



WIND BAND CLASSICS

JOHAN DE MEIJ

2 CDs

The Symphonies

The Lord of the Rings • The Big Apple • Planet Earth

The Peabody Conservatory Wind Ensemble
Harlan D. Parker



Nicolas Marini ²
Christopher Sarangoulis ²
Joel Decker ³

Tuba

Ian Burns ¹
Scott Miller ^{1, 3}
Haiyu Wang ¹
Ian Lowther ¹
Eli Wirth ²
Ian Sloan ²
Nicolas Wallin ²
Robinson Love ²
Edwin Brown ³
Haim Mazar ³

Harp

Laura Stokes ^{1, 3}
Shuang Liu ¹
Jordan W. Thomas ^{1, 3}
Michaela Trnkova ²

Piano

Camille Petty ¹
Naoko Hashimoto ²
Lior Willinger ³

Harpsichord

Douglas Beck ²

Celesta

Lior Willinger ³

Choirs & Virtual Organ

Instruments

Rich Lauver ³

Cello

Dorotea Raczy ^{1, 3}
Ismar Gomes ^{1, 3}
Daniel Taylor ¹
Kathryn Brunhaver ³

Double Bass

Emily Koh ¹
Sean McClowry ²
Brittany Bowen ³
Wesley Thompson ³

Timpani

Juanmanuel López ¹
Cristóbal Gajardo ¹
Richard Wattie ²
Georgi Videnov ³

Percussion

Sao Aoki ^{1, 3}
Crystal Chu ¹
Tatevik Khoja-Eynatyan ¹
Seo-Young Lee ^{1, 3}
Derrick Lim ¹
Terry Sweeney ¹
Kelsey Tamayo ^{1, 3}
Matthew Beaumont ²
Ryan Bishop ²
Jennifer Campbell ²
Gavin Farrel ²
Carolyn Hall ²
Erica Richstad ²
Lawrence Rosenberg ²
Karen Seward ²
Wanlu Ma ³
Kei Maeda ³

The Peabody Children's Chorus ³

Director

Doreen Falby

Chorus Manager

Sharon Spicher

Chorus

Caitlin Adler
Emily Adler
Lisa Alonso
Sophia Anastasi
Jemeyah Bagby
Michael Biondi
Annie Bishai
Emily Bishai
Graham Bishai
Trevor Bishai
Julia Boscov-Ellen
Karis Bruckman
James Cavallon
Sarah Chase
Hannah Cohan
Mary Connolly
Emily Crockett
Rachel Curry
Kasey Cwynar-Foye
Caitlin DeLatte
Elissa DeStefano
Tessa Dobrow
Roselyn Dooley
Shaina Dooley
Lanie Eppers
Cameron Falby
Isabel Feller-Kopman
Melissa Flint
Rebecca Fritz
Erika Klatt
Karen Loscocco
Mary Beth Loscocco
Diana Lowitt
Joshua Lucker
Sara Mahmood
Yusuf Mahmood
Killian McGinnis
Colleen McGonigle
Gabriella McManus
Unnati Mehta
Madeline Miller
Bryna Mullins

Key:

¹ The Lord of the Rings

² The Big Apple

³ Planet Earth

Johan de Meij (b. 1953)

The Symphonies



Symphony No. 1 'The Lord of the Rings'

The *First Symphony 'The Lord of the Rings'* by Johan de Meij (pronounced 'May') is based on the trilogy of that name by J.R.R. Tolkien. This book has fascinated many millions of readers since its publication in 1955. The symphony consists of five separate movements, each illustrating a personage or an important episode from the book. The movements are: *I. Gandalf (The Wizard)*; *II. Lothlorien (The Elvenwood)*; *III. Gollum (Sméagol)*; *IV. Journey in the Dark – a. The Mines of Moria, b. The Bridge of Khazad-Dûm*; *V. Hobbits*.

The symphony was written in the period between March 1984 and December 1987, and had its première in Brussels on 15th March 1988, performed by the Groot Harmonieorkest van de Gidsen under the baton of Norbert Nozy. In 1989, the symphony was awarded a first prize in the Sudler International Wind Band Composition Competition in Chicago, and a year later, it received an award from the Dutch Composers Fund. In 2001 the orchestral version was given its première by the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra and recorded by the London Symphony Orchestra.

