

Melia Watras: Sonata for viola solo (2012)

World Premiere:

Melia Watras, viola; April 28, 2013, New York, NY

Duration: 13:27

Program Notes:

My Sonata for viola solo was written in 2012, with a desire to continue my work as a violist/composer, exploring emotional landscapes that are very difficult, or impossible to explain with words. The first movement is a contemplation of an inner and outward journey of a lone figure. At its core is a sense of yearning to find or return home. The movement opens in the midst of a tempest, and the second section begins with a quote from the refrain of the Appalachian folk song *O Death*. I was particularly influenced by Ralph Stanley's interpretation and soulful singing.

The idea of a timeless, positive force provided the impetus for the second movement, written in Mixolydian mode. *Ansioso*, the third movement, reflects on the desire to escape. Each section can be seen as a side of a cage, with the first segment providing the pitch material and order for the other three. When the sonata ends, we are left with the timeless force from movement 2; revealing the ever-present nature of its existence.

—Melia Watras