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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THE COLLEGE OF SANTA FE, 1999

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

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Theory and Composition

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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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
\[=220 - \text{with mischief}\]
giddy yet incisive
142
stately

146
arco

espress.

150
hushed disbelief
Suddenly agitated
col legno battuto with presses

let bow bounce

arco
an ironic aside
Dark, but with fire
ff 105 - quickening

mf

sul pont.