

THE TERROR OF KALAMAZOO

PROGRAM NOTES

THE TERROR OF KALAMAZOO WAS WRITTEN AS A COMMISSION FROM THE GAGIE SCHOOL FOR THEIR FALL BAND CONCERT ON NOVEMBER 11, 2004. THE COMMISSIONER, CONDUCTOR, AND FELLOW MUSIC COLLEAGUE, CHRIS RAMAERKERS, NEEDED A NEW PIECE FOR HIS RATHER UNUSUAL MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND INSTRUMENTATION. THE PIECE WAS INSPIRED BY A SHORT STORY THAT I WROTE FOR AN ENGLISH ASSIGNMENT. THE STORY IS AS FOLLOWS:

The terror of Kalamazoo lives in the woodland outskirts of solon street near the hustle and bustle on the corner of Howard and West Michigan avenue. The "terror" as many witnesses have called it, seems to be nocturnal. No one knows exactly where the terror resides. Many believe that the terror can blend in with the surroundings of his environment. Many contractors have wanted to build some much needed student housing in these woods, but all have changed their minds claiming that the woods emit a deathly aura. Contractors who have surveyed the woods made claims that they felt the woods were watching them, but the natives of this area know exactly what it is . . . The terror is always watching.

During the night hours the terror gathers the courage to leave the woods. He doesn't know exactly why he leaves the woods but he knows what he must do. Feed. He tramps slowly, hiding in the shadows, the only comfort that he finds in leaving the woods. The relentlessly narcissistic people in this part of town never notice the terror lurking in the shadows. His eyes are cold, unresponsive and emotionless.

The terror watches and waits for the right time. He lashes out at his victims with no remorse. The victims never see it coming and the others never see him leaving. The victims are never seen, mentioned, or heard from again. Their identity is erased. It is unknown whether this is a result of the power of the terror itself or the overwhelming denial from the local people.

As the terror drags its helpless victim back into the woods he stares into their eyes, wishing that his eyes would look as full of life as they once did. He thinks of a time when it was and weeps. As the feeding frenzy ensues; the birds stop chirping, the insects become quiet, and a cloud covers the shine of the moon. The terror is alone again.

