

# ROBERT SIROTA

COMPOSER

## PROGRAM NOTES

### **ASSIMILATIONS for Violin, Clarinet, Cello and Piano (2010)**

Program note by Robert Sirota:

On the surface it would appear that I am the most "assimilated" of Jews.

My paternal grandparents left the shtetl almost a century ago: my maternal grandparents were already in America well before that. I have been married to a Christian woman for forty years, and I myself converted to Christianity some twenty-three years ago. I embrace my Christian faith with conviction and enthusiasm.

So why the deep pull back to a past about which I know very little, and from which I essentially walked away?

While my Jewishness is defined by many things (culture, food, mysticism, among others), one strong personality trait that I have always had is a distinctly Jewish sense of urgency - of preparedness. Psychologically, my bags are always packed. As I grow older, I realize that I have always been seeking to escape the cattle cars, to stay one step ahead of the persecutors, all of my life. While this makes me very effective in a crisis, it also haunts my sleep, and makes a mockery of my so-called assimilation.

This piece is an attempt to express the poignant beauty and the sadness linking the world of my heritage with the person I have become.