

*Queen of Hearts*, my Piano Trio #1, was written for the Claremont Trio in 2017 on commission from Chamber Music Northwest, David Shifrin, artistic director. Cast in a variation form that flows without pause in a single fourteen-minute trajectory, the work alternates a chaconne (a repeating pattern in the bass) with a lyrical melody. These two elements unfold as a dialectical pair, at first separate and later layered together. At the heart of this work is the idea of resilience. A life fully lived may see challenges that can seem insurmountable. The work's variation structure, by representing tenaciousness and ingenuity continuously finding new ways to respond ultimately reveals an inner strength and an emotional core that hold steadfast and unshaken no matter how they are tested. The title *Queen of Hearts* is a whimsical reference to the "mother of higher love" card in a deck of playing cards. This card symbolizes resilience, magnetism, nobility, empathy, decorum, a flair for the dramatic, and a distinctly feminine power.

- Kati Agócs, 2021