

**Music Alive: New Partnerships**  
A Residency Program of  
Meet The Composer and the League of American Orchestras

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**Morbidity and Mortality Report (2002)**

Gordon Beeferman  
Program Notes

The Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report issued by the Centers for Disease Control contains "data on ... infectious and chronic diseases, environmental hazards, natural or human-generated disasters, occupational diseases and injuries, and intentional and unintentional injuries."

Because the past few years have been a particularly frightening and sickening time in our world, I found myself needing to reflect on some of these "diseases ... disasters ... and injuries" in my work.

This piece is a musical/personal Report. In four short movements, it is simply a litany, or list, of Morbidities and Mortalities.

According to Webster's, *cutaneous* means "of, on, or relating to the skin." In this context, I think of the fear of disease - microbes, spores, rashes - an itchy, uncomfortable, paranoiac state.

The Russian nuclear submarine *Kursk* sank in August 2000 in the Barents Sea after unexplained explosions rocked the vessel. All 118 sailors aboard died - either killed instantly by the blasts or slowly from asphyxiation and hypothermia.

The third movement, subtitled "Fight Scene," is a study in violent clashes, both formal and cinematic. The music is aggressive, destructive and strident, yet exhilarating as it approaches its final "duel."

"Grandmother in the Bed" tries to comprehend the experience of approaching death. Here I imagine nostalgia, confusion, pain and resignation.

As the movement titles indicate, this piece takes us through emotional territory that is creepy, violent and sad. In more concrete terms, the first moment is about timbre, the second movement about texture, the third about rhythm and the fourth about melody. Throughout the piece I frequently use microtonal intervals, specifically sixth- and thirddtones (in addition to conventional half- and whole-tones), to expand and enrich the melodic and harmonic palette.

"Morbidity and Mortality Report" was commissioned by the BMI Foundation / Carlos Surinach Fund for the Albany Symphony.

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To inquire about a residency, please contact:  
Mary Madigan, Director of Programs, Meet The Composer  
[mmadigan@meetthecomposer.org](mailto:mmadigan@meetthecomposer.org)