

## PROGRAM NOTE:

The concept of the simultaneous immanence and transcendence of God has posed a tantalizing theological and philosophical problem for many of the West's greatest minds. How can the God who created black holes also hold every blade of grass in his infinite love? How can that same God listen to every prayer from every human soul? And how can that eternally blameless and ineffable Energy deign to manifest Himself in human form – and in a human who experienced torture and death at the hands of beings created by his Father?

Strange Energy is a meditation upon these questions. The act of meditating is in part an act of recontextualization: of taking an idea, image, word – or even one's whole life – and trying to understand it by fundamentally questioning the way we have understood it in the past. We can perhaps approach the questions above by learning to fathom how different God's perspective on the universe is from ours, and how differences which seem so great to us – a black hole, a blade of grass – may not be for our Creator.

Thus, the guiding metaphor structuring Strange Energy is that of the recontextualization of the ordinary, but to do so in order to show the universal connectedness of all of us. The concert experience in the Western tradition serves in many ways to divide, not unite, and thus Strange Energy represents an attempt to undermine that sad reality. Thus, I have asked that the performers surround the audience, placing them literally in the center of the music-making experience. In addition, the performers not only play their instruments – skills which separate them from the listeners - but also whisper, whistle, and blow on glass bottles – activities that all of us can do. The close-up photographs of the flowers confront us with the intricate beauty that surrounds all of us daily, but which most of us take for granted – and which none of us (artists or not) can fully recreate.

Strange Energy is a quiet piece meant to allow for reflection and contemplation. The musical form of is heavily ritualized in that the same sequence of events happens four times, and though the pitches and timbres change, the duration of each stays the same. This results in a large-scale predictability that underscores the eternal nature of the piece's main question.

I am grateful for the collaboration of my late wife, photographer Laura Kjeldgaard Case, and my daughter, Alexandra Case.