



Charles Argersinger

Program notes

## ... between Scylla and Charybdis

Written for Gerald Berthiaume's solo piano recital tour of the Middle East sponsored by the United States Information Agency, ... *between Scylla and Charybdis* was premiered in August 1993.

In classical mythology, Scylla was a sea nymph who was transformed into a sea monster; Charybdis, once a daughter of Gaea and Poseidon, became a whirlpool in Homer's *Odyssey*. The expression "... between Scylla and Charybdis" came to mean between two equally perilous alternatives, neither of which can be passed without encountering and probably falling victim to the other.

In the piece, swirling chromatic sextuplets and septuplets define the landscape of the work. There are occasional brief illusions of tonality in the distance which provide momentary relief from the otherwise dense chromatic patterns and clusters. Aural illusions of meter and polymeter are created, only to be shattered by adjacent rhythms which suggest that the listener revise his or her metric orientation.