



## Program Notes

Composed in 1994, *Meditation for timpani and drone* was first performed on April 14th, 1994, in Kilbourn Hall at the Eastman School of Music. While many listeners may think of timpani as a strong rhythmic and sonic force within large ensembles, percussionists who have spent time with the instrument in quiet spaces are aware of its more varied nature. The sound, when heard alone, is immensely complex, with many shifting and shimmering overtones, and listening to gently played notes can bring on a meditative state. This piece was composed in order to share this sonic world with non-percussionists, and to provide timpanists with a new opportunity for simple, lyrical expression.

## Performance Notes

This work is most effectively performed in a darkened hall. Also, since the music is simple and easily memorized, it is suggested that the piece be played from memory--this makes it possible to have the lights dimmed even on the stage.

While the piece may be played exactly as written, the player is encouraged to improvise within the basic outline. The piece may be made longer through added improvisations, but not shorter.

The drone-tape is included for convenience. If desired, the player may create her own drone using any live or recorded means. For example, it is effective to have several string players fade in and out randomly. If they can retune their strings so that the necessary Db and Ab are open strings, or play from backstage, so much the better. The performer is encouraged to be creative in fashioning his own drone.

The tape should be played through the best audio system available, although even a cheap boom-box will suffice. As marked in the score, the drone should be faded-in at the beginning, and faded-out at the end. If there is no audio engineer involved, the player may do this himself.

Take care to distinguish between glissed notes that are slurred, and those that are not. When two notes have a glissando between them, and they are slurred, the second note should not be re-struck; when the two notes are not slurred, the second note should be re-articulated.

If a quality sound-reinforcement system is used, the player may experiment with amplifying the timpani to make the very quiet overtones more audible in the hall. Different speeds of digital delays may also be used to great effect.

