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# SCHOLARLY PROGRAM NOTES OF SELECTED WORKS BY LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN, RICHARD WAGNER, AND JAMES STEPHENSON III

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## CLOSING REMARKS

In selecting music for this program, the works had instrumentation that fit with our ensemble, the Southern Illinois Sinfonietta, yet covering three major periods of music over just a little more than the past couple of centuries. As composers write more and more for a chamber ensemble like the musicians I have worked with to carry out this performance, it becomes more and more idiomatic for conductors like myself to explore their other compositions for orchestra, both small and large. Having performed my recital with musicians from both the within the Southern Illinois University Carbondale School of Music core and from the outside, this entire community has helped shaped my studies & my work as a graduate student here at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, bringing it all to a glorious end.

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by  
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A Research Paper  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
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RESEARCH APPROVAL

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A Research Paper Submitted in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

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Approved by:

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Graduate School  
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April 13, 2017

AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

JEFFREY CHOW, for the Master of Music degree in MUSIC, presented on APRIL 13, 2017, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: SCHOLARLY PROGRAM NOTES OF SELECTED WORKS BY LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN, RICHARD WAGNER, AND JAMES STEPHENSON III

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Edward Benyas

This document is a compilation of biographical and musical information that serves to inform the audience about the music presented at the graduate recital of Mr. Jeffrey Chow. The works discussed will include Ludwig van Beethoven's *Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 36* (1801-02), Richard Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll, WWV 103* (1870), and James Stephenson III's *Celebration Overture* (1999). I have studied these in my fourth and final semester here during my graduate studies at the Southern Illinois University of Carbondale, Illinois, and performed them on my graduation recital on March 5, 2017.

The purpose of this document is to provide a better understanding of the repertoire to be performed, including information about the lives and experiences of the composers, and the situations in which these works were composed, all to better serve the listener's understanding of these works as they are heard. In studying and performing these works, various trends in the development of orchestration, melody, and harmony identify the individuality and creativity in each of these composers.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and give great gratitude to my Graduate Faculty Committee chairman, orchestral conducting professor, and research advisor Edward Miles Benyas, for helping coach and guide me in pursuit of more concrete destinations in my musical life and in showing me there are endless opportunities and enjoyment to be had in the world of classical music. The impact of mind-blowing discoveries through hard and diligent work in the disciplines of score analysis and score marking bears many fruit, and enables us all to seek out answers to many things that are connected which we may have not realized ourselves in the beginning. Also, my sincere gratitude to Michael Barta for expanding my technique on playing the violin and viola, thereby allowing me to thoroughly enjoy my time in your studio every week this past year. This has been an interesting 16 months and though my life as a graduate student at the College of Liberal Arts here at SIUC is coming to an end, I feel fortunate enough to have been pursuing this Master of Music degree. Being away from school for so long, I have struggled, but ultimately conquered, and I certainly would not have done so without the love and support from my parents, Keith and Sheena Chow and my brother, Justin. They made sure I would push through to understand, no matter how many times I tried and failed. Though this school may not share the same prestige as some of the other “household-named” schools out there may have, the learning environment is highly-observed and the professors here see and recognize their students by names, and not by numbers; I hope my friends do get a chance to share this wonderful gift of education out at this university and experience the wonders of orchestral conducting. Last, but not least, I’d also like to thank the members of this year’s Southern Illinois Sinfonietta: Michael Barta, Matthew Grammer, Brittney Washam, Gabriela Benyas, and Keyan Rahimi, Herson Perez, Shantay Guyton, Kenneth Wollberg, Joshua Cheng, Ryan Hesketh, Lorenzo Riley, Gina

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## INTRODUCTION

The basis of this programme features music from three musical sub-genres under the umbrella of classical music: *Classical*, *Romantic*, and, barely, *20<sup>th</sup> Century* and is programmed in typical fashion of the standard concert order: concert overture, showpiece and symphony, with an intermission between the latter two works. These pieces are important to my repertoire because they explore a wide range of emotions and moods: from pure tranquility to the robust, and from destitute solemnness to exuberant triumph. The ensemble which I assembled to perform these works, the Southern Illinois Sinfonietta, features 5 first violins, 6 second violins, 3 violas, 4 cellos, and 2 double basses – a string section capable of delivering a rendition of these works, under my guidance, with attention to detail and careful acoustic balance.

