TOURBILLON
(Whirlwind)
David R. Gillingham

INSTRUMENTATION
Viola
Trumpet in Bb
Piano

PROGRAM NOTES

Tourbillon is French for “whirlwind.” When I was a young child growing up on a farm in Wisconsin, I remember being fascinated with what my brother and I called “small tornadoes.” These small “whirlwinds” actually frightened me as I thought that I might be lifted up by one and carried away. These meteorological events would start small, grow in size and move from side to side picking up debris and carrying it skyward. Sometimes several would form and sometimes they would converge. But these little “dust devils” would often dissipate just as quickly as they would form.

The structure of Tourbillon follows the random appearances of these whirlwinds, twisting and turning and carrying two basic motions throughout the piece: the first heard by the trumpet in measure 3 and the second in the piano at measure 8. The cello and violin displace the middle of the piece to a calm “summer breeze.” But then, the motion returns only to again dissipate at the end of the piece.

Percussional diminished seventh chords provide the harmonic basis for the piece along with augmented 9th chords for the secondary theme. The melodic material is derived mostly from harmonic scales.

COMPOSER BIO

David Gillingham (b. 1947) earned Bachelor and Master Degrees in Instrumental Music Education from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and the PhD in Music Theory/Composition from Michigan State University. Dr. Gillingham has an international reputation for the works he has written for band and percussion. Many of these works are now considered standards in the repertoire.

His numerous awards include the 1981 DeMeadin Award for Concerto for Bass Trombone and Wind Ensemble and the 1998 International Barlow Competition (Brigham Young University) for Jovenc. Last and Bolon. Dr. Gillingham’s works have been recorded by Alainier, Sony and Barroni and Costaia. His works are regularly performed by nationally renowned ensembles including the Prague Radio Orchestra, Cincinnati Conservatory of Music Wind Ensemble, The University of Georgia Bands, North Texas University Wind Ensemble, Michigan State University Wind Ensemble, Oklahoma State Wind Ensemble, University of Oklahoma Wind Ensemble, Florida State Wind Ensemble, University of Florida (Miami) Wind Ensemble, University of Illinois Symphonic Band, Illinois State Wind Symphony, University of Missouri Wind Ensemble, Indiana University Wind Ensemble and the University of Wisconsin Wind Ensemble. Also, nationally known artists, Fred Mills (Canadian Brass), Randall Hawus (Detroit Symphony) and Charles Viercan (Chicago Symphony Orchestra) have performed works by Dr. Gillingham.

Dr. Gillingham is a Professor of Music at Central Michigan University and the recipient of an Excellence in Teaching Award (1998), a Summer Fellowship (1991), a Research Profitship (1995), and recently, the President’s Research Investment Fund grant for his co-authorship of a proposal to establish an International Center for New Music at Central Michigan University. He is a member of ASCAP and has been receiving the ASCAP Standard Award for Composers of Concert Music since 1996.