

*Five Songs of Passion* was written for the EastWind Ensemble and premiered during their performance at Weill Recital Hall in Carnegie Hall on March 10, 2005. The composition was undertaken with the support of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro School of Music.

I wanted to create a group of movements that communicated directly, immediately, without getting too complicated. In this respect, I was thinking about an earlier piece of mine entitled *Four Short Songs: a certain sadness*, which is one of the earliest pieces I wrote that continues to be performed today. In the *Four Short Songs*, each movement presents its main idea, expresses its musical essence and then ends without undergoing extensive development, much like the early musical gems of Anton Webern. So too are the *Five Songs of Passion* conceived, although they are decidedly not Webernesque in style. So, in a sense, the “passion” of the title refers not only to the moment-to-moment musical passion that (I hope) exists for the performers and listeners, but also to a kind of compositional passion that occurred in the making of the piece. These movements are written from my musical heart and soul.

Having four distinct instrumental colors immediately suggested to me a large-scale format for the piece. I made five movements, during which each instrument is given its own movement to act as leader or soloist. The “leaders” are heard in this order: piano, bassoon, clarinet and oboe. The fifth movement is a finale that is mostly *tutti* throughout. Each movement has its own simple, characteristic shape. Movement one is in two parts, fast and slow. The second movement begins in the bassoon’s highest register and descends gradually to its depths. The middle movement is a virtuosic statement by the clarinet that in the end comes apart at the seams. The oboe’s movement is the one true “song” of the collection, in standard song format (aaba). The *tutti* recalls the opening movement, and is again in two parts, the first shorter than the second.

**Mark Engebretson** (b. 1964) is Associate Professor of Composition and Electronic Music at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He is the recipient of the 2011 North Carolina Artist Fellowship in Composition, and has received major commissions from Harvard University’s Fromm Music Foundation and the Thomas S. Kenan Center for the Arts.

He is the founder of the UNCG New Music Festival, with performances at SEAMUS, ICMC, Wien Modern, Third Practice, Festival of New American Music, ISCM, BGSU Festival of New Music and Art, Carnegie Hall, Sala São Paulo, Argentina, Albania, Azerbaijan, Lithuania, Sweden, Norway, China, across America, and throughout Europe. Recordings of his compositions are available on the Albany, Innova, Lotus, and Capstone labels.

Dr. Engebretson taught composition at the University of Florida, music theory at the SUNY Fredonia and 20<sup>th</sup>-century music history at the Eastman School of Music. He studied at the University of Minnesota (graduating Summa cum Laude), the Conservatoire de Bordeaux (as a Fulbright Scholar), and Northwestern University, where he received the Doctor of Music degree. At Northwestern he studied composition with M. William Karlins, Pauline Oliveros, Marta Ptaszynska, Michael Pisaro, Stephen Syverud and Jay Alan Yim and saxophone with Frederick Hemke. His teachers in France were Michel Fuste-Lambezat and Jean-Marie Londeix.

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