Orchestral music, as featured in my programme, had seen unprecedented growth in styles over the past 3 centuries. With the advent of virtuosic handling of instruments, adaptations of new functions, exploration of new techniques, combined with the changes in styles of composition, symphonic repertoire would expand and their music would represent a larger myriad of thoughts, expressions, and ideals as we can see here in these three works. Despite these progressions, the works' forms are distinct and melodies and harmonies largely diatonic and chromatic.

This paper will demonstrate a thorough understanding of the music and the relation of the music within the pieces themselves, backed by a detailed analysis and historical research. The goal of my research aims to assist future performances of these pieces with a strong grasp on its practical aspects.

## CHAPTER 1

### LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN'S *SYMPHONY NO. 2 IN D MAJOR, OP. 36*

Beethoven was probably born on December 16 (he was baptized on the 17<sup>th</sup>), 1770 in Bonn, the capital city of what was then known as the Electorate of Cologne, which belonged to the Holy Roman Empire. He died on March 26, 1827 in Vienna of the former Austrian Empire. Of the central genres of Beethoven's long career – string quartets, keyboard chamber music, and symphonies – it was in the earlier works written for piano from the 1790s that he was able to attain a masterful handling of the form and originality of his compositions. In the few years leading up to the composition of the Second Symphony, he had composed the first two piano concertos, and chamber music such as the cello and violin sonatas of Op. 5 and Op. 12, string trios, and garnered public success with his Septet and First Symphony. Around the same time, the first implications of his impending deafness appeared, a torture he would combat for the rest of his life. and that this inner torture was one he would have to combat for the rest of his life. Symphony No. 2 in D Major was written by Beethoven in the summer and fall of 1802 and premiered on April 5, 1803, at an all-Beethoven concert given at the Theater an der Wien in Vienna; the Third Piano Concerto and the oratorio *Christ on the Mount of Olives* were also performed that day. This symphony is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets in A, two bassoons, two horns in D, two trumpets in D, timpani and strings. In the first movement, the two horns and two trumpets are in D and the timpani is tuned to D and A. The second movement sees the trumpets and timpani drop out and the horns in E. The third and fourth movements features an instrumentation exactly the same with that of the first movement.

The symphony has four movements: I. *Adagio molto – Allegro con brio*, II. *Larghetto*, III. *Scherzo; Trio*, IV. *Allegro molto*

He wrote that “For a while now I have been gaining more than ever in physical strength and in mental strength, too,” and “Every day I come closer to my goal, which I can sense but don’t know how to describe.” The efforts made to compose this symphony are realized at how busy a schedule he had as he “...live[s] only in [my] notes, and with one work barely finished, the other is already started; the way I now write I often find myself working on three, four things at once”, wrote he to another friend.

For the performance, I have also taken my own approach and made a large number of suggestions for different nuances, gestures, dynamics ways of phrasing in keeping consistency with the size of our ensemble. In the introduction of *Adagio molto; Allegro con brio*, I have placed a *diminuendo* on the 3<sup>rd</sup> beat of m. 7, arriving *mp* into the downbeat of m. 8. Twice again, a *diminuendo* occurs on mm. 9 and 10. At m. 14, make sure the second violins play the *sfp* with as much conviction on beat 1.5, but not louder than the first violins on beat 1 at m. 14. The entrances of the scattered woodwinds from mm. 17-22 should be played *mp* instead of *p*. At m. 34, at the start of the exposition section, the first and second violins should start with two upbows, *spiccato*. At m. 61, the first instance of *ff* is encountered in this fast-moving section of the movement, so it should be played louder than the passage at m. 47. At mm. 65-68, the French horn and trumpet should play from *sf* with a *diminuendo* into next measure to *mf*, and *crescendo* back to *sf*, *diminuendo* for one bar, and then *crescendo* again to m. 69. At m. 71, the oboes and violin II have *sf* on beat 2 and should be played just as strong as violin I’s *sf* on beat 1 (both to be played from the string, and not off of it). At m. 95, the brass and timpani should play *mf* and *crescendo* into the next measure instead of playing *sf* on the downbeat. At m. 101, for the woodwinds and brass, mark the half-note with *tenuto* bar above, followed by a *crescendo* above that with a breath mark into the rest. For mm. 148 and 149, woodwinds, should play *marcato* on

