On a Rose of Coals: Scherzo and Variations for String Quartet

Robert Rothschild

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ON A ROSE OF COALS: 
SCHERZO AND VARIATIONS 
FOR STRING QUARTET 

BY 

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BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS, CONTEMPORARY MUSIC 
THE COLLEGE OF SANTA FE, 1999 

THESIS 
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the 
Requirements for the Degree of 

Master of Music 
Theory and Composition 

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ABSTRACT

On a Rose of Coals is a single movement composed for string quartet and is approximately eleven minutes in duration. The work revolves around ostinati which incorporate rhythmic characteristics of West African and Balkan traditional music, against which are set melodies which emphasize the conflict between a bitonal and composite reading. Polyrhythmic structures and assymetrical rhythms dominate the work, and are used to effect many of the metric modulations between sections of the piece. The tension between a solid, relatively stable modal center and a melody which continually pulls toward disintegration of tonal stasis characterizes the work at large. The final section explores the inherent dissonances in a seemingly tonal ostinato, a discord which ultimately eclipses the sense of tonal and rhythmic stability entirely.
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SCORE............................................................................................................................... 1
\( \text{\textcopyright 2020 - with mischief} \)

- 1 -
giddy yet incisive
hushed disbelief
\( q. = 90 \) (\( q_x \) becomes \( e. \))

\( \frac{\text{mp}}{\text{mp}} \)

\( \frac{\text{with gravity}}{\text{with}} \)

\( \frac{\text{arco}}{\text{arco}} \)

\( \frac{\text{mp}}{\text{mp}} \)
Suddenly agitated
plaintive
col legno battuto with presses

let bow bounce
an ironic aside

pizz.

mp

arco

pizz.

arco
Dark, but with fire

pizz.