

*Agitations*, composed in 1994, is a Mendelssohnian scherzo that goes haywire. Its thematic material is of quirky origin. My beleaguered Golden Retriever, Tracy, died ten years before this orchestral work was written. She had sustained me through Nixon, Watergate, and early Reagan. Patiently, she assumed the roles of Martha Mitchell, Dita Beard, E. Howard Hunt, J. Edgar Hoover and a string of other culprits as I issued a steady stream of accusations and beratings. She was the ideal therapist. In her sweet memory, I have translated some of my relatively supportive sayings to her into phrases that comprise the musical material of this work. The bulk of these are private and incomprehensible to others; one example--delivered by cellos and bassoons a few minutes into the piece-- will suffice: "Is this doggy some kind of a goat?"

I hasten to add that this is not program music but rather an abstract piece whose zoological aspects remain--I hope--well hidden.

--RW