their entrance, at mm. 154-157, make sure the brass entrances on the alternating *sf* are equally attacked and sustained, at m. 180 and 181, and the violins should play these notes at the tip, at mm. 198, 200, and 202, the flutes should play the *sf* C#6 note *marcato*, and shortly after in m. 211, the last eighth note in the second violin part should be played down bow as a quaver, not a semiquaver as marked, so that the ascending *diminuendo* scale is begun and played on a down bow into the recapitulation on two up bows just like the way the theme was played in the exposition. In mm. 233-240, like mm. 65-68, brass should *diminuendo* for one bar, *crescendo* the next and repeat this until *sf* in m. 241. The trumpets, at m. 243, play the *sf* note *marcato*. Again, like in m. 101, the woodwinds and horns at m. 273 should mark the half-note with *legato* bar above, followed by a *crescendo* and a breath mark into the rest; the absence of any activity in the trumpets and timpani in mm. 269 and 273 compared to mm. 97 and 101 is due to the fact that valveless brass instruments could only play the notes of the harmonic series. At m. 335, the brass ought to play *crescendo* into the 4-3 suspension over the next couple of measures. At the penultimate measure of the movement, at m. 359 *tutti tenuto* should be called for on the quarter-notes.

In *Larghetto*, the *crescendo* starting at m. 5 should go from *p* into *mf* right before the arrival of m. 7, the violas should play *staccato* from mm. 47 to 55, at m. 52, the first violins should play this embellished 3-bar passage *flautando*, at m. 59, the *f* here should *diminuendo* into the *p.*, at m. 66, *tutti* should be played *sf diminuendo* into the next bar, at m. 106, the oboes and bassoons should *crescendo* to *mf* in next bar, at m. 131, the oboes and bassoons should place accents on both notes on beat 3 and the same should be done with the cellos and basses on both notes on beat 3 in the following bar at m. 132. At m. 152, *tutti* should play *sff* instead of *sf*, at m. 174, bassoons should play *marcato sf* on entrance, at m. 191, clarinet I and bassoon I should play

*tenuto* on beat 2, at m. 223, the *f* here should *diminuendo* into the *p* as before in m. 59, and as before in m. 66 at m. 230, *diminuendo* to next bar, and at mm. 265, 267, 269, 270, and 271, flute I should *diminuendo* throughout these short lines.

In *Scherzo; Trio: Allegro*, from mm. 29-33, the bassoon should play *poco crescendo* all the way through, from mm. 85-88, oboes and bassoons should play *crescendo* for two bars and then play *diminuendo* to beat 1 of m. 88. From mm. 110-111, oboes play *crescendo* for one bar and then *diminuendo* for one bar.

In *Allegro molto*, from mm. 50-51, for violin I, do not *diminuendo*, mm. 64 to 65, tie the two A's together for oboe I, mm. 98-106, place the tip of the bow on the violin and play from there, and at mm. 181 and 183, change the dynamics from *pp* to *mp* in violin I.

The music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart had been long-served as formal models for many Beethoven's works from his Bonn period and first decade in Vienna. The first movement of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 36* is almost reminiscent of the opening movement to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Symphony No. 38 in D Major, K. 504* "Prague" for they both share an expansive slow introduction followed by a spry, fast-moving section. Although there is little certainty as to whether Beethoven referred to Mozart's work or even knew of its existence, the latter's opening is 14 measures longer than Beethoven's introduction. However, the arpeggio is an important genetic element for the whole of Beethoven's Second Symphony and is not true for the former.

The first movement has a thirty-three measure *Adagio molto* introduction that introduces the themes and motives heard later on in this movement, such as the scalar lines in the strings are heard later in the woodwinds, which climax in *tutti*. The piece opens with a *tutti fortissimo* played by the orchestra on unison D, which is followed by oblique motion in the oboes and

bassoons, outlining the tonic key of D major and eventually finishing with a half cadence on a secondary dominant chord into a minor 6<sup>th</sup> chord and back down to a dominant; this motive is repeated and presented in various transpositions throughout the introduction and ultimately becomes a prominent motive in the *Allegro* section. Of note, as with the introduction in his *Symphony No. 1 in C Major, Op. 21* of 1800, there is rhythmic acceleration of a repeated-note pattern whose purpose is to propel the *Allegro* themes: in part 1 (m. 1) of this introduction, this pattern consists of an upbeat thirty-second note followed by a quarter note with fermata and happens again on m. 5 without the fermata on the quarter note. In part 2 (m. 8), repeated eighth notes are presented by the horns and strings, part 3 (m. 12) sees repeated sixteenth notes, triplet sixteenths on m. 17, and once again on the dominant pedal at the end of the introduction at m. 33, in which the acceleration of the rhythms culminate into the repeated eighth notes in violins I and II at the beginning of the *Allegro con brio*. Beethoven also establishes subtle connections between contrasting sections by way of enharmonics in the music like A-sharp in the bass in m. 9 and B-flat in the bass in m. 12. The former is marked *fortepiano* and the latter is marked *sforzando* which share a similar dynamic value between them.

