

Greg Bassett, French Horn  
Rhonda Sider Edgington, Organ

from Suite Rhapsodique, for Horn and Organ (2002)

Naji Hakim (\*1955)

Noel  
Incantation  
Air  
Alleluia

'Twas a Dark and Stormy Night..., Fantasy for Horn and Organ (1987)

Kerry Turner

Concerto in d minor, BWV 596

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

after the Concerto in d minor, op. 3 Nr. 11 by Antonio Vivaldi

I.  
II. Grave  
III. Fuga  
IV. Largo e spiccato  
V.

Sonata for Organ and Horn, Op. 60 (2011)

Rachel Laurin (\*1961)

I. Allegro  
II. On a Painting by Thomson... (Andante Espressivo)  
III. Rondo Fugato (Giocososo)

#### Notes on Suite Rhapsodique:

This suite is intended for concert or liturgical performance. It is based on songs which originate from different regions of France – [Basque country (Air), Savoie (Noel)], as well as gregorian (Alleluia), and maronite repertoire (Incantation). Naji Hakim was born in Beirut, but received his musical education in Paris, where he has lived ever since. He was titular organist of the Basilique du Sacre-Coeur for 8 years, after which he succeeded the famous Olivier Messiaen at the church of the Trinite.

The opening movement of Suite Rhapsodique, **Noel** is an up-tempo, jaunty romp – with a contrasting middle section containing a quieter, clear stating of the noel tune.

**Incantation** opens with the solo horn, stating the melody on which the movement is based, in a free, declamatory manner. It is interrupted by an almost mechanical sounding subject, heard in the organ. These two themes alternate back and forth, with each repetition sounding at a slightly higher pitch than the last. Suddenly, the pattern changes drastically – both horn and organ play together, in a much quicker tempo, followed by the organ taking up the horn's theme, and the pieces ends with both horn and organ playing a theme which has elements of both the horn's previous lyrical melodies, and the

organ's mechanical subjects.

Greg and I took this movement to be a fantastical depiction of some kind of magical incantation – a magician chanting a certain phrase (heard in the horn), and the sounds of the magic attempting, but failing, to take hold. The listener can decide when exactly in the piece the magical incantation actually begins to work, and what happens when it does, but regardless of what we imagine happening during the piece, it is a cleverly written piece, and fun to play!

The **Air** is a slow, lyrical movement, with lush harmonies and soaring melodies.

**Alleluia**, with which we end this section, is fiery and fast-paced. It employs a back-and-forth dialogue between organ and horn, interspersed by sections of toccata-like figurations, played by the organist.

Note from the composer, on 'Twas a Dark and Stormy Night... -

'Twas a Dark and Stormy Night... was composed in the winter of 1987. My inspiration came from a book of the same title. It was a compilation of short stories that were entered in a literature competition out of England. The only mandatory guideline was that the story must begin with 'Twas a dark and stormy night. After that, the world was open for whatever the imagination might bring.

I was so excited by the idea, that I decided to basically do the same thing with an equally simple and yet “open” motive. Thus the piece begins with the musical equivalent of 'Twas a dark and stormy night. The opening cadenza sets the stage, the harmonic language is introduced, and all at once, the imagination lets loose the adventure within.

Notes on Concerto in D minor, BWV 596:

Bach's concerto in D minor is an organ transcription of a Vivaldi concerto, originally written for two violins and basso continuo. It is not a concerto, in the romantic sense of a solo instrument playing with a large orchestra, such as the piano concertos of Rachmaninoff, but rather a concerto grosso, an Italian form, which pits a small group of solo instruments against the larger orchestra. The opening movement shows quite clearly the original structure – in Vivaldi's piece, the two solo violins are echoing each other, playing a duet. Bach transforms this into a trio texture – with each of the organist's hands playing one of the violin parts, and the pedal playing an accompanying bass line. The Grave movement is only six measure long – this chordal section is basically a harmonic and dramatic transition to the next movement, a fugue. There follows a beautiful and lyrical slow movement, and the final movement is quick and full of energy, sounding very much like other Vivaldi string works, and clearly showing the exchange between the two groups of instruments, played in this case on two different manuals of the organ.

The Sonata for Organ and Horn, Op. 60, by Ottawa organist and composer Rachel Laurin, is the result of a commission from [hornist] Karen Holmes, who wanted to present the premiere performance at the 2011 Royal College of Canadian Composers National Convention, in Hamilton. There are three movements: an Allegro in traditional sonata form with two contrasting themes; a slow movement, freely structured and descriptive in character; and a Fugato in Rondo form, in which the main fugal theme returns regularly as a refrain. The contrapuntal character unites the whole last movement, giving occasion for canons and imitations between the horn and the organ. Then a final harmonic burst leads to the Coda.

Rachel Laurin tells the following anecdote to contribute to the understanding of the second movement: “... wishing to stimulate my imagination in order to start writing as soon as possible, I looked through, as I sometimes do, a collection of reproductions of works of art. Because I particularly like his work, I choose a collection of works by Tom Thomson on the theme of trees. I soon found a landscape that touched me deeply, entitled “Ragged Lake”. Right away harmonies suggested themselves, a musical atmosphere was established, a melody appeared, another motif joined in: everything fell into place

naturally to describe the atmosphere suggested by this lake, these clouds, this coniferous tree bent over in the foreground. But imagine my surprise when, in the middle of writing this movement, I decided to look up more information about this painting that I had been admiring for several days; of the thirty or so paintings in this book, coming from private collections, or, in the case of most of them, from the Art Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, a few minutes' walk from where I live, only one came from the Art Gallery of Hamilton: "Ragged Lake", which I had chosen by pure coincidence!"

Please include here the picture at this link

<http://www.artcountrycanada.com/images/thomson-ragged-lake.jpg>

Notes (except where otherwise indicated) by Rhonda Edgington