

## *Secret Gardens*

**Secret Gardens** is a chamber piece for alto saxophone, percussion, woodwind quintet and prepared electronic tape is organized as a sequence of small movements (some of which repeat in a modified form). The small movements are at once self-contained and are an inseparable part of the whole composition. Each of these movements provides a suggestive programmatic title that contributes to the collective aesthetic of *Secret Gardens*. There is a reoccurring *Nightscape Theme* presented in quite different contexts in movements one, four, six and eight. This vision of darkness is evil, but is the darkness of the unknown that we all must learn to face...to face eventually in death, itself. The other movements have to do with moments on the timeline of our life cycle, such as *Morning's Rage* presents us with the naïve enthusiasm and restrained energy that only the unbent bodies of youth can have and *Scents of Winter* presents us with a small portrait of the last segments of our lives. It presents us with images of unspoken rage that it all is ending much too soon and too much is undone.

The tape does not dominate the ensemble and only performs in very specific movements. The sounds of the tape are often modifications of the individual instruments of the acoustic ensemble, so that the tape is a color extension of the ensemble, itself.

The garden is a metaphor for the enclosed space where warriors rest, that protected area where they can remove heavy armor and be vulnerable to their most gentle associates, that mythical space so well defined by Robert Bly in the contemporary best seller **Iron John** that is reserved for the sharing of the most intimate gestures of their true loves; that special place with no mass, space or form that is all important to real intimacy awaits us all if we can manage to shed the chains of shame that life has given us and we carry to its door. Nightscapes; death awaits the warriors' return from the garden as they put back on their thick armor and defenses to go again to battle, to fight, crawl, spit, claw and even lie and to carry once again their shame. The garden is a place where time stops and when live in the moment. It is a place where today is everything and tomorrow has no meaning.