Although it is not easy to summarize such an extensive and complex work, the main outline is as follows: the central theme is the Ring, forged by the dark lord Sauron to rule the peoples of Middle Earth. For years it was the possession of the creature Gollum, but as the Ring falls into the hands of a Hobbit the evil forces awake and the struggle for the Ring commences. There is but one solution to save the World from disaster: the Ring must be destroyed by the same fire in which it was forged: Mount Doom in the heart of Mordor, the country of the evil Lord Sauron. It is the Hobbit Frodo who sets out to complete this task, and to assist him a company, the Fellowship of the Ring, is formed under the leadership of Gandalf the wizard, which includes the Hobbits Sam, Merry and Pippin, the Dwarf Gimli, the Elf Legolas, Boromir and Aragorn. However, the Companions soon fall apart and, after many pernicious adventures and a surprising dénouement, Frodo and Sam can at last return to their familiar home, The Shire.

Explanation of the five movements:

I. Gandalf (The Wizard). The first movement is a musical portrait of the wizard Gandalf, one of the principal characters of the trilogy. His wise and noble personality is expressed by a stately motif which is used in a different form in movements IV and V. The sudden opening of the *Allegro vivace* is indicative of the unpredictability of the grey wizard, followed by a wild ride on his beautiful horse "Shadowfax".

II. Lothlorien (The Elvenwood). The second movement is an impression of Lothlórien, the elvenwood with its beautiful trees, plants, exotic birds, expressed through woodwind solos. The meeting of the Hobbit Frodo with the Lady Galadriel is embodied in a charming *Allegretto*; in the Mirror of Galadriel, a silver basin in the wood, Frodo glimpses three visions, the last of which, a large ominous Eye, greatly upsets him.

III. Gollum (Sméagol). The third movement describes the monstrous creature Gollum, a slimy, shy being represented by the soprano saxophone. It mumbles and talks to itself, hisses and lisps, whines and snickers, is

The Peabody Conservatory Wind Ensemble

Piccolo

Hanol Lee ¹
Rebecca Simon ²
Eric Maul ³

Flute

Camille Delaney ¹
Eric Maul ^{1, 3}
Kyong A. Kim ¹
Mary Matthews ¹
Catherine Ott ¹
Cari Shipp ¹
Sandra DelCid ²
Betsy Gary ²
Heather Iler ²
Jennifer Swanson ²
Jared Harrison ³
Hanol Lee ³

Oboe

Elizabeth Honeyman ¹
Ursula Sahagian Mills ¹
Katherine Magruder ¹
Kevin Darrow ²
Adriene Foutz ²
Patrick Bryan ³
Kathryn Gorski ³
Jared Laws ³

English Horn

Emily Cich ¹
Katherine Magruder ¹
Leah Moss ²
Lindsay Scattergood ³

Clarinet

Viet Cuong ¹
Audrey Hueg ¹
Yuri Kim ^{1, 3}
James Livengood ¹
Bradley Mitchell (E-flat) ^{1, 3}

William Scott (bass) ¹

Hyun Sung Park ¹
John Steman ¹
Tai-Chi Tang ¹
Joel Weszka ^{1, 3}
William Wysocki ^{1, 3}
Hilary H. Zirkle ^{1, 3}
Sarah Bednarcik ²
Louis Bianco ²
Karin Kaifa (alto) ²
Wen-Mi Chen ²
Thomas Diehm ²
Sam Kaestner ²
Theresa Hallinan ²
Tallia Horry ²
Cia-Li Huang ²
Cindy McCloskey (bass) ²
Amanda Richmond ²
Beth Sandholm (bass) ²
Shannon Shin (E-flat) ²
Joshua Anderson ³
Sabrina Caminero ³
James Duncan ³
Lara Mitofsky Neuss ³
Nicole Papadatos ³ (alto) ¹
Kevin Poglitsch (bass) ³

Bassoon

Hillary Erb ¹
Stephanie Marcia
Suryahadi ¹
Sarah Whalen-Cohen ¹
Jolene Mason (contra) ¹
David Rocca (contra) ¹
Tanya Merchant ²
Ying-Din Wang ²
Aaron Lipka (contra) ²
Alexander Carlucci ³
Dillon Meacham ³
Melissa Birkhold (contra) ³

Saxophone

Stephen Dunlap (soprano) ¹,
(alto) ³
Kimberly Reece (alto) ¹
Hart L. Linker (alto) ¹,
(tenor) ³
James Williams (tenor) ¹,
(baritone) ³
J. Adam Briggs (baritone) ¹,
(alto) ³
Beth Silverman ²
Chris Winters ²
Brian Schmidt (tenor) ²
Dan Fitzsimons (baritone) ²
Rachel Winder (tenor) ³

