

Partita (2006)

Gerard Schurmann

“Commissioned by the Verdehr Trio, this *Partita* is in four short movements, and was composed in consideration of the fact that a concert by the ensemble represents a formidable undertaking in terms of endurance for the busy clarinet. The opening *Threnody* was written soon after the tragic death of a young friend in Los Angeles. *Whirling* represents the movement of a spinning top which slows down in the middle and picks up speed again towards the end. In *Romanza*, the clarinet and violin share romantic exchanges, accompanied by repeated unison figuration on the piano. The final *Capriccio* is an energetic dash to a strong and emphatic conclusion.”

—Gerard Schurmann

The world premiere of *Partita* was on March 4, 2007 in the Music Room, The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

Gerard Schurmann (born 1924, Kertosono, Kediri, Dutch East Indies; now Kertosono, East Java, Indonesia) left home at an early age, growing up in England in the care of an uncle. His professional grounding in music came when, as a teenager, he studied composition with Alan Rawsthorne, piano with Kathleen Long, and conducting with Franco Ferrara. He developed a musical language that sometimes uses pentatonic scales which he absorbed as a boy from the local gamelan music of Java and from the Hungarian heritage of his mother, a pianist and accompanist.

After serving in the Royal Air Force during World War II, Schurmann began to combine his concert career as a pianist with the position of Cultural Attaché at the Netherlands Embassy in London, after which he was appointed resident orchestral conductor at the Netherlands Radio in Hilversum. At the end of his contract there, he returned to England and established himself as a composer, receiving numerous international awards and commissions. In 1981, he settled in Hollywood Hills, California, and became an American citizen in 1989.

Schurmann has written music for a wide variety of media. His orchestral works include *Gaudiana—Symphonic Studies* commissioned for the Orquestra Simfònica de Barcelona i Nacional de Catalunya; *Concerto for Orchestra* for the one hundredth anniversary of the Pittsburgh Symphony; *The Gardens of Exile* for cello and orchestra for Peter Rejto and the Bournemouth Symphony, England; a *Violin Concerto* for Ruggiero Ricci and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, England; a *Piano Concerto* for John Ogdon and the Bournemouth Symphony, England; *Variants* for the Guildford Festival, England; *Six Studies of Francis Bacon* for the Dublin International Festival, Ireland; *Sonata* for strings for the Redcliffe Society in England; the orchestral song-cycle *Chuench’l* on poems from the Chinese; and a set of *Nine Slovak Folk Songs* for soprano, tenor, and orchestra.

Other works include the opera-cantata *Piers Plowman* for the Netherlands Radio, Hilversum; the choral cantata *The Double Heart* for the BBC, England; a *String Quartet* for the Chilingirian Quartet; two quartets for piano and strings for the Los Angeles Piano Quartet (No. 1 commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts/No. 2 commissioned by the Tucson Chamber Music Festival); and a *Trio* for clarinet, cello, and piano for the Tucson Chamber Music Festival, Arizona. He has also written many solo instrumental works and songs.

Schurmann’s music is published by Novello & Co. Ltd., and his works have been recorded on CBS, Nonesuch, EMI, Chandos, Virgin Classics, Albany, Pye, Silva Classics, GDI, United Artists, Cloud Nine, and Toccata Classics.

Additional information is available at www.gerard-schurmann.com.