

# COLD MOUNTAIN

## Seven *Shih* for Piano Trio

- I. The Call of the Mountain
- II. Ascending the Mountain
- III. Dance of the Night Creatures on the Mountain
- IV. Song of Nature
- V. A Higher Peak is Seen Through the Mist and Fog
- VI. Light and Silence
- VII. Return from the Summit

The inspiration for *Cold Mountain* comes from the writings of Han-shan, a Tang dynasty poet and nature mystic who probably lived in the late eighth and early ninth centuries. Han-shan (whose name is eponymous with that of his mountain retreat) wrote of the mysterious Cold Mountain where he lived and taught. Though not programmatic, the work examines a different aspect of Han-shan's art in each movement so that the trio functions both as absolute music and as a gesture of appreciation for the genius of Chinese art.

Two additional quotations by other Chinese artists inspired sections of *Cold Mountain*. The romantic melody in the middle of the sixth movement was inspired by the following:

*The atmosphere is misty on the eastern mountain;  
There is a palace situated on the top.*

And the following quotation inspired a number of motifs in the trio:

*I just learned beyond the five lofty summits  
There are other noble mountains.*

Like *Shih*, the traditional Chinese verse form, each movement is concise and evocative. Performers should keep in mind that this music does not dwell on overexplanation, but gestures towards its goal with economy and clarity.

*Cold Mountain* was commissioned by the Castalia Trio for their concert tour to China in May of 1998. The work is dedicated with gratitude, admiration and affection to the members of the Castalia Trio: James Lyon, violin; Kim Cook, violoncello; and Marylène Dosse, piano.

*Bruce Trinkley, State College, Pennsylvania, April 1998*

### PERFORMANCE NOTE

The seven movements should be played without a break. For the fifth movement, the violinist and cellist should, as far as possible, play into the body of the piano to generate sympathetic vibrations from the piano strings. This can be more easily accomplished by removing the lid from the piano.