Horn

Andrew Smith ^{1, 3}
Ariyo Shahry ^{1, 3}
Christopher Scott ¹
Morgan Conrad ¹
Margaret Tomlinson ¹
Ellen Ariere ¹
Leigh-Anne Lautenbach ²
Aaron Nelson ²
Rachel Rhodes ²
Alex Riemer ²
Susan Plummer ²
Kristin Szydlowski ²
John Craddock ³
Elizabeth Fryer ³
Joe Hughes ³
Melvin Jackson ³
Sean Ross ³
Joel Watts ³

Trumpet

Athens Carter ¹
Katelyn Huff ¹
Christopher Blake ¹
Annaliese Perrett ¹

Demar Woods ¹
Frank Gorecki ²
Jaon Harlow ²
Billy Holaday ²
Peter Lander ²
Michael Lawrence ²
Jeremy Meeks ²
Timothy Ryan ²
Rachel Zephir ²
Tristan Boisset ³
Austin Boyer ³
Tristan Clarke ³
John Ehrenburg ³
Michael Leone ³
Eliza Minster ³
Kevin Sabik ³
Rosemary Ward ³

Trombone

Kristin Stauffer ¹
Benjamin Cross ¹
Dan Price ¹
Frances Yu ^{1, 3}
Sung Ahn ²
Shawn Johnson ²
Blake Odonnell ²
Brandon Rivera ²
Tony Warnet ²
Emily Joseph ³
William Marrin ³

Base Trombone

Joseph Buono ^{1, 3}
Frank Gulino ¹
Christian Hizon ¹
Niel Tevault ²

Euphonium

Kristoffer Danielsen ¹
Samantha Russo ¹
Matthew Dubbs ²

The Peabody Conservatory Wind Ensemble



Photo: Rich Lauver

Under the direction of Harlan Parker, the Peabody Conservatory Wind Ensemble has given over forty world premières and has performed at State, Regional and National Conventions. Considered "one of the finest ensembles of its kind in the nation", the Peabody Conservatory Wind Ensemble has received critical acclaim from contemporary composers such as David Amram, James Syler, Eric Ewazen, Stella Sung and Johan de Meij. The début CD of the ensemble, *From an Antique Land*, has been praised as one of the most exciting wind ensemble recordings in recent times and the second CD, Orff, Bird and Reed, was released in August 2006 on the Naxos label (8.570242). Of the

performance of *La Fiesta Mexicana* on the second CD, composer H. Owen Reed, in a letter to Harlan Parker writes, "I have just listened, twice, to your brilliant recording of my *La Fiesta Mexicana*, and I must tell you that it was a thrill to hear my music performed exactly as I always hoped for. Your total understanding of the work showed up on all parameters. Your tempos were on the mark, and the overall conception of the work was superb."

Harlan D. Parker



Photo: Studio 1209

Harlan D. Parker has been the conductor of the Peabody Conservatory Wind Ensemble and Coordinator of the Music Education Division at the Peabody Conservatory of Music of The Johns Hopkins University since 1990. In the fall of 2007, he was also appointed as the music director/conductor of the Peabody Youth Orchestra in the Preparatory Division of the Peabody Institute. Under his direction, the Peabody Conservatory Wind Ensemble has given over forty world premières, and has performed at state, regional and national conventions. As well as his duties at Peabody, Dr Parker has a very active musical life outside the Conservatory. He is a Past-President of The Conductors Guild, an international service organization dedicated to encouraging and promoting the highest standards in the art and profession of conducting. He is also a member of The American Bandmasters Association, an organization whose membership is by invitation and recognizes "outstanding achievement in the field of the concert band and its music." He is active regionally, nationally and internationally as a guest conductor, conducting pedagogue, clinician and adjudicator, having worked with professional musicians and students from all fifty states and over forty countries. In his first year as a faculty member at Peabody, Harlan Parker reorganized the Peabody Conservatory Wind Ensemble in its present format after several years of non-existence and was awarded the Peabody Student Council Faculty/Administration Award for outstanding contributions to the Peabody Community. In the fall of 2000, he accepted the first graduate class of Wind Conducting students. Graduates and students of the program are teachers and conductors in high schools and colleges and conductors of military bands, with two recent Masters students accepting positions as conductors with the United States Air Force. Dr. Parker received his Bachelor of Music from Emporia State University and his Master of Music and Doctor of Philosophy in Music Education with an emphasis in Conducting from the University of Kansas and has completed post-doctoral work at the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies in New York.

alternately pitiful and malicious, and is continually fleeing and looking for his cherished treasure, the Ring.

