

Notes to *Primordial*

The work can be considered a compendium of undercurrents—the flow of many things, including water, air, light, and life itself. The meaning of sound is one of the most difficult ideas for me as a composer and so rather than being specifically programmatic, the work is intended to bring about vague images—*shadows of meaning*—whose interpretations may vary widely. The following are just some of the ideas for the various sections as I both wrote them and as I reflected on the imaginative meaning of the music as a whole.

The beginning is a force of nature: volcanic and explosive; unrelenting and intense, but short-lived, foreshadowing the penultimate section later. In some ways the opening could be described as a fanfare calling the forces of nature—come be a part of us they emerge and explode in color, but with a designed holding back for what is to come. A series of sections are designed as an arch form. There is an overriding ambience that strives for lushness in a dissonant language. Several primary themes are assembled that will then return after a central playful section featuring woodwinds in pairs—a respite from the surrounding intensity. Two central themes that I highlight on either side of the arch are a rock-based theme, and the primordial theme. The first is soaring and conversational, and the second is brooding and dark, at least in its first presentations, though the intensity is fiercely dramatized through successive repetitions. The idea for the whole work is the primordial world with driving forces and strident violence, but with undercurrents of flowing water, soaring light, the organic life, but also the life of the planet itself, often with a dark and mysterious underpinning. The return of the main ideas comes with greater intensity, passion, and especially battle, emphasized by the competing instrumental choirs of the orchestra near the end. This section dissolves into the only slow music of the work—short and fragile—before bringing the original rock melody back to conclude the work in dramatic fashion.

Peter Fischer