

*Frisson* (2007)

James Holt

“A trio for violin, clarinet, and piano, *Frisson* is a one movement work which progresses through many smaller sections of varying tempos, colors, and rhythmic ideas. Three markings in the score indicate the general development of the music: 1) Mysterious, intense, 2) Introspective; and 3) Letting go, sense of release.

Often, the instruments play in multiple tempos simultaneously, creating an ambiguous sense of pulse and meter. The rhythmic structure of the piece is based on composite cross rhythms which give the music a more tentative, unsettled feeling. However, the climax of the work provides the dramatic excitement that is the title’s reference; a frisson is a 'brief intense reaction, usually a feeling of excitement, recognition, or terror, accompanied by a physical shudder or thrill.'

*Frisson* was composed while in residence at Centrum in Port Townsend, Washington, an artist retreat on the Washington peninsula near the San Juan Islands. It was commissioned by and dedicated to the Verdehr Trio and Michigan State University.”

—James Holt

The world premiere of *Frisson* was on October 21, 2007 in the Music Room, The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

James Holt received a Doctor of Music in Composition from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. His teachers have included Claude Baker, Sven-David Sandström, Don Freund, David Dzubay, Syd Hodkinson and Roger Briggs. He had master classes with Tristan Murail, Jin Hi Kim, David Maslanka, Harvey Sollberger, Melinda Wagner, David Lang, John Harbison, Chris Rouse, and Steve Mackey. Holt also studied at the Bang on a Can Summer Institute of Music and the Aspen Music Festival and School.

His creative residencies have spanned the country, including Yaddo and Centrum, and he has twice been guest composer with Ensemble Eleven in Manchester, England. He was co-founder of two contemporary chamber ensembles in Washington that continue to be dedicated to the promotion and performance of new music by living composers.

Holt writes music for a wide variety of mixed and standard chamber ensembles, orchestra, wind ensemble, solo instruments, and works featuring voice and modern dance. His music has been performed across the United States and in England, including performances in New York City, Washington, DC and San Francisco and includes ensembles and performers such as the Verdehr Trio, Tonus, Percussion Group, Tosca String Quartet, Attaca Percussion Group, Sqwonk, REDSHIFT, Composer's Concordance, violinist Ben Sung (concertmaster, Fargo-Moorhead Symphony Orchestra), clarinetist Jorge Montilla (principal clarinet, Simon Bolivar Orchestra), and modern dance choreographer Laura Poole (Indiana University School of Kinesiology).

Holt taught as an Associate Instructor of Composition at Indiana University, where he was also Assistant Director of the IU New Music Ensemble and President of the Student Composer’s Association. In 2007-2008, he was involved with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s Arts Education Program in New York City. He is currently living and composing in Queens, New York.