

As in any concertante piece, one of my central concerns in *Concerto for Piano and Nine Instruments* was exploring the inherent possibilities for dramatic contrast and interplay between the ensemble and the soloist. The relationship between soloist and ensemble evokes in certain ways traditional concerto writing, yet its modernity is just as evident or more so. This concerto is formally set in two movements, but there are really three: a spacious, brooding, and atmospheric adagio, marked *lento* at the outset, provides an introduction and frame for the first movement's *allegro*. The piano introduces the adagio music unaccompanied; the ensemble enters playing *misterioso* in response, to match in its own way the piano's affect. After a time, the piano, in a series of phrases alternating with the ensemble, begins a gradual acceleration, transforming its character into an elegant, gracious, and highly ornamented elocution. The musical spirit and feeling of *vitesse* continue to increase and intensify, traversing a dancing passage for the ensemble, moving toward the movement's culmination, and leading to a return of the adagio, whereupon the music settles over the span of a long, quiet coda. Equipped with its own piano introduction in homophonic style, the second movement is shorter and more intense, forceful in its argument, and dizzy with syncopation. The concerto was composed for Charles Abramovic and Network for New Music in Philadelphia, who gave the World Premiere performances in 2007. To compose for a combination of instruments so wonderfully rich in timbral and contrapuntal possibilities was a marvelous opportunity to let loose my imagination in all directions,