The first theme of the exposition appears and grows organically out of the introduction and is based on a D major arpeggio played in the middle strings followed by a fourteen-bar passage (which is not included later in the recapitulation) with accents passed around the orchestra on the weak beats.



Figure 1-1: Beethoven, *Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 36: I. Adagio molto; Allegro con brio*, mm. 34-38.

The next 12 bars are a modulating bridge with charging chromatic phrases which are now firmly planted in the dominant key. This second theme, regal-like in essence, is also based on the arpeggio; a bridge of alternating strings, followed by descending *tuttis* follow into a codetta consisting of descending of arpeggios leading to a closed cadence.

From here, the development section echoes a bit of the exposition as imitation between the low and high strings modulate before the arrival of a chromatic descending bass line. When it seems like the line has nowhere to go, Beethoven reinforces the momentary tension by adding the bassoon to the low strings into an open cadence before the regal motif from theme 2 in the exposition is heard once again, this time in the subdominant key of G Major. A sequence of this appears in fragments and subsequently, the bridge motif leads the music to *tuttis*, where, the *sforzandos* can be heard falling on different beats within the measures creating repeated unusual stresses, and finally ending on an open cadence, welcoming the recapitulation.

The first theme returns as the recapitulation begins, however, with added ornamentations played by flute I. With the absence of the fourteen-bar passage, Beethoven adds a coda here combining and twisting motifs heard throughout the movement up until here. The sequence begins with descending woodwinds, followed by dialogue between this material and theme 1, then more dialogue with *tuttis*, and with an ominous chromatic rise in the cellos, basses, and

bassoons. The coda brings the music to an energized variation of the bridge before ending up in a *tutti* playing the theme 1 motive, thus ending the first movement.

The second movement, *Larghetto*, like the first, is also composed within the framework of sonata form. The melody played by the strings at the beginning of the exposition is one of sheer lyricism and refined beauty which is joined by the clarinets and bassoons at m. 9; a new phrase in the strings is presented at m. 17, which again, is shortly joined by the clarinets and bassoons at m. 25. At m. 33, the bridge sees a duet between the clarinets and bassoons and the violins with a modulation into the dominant key firmly planted at m. 48, which extends into another melody in the strings at m. 55, later joined by the winds at m. 62. From here, a new motif occurs from here with the sixteenth notes going into the downbeat of m. 67. The 3-note descent of these notes carries the music into the downbeat of m. 75, which meets a fanfare-like chord answered by spritely repeated thirty-second notes, although *pp*, and ending at the arrival of the cadence section at m. 82.



Figure 1-2: Beethoven, *Larghetto*, mm. 82-84, Ballet theme

Here, this “ballet” part, which is actually a variation of the theme heard at m. 75, is introduced by unison second violins and cellos, and is shortly joined by a syncopated dialogue between strings and horns at m. 90 until m. 96, where descending strings bring the exposition to a close. In the development section, at m. 100, the melody of the first theme returns but in the minor key. At

mm. 109 and 119, the 3-note descending motif alternates with closed cadences here, which leads into a sequencing of the motif of the first theme driven by octave C's in the second violins and violas. In m. 140, a rising sequence of the melody heard in m. 55 leads to pulsating chords arpeggiated, ultimately modulating the music back into the home key of A major. The recapitulation maintains the same shape and form until the second theme returns at m. 230, where the oboe takes over in playing 3-note descending motif instead of the clarinets as heard in m. 68. The coda at m. 264 features a fragmented first theme playing against rising arpeggios in flute I and the whole movement ends *tutti* on final tonic chords.

In the third movement, *Scherzo*, the 3-note motif heard in the second movement begins passing itself around the orchestra, which modulates nine bars later into m. 16, where an idiosyncratic phrase with upbeat accents brings the music back the home key of D major. At m. 47, a variation of the main theme leads into a climatic phrase brought upon by the lines of oboe I and bassoon I, played at the octaves at m. 59.

