

**By Various Means**  
for Clarinet Quartet

Robert Greenberg

Program Note

**By Various Means** was composed in 1983. The work is in three movements. The piece draws its title from the "various" variational techniques and forms employed in each movement. The composer begs the listeners' indulgence in differentiating between passacaglia and chaconne, a differentiation not generally recognized by our musicological brethren.

I. Passacaglia. The first movement, marked *espressivo*, is a quiet *mesto* written using strict serial techniques. The theme, a twelve tone row played first by the solo clarinet, appears twelve times in succession, always at the same transposition (on the same notes), but with different rhythms, varying accompaniment, and in different instruments.

II. Theme and Variations. The second movement sees the theme of the first movement extended into a longer, more rhapsodic melody. Following the theme itself, again played by the clarinet, there are five variations and a brief coda.

III. Chaconne. In the third movement, the twelve tone theme of the first movement is divided into three groups of four notes. These groups of four notes become the melodic and harmonic units from which the movement is built. The movement is characterized by a sea of undulating motives, out from which melodic lines rise and fall from view. Brief moments of synchrony mark the divisions between the four-note groups. The movement features a buzzing introduction and twelve successive sections. The sections 1 - 11 become increasingly compressed; section 11 consists solely of the twelve tone row in its original (first movement) form. A long *ritard* ensues. Section 12 recalls the slower, more introverted mood of the first movement before accelerating into a fast conclusion.