

Essay for Orchestra: Journey of a Man

INSTRUMENTATION

2 Flutes
2 Oboes
Cor Anglais
2 Clarinets in B flat
2 Bassoons
4 Horns in F
3 Trumpets in B flat
2 Trombones
Bass Trombone
Tuba
Timpani
Percussion: Bass Drum, large Tam-tam,
large Suspended Cymbal
Strings

Approximate duration: 10 minutes.

Composer's Note: Like many of my other works, “Essay for Orchestra” describes the struggle of a hero to overcome his personal demons. The orchestral essay, as a genre, began with Samuel Barber’s first “Essay for Orchestra” in 1937. This genre attempts to compress the drama and form of a symphony into one movement and has only one main theme, or character, instead of many.

This struggle is illustrated in three parts:

1. “A” section – **Andante serioso**

The first section introduces the tragic hero’s theme in the English horn, and then other instruments take up a variation of the melody. After a fanfare-like section, the somber mood returns.

2. “B” section – **Scherzo**

This is a fast section with fugal writing. It begins with the cellos and basses sustaining a long C note. On top of that, the flute states the main subject, which is based upon the hero’s theme.

3. “A₁” section – **Andante serioso**

A heroic statement in the horns and trombones announces the beginning of the third section. Dramatic exclamations from the orchestra and bass drum end the theme. The strings then try to rise out of the darkness, but their attempts are overcome by a great and somber orchestral tutti. This somber mood continues for the rest of the piece until the last three chords. A hopeful strain returns to hint that the hero has been defeated this time, but not forever.

