

Rise

Instrumentation

- 1 Piccolo, 2 Flutes, 2 Oboes, 2 Clarinets in Bb, 2 Bassoons, 1 Contrabassoon
- 4 Horns in F, 2 Trumpets in C, 3 Trombones
- Timpani; Perc. 1: Snare Drum, Crash Cymbals, Tam-tam, Glockenspiel, Sand Blocks, Suspended Cymbal, Bass Drum, Tom-toms (hi-med-lo), Güiro, Triangle; Perc. 2: Crash Cymbals, Suspended Cymbal, Bass Drum, Snare Drum, Cabasa, Tam-tam, Bongos (hi-lo), Ratchet; Perc. 3: Bass Drum, Cabasa, Mark Tree, Triangle, Suspended Cymbal, Crash Cymbals, Tam-tam, Sand Blocks, Snare Drum, Tom-toms (hi-med-lo)
- Strings

Rise

Published by Filarmonika.

Duration: 11 minutes.

I started to compose *Rise* in February of 2020, and little did I know that by the time of its completion in April of the same year, the world would be a completely different place. Commissioned by the Berkeley Symphony, this work was meant to celebrate both, the Berkeley Symphony's 50th anniversary and Beethoven's 250th birthday, but, as we all know, the world would come to standstill, meaning that this work—which had been designed to precede Beethoven's 9th symphony—would ultimately have to wait until June of 2022 to see the light of day.

Rise uses the same instrumentation as Beethoven's 9th minus the voices, but its connection to Beethoven runs deeper than that at a musical and personal level. His last symphony was the very first music score I ever purchased with my own hard-earned money, back when I was a teenager, so that work has a special place in both, my library, and my creative development. It is no coincidence that my piece ends in a luminous D major chord, or that I wrote a prominent chorale-like section toward the end where the melodies are carried by brass and woodwinds while most strings play arpeggio-like triplets in unison, or—if one wants to get a little more technical—that the motivic material in *Rise* gets a Beethovenian treatment throughout most of the work. Beethoven has had an enormous influence in the way I construct my symphonies, so it's no wonder that he would also influence the way I conceive of my overtures.

There is, however, another important element to the conception of *Rise*, and that is my connection to the city of Berkeley. During my research into the origins of the Berkeley Symphony I found out that the city where it resides had been named after Irish Philosopher George Berkeley who, in the 18th century wrote a poem laying out his hopes and dreams of creating a higher education institution in America. Fast forward 150 years to the late 19th century, and this poem would inspire the trustees of the Private College of California (one of the colleges that would eventually form the University of California) into naming the campus "Berkeley". The name was later adopted for the entire community. I find one of its stanzas particularly poignant:

*There shall be sung another golden age,
The **rise** of empire and of arts,
The good and great inspiring epic rage,
The wisest heads and noblest hearts.*

I believe this stanza embodies many of the principles upon which UC Berkeley (of which I am an alumnus) is founded, including the central and progressive role that both, the city of Berkeley and the university, have played in some of the most transformative moments in the history of this country.

A high-energy, celebratory work (very much in the tradition of the great overtures but with my personal harmonic, rhythmic, and melodic seal) *Rise* stands as a homage to Beethoven's enduring legacy, and to the Berkeley Symphony's prominent place in its community as a forward-thinking, diverse, and adventurous artistic institution. My sincere gratitude goes to Music Director Joseph Young and former Artistic Director René Mandel for entrusting me with this formidable task, and to Kathleen G. Henschel & John W. Dewes, as well as New Music USA for making this commission possible.

Jimmy López Bellido © 2024