

# Secret Notes

for solo violin and ensemble or chamber orchestra,  
opus 19 (violin concerto no.2)

I. keep them in the dark  
II. keep silent  
III. leaked out

## **commissioned**

by The Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group; Esa-Pekka Salonen, Music Director

## **composed**

between 18<sup>th</sup> September 2000 and 20<sup>th</sup> June 2001

## **dedicated**

to Christopher Hailey

## **duration**

ca. 22 min.

## **premiered**

on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2002 at the Zipper Hall in Los Angeles (U.S.A.) by Marijn Simons (violin), The Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group & Yasuo Shinozaki (conductor)

## **published**

by Donemus

## **recorded**

by Marijn Simons (violin), the Netherlands Radio Chamber Orchestra and James MacMillan (conductor) on NorthWest Classics NWC 412152

## **scoring**

Solo Violin

Flute (also Piccolo)

Oboe (also Cor Anglais)

Clarinet in Bb (also Bass Clarinet in Bb)

Bassoon (also Contrabassoon)

Horn in F

Trumpet in C

Trombone

Percussion (1 or 2 players): 4 Boo-bams or Octabons, Roto-tom, 2 Low Drums (use drums with a low and dry sound), 5 Tom-toms, Low Floor-tom, Junior Conga (high tuned), Tambourine, 2 Wood Blocks (one medium, one high), 3 Temple Blocks, 2 Timbales, Hi-Hat

Accordion (with baritone/melody bass & standard bass)

Strings (either solo or multiple)

### **technical specifications**

Sound reinforcement for Solo Violin and Accordion:

1. DPA Miniature Microphone for Solo Violin
2. Microphone on stand for Accordion
3. On-stage PA speakers
4. Mixing desk in the auditorium

### **Marijn Simons on *Secret Notes*:**

The title *Secret Notes* seems to make no sense at all, for every separate note is there in the score to read. But what composer would resist a commission from M<sup>o</sup> Esa-Pekka Salonen & The Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group and would not immediately start composing, or at least brainstorming about such a commission. I certainly wouldn't! As a consequence I got into problems with deadlines of other commissions. Whatever excuses I tried to think of, the truth came out. Perhaps the title won't seem so strange now.

The trombone concerto (*Concerto Comique, opus 17*) is the first composition in which I didn't write "notes" any longer. Before, I used to work with themes and motives in a

-call it- classical way. In my opus 17 this changed and it caused an enormous inner struggle. For the first time I didn't use the unconscious support of composers I admired such as Stravinsky, Copland, Villa-Lobos, Milhaud and some others. I had been confronted with myself!

Now I am composing in sound colours -you could call them sound tonalities- and I try to find notes (and instruments!) to construct this sound tonality. Which notes they are is of no importance.

The obsessive urge to compose a continuum -as in the second part of my opus 17- is carried out very strictly in *Secret Notes*. Each part has its own specific sound tonality with a polyphonic stratification built up from tiny motives that form one big closed whole, as in a mosaic. These independent layers fight a grim battle for the top musical position, as in a Concerto Grosso from the Baroque. The fragility of these sound tonalities is great: one note too much or too little and the whole composition will collapse like a house of cards.

In my youthful boldness I thought I could easily compose a consonant final part. Dissonance -squirming and strangling- had been a normal practise for me in all my compositions before the trombone concerto. The four-minute-long third part *leaked out* is, on the contrary, fully consonant. I was deceived! Every minute that I finished with a struggle doubled my admiration and respect for a master of consonance: Aaron Copland.

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