

Claremont Suite

Claremont Suite was composed for the 2011 Claremont Clarinet Festival, where I was Composer-in-Residence, and premiered by the festival's clarinet choir. The content of the work is somewhat unusual in that each of the three movements is an arrangement of a composition I had written previously for other ensembles. Though these pieces were not originally intended to be performed together, I thought that, arranged for clarinet choir, they would make a nice little suite. The first movement is an arrangement of a wind octet I wrote earlier in 2011 (2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns), which was composed as a companion piece to Mozart's *C minor Wind Serenade*. I sought in this work to combine the clarity, resonance, and sense of drama that characterizes Mozart's *Serenade* with my own expanded harmonic palette and driving rhythms. Movements 2 and 3 are arrangements of tunes I originally wrote for a San Francisco-based band that I used to play in called Zoyres. The word "zoyres" comes from a Yiddish word meaning "fermented vegetables," and the idea of the band was to take traditional tunes from Eastern Europe and the Balkans, and "ferment" them in the culture of the San Francisco Bay Area to create tasty hybrids of folk, klezmer, rock, jazz, and avant-garde improvisation. It was challenging but also a lot of fun to take these tunes, both of which have very free, improvisatory sections, and arrange them into fully notated music for clarinet choir. The resulting three-movement suite takes full advantage of the vast range of colors and characters that the clarinet choir can produce, from the dense chords of the opening, to the jazz and klezmer riffs of the second movement, to the driving dance rhythms and virtuosic runs of the final movement.