

Parlor Music, Op. 25 (2007)

Russell Platt

“Parlor Music was written between February and December of 2007, first at Copland House in Westchester (where I lived as a Copland Fellow, and to which I express my gratitude) and then at my home in Upper Manhattan. I first heard the Verdehr Trio over twenty years ago when they toured to Oberlin College, and I feel fortunate to join the ranks of distinguished composers whom they have commissioned through Michigan State University.

The title *Parlor Music* is given in acknowledgment of the divertimento-like style of the greatest work in this genre—Bartók's *Contrasts*. These are American contrasts, however. The first movement, called *Outdoor Overture*, was written mostly at Copland House, and the title is a tip of the hat to one of my favorite Copland pieces; it is a fast, sometimes ruggedly chromatic sonata-form movement, with a few surprises here and there. The brief second movement, *Song Without Words*, is what it says it is, a setting of a text by Whitman (from my cantata *From Noon to Starry Night*, recorded on Albany Records) from which the words have been excised; the title further adds to the domestic, ‘parlor’ mood. The finale, *Scenes from Childhood*, is not a recollection of a specific personal memory but rather an essay in storybook derring-do, a picture of an imagined child (the composer, perhaps) dreaming of an imagined, heroic past. After an astringent yet lyrical slow introduction, the movement sets off on a wild little ride.”

—Russell Platt

The world premiere of *Parlor Music, Op. 25* was on March 8, 2009 at the Music Room, Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

Russell Platt (born 1965, Westport, Connecticut) is an alumnus of Oberlin College, the Curtis Institute of Music, St. Catharine’s College, Cambridge (M. Phil.) and the University of Minnesota (Ph.D.). His principal teachers were Ned Rorem, Dominick Argento, Alexander Goehr, Robin Holloway, Judith Lang Zaimont, Edward J. Miller, and Richard Hoffmann.

Platt is winner of both a fellowship and the Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Civitella Ranieri Fellowship, a Copland House Fellowship and an ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award. He has had six residencies at Yaddo and three residencies at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. As a writer, he has been honored with an ASCAP Deems Taylor Award for Music Criticism.

Platt has been commissioned by Switzerland’s Orchestre Symphonique, Mirror Visions Ensemble, An die Musik, Bargemusic, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra Ensembles, the American Composers Forum, and the Chamber Music Society of Minnesota. His music is consistently performed by these and other exceptional musicians such as the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra; the Wisconsin Philharmonic; New York Festival of Song; the Knights; the American Modern Ensemble; the St. Petersburg, Amernet, and Brooklyn Rider String Quartets; the Dale Warland Singers; and I Virtuosi Italiani. Individual artists include soprano Nancy Allen Lundy; tenors Paul Appleby and Paul Sperry; baritone Thomas Meglioranza; bassoonists Peter Kolkay and George Sakakeeny; violinists Frank Almond and Livia Sohn; violist Max Mandel; cellist Edward Arron; and pianists Brian Zeger, Natalie Zhu, Margo Garrett, and Lydia Artymiw.

Platt has been the Classical Music Editor of *Goings on About Town* for *The New Yorker* and essayist for both *The New Yorker* and *Opera News*. He was also the Curator for Chamber Music at the Westport Arts Center in Connecticut. In 2018, he joined the faculty of the Blair School of Music at Vanderbilt University.

Additional information is available at www.russellplatt.com.