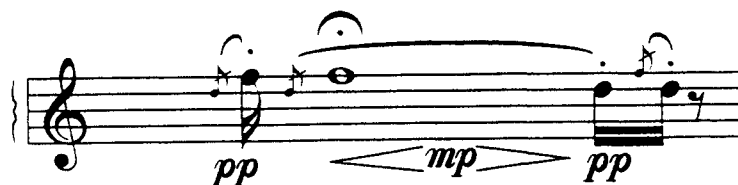


ARCA SACRA

Program Notes

The title, *Arca Sacra*, is a word palindrome (a symmetrical series of letters that reads the same forwards as backwards), reflecting the fact that the piece is full of musical palindromes as well as other kinds of symmetries. The first gesture of the piece is an example of a musical palindrome:



Note that this same gesture appears at the very end of the piece, but in inverted form. This suggests two other kinds of symmetry: pitch inversion (what went up now goes down), and formal symmetry of an ABA, or “arch” form. In this arch form, many gestures from the first part return in the last part, except in reverse order and often in inverted form. Another aspect of symmetry is the registral expansion at the opening of the piece and its compression at the end. Symmetry in the middle section is manifested primarily in the use of palindromic groupings of accents and articulations:



It is important that the flutist recognize many of these symmetries and perform them in a manner that allows the listener to hear them. For example, the diminuendo in the first gesture should take about the same amount of time as the crescendo so that the *mp* is reached close to the middle of the time segment; the triplet-quintuplet-triplet repeated notes (at the end of the second line) should be timed so that the middle of the quintuplet is also the middle of the gesture.

Aside from this structural aspect, performers and listeners may notice influences from jazz and folk music, in some of the bends, grace notes, syncopations, and exotic scales. Many of these scales are themselves symmetrical, including the octatonic scale (alternating whole- and half-steps) and augmented scale (alternating minor 3rds and half-steps).

Instructions to the Flutist

1. In the slow sections (pages 1 and 4), an accidental applies only to the note that it precedes except in the case of repeated notes. In the middle section, accidentals carry through the measure.
2. Upward bends (marked with a “/.” or an upward slur) should be played by sliding fingers off of the keys of an open-hole flute until the second note is reached. Downward bends (marked with a downward slur or with a “~”) can be played by rolling the flute inward as far as possible.
3. Note (1)* on page 1--produce a timbral flutter by alternating the normal G# fingering with G# plus all of the fingers of the right hand depressed; this “trill” should begin slowly and speed up. Note (2)* on page 4--produce a flutter in the same manner as (1)* but begin fast and slow down.
4. Harmonics on pages 1 and 4 are produced by fingering the small note and overblowing to produce the large note.
5. The accelerando at the end of page 1 should be gradual but extreme; the new tempo on the next page should actually be reached by the time the last four eighth notes of page 1 are played so that this half-note pulse becomes the new quarter-note pulse.
6. The designation, “whisper (mostly air)” can be very airy, but sharply articulated; when the slurs are added three bars later, maintain this airy sound, but with sharp tonguing on the accents. The designation “m.o.” (*modo ordinario*) indicates a return to a normal sound.

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About the composer

Cynthia Folio, flutist, composer, and theorist, is Associate Professor of theory at Temple University. She earned a Ph.D. in music theory and a Performers Certificate in flute from the Eastman School of Music. Her *Trio* for flute, cello, and piano (published by Hildegard Publishing Co.) was a winner in the 1995 NFA Newly Published Music Competition and a new work for solo flute, *Arca Sacra*, was commissioned by the NFA for the 1997 High School Soloist Competition. She received the Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching, four consecutive ASCAP Standard Awards, First Prize in the 1994 New Music Delaware Competition, Distinguished Alumni Award from West Chester University, and grants from NEH and Meet the Composer. Her compositions are published by Shawnee Press, Seesaw Music, and Hildegard and are recorded on Capstone Records and Nebula Records. In addition to her work as a composer she has published music theory articles and reviews in many journals, including *The Flutist Quarterly*, and she was elected Treasurer of the Society for Music Theory (1994-98). Her theory/composition teachers include Joseph Schwantner, Robert Morris, and Larry Nelson and her flute teachers include Bonita Boyd and Emily Swartley.