IV. *Journey in the Dark*. The fourth movement describes the laborious journey of the Fellowship of the Ring, headed by the wizard Gandalf, through the dark tunnels of the Mines of Moria. The slow walking cadenza and the fear are clearly audible in the monotonous rhythm of the low brass, piano and percussion. After a wild pursuit by hostile creatures, the Orks, Gandalf is engaged in battle with a horrible monster, the Balrog, and crashes from the subterranean bridge of Khazad-Dûm in a fathomless abyss. To the melancholy tones of a *Marcia funebre*, the bewildered Companions trudge on, looking for the only way out of the Mines, the East Gate of Moria.

V. *Hobbits*. The fifth movement expresses the carefree and optimistic character of the Hobbits in a happy folk dance; the hymn that follows emanates from the determination and noblesse of the hobbit folk. The symphony does not end on an exuberant note, but is concluded peacefully and resignedly, in keeping with the symbolic mood of the last chapter *The Grey Havens* in which Frodo and Gandalf sail away in a white ship and disappear slowly beyond the horizon.

Johan de Meij

Symphony No. 2 'The Big Apple' (A New York Symphony)

My *Second Symphony* is an ode to New York: not strictly programmatic music but rather a musical interpretation of the spirit, glamour and indifference of one of the most fascinating cities in the world.

The first movement, *Skyline*, depicts the massive façade, the 'global' contours of New York; in the second movement (*Gotham*) the brutal, chaotic aspects of the metropolis are introduced. Listening to this symphony is perhaps as enervating as an actual visit to Manhattan. The listener is scarcely granted a moment of calm: even the more subdued passages are invariably accompanied by an obstinate rumbling in the background – the music never really quietsens down...

The Big Apple

The name *The Big Apple* was often used during the twenties by jazz musicians: if you managed to play in the New York jazz clubs you had made it, you had the 'Big Apple' in the palm of your hand! Today, however, the bright red apple functions as a symbol of the city: a welcome object in the souvenir shops, where post cards, pencil sharpeners, T-shirts and posters depict in countless variations this trademark of New York. The subtitle of the second movement, *Gotham*, is another nickname for the city.

Times Square Cadenza

My initial plan of writing a three movement symphony with a slow middle movement was soon abandoned since this was not in keeping with the frenetic energy, turmoil and the accelerated pulse beat that I always feel during my visits to the Big Apple. To preserve the tension between the two movements the idea emerged of a non-musical intermezzo: *Times Square Cadenza*, a compilation of city sounds I personally recorded, which links the two movements of the symphony together into a single uninterrupted whole.

The musical language running through the entire work is robust, angular and straightforward, unencumbered by depth or philosophical reflection. The symmetry of the New York street map together with the massive architecture of the skyscrapers provided the structure of the thematic material. For me, composing this work was both an exploration of various musical styles as well as a tribute to Aaron Copland, John Adams and Leonard Bernstein.

The syncopated, restless interval structure of the first theme on the horns, known as the 'Skyline Motif', follows the contours of the impressive silhouette of the Big Apple. From this motif all other themes are distilled, such as the extended melodic lines on the English horn, later joined by oboe and piano, and the massive sound blocks played by the brass. The whole is surrounded by repeated accompanying figures on the woodwinds, piano, harp and mallets: a jumble of lights and the on-and-off flicker of neon signs.

The recurrent use of these repeated sound patterns



bears a certain resemblance to minimal music, and there are also rhythmic influences of such musical styles as jazz and ragtime. The addition of a harpsichord is not the most obvious alternative in this context, but it is precisely the rigid, hammering nervous system of this instrument that fits so well into the orchestration.

The theme of the second movement is based entirely on the opening motif played by the brass; all possible manifestations of this four-tone motif are then used, in the accompanying figures as well as in the theme itself, including an extended dialogue (or duel?) between the timpani and the roto-toms. Apart from this, the second motif, which begins with an octave jump, provides the remaining musical building blocks. As the symphony concludes, a contrapuntal form of the 'Skyline Motif' returns from the first movement.

Symphony No. 2 'The Big Apple' was commissioned by the United States Air Force Band in Washington D.C., on the initiative of its commander and conductor, Lieutenant Colonel Alan L. Bonner, and was composed between October 1991 and September 1993. The official premier performance was given in March 1994 during the American Bandmasters Association Convention and the Pacific Basin Music Festival in Honolulu, Hawaii. The Dutch première was played by the Amsterdam Wind Orchestra conducted by Heinz Friesen in Muziekcentrum Vredenburg, Utrecht on 20th February 1994.

