Ronald Bruce Smith

Tombeau (in memory of Donald Stenberg) for Violin and Piano (2006)

Commissioned by Charles Amirkhanian and Other Minds
Tombeau (2006) was written in memory of Donald Stenberg who passed away July 10, 2004. Don was a tenor, a professor of voice and, for a good number of years, chair of the voice department at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. His genuine warmth and gentleness affected everyone who knew him, as did his profound love and knowledge of music and the joy that it gave him.

This piece employs certain features associated with tombeaus from previous centuries. Such features include a descending stepwise figure, first presented in this piece diatonically and then later in a more chromatic context, that is used to symbolize grief, as well as an ascending figure which is meant to depict the soul’s suffering and its transcendence. Embedded in the work is a four note motive, D E-flat (or Es in German) B and G, that was derived from Don Stenberg’s name.

The piece was commissioned by Charles Amirkhanian and Other Minds and was written for Kate Stenberg.
40 calm, floating

a tempo ($= 80$)

44
These breath marks should be held slightly longer than usual but without breaking the line.

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gradually becoming tranquil

serene, meditative

rall

(let the piano fade out)

duration ca 5'30"