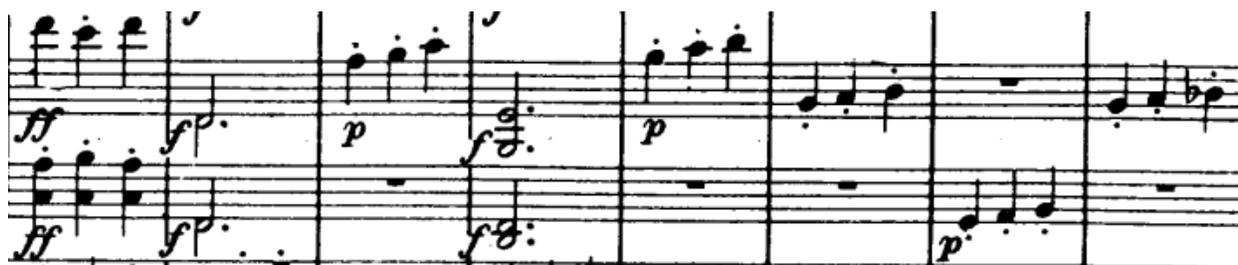


Figure 1-3: Beethoven, *Scherzo: Allegro*, mm. 46-53

In the *Trio*, at m. 85, the oboes and bassoons slow things down, but only for a brief moment before the strings harshly disturb the tranquility in F-sharp major, whereupon the woodwinds followed by strings come back in and brings this section to a closed cadence.

Like the first and second movements of this symphony, the fourth and final movement, *Allegro molto*, is composed in sonata form. The opening theme is very light and caricatural, and

is carried on by the rising accented phrases beginning at m. 12 which lead to an open cadence where the bridge begins. The flowing lines begin to contrast here at m. 26, modulating into the second theme at m. 52, where the long, descending woodwind lines are joined by fast first violins, entering strong on the offbeat. A variation of this theme in the minor key presents itself at m. 68 with the first oboe and first bassoon playing a new phrase shortly joined by flute I at m. 80. With its roots coming from the second theme of this movement, this cadential section closes with an extended dominant seventh chord, where Beethoven uses more joyous elements and accents to this movement before the arrival of the development at m. 108. The opening theme this time leads into a gloomy D minor where the drama of the music is felt both in the foreground and later maintained in the background at m. 139, where it all concludes in unison descents in the strings, quickly followed by the woodwinds, less the clarinets. From here, the modulation back into D major is loud and boisterous until the music is met with two pauses: one at m. 182 and one at m. 184. The next measure represents the recapitulation and the one big change here is that at the second theme, which begins on m. 236, the horns introduce the melody instead of clarinet I and bassoon I and when the variation in the minor returns at m. 252, the timpani introduces a quiet, yet ominous low A for five measures. At m. 294, Beethoven composed a coda which was longer than the coda for the first movement of this symphony, which begins with rising chromaticism in the lower parts. Sudden dynamic contrasts burst back and forth before a variation on theme 2 takes form in the walking basses. Once the jovial accents return at m. 346, the music seems to slow down a bit, but at m. 372, a sudden, yet explosive *tutti* gathers more and more energy as strings swirl at full tempo, yet hushed by the dialogue between the woodwinds, less the clarinets, and the strings.



Figure 1-4: Beethoven, IV. *Allegro molto*, m. 372, explosive *tutti*

Once again, the walking basses return but are interrupted by a pause and proceed to play up a semi-tone. Here, for one final time, the caricatural accents descend and help to highlight the D major arpeggio ending on a big close.

## CHAPTER 2

### RICHARD WAGNER'S *SIEGFRIED IDYLL*, WWV 103

As Richard Wagner began his musical career under his own steam after setbacks with his studies of the *System der Musik-Wissenschaft* and *Leubald*, his path in ‘deciding to become a musician’ the conventional way of obeying rules of composition that had to be effortfully learnt was not for him.<sup>1</sup> Any inspiration of which he thought up of could not be discerned in his works and such an example of this is his *Siegfried Idyll* of 1869. This piece was composed as a birthday present to his second wife, Cosima, after the birth of their son Siegfried in 1869. It was premiered on Christmas morning, December 25, 1870 by a small ensemble of the Tonhalle Orchester Zürich on the stairs of their villa at Tribschen.<sup>2</sup> A performance of this piece would last about 19 mins. Six months before the birth of Siegfried, Cosima had begun a diary which she would keep active with until the death of Richard some 13 years later and through these entries, we discover how the conflict between husband and wife would allow her to exploit him as a means to gain and exercise power over him. His response saw him relapsing into childhood patterns of behaviour and thus, was he inspired by his love for Cosima to write the *Siegfried Idyll* which is a “Song of Songs to Brunnhilde, who is destined for the hero”



