

## ABOUT THE WORK

Night Visions is a four-movement programmatic work about dreams. The composition starts with a woodwind chorale, which represents a standard bedtime prayer as follows:

Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.

If I die before I wake,  
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

The four bars before Rehearsal #1 is music representative of one falling asleep. The actual first dream "*Flying*" is heralded in at Rehearsal #1 with a brass fanfare followed by the actual flying motive, which enters at the Allegro at Rehearsal #2. The *l'istesso tempo* five bars after Rehearsal #10 begins a musical collage which is representative of the ending of Dream One and carries us into the clock striking midnight at Rehearsal #11. It should be noted that each dream has a separate ending designed for shortened performances of the work. These separate endings allow any movement to be performed by itself or in conjunction with other movements of the work. In a normal performance, the segue ending should be used.

The second dream, "*Gates of the Unknown*", begins at Rehearsal #12. This is the most programmatic of the four dreams. The woodwinds begin this work with a *Dies Irae* theme, which sets the mood for this piece. The brass chorale at the Largo (seventh bar of Rehearsal #12) represents the image of one standing before some very formidable gates. The *piu mosso* at #13 is characteristic of these gates opening, and the flute solo at #14 is the dreamer choosing to enter these gates. If there was any doubt that this dream was going to become a nightmare, the low E in the bass and cello against the final brass chorale chord three bars before #15 should end this doubt. The music in the clarinets in the Allegro Vivace (#15) depicts the panic of our dreamer trying to leave the maze that he has entered. The bass motive with the major seventh is 'the monster' from which he is fleeing. This chase now intensifies until #20; at this point the dreamer reaches a dead end from which there is no escape. Music from #20 to #24 indicates the panic of being unable to escape from the monster and finally culminates with the dreamer awakening at #24 to the sounds of the clock striking 3 A.M. The glissando, three bars later in the strings, is a musical sigh of relief that this was only a dream.

The third dream, "*Vision of a Lost Friend*", is a sentimental movement reflecting the concept that there are some people that we can no longer see in life that we can still see in our dreams. Since this work is written in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Charles O'Drobinak, this particular movement is dedicated to the late, great jazz pianist, Bill Evans, who was a close friend of theirs. Little needs to be said of this movement, but it should be noted that the five-bar phrase at #28 is a musical resignation that in fact we are all mortal. This statement is repeated in a more dissonant manner at #29, indicating the frustration and anger of no longer being able to see a lost friend in life.

The final dream, "*The American Dream*," begins with a majestic fanfare at #30 followed by an energetic theme at #31. The Lydian motive from the first dream is recapped at #33 with the introduction of the harvest hymn best known as "For the Beauty of the Earth" stated in a woodwind chorale at #34. This hymn quote was meant to pay homage to the wonderful natural resources that bless this great country. It concludes with an invigorating return to the Allegro Giusto at #35 which takes us back to the 'A' theme of this dream and into a coda which begins at #39. This dream is specifically dedicated to Mr. O'Drobinak to embody the spirit that has been so prevalent among many great Americans, and which those that know him feel he possesses.

It should also be noted that this piece could be thought of chronologically. The work opens with a child's prayer followed by a young person's fantasy dream of flying. The nightmare can be thought of as an older child's realization that there are many things to be feared in life, real or imagined. The third dream, "Vision of a Lost Friend" is a dream that would be typical of an older person who has begun to experience the loss of some of their close friends or relatives. The final dream "The American Dream" is one of accomplishment, which is often realized at the end of a career when one looks back at his achievements in life.

As stated earlier, every dream has an optional ending, which allows each movement to be performed separately. This composition has been orchestrated and written in such a way that it is possible to segue from Dream One to Dream Three or Four and from Dream Two to Dream Four. Thus, the conductor is provided with several options in any given performance. The total work is 12'45". Deleting any one movement would shorten the work by approximately 3 minutes.