

## *Commedia* (2001)

David Liptak

"I wrote my trio for clarinet, violin, and piano as a four-movement 'comedy' that used the figures from the traditional *Commedia dell'Arte*, the sixteenth-century form of improvised comedy that created the characters that are still with us. The first movement is an *Entrada*, and, after the 'actors' burst onto the stage, presents the coquettish dance of Harlequin and Columbine. The middle movements are called *Intermezzo*, and the first of these is about Pierrot, the melancholic and meditative dreamer. The second *Intermezzo* is Pulcinella, the dwarfish humpback with a crooked nose, the cruel bachelor who chases pretty girls. This is the character also found as Punch in the Punch and Judy puppet shows. The last movement is the *Finale*, and presents Scaramouche, the bold, swaggering soldier dressed in black and brandishing a sword. The piece ends with a retreat of all the actors from the stage in a reversal of the beginning of the work. *Commedia* was commissioned for the Verdehr Trio."

—David Liptak

The world premiere of *Commedia* was on October 21, 2001 in the Music Room, The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

David Liptak (born 1949, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) is Professor of Composition and Chair of the Composition Department at the Eastman School of Music. He previously taught at Michigan State University and the University of Illinois. He has held residencies at the Seal Bay Music Festival and the Brevard Music Festival.

Liptak's music has been commissioned by the Meet the Composer/Readers Digest Consortium Commissioning Program, the Fromm Music Foundation, and numerous performing organizations and soloists. It has been performed by ensembles such as the Montreal Symphony, the San Francisco Symphony, the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, the Youngstown Symphony, the National Orchestral Association, the New England Philharmonic, the Eastman Wind Ensemble, and the New York New Music Ensemble.

Much of Liptak's work is for chamber ensemble and has been heard with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Sinfonia da Camera of Illinois, the New York New Music Ensemble, the Group for Contemporary Music, EARPLAY, the Finger Lakes Chamber Ensemble, Trio Xia, the Ying and Cassatt String Quartets, the Tarab Cello Ensemble, and Dinosaur Annex Ensemble. Works featuring solo performers have been premiered by Catherine Tait, violin; David Starobin, guitar; Chen-Kwan Lin, saxophone; John Graham; viola; Steven Doane, cello; and Paul Merkelo, trumpet.

Liptak's composition awards include prizes in the 1986 Georges Enesco International Composition Competition and the 1978 Minnesota Orchestra 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Composers Competition. He was a finalist in the 1982 St. Paul Chamber Orchestra Composition Competition, the 1989 Sudler International Competition for Wind Ensemble Composition, and the 2008 Sackler Composition Competition. In 1995, he was honored with the Elise L. Stoecker Prize, given by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in New York, in recognition of distinguished achievement in the field of chamber music composition. Other distinctions include awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the Barlow Endowment for Music Composition, both in 2002. He has also received the 2006 Lillian Fairchild Award.

Liptak's music is published by Keiser Classical, Alfred Music, and MMB Music. Recordings are available on the Albany, Innova, and Bridge, Ravello, Centaur, Gasparo, and Crystal Records labels.

Additional information is available at [www.dliptak.com](http://www.dliptak.com).