Diane Thome

The Palaces of Memory

for large chamber ensemble or chamber orchestra and tape

Commissioned by the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble
In the 16th Century a Jesuit priest, Matteo Ricci, brought to China a wonderful memory system that had been used in the West since the days of ancient Greece. To improve their powers of retention, people would build memory palaces, huge imaginary buildings they kept inside their heads. "To everything that we wish to remember," wrote Ricci, "we should give an image; and to every one of these images we should assign a position where it can repose peacefully until we are ready to claim it by an act of memory."

What intrigued me about this story was the recognition that one of the powers which memory possesses for me is the capacity to evoke and capture images of feeling, being, and knowing and to crystallize these images into sonorous forms. As we move through the world of a musical work, our experience is transformed into memory.

The form of THE PALACES OF MEMORY is unfolded through polarities of sections and interludes. Initially it is the synthesized music which functions as accompaniment to or interlude between sections of live music. Increasingly, however, this role is reversed as the instrumental music becomes more and more the delineator of temporal space between solo sections of tape music. As the work proceeds, the boundaries between the two domains are gradually dissolved as they are intermeshed in a complex net of sonorous images created through the counterpoint of distinct textural and temporal strands.

Equipment used in the creation of the tape music included a Kurzweil 2000 digital synthesizer and a Peavy SX-stereo 16 bit sampler. The sections were digitally mixed, using the MTU Microsound Digital/Audio System. I wish to thank Robert Austin who was my collaborator in the production of the tape.

THE PALACES OF MEMORY was commissioned by the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble and premiered on March 29, 1993. It has been recorded on a Centaur CD by Gerhard Samuel and the Cincinnati Philharmonia.

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INSTRUMENTATION:

Flute/piccolo
Oboe
Clarinet in B Flat
Bassoon

Horn
Trumpet
Bass Trombone

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Sitting Bass

Harp
Piano
Percussion (timpani, xylophone,
glockenspiel, vibraphone,
snare drum, cymbal, triangle)

Score is written in C.
Note: Begin orchestral music approximately 1\textperiodcentered into tape section (tape music briefly thins out with repeating high string figure).
GLOCK.

Perc.

mf sempre dim. poco a poco

Piano

sub. mp

mf

Vio 1

sub. mp

mf

Vio 2

sub. mp

mf

Vio

mf

Vic

mf

Rit.

(TAPE FADES OUT)

Repeat this bar 3-3 times to fade on beat 2 with tape.
Note: Begin orchestral music approximately 43" into tape section, coinciding with 3rd solo string phrase (on tape).
Note: Begin orchestral music 33\textsuperscript{rd} into tape section.
breathe as necessary

cresc. poco a poco

cresc. poco a poco

simile

ped. simile

pp

mf

sub. p

sub. p