

Bloomsburg University Community Orchestra

Saturday, April 9, 2022

Epic Overture

The “Epic Overture” was written during the summer of 2021 when the world was still sort of “shut down”. I was feeling very creative and inspired by nature and by other music that I had been listening to at that time. I felt as though quarantine had given me even more of a reason to be creative and make something new and to challenge myself along with that.

The overture was my largest composition to date at that point. Both in length, and in ensemble size. I wanted to write a piece for an orchestra for so long but every time I would go to write it, I would lose inspiration about halfway through. This time, it did not stop. I obsessed over this piece until it was done. Taking frequent walks every day, thinking of the next ideas I could put into the work. I hope you enjoy this piece as much as I enjoyed working on it! Thank you to the Bloomsburg University Community Orchestra and Dr. David Tedford for being willing to work on this and premiere it!

-Nick McWilliams

Ancient Echoes of Time

Beginning at the brilliant and dramatic dawn of civilization, time has been moving forward like an endless river, steadily flowing in its course through the ages. Winding through mountains, valleys, and landscapes, it carves a path and leaves behind a lasting impression – a record, a map a history – charting the rich tapestry of life.

And as the chronicle of time unfolds, voices from the past – some familiar, some unknown – speak to us, adding their wisdom, their guidance, and placing their imprint on the epoch journey of humankind. So, at last, it is our turn to seize this movement in time, adding our voices to theirs, bringing the light that will guide generations to come on their way forward.

Introduction & Allegro

Introduction and Allegro for String Orchestra

(1973; revised and recomposed 2011)

Initially I composed this work during my student years at Christopher Columbus High School in the Bronx, with the hopes of having it performed by the school's orchestra. Suffice it to say, I looked at the piece years later and felt that it was not compositionally or melodically strong enough to be presented, and the original version was, like several of my student compositions, destroyed.

Decades later, I decided to re-write the work for Megan Gugliotta and the Maple Hill Elementary School String Orchestra in Middletown, New York, eager to bring a mature aspect to the work's compositional structure while retaining its youthful melodic zeal.

Opening in the key of D minor, the four-note motif (D-F-G-A) is rhythmically permuted against a series of melodic fragments that is developed and transfigured during the playful allegro section.

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Introduction and Allegro was premiered on 19 February 2017 in Scottsdale, Arizona with Warren Cohen conducting the MusicaNova Orchestra.

-Kevin Scott

Symphony No. 3 in D Major

Schubert composed this symphony between May 24 and July 19, 1815. Although the symphony was probably performed privately that year, the first public performance did not take place until February 19, 1881, in London.

1815 was the most productive year of Schubert's life. He was pulling double duty as a teacher, who filled his free time writing music that would one day make him famous. Schubert's off hours produced an extraordinary amount of music that year: a string quartet; two piano sonatas; a set of variations on an original theme; dances for keyboard; two masses and considerable miscellaneous choral music; four operas – including *Claudien von Villa Bella*, which lost its second and third acts when the servants of a friend, Josef Hüttenbrenner, used the manuscript to start fires during the winter of 1848; 145 songs, including *Erlkönig*, long considered his greatest; and this D major symphony. Tapping into his youthful energy, Schubert was only eighteen; he must have been writing at lightning speed and often well into the night. Much of it is impressive regardless of the circumstances, and some of the songs are among his finest works – they reveal a vivid imagination and strong musical ability to be squashed by the rigor of instructing reluctant students.

History is filled with stories of fine music written at astonishing speed, but Schubert often did his best work in great haste – he once jotted down a song, fully formed, on the back of a café menu. The third symphony is such an example. The manuscript tells us he began this symphony on May 24, the same day he wrote a piece for female chorus and horns. (He had finished a one-act singspiel five days earlier.) In the next few days, he wrote several more choral works and a number of songs; he completed the slow introduction and first few pages of the Allegro section, and then put the score aside. He returned to the Allegro on July 11. The symphony was completed eight days later.

We might assume that Schubert belonged to an orchestra that regularly played the symphonies of Haydn and Mozart, considering the imitation of style in this symphony. We also notice a distinctive way with traditional forms – any composer capable of writing one of the most extraordinary songs in the literature, *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, at the age of seventeen had found his own voice at an early age. By the time he wrote that song in 1814, Schubert had finished his first symphony. And by the time he finished this one, his third, less than a year later, Schubert had written what many composers would gladly claim as a life's work.

The first movement begins with a slow introduction. The manuscript shows that Schubert struggled with the fun and energetic clarinet theme that launches the Allegro con brio, writing it first for oboe and horns, and then for strings before finding the right sound. The movement itself is fluent and carefree; the coda returns to the ascending scales of the introduction. Schubert originally planned to write an adagio for the second movement – he even sketched a theme in this tempo, but he settled on a fresh and unassuming allegretto instead. The third movement is a forceful minuet that emphasizes the offbeat, instead of the strong downbeat. The finale, marked presto vivace, begins pianissimo and then explodes with energy.

-compiled and edited by David Tedford