

CONCERTINO FOR OBOE (Note by the composer)

The original version of the *Sonata Breve* for solo oboe with piano accompaniment was commissioned by my friends Aaron Neustadt and Amelia Russo Neustadt in 2002 for Amelia's use and for the enjoyment of musicians and listeners everywhere. Amelia's father passed away while the work was being composed, and Amelia chose to dedicate it to him:

"This work is dedicated to the memory of my father, Jeremiah Russo, people person, proud and loving father, "fix-it" man, inventor, and painter; a kind, endearing gentleman with a fine sense of humor and fun who loved nature, human nature, his family, and art."

The first movement, "Shifting Masks," is a varied sonata form with several strongly contrasting themes and moods, now sunny, now dramatic and gloomy, now lyrical, now rhythmic and restless.

The elegiac character of the slow movement, "Lament," reflects deep feelings stirred by the loss of a loved one. This song form begins with a slow-treading introduction, soon joined by a long high note in the oboe. This introduces two closely related lyrical melodies, the second like a folk song. The middle section extends the first melody, building to a sharp, passionate outburst of grief in a brief, wild oboe cadenza, followed by a gentle varied reprise of the folk melody and a short coda.

The third movement, "Hushabye," is a simple, playful, almost childlike rondo in a lyrical American folk vein, whose recurring main rondo tune finally fades away gently to a safe, reassuring mood, like a lullaby played by a child's music box.

In 2009 Amelia and Aaron asked me to score the accompaniment for string orchestra with harp. She premiered it in 2010 with the Irvine Valley College Orchestra.