The Big Apple was a finalist at the 14th International Composition Competition in Corciano, Italy (1993) and was awarded an honourable mention.

My *Second Symphony* is dedicated to my parents.

Johan de Meij

Symphony No. 3 'Planet Earth' **Anthony Fiumara in conversation with the composer**

When Marcel Mandos, artistic director of the North Netherlands Orchestra (NNO) approached Johan de Meij with the request to write a symphony for his orchestra, the composer knew immediately what the subject of this new work would be. His *First Symphony 'The Lord of the Rings'* has the trilogy of the same name by Tolkien as a

guiding principle; his *Second Symphony 'The Big Apple'* is an homage to New York City. In fact, this latter symphony was magnificently recorded by the NNO conducted by Jurjen Hempel (QDisc 97035).

The *Third Symphony*, like the *Second*, has also become an ode; not to a city or a region, but to the entire earth in all its miraculous beauty and appearances: *Planet Earth*. With regards to what inspires him, De Meij states: "I always try to prevent my work from becoming 'story-telling music'. I like evoking images, but I mostly try to find it in abstractions. And I keep looking for new roads to follow. In my *Third Symphony*, the musical language and method I've used differ from the first two."

Still, *Planet Earth* shows clear similarities to *The Big Apple* – for example, the use of electronic sounds. "The recorded city sounds in *The Big Apple* were a sort of herald of the electronics that I use in the *Third*, continuing the attainments of the *Second Symphony* rather than those of the *First Symphony*. I use the extra-musical framework not so much programmatically but rather as a guideline, as a metaphor. When I think of motifs and fragments, I immediately know if they fit the framework or not. If they don't, I save them for another piece."

De Meij's music is often based on just a few principles. For instance, in his *Third Symphony*, he uses two triads that interlock on the piano keyboard: "I enjoy limiting my material to a handful of tones or chords and see what I can achieve with them. I always have to seek out these motifs or cells: they arise gradually. At a certain moment I start to see structures and variants in the few notes. From my intuition I develop certain motifs. Sometimes you plant such a seed and nothing comes out of it, but another motif can suddenly turn out to be a huge source of ideas."

Planet Earth is the first symphony that De Meij composed directly for symphony orchestra: his first two symphonies and his cello concerto *Casanova* were originally written for wind band, and later orchestrated. However, De Meij has always seen himself as a symphonic composer, because while his instrumentation is for wind players, the classical symphony orchestra has always been his guideline.

The title of De Meij's *Third Symphony* may remind us

of Gustav Holst's *The Planets*. In that work the composer 'deals with' all the planets of the solar system, except Earth. De Meij: "In *Planet Earth* I continue where Holst stopped. Not just in a figurative sense, but also literally: where *The Planets* ends with a six-part female choir and a large orchestra, I open my first movement (titled *Lonely Planet*) with a similar instrumentation and atmosphere. After that, any comparison to Holst ends."

After the opening movement, the composer approaches the 'lonely planet' through a big bang that launches the listener into the universe. The comets and planets surround us in the opening part, through speakers that are placed around the audience. For those electronic sounds, De Meij has used the expertise of Joris de Man, who knew perfectly how to transform his wishes and fantasies in impressive extraterrestrial and eccentric sounds.

De Meij had further assistance when he discovered, through the grapevine, the ancient Greek Homeric Hymns, from which he used the ode to Mother Earth (*Gaia* in Greek) in the closing movement of the

symphony, entitled *Mother Earth*. "This ancient Greek ode was exactly what I was looking for," says De Meij. "A classical text that I could use abstractly, but that intrinsically sings the praises of the life energy of the earth. Classicist Dr Adriaan Rademaker has helped me place the text below the notes; he turned out to be well-versed in music as well."

Out of the cosmic waste of Movement I, the second movement, *Planet Earth*, makes room for a pastoral, aerial view of the beautiful landscapes of our planet. De Meij: "In the second movement you hear the 'big tune' for the first time, a heroic unison melody in six horns from which much material is derived, each time in a different form and context, throughout the whole symphony; an endless hymn sung lustily, with which Homer was ahead of me thousands of years ago: 'I will sing praise of the Earth, mother of all!'" In the finale, the composer pulls out all the stops. All musicians contribute to this hymn and bring the symphony to a brilliant close.

Anthony Fiumara

