

Kirk O'Riordan



Ostinati
for
Soprano Saxophone, Violin, and Piano

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Kirk O'Riordan (b. 1968)

Program Notes

Ostinati was originally commissioned by violinist Melanie Gran and saxophonist Michael Hanson. The revision was made for Farrell Vernon.

The original notes:

The melodic material of the piece is derived from an ostinato that is gradually introduced in the course of the piece. There are three sections in the piece: the first two sections are essentially variations on the ostinato, but because they are heard before the theme, they have the effect of implicating the original, rather than varying from it. The first section begins with three pitches, which are spread out over several measures: these form the primary motive of the ostinato. The middle section is comprised of cadenzas for each instrument. The final section is a fast dance that presents the ostinato in its pure form. The piece ends with a restatement of the opening material.

The revision of this piece was much more extensive than I had anticipated. Much of the original was cut, and much of the remaining material was reordered, developed, re-orchestrated, and otherwise rewritten. The fast section was almost entirely recomposed. The resulting form is more closely related to a theme and variations than the ternary structure of the original, which I think better serves the title. The piece now is a series of ostinati, related to each other by melodic fragments, colors, and gestures; treating the fundamental ideas of the ostinato slightly differently with each iteration.