RICE UNIVERSITY

Songs of Arion for symphony orchestra (2010)

by

Christopher Goddard

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE Master of Music

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Songs of Arion

for orchestra

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ABSTRACT

“Songs of Arion”

Gustav Mahler in memoriam

for symphony orchestra (2010)

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This work for symphony orchestra is written in memory of the composer Gustav Mahler (1860-1911), in honor of both the 150th anniversary of his birth and the approaching 100th anniversary of his death. As such, it traces his creative development—in an extremely condensed fashion—through veiled references to his first through his last symphonic utterance. My piece takes the form of a loose palindrome: two larger, gradually intensifying sections flank a shorter middle section that represents an immense orchestral swell. The principal dramatic impetus comes from the conflict between the obsessive recurrence of a single pitch and the music’s repeated attempts to achieve freedom from it; a conflict of linearity vs. circularity, propulsion vs. stasis. Ultimately the work takes the shape of a kaleidoscope, with textures and patterns in constant flux around a single, unchanging pitch at its center.

The piece utilizes a standard orchestral instrumentation: 3 flutes, 3 oboes, 3 clarinets, 3 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, 3 percussion, harp, piano/celeste, and strings.
Songs of Arion (2010) for orchestra

Piccolo
2 Flutes
3 Oboes (3. doubling English horn)
3 B-flat clarinets (2. doubling E-flat clarinet, 3. doubling bass clarinet)
3 Bassoons (3. doubling contrabassoon)

4 Horns in F
3 Trumpets in C
3 Trombones
Tuba

Timpani: 3 drums, pitched

\[\text{\small \symbol{92}}\text{\small \symbol{92}}\text{\small \symbol{92}}\text{\small \symbol{92}}\]

Percussion:

1. glockenspiel, xylophone, vibraphone, small crash cymbals, snare drum, large tam-tam
2. glockenspiel, small triangle, sizzle cymbal, tambourine, snare drum, 4 toms (low to high), bass drum
3. crotales, small triangle, 3 suspended cymbals (small-medium-large), snare drum

Toms notation is as follows:

\[\text{\small \symbol{92}}\text{\small \symbol{92}}\text{\small \symbol{92}}\text{\small \symbol{92}}\]

Three suspended cymbals notation as follows:

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There is only one pitch employed for the crotales:

\[\text{\small \symbol{92}}\text{\small \symbol{92}}\text{\small \symbol{92}}\]

Harp
Keyboard (piano and celeste)

Strings

* xylophone, crotales and celeste sound up 1 octave, glockenspiel sounds up 2 octaves
** one glockenspiel may be used interchangeably between percussion players 1 and 2, if placed appropriately
*** piano and celeste should be placed at 90° angle to one another to facilitate quick interchange between them

Duration: ca. 8’00”

Score is notated in C
This work for symphony orchestra is written in memory of the composer Gustav Mahler (1860-1911), in honor of both the 150th anniversary of his birth and the approaching 100th anniversary of his death. As such, it traces his creative development – in an extremely condensed fashion - through veiled references to his first through his last symphonic utterance. My piece takes the form of a loose palindrome: two larger, gradually intensifying sections flank a shorter middle section that represents an immense orchestral swell. The principal dramatic impetus comes from the conflict between the obsessive recurrence of a single pitch and the music’s repeated attempts to achieve freedom from it; a conflict of linearity vs. circularity, propulsion vs. stasis. Ultimately the work takes the shape of a kaleidoscope, with textures and patterns in constant flux around a single, unchanging pitch at its center.
molto ritard.
molto ritard.