie Composition Contest of Harelbeke, Belgium.

Compositions by Hodkinson are published by Theodore Presser, American Composers Alliance, G. Schirmer, Ludwig Music, Columbia University Music Press, Music for Percussion, Editions Jobert, Transcontinental, Smith Music Publications, Ricordi, and Dorn Publications. Recordings of Hodkinson as a conductor and composer have been produced by CRI, Grenadilla, Louisville, Advance, Albany, Nonesuch, Centaur, CBC, Novisse, Mark, Innova, and Pantheon.

Hodkinson has taught at the Universities of Virginia, Ohio, and Michigan. He joined the faculty of the Conducting and Ensembles Department of the Eastman School of Music in 1973, assuming the directorship of the Musica Nova Ensemble, and later, the Kilbourn Orchestra. During 1984–1986, he served as Meadows Distinguished Professor of Composition at Southern Methodist University, and in 1991, was Visiting Professor of Composition at the University of Western Ontario. In 1995, he assumed teaching duties in the Composition Department at Eastman, a position he retained until his retirement in 1999.

Since retirement, Hodkinson has been a guest conductor at Oberlin College and a Visiting Professor of Composition at Indiana University and Duke University. In 2004, he accepted the Almand Chair of Composition at Stetson University, and he also conducts the Contemporary Ensemble and teaches composition at the Aspen Music Festival.

Additional information is available at www.sydhodkinson.com.