

Program Note *by the Composer*

*Black Fugatos* was commissioned by the Halcyon Ensemble, a chamber group formed by members of the Cleveland Orchestra (Martha Aarons, Laura Okuniewski, Gino Raffaelli, Gary Stucka and Richard Weiner), and was premiered by the Ensemble in May 1983. The character of the music—dark, somber, contrapuntally imitative—is evoked by the title, which comes from a poem by Wallace Stevens.

Except at certain prominent moments, the score is unsynchronized: the players are rhythmically and metrically independent of each other, and the individual parts are coordinated by a system of visual cues. The entire piece is restricted to a very limited compass of pitch, register, and dynamics; and each instrument, either by its very nature or the manner in which it is played, is muted and suppressed. Within these confines, however, each performer is asked to play with great intensity.

*The black fugatos are strumming the blacknesses of black...*

*The thick strings stutter the finial gutturals.*

— Wallace Stevens, *Madame La Fleurie*