

Notte Oscura for orchestra (2002, rev. 2004)

Notte Oscura is essentially the first interlude from my opera 'The Overcoat after Gogol', with some additional material from the first scene of act one. Gogol's eloquent description of what he calls St. Petersburg's most powerful foe, the Northern cold, lies at the heart of this piece:

This foe [...] our Northern cold [...] is said to be very wholesome. At the hour when the foreheads of even those who occupy exalted positions ache with the cold, and tears start to their eyes, the poor titular councillors are sometimes unprotected. Their only salvation lies in traversing as quickly as possible, in their thin little overcoats, five or six streets, and then warming their feet well in the porter's room, and so thawing all their talents and qualifications for official service, which had become frozen on the way".

Notte Oscura was written in response to a commission from Andrew Bennett with contributions from his friends to celebrate his 40th birthday.

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