

## ***Rooms of Growing Old***

### Program Notes:

One of my first composition teachers made a musical distinction that I have always found useful. "One kind of music," he said, "tells a story, relying on a journey from one end of the piece to the other. The other kind of music lives in a space, relying instead on an atmosphere that suspends the listener's sense of time rather than propelling it forward." *Rooms of Growing Old* (2012) belongs in the second category, and is fundamentally about creating a sense of place and a sense of space. When I began composing the piece, I was thinking of a musical fairy tale that, rather than telling an entire story, captures a single dream-like place in that story and remains there for its duration. The music moves between various "rooms," each of which contains its own set of musical decorations, colors, and patterns.

*Rooms of Growing Old* takes time to sit in each space, allowing these architectural details to set a mood. The character of the rooms depends not on driven melodies and harmonic motion, but on an impressionistic mixture of layers that give each room its distinct personality. The piece revisits most of the spaces as it moves through my imaginary house, noticing new details each time. When writing this score, I imagined that each of the rooms also had its own set of memories attached to it, and for this reason the composition is reflective, introverted, and nostalgic. For me, this is a composition about remembering and renewing, and finding a way for a past place to exist in present time.