

Time Considered as a Helix of Semi-Precious Stones (1994)

Marc Satterwhite

"This trio was inspired by one of my favorite titles—that of a well-known short story by science-fiction writer Samuel R. Delaney. I say title rather than story, because my piece is not concerned with the story itself (a picaresque romance set in the near future), although it is a marvelous one. Rather, I have tried only to give the listener the sense of swirling, dazzling brilliance that the title has always conveyed to me.

The piece is written in a form combining elements of both rondo and arch: A-B-A-A-C-A-B-A. The first, middle, and last A sections are in a presto tempo (A=168), while the other sections are all in tempos that relate to 168 in 'Golden Section' ratios (.618—a ratio found in some natural phenomena and also much used to determine proportions in art, architecture, and music). The lengths of the sections are also determined by 'Golden Section' proportions with respect to the first A section, which lasts one minute.

Since I was writing for a virtuoso ensemble, the Verdehr Trio, *Time Considered as...* makes full use of both the technical and ensemble skills of the players, while exploring many—certainly not all—of the sonic possibilities of this wonderful combination of instruments."

—Marc Satterwhite

The world premiere of *Time Considered as a Helix of Semi-Precious Stones* was on February 19, 1995 at the 50th Annual Contemporary Music Festival in the Recital Hall, Music Building, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Marc Satterwhite (born 1954, Amarillo, Texas) is a composer and bassist with an undergraduate degree in double bass from Michigan State University and graduate degrees in composition from Indiana University. He studied double bass with Murray Grodner and Virginia Bodman, and his principal teachers in composition were John Eaton, Eugene O'Brien, Ramon Zupko, and Earle Brown. At Indiana, he was a research assistant to George List, one of the pioneers of the field of ethnomusicology.

At both universities, Satterwhite was the recipient of numerous awards, scholarships, and fellowships both for his composition and bass playing, including Michigan State's annual prize to the outstanding graduating music major. At Indiana he received the university's most prestigious award, the Sweeney Memorial Scholarship, as well as the Dean's Prize for Chamber Music Composition.

Satterwhite has received many commissions and grants and had residencies at the MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, and the Atlantic Center for the Arts. His compositions have been performed in diverse venues all over the United States, as well as in Australia, Europe, Latin America, England, Japan, South Africa, China, and South Korea. Among the groups and soloists that have performed and recorded his works are the Boston Symphony, the Utah Symphony, the Louisville Orchestra, eighth blackbird, the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, the Core Ensemble, Tales & Scales, the Chicago Chamber Musicians, the London Composers, Ensemble, Percussion Group Falsa, tubist Gene Pokorny, and clarinetist Richard Nunemaker.

Satterwhite began his professional career as an orchestral bassist, and for two years was assistant principal in the Mexico City Philharmonic. Afterwards, he taught double bass, music theory, and composition at Indiana University, Western Michigan University, and Lamar University where he was also the producer and host of a weekly radio show devoted to contemporary music. He has worked with activist groups concerned with Latin American issues, and he is an Amnesty International Freedom Writer.

He is Professor of Composition and Music Theory at the University of Louisville School of Music where he also serves as Director of the Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition program.

Additional information is available at www.marcsatterwhite.com.