

a study for voicing doubts

Many painters – most notably Francis Bacon – have produced series of satellite “studies” around one subject. While these works are complete and interesting in their own right, they also function as commentaries and footnotes on each other, and on the cluster of preoccupations they share, as much as on the “main” paintings for which they are nominally studies. Composers do this sort of thing less often, but it was with this idea of a study in mind that I set out to write a miniature “clarinet concerto” for Gretchen Dunsmore and 175 East in 2000.

The piece makes use of the contrasts between the generally light and lithe clarinet writing and the weightier interjections of the ensemble, and the repeated attempts of the soloist to escape the “gravitational pull” of the ensemble could be seen as one narrative strand in the work.