

About the Work

“Overture for a New Age” was commissioned by the Diablo Symphony and dedicated to Mr. Yen Liang in celebration of the new millennium. This work was premiered in February of 2001 under the direction of Joyce Johnson-Hamilton. The adagio opening to this overture for full orchestra begins pensively with beautiful ascending lines in the strings accompanying a woodwind melody that depicts the hope and wonderment of what the next thousand years might bring for humanity. This eventually leads into a fanfare for the brass, which celebrates the arrival of the new millennium and carries us into the main, spirited allegro section of this work.

The allegro is begun with a driving dissonant theme that quickly moves into a second main melodic theme that is very festive and joyful. This allegro waltz playfully jumps from 3/4 to 6/8 time. In contemplating the next thousand years while writing this work, it became evident to the composer that he would be clueless as to what life might be like a thousand years from now. While he hopes and prays that there will be happiness, peace, and joy for mankind; Mr. Beckel also realizes that there could be many threats to our future happiness. Therefore, the use of this opening contradictory theme in the allegro sections is a bit threatening. It was the composer’s musical way of saying to future generations, *“Choose wisely.”* These two musical ideas alternate throughout this allegro section, and the work eventually returns to the opening fanfare material. This overture ends with a final statement of the threatening theme, which leaves us with a bit of a question mark regarding the future and what it might bring. This five minute overture is a lot of fun for orchestras to play, and audiences will find the piece enjoyable.