

## MODERN TIMES Launched in Tampa!

Whether they be the subject of books, editorials, political discourse, or reflected in the lyrics of popular music, social commentaries appear in numerous forms. On November 6, 1995 MODERN TIMES by American composer/poet Howard J. Buss received its world premiere at the University of South Florida in Tampa. Scored for narrator, flute and percussion ensemble, it is a frequently provocative, at times mystical, and occasionally humorous work of modern classical music. MODERN TIMES addresses an eclectic range of subjects such as the tyranny of popular opinion, taxes, neglected children, team mascots, hope born from despair, the information glut, and "culture-laden technoglaze." The performers in the work's debut were narrator Jerald Reynolds, flutist Kim McCormick, and the University of South Florida Percussion Ensemble, Robert McCormick, director.

*"Savage urban tribes displace jungles  
tamed,  
Where xocs warehouse treasures  
as museums to art:  
I see it all in a teen's distracted gaze!"*  
- Excerpt, First Movement,  
MODERN TIMES

The tenor of Buss' social commentary is somewhere between that of the witty jeering of Mark Twain and the pithy insights of Sinclair Lewis. In his free verse one finds provocation without violence and intense anger without profanity.

*"Flour and sugar white,  
painted ladies in churches,  
Lipstick on baby-hatching corpses.  
Mouths to feed, flocks to fleece,  
songs to write, rights to wrong-  
I hear it all in ivory tower silence!"*  
- Excerpt, First Movement  
MODERN TIMES

The A.M.A., Bible-thumpers and bureaucrats are not bashed; nevertheless, it is doubtful that all such professionals will be

pleased. On the lighter side, humor is mixed with profundity in exploring such mundane daily experiences as grocery shopping and the sound of a giggling child. The juxtaposition of levity and gravity in MODERN TIMES is intended in itself to be symbolic. Buss explains, "I am simultaneously amused and troubled by the persist-

ence, and in some cases the magnification of human foibles in a culture which is increasingly relying upon technological 'advances' in an effort to solve its problems."

The music of MODERN TIMES transports the poetry into the dramatic and colorful sound-world of the flute and percussion orchestra. The result is a

unique and fresh view of the culture(s) in which we live.

Is a composition called "Modern Times" outdated as soon as

*"I pay my doctor when I am ill,  
shouldn't he be paid for keeping  
me well?"*

*"As mascots we honor the Seminoles,  
Braves, and Illini, the Indians,  
Redskins and Chiefs,*

*Who were vanquished by the Cowboys,  
Patriots, and Raiders,  
the Forty-Niners, Yankees and  
Saints -*

*Who will be the mascots of tomorrow?"*

- Excerpts, Fourth Movement,  
MODERN TIMES

it is written? Despite some references to specific 1990's phenomena, Buss says, "Any point in time was, is, and will be a 'modern time.' This work is really about all modern times."

-Brixton Publications

MODERN TIMES for narrator, flute, and percussion ensemble by Howard J. Buss is published by Brixton Publications; 4311 Braemar Ave.; Lakeland, FL 33813. Permission has been granted by Brixton Publications to reprint the above free verse excerpts.

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## DEADLINES

Have something for the newsletter?

Bi-monthly Florida Newsletter copy deadlines are as follows:

ISSUE	DEADLINE
Jan/Feb	December 1
March/April	February 1
May/June	April 1
July/Aug	June 1
Sept/Oct	August 1
Nov/Dec.	October 1