

## Jack Fortner: "Nothing and more"

### ENSEMBLE

Sound Sculpture in Six Tableaux for Six Musicians.

NOTHING and more was composed between August 4 and November 4, 2009 at the request of El Cimarrón Ensemble. As is the case with my more recent works, I prefer to refer to it as a sound sculpture rather than music, and also thought of it more as a Greek drama or English masque than an opera. The six tableaux depict an undefined dramatic action and it is the listener's responsibility to divine the meaning of the work. It is possible that there are as many interpretations as there are listeners.

During the time that I was working on NOTHING and more I was drawn to the literary works of Samuel Beckett and the writings of the Slovenian philosopher and cultural critic Slavoj Žižek. The search for the meaning of existence by Beckett and the thoughts of Žižek about what is real (Ex. "The Real does not have positive existence; it only exists as an abstraction,") were constantly in my mind during the three months of composition.

From a technical viewpoint, NOTHING and more is a symmetrical construction (A - B - B I - C - CR - B/A) with elements of the Prologue appearing in the Epilogue; Igor's Monologue uses material of Igor's Monologue in inversion; the Duologue is the retrograde of the Intralogue; and the vertical symmetries of the two monologues are combined in the Epilogue overlaid upon elements of the Prologue. Certain aspects of the Golden Section, Fibonacci series, and other expanding/contracting arithmetic series were used to control the flow of events throughout the twenty-six minute span of the piece.

I am indebted to the talented video artist Paula Durette for creating the extraordinary video imagery for NOTHING and more, and to the vocal talents of colleagues Helene Joseph-Weil and John Karr who provided the raw material for the musique concrète cue of the Epilogue.