

## **SENSITIVE CHAOS (1995)**

for two-channel audio

by Hildegard Westerkamp

The German romantic writer Novalis called water *Das Sensible Chaos* (the sensitive chaos) and Theodor Schwenk wrote a book of the same name examining the formations of water and air. Both their work inspired me to explore water in its sonic musical shapes: water's surfaces and depths, its playfulness and its dangers, its frozen and moving shape; never static, always in motion, fragile, sensitive to the smallest environmental changes, at the same time powerful, dangerous, shaping its path into landscapes.

Water sounds tell us about landscape formations, about the "architecture" the water moves through (creeks and riverbeds), into (caves), over (ground surfaces) and against (seashores). And vice versa, the landscape formations produce water's many and varying voices and resonances. When we listen to water we can hear in its voices that it is a life-giving and life-preserving element of the earth. In *Sensitive Chaos* I did not only want to explore water sounds in detail but also the realm of experience they offer to the listener.

*Sensitive Chaos* was commissioned by the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra for the 1995 Winnipeg New Music Festival with the financial assistance of the Canada Council.

Length: 12:05