Figure 2-1: Wagner, *Siegfried Idyll*, m. 37, “Valkyrie” motif

<sup>1</sup>Joachim Köhler. *Richard Wagner: The Last of the Titans* (New Haven: Yale University Press 2004), 53.

<sup>2</sup>Matthew Bribitzer-Stull, Alex Lubet, and Gottfried Wagner, eds., *Richard Wagner for the New Millenium: Essays in Music and Culture*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 25-26.

‘from time immemorial’ and who, in contradistinction to the drama, presents him with a son recalled in the work’s second subject, headed ‘Schlaf, Kindchen, sc`hlaf’.<sup>3</sup>



Figure 2-2: *Cradle Song*, m. 120

The original title was “*Tribschen Idyll* with Fidi's birdsong and the orange sunrise, as symphonic birthday greeting. Presented to his Cosima by her Richard.” However, around the same time, this dedication meant very little as Wagner had tried to ‘lure’ his lover to Bayreuth by using an official letter to both the French poet and historical novelist, Judith Gautier and her husband to express what had previously been a secret.<sup>4</sup> “Fidi” was the family's nickname for their son Siegfried. It is thought that the birdsong and the sunrise refer to incidents of personal significance to the couple. Wagner originally intended the *Siegfried Idyll* to remain a private piece. However, due to financial pressures, he decided to sell the score to publisher B. Schott in 1878, which was the version I used in my performance. In doing so, Wagner expanded the orchestration to 35 players to make the piece more marketable. Although Wagner’s work here isn’t as much of a showpiece as it is a symphonic poem, the lullaby-like quality of this piece serves as a stark contrast to the opening number, which opens and ends with a vivacious character. It is scored for one flute, one oboe, two clarinets, one bassoon, two French horns, one trumpet and strings.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, 530.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 581.

As with Ludwig van Beethoven's *Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 36*, my instructions with changes to the different nuances, gestures, dynamics have replicated what the household of Richard Wagner might have heard on that morning back in 1870, but projected onto an ensemble slightly larger than that of his original group which performed this piece. At m. 5 the violin I should play *diminuendo*, at m. 18, make sure the *poco crescendo* leading up to the downbeat of m. 18 should go into *mp* and then *diminuendo*; at m. 48, *mf* should be heard in both clarinet I and violin I so that the *crescendo* could be given more room to build upon in the next measure. At m. 63, make sure violin I slight taper off on the downbeat; at m. 74, have the strings play *sostenuto*; at m. 81, give a slight *ritardando* throughout the ensemble; at m. 91, ensure very simple, yet moving lines, and try to maintain the balance between the oboe with the strings here. From mm. 115-116, *diminuendo* to *pp*, but at m. 120, in violin I and viola, have them play *pochissimo crescendo* into the entrance at mm. 121-124, where the horns can play that passage *poco marcato*. At mm. 125-126, strings should play *quasi sordini* (like muted, subsequent measures are played with actual mutes); at mm. 146-147, violin I should *diminuendo* to almost *niente*, from mm. 153-155, *poco ritardando* should be observed before settling on a *tenuto* chord on m. 156. At mm. 163-164, *crescendo* to at least *mf* before dropping to *subito p*; at mm. 180-181, clarinet I has a descending solo run of dominant 5ths before landing on a *fp* in the next measure (make sure this is not covered up); at mm. 194-197, violin II leads this four-bar phrase which subsequently lends itself to violin I; at mm. 198-200, enforce *crescendo* in first two bars thereby arriving *mp* at m. 200; at mm. 200-201, oboe should play *pp* and play *crescendo* into *p* and strings, take *diminuendo* twice (*mp diminuendo p*, *mp diminuendo pp*); at mm. 216-217, violin II and viola should play these octave G#'s *poco spiccato*; at mm. 218-219, violin I, play *f* all the way, including grace notes until the *subito p* B-natural; at m. 226, *mp diminuendo p*; mm. 241-

