

music

by Eunice Wanzila

FILE	MUSIC_COMPSER.DOC (31.5K)		
TIME SUBMITTED	02-MAR-2017 10:02AM	WORD COUNT	538
SUBMISSION ID	778488541	CHARACTER COUNT	2722

Name

Professor

Course

Date

Music composer

⁵ Jennifer Higdon was born in Brooklyn, NY, on December 31, 1962. She is a major figure in contemporary classical music and is one among those who enjoy a lot of performances on stage. She gets her commissions here, by representing ¹ a range of genres which include; orchestral, chamber, choral, vocal and wind ensemble.

⁴ She has also received the 2010 Pulitzer Prize in music for her violin concerto and a Grammy award in the same year for percussion concerto. Her work on ¹ the blue cathedral is one of America's most performed contemporary orchestral works with more than 600 performances worldwide since its premiere in 2000.

³ Her works have also been recorded in more than four dozens of CDs. She holds a Ph.D. and an MA in music composition from the University of Pennsylvania, a BM in flute performance from Bowling Green state University, and an Artist Diploma in music composition from the Curtis Institute of music in Philadelphia.

¹ Her current project is an opera based, on the bestselling novel, Cold Mountain, by Charles Frazier which was co-commissioned by Santa Fe Opera, Opera Philadelphia and

Minnesota Opera in collaboration with North Carolina Opera. Recently, Jennifer won the international opera award for the best selling world premiere. She holds the rock chair in composition at the Curtis Institute of music in Philadelphia. Her music is exclusively published by Lawson press.

The name of selection I chose to study on is Blue Cathedral by Jennifer Higdon, which I listened on YouTube. The song was released in 2003 and is in the album Rainbow body/Blue Cathedral/symphony1/Appalachian spring suite.

² The work is scored for an orchestra comprising of two flutes, oboe, for anglais, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, harp, piano, celesta, timpani, three percussionists, and strings.

² This piece was written in memory of Higdon's younger brother who had died of skin cancer in 1998. It was about the journeys we travel in life whether solo or as a group, the growth we go through and all the positive and negative things that we encounter in life. The music seems to emit and at the same time ² reflect light as it moves from stillness to exuberance and back again tapering off ethereally. It also has that soul touching feeling of the listener knows the real background and source of the song.

It also envelops one with grief, hope and intuitive musical inventions which come from the rich orchestration making it entirely difficult to remember specific details about the song from one bit to the other.

The song has that angelic atmosphere of floating sounds. It opens with soft bell-like sounds and quiet solos. As the song gains intensity, the orchestral players are also indulged in, and other solos also join in. At the height of sound, the quiet celestial beginnings return with

muted sounds of strings and reflex bell sounds and eerie sounds of tuned water glasses. The song was so effective and so much friendly to the ears.

Works Cited

Higdon Jennifer. *blue cathedral program note*, 2000. archived February 2, 2016 at way back machine, retrieved Nov 24 2015

Lobb Annelena. "jennifer higdon" *The wall street journal* 2005. Retrieved Nov 24 2015

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