

Performance time: approximately 20 minutes

PROGRAM NOTE:

Upon completing my Third String Quartet and sketching a fourth, I received a commission from the Canadian artist Victor Schultz to compose a solo work for his violin recitals. Mr. Schultz suggested I employ fragments from an upcoming, and still pregnant, Concerto; I adopted his idea, but used instead some "droppings" from the two previous string quartets.

The resultant work uses only very small "twigs" of 2nds and 3rds—derived from a motto of my own name—as the genesis for all of the material. The six sections are therefore somewhat akin to variation form, each one branching out from a central trunk, "developing" as a sonata, but fully, sometimes adamantly, testing the dexterity of the soloist.

The Introduction (I) exposes the entire work's thematic kernels—"dipping-in" piece-meal, as an appetizer—and the successive movements each hone in on a single aspect: an expansion of the previously-heard material. The *Intrada* and the following two pieces are played *attacca*: the second deliberate and impassioned, the third more lyrical and delicate. The fourth is a *vivace*, but ephemeral, scherzo. The last two sections are likewise linked: the fifth, a quiet hymn written in memory of Anna Cholakian Schultz, Victor's wife, who died during this period, and the sixth, a vigorous *moto perpetuo* which is a truncated recapitulation of movements II and IV, and brings the sonata to a frenetic conclusion.

In keeping with its chamber-nature, the work is alternately declamatory, intimate, subtle, and decorative, and for me resembles—hence the title—the ornamental designs, the interlaced lines of a Gothic window tracery.

*BRANCHES* is approximately 20 minutes in duration and was completed in Fairport, New York in November of 1995. The sonata is dedicated to the Russian violin virtuoso Oleh Krysa, my colleague at the Eastman School of Music, who gave the premiere performance.

S.H.