242, really *crescendo* here; at mm. 253-254, again, really *crescendo* here into the *ff*; at m. 275, beat pattern returns to 4; at mm. 279-285, strings, *poco crescendo* to *mp* at m. 283 while woodwinds keep at *p*; m. 285, a *poco ritardando* should be placed there; at m. 286, *meno mosso* should be observed at a slower tempo than before; at m. 293, *diminuendo* beats 3 and 4; at m. 295, *poco ritardando* and strings, *crescendo* for 3 beats to *ff* on beat 4; m. 296, have orchestra play *poco meno*; at mm. 303, trumpet and violin I, place *staccato* on eighth-note on beat 3 and an *accent* on the following syncopated quarter-note; m. 308, *tutti* play *poco meno* and violin I play *fp*! From mm. 308-311, violin I, play this passage *sul D* followed by *sul A*; from mm. 312-313, *ritardando*; m. 313, woodwinds should play *crescendo* to *pp*, not *p*; at m. 314, *Tempo I* again, tagged at m. 333, by bassoon and cello playing *dolce*. At mm. 333-334, *tutti* ensemble should play this *poco ritardando* going into m. 335, *calmo* and make sure the violas play this *espressivo*. At m. 345, violin I should play *crescendo* from beat 3.5 to *sf* in the next bar; at m. 352, there is a small cello *sol*, m. 364, *zeit nehmen*, or, take time on last two notes in beat 4; at m. 365, make sure *poco ritardando* and played by violin I and cello, *diminuendo* into the beautiful flat IV<sup>6</sup> chord in the next bar. From mm. 373-374, viola *sol* should come out more *p* and from 400, cello *sol*, keep line moving but never above *tempo*; at m. 404 and 405, woodwinds and brass, place breath mark between these two final notes of this lovely piece.

## CHAPTER 3

### JAMES STEPHENSON III'S *CELEBRATION OVERTURE*

James Stephenson III is an active composer and highly sought-after arranger and conductor currently based in the Greater Chicago area. He he was born there in 1969. Largely self-taught, he caught his major break when, in 2012, he received a commission from the Minnesota Commissioning Club to compose two violin concertos which received their premieres by the Minnesota Orchestra, featuring Jennifer Frautschi as the soloist and Osmo Vänskä as the conductor, and by the Rhode Island Philharmonic under the direction of Larry Rachleff, featuring Alex Kerr as the soloist. To date, based on his orchestral work output alone, he has received 34 professional commissions and premiers throughout the United States.<sup>5</sup>

Stephenson earned his Bachelor of Music degree in Trumpet Performance "with distinction" from the New England Conservatory where he became involved with composing music on the side. He entered his full-time composing career after having performed 17 seasons as a trumpeter in the Naples Philharmonic in Florida.

Written in celebration of the 48th Anniversary season of the Chicago Chamber Orchestra with Edward Benyas as conductor and recently rededicated to the City of Lake Forest, IL<sup>6</sup>, in honor of its 150th anniversary, the *Celebration Overture* was premiered in September of 1999. A performance of this piece lasts approximately last 10 minutes and 20 seconds long. Three things came to the composer's head as this piece was being commissioned: 1) The piece needed to be completed in roughly two weeks, 2) it should feature the timpanist, and 3) really, a piece to

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<sup>5</sup> James Stephenson III, "Jim Stephenson Curriculum Vitae". *Stephenson Music*. 2017. Accessed February 12, 2017. <https://www.stephensonmusic.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/CV-James-Stephenson-composer.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> James Stephenson III, "Celebration Overture for Chamber Orchestra", *Stephenson Music*, August 2010, accessed February 12, 2017, <https://www.stephensonmusic.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Celebration-Overture-score-2006-revision.pdf>.

celebrate the 48th anniversary???

The first request needs very little explanation – it was hard and furious work, but was completed on time while sitting on the porch of a cabin in Northern Michigan, overlooking a lake. As for the second request, the timpanist for the concert was a mutual friend, and it was already known that in order to play the concert, he would be driving hours from one gig, unloading timpani, then driving elsewhere, playing another job, then driving back to the first, playing, reloading timpani, etc... in other words, he would be rewarded with a good part for all of the extra hassles he'd be going through just to play the concert. The third request, once Jim got over the initial “why’s” and “really’s”, presented a rather fun challenge and inspiration, for puns and symbolism have always been of Stephenson’s “game” when writing music.<sup>7</sup> In the case of this event, he took advantage of whatever he could with the number 48 when composing this piece and thus began its inception: the numbers 4 and 8 are crucial to the entire piece.

