

APHORISMS for Solo Clarinet

First performed by American composer and clarinetist Derek Bermel at Seiji Ozawa Hall, Tanglewood in 1995, Aphorisms was written during a stay at Saranac, Koussevitzky's home in Massachusetts, whilst the composer was the Leonard Bernstein composition fellow.

Each of the five movements is laconic in nature, terse and brief as well as humorous or even sarcastic. The declamatory style of the piece is varied - incantatory, dramatic, frenetic, wild or sorrowful - and each movement presents the performer with various technical demands, including screaming through the instrument whilst playing or a large, klezma-style vibrato to imitate sobbing. Each movement is thematically independent, but one gestural contour, that of an upward rushing arpeggio or group of notes, recurs throughout and is the opening and closing gesture of the work.

Aphorisms is dedicated to Derek Bermel.

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