

Robert G. Patterson
***Pastorale* (1990)**

Program Entry

Pastorale (1990)
after “Tree with Blue Sky” by Odilon Redon

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Program Notes

This piece was originally performed with a suite of pieces by various composers written after paintings by Odilon Redon. The specific paintings were on display at the museum where the suite was performed, and a slide of each painting was projected on a screen during each composition. “Tree with Blue Sky” is a fairly prosaic little painting about the size of a piece of notebook paper, but it is more impressive when blown up by a slide projector. I had only seen the slide when I composed the *Pastorale*.

Although composed as part of a larger suite, the *Pastorale* is intended for performance by itself. What interests me about the painting is what is not shown. Paintings often serve as portals to magic kingdoms in mythology, and I imagined this painting to be such a one. I speculated that just over the hill a mystical hunt is in progress, and with enough desire the viewer/listener can leave this world behind and join it. The piece is divided into three sections delineated by long pauses. The first brief introduction is “The Yearning,” in which the viewer/listener expresses fervent desire to enter the other world. (Pressing need or “pure” desire is typically a requirement for enchanted portals.) The second, longer section is “The Puissant Call,” in which the call of the other world overpowers the viewer/listener. Finally comes “The Shimmering Azure,” in which the wild horn calls of the elfin huntsman reach this world from a great distance, transformed by the portal into quiet cries of longing for that other world.