This overture is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets in B-flat or A, two bassoons, two horns in F, two trumpets, one trombone, timpani, piano, harp and strings. The large-scale form of this piece is A-B-A'-C-A''-Coda. There are many not-so-hidden rhythm patterns and intervals that refer exclusively to those numbers. For example, the piece opens with a flurry of 40 eighth-notes in the strings (originally, the composer was going to go for 48 notes, but it didn't work, so he had settled for forty 8th notes instead) in the opening five measures.

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<sup>7</sup> James Stephenson III, “Celebration Overture”, Stephenson Music, August 2010, accessed February 12, 2017, <https://www.stephensonmusic.com/product/celebration-overture>.

Figure 3-1: James Stephenson III, *Celebration Overture*, beginning of *Allegro con brio* first theme, mm. 1-5

Additionally, the harmonic structure of the piece is almost entirely built upon a minor 7<sup>th</sup> chord; this is because when one counts up 4 semi-tones from the root of the chord, and then another 8, the resulting notes spell out most of a minor 7<sup>th</sup> chord. For example, at m. 10, minor 7<sup>th</sup> chords are spelled out three different times, each one on a different beat: B<sup>b</sup>-D<sup>b</sup>-F-A<sup>b</sup> on beat 2, F-A<sup>b</sup>-C-E<sup>b</sup> on beat 3, and C-E<sup>b</sup>-G-B<sup>b</sup> on beat 4.

Figure 3-2: *Allegro molto con brio*, m. 10, piano part

The minor 7<sup>th</sup> chord B<sup>b</sup>-D<sup>b</sup>-F-A<sup>b</sup> then repeats itself again in mm. 10-15, jumps up a semi-tone to B-D-F<sup>#</sup>-A on the off-beat of beat 3 in the next measure, up a minor 3<sup>rd</sup> (D-F-A-C) on the off-beat of beat 2 in m. 17, on the off-beat of beat 4 of m. 18, the music goes up a major 3<sup>rd</sup>.



Figure 3-3: *Allegro molto con brio*, mm. 15-18, strings

The only occurrence of a 4/8 time signature in the music is from letter D up until letter I.

In the music, on beat 1 of m. 2, an example of his eclectic use of this pre-determined modality is shown here: A, B, C#, E, F, and G. As the overture starts off in the key of A major, it almost seems to be a normal sense of melody before this tonality characterizes the overall shape to this piece, with each multi-note chords painting a landscape of different moods and characters. In the Coda section, Stephenson cleverly decides to bring back themes heard in the A and B sections which is driven to the end by a fanfare-like motive played by the oboes, horns and trumpets at letter X. What makes this 6-beat entrance interesting is that though the pattern starts on the downbeat with an accented ornamented note, the amusing thing that happens is the subsequent entrances do not enter on the downbeat, but on the second and third beats, thereby separating each of these groups by 3 quarter-beat rests within the frame of a cut-time time signature. While this is happening, the rest of the orchestra plays a different group of a 4-beat motive against the other group, separated by 5 quarter-beat rests, thereby creating all sorts of chaos until the music reaches a  $V^7$ -I chord.

The image shows a musical score for horns and trumpets, specifically the Coda section (mm. 336-339). The score is written on two staves, with the top staff for horns and the bottom staff for trumpets. Both staves begin with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic marking. The music consists of a series of chords and melodic lines, with some notes marked with accents (*>*) and slurs. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into four measures by vertical bar lines.

*Figure 3-4: Coda, mm. 336-339, horns and trumpets*

With regards to rehearsal considerations, Stephenson has carefully written out this piece very well-balanced through each instruments which is played here. The piano is probably the only instrument with which it needs is notes to be played a lot more bolder.

## CONCLUSION

In selecting music for this program, the works had instrumentation that fit with our ensemble, the Southern Illinois Sinfonietta, yet covering three major periods of music over just a little more than the past couple of centuries. As composers write more and more for a chamber ensemble like the musicians I have worked with to carry out this performance, it becomes more and more idiomatic for conductors like myself to explore their other compositions for orchestra, both small and large. Having performed my recital with musicians from both the within the Southern Illinois University Carbondale School of Music core and from the outside, this entire community has helped shaped my studies and my work as a graduate student here at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, bringing it all to a glorious end.

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