ABSTRACT

Title of Document: ABOVE THE HORIZON, for Orchestra
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Above the Horizon is a two-movement composition for orchestra of roughly sixteen and a half minutes. The piece explores a variety of musical characteristics that have been important in my recent work, including the textural difference between active and static music. In this piece, I try to find various ways of superimposing these seemingly contrasting ideals. For example, a section of music that is not driven by pulse or harmonic change and is therefore static may be animated by active musical gestures such as tremolandi, trills or repetitions of single pitches. This technique helps to provide a constant sense of energy even within the slower, more reflective sections. Another important characteristic involves using timbre changes to transform single pitches and/or larger harmonic units. The orchestral medium, with its broad spectrum of colors, was a logical choice for this aesthetic consideration.

The first movement, Cloud Formations, considers how the registral placement of pitch affects the resulting sound of similar harmonies, mainly through the opposition of open-spaced harmonies and cluster chords. The piece can be divided into three main formal sections, the first of which slowly unfolds the primary harmonic material, an openly spaced five-pitch chord that expands in a wedge-shaped motion. The second section shifts the focus to clusters, concentrating the pitch
material into narrower but densely packed registral bands. The third section combines ideas from the previous two and leads to a forceful orchestral tutti before a short coda ends the movement.

The second movement, *Fireworks*, consists of an energetic sound world that is motivated by the initial brass chords. The reiteration of these chords leads to the first of three main formal sections, where an underlying sixteenth note pulse that is irregularly accented provides a background for multiple layers of music. A contrasting second section lacks a regular pulse, is more chromatic and focuses on high and low registral extremes. The final section begins with a single trill-like figure before forceful repetitions of dense harmonies, rushing scalar gestures and repeated yet staggered pitch patterns provide the material for the end of the piece.
ABOVE THE HORIZON, for Orchestra

By

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**Above the Horizon**

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INSTRUMENTATION

Piccolo
2 Flutes
2 Oboes
English Horn
2 Clarinets in Bb
Bass Clarinet in Bb
2 Bassoons
Contrabassoon

4 Horns in F
3 Trumpets in C
2 Trombones
1 Bass Trombone

Timpani

Percussion (3 players)
Crash Cymbals, Suspended Cymbal, Tam-tam, Triangle
Tambourine, Shaker, Flexatone, 3 Woodblocks, Snare Drum, Bass Drum
Glockenspiel, Xylophone, Vibraphone, Marimba

Harp

Celesta
Piano

Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Cello
Double Bass
II. Fireworks
Lively and Playful
Slightly Faster

\( \text{\textbf{Fl.}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{Ob.}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{Eng. Hn.}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{Cl.}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{B. Cl.}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{Bsn.}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{Hn.}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{Cbsn.}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{Tpt.}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{Tbn.}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{Vln.}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{Vla.}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{Cym.}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{Pno.}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{Tba.}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{Db.}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{Vc.}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{77}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{8}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{40}} \)