MATTHEW PETERSON

SYMPHONY NO. 1

The Singing Wilderness

2021

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SYMPHONY NO. 1

The Singing Wilderness

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SCORE

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for Steven Amundson

commissioned by St. Olaf College, Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, and Northern Symphony Orchestra
to celebrate conductor Steven Amundson's retirement and musical legacy

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PROGRAM NOTE

My first symphony, composed from summer of 2020 through spring of 2021, is inspired by conservationist Sigurd F. Olson's book *The Singing Wilderness*, a series of essays on the Minnesota northwoods published in 1956. I had been commissioned by three Minnesota orchestras to compose a work in honor of conductor Steven Amundson's retirement from my alma mater St. Olaf College, where he has conducted the orchestra since 1981. Steve has championed my work from the very beginning. We share a love for music and the Minnesota northwoods: Steve has a cabin near Ely where he spends his summers composing, and I spent many weeks of my youth traveling the Boundary Waters by canoe. Therefore I envisioned a large scale work in Steve's honor, inspired by the border-country wilderness. My thoughts landed on Sig's book, which I first read as a college student.

I set out to write a set of orchestral miniatures inspired by quotes from the book. Shortly into composing the work, it became clear the COVID-19 pandemic would delay the premiere indefinitely. Around that point in time I had a moment of recognition. Formally the work was expanding in scale, and thematically coalescing around a single motive of three tones. It dawned on me that *The Singing Wilderness* was a symphony-in-progress, an extension of the tradition of nature-inspired symphonies, alongside works of Beethoven, Mahler, Sibelius, Rautavaara.

The four movements, like the book's sections, follow the seasons from spring to winter. Each movement contains several sections inspired by quotes from the book. These quotes are included below as well as in the score. Olson's essays are like sermons: he is an evangelist preaching the Gospel of the Wilderness. He writes so evocatively about his transformative experiences in nature that the reader shares in his wonder. Reading his essays, I hear music. My symphony seeks to awaken a musical experience capturing some essence of the sensory experiences, natural phenomena, and moments of reflection that Olson describes so well.
- Matthew Peterson, June 2021

movements and sections may be performed individually as autonomous pieces

PART ONE: SPRING

The Winds of March

"When March comes in...the time is ripe for signs. It makes no difference if the ice is still thick on the lakes...when that something is in the wind, the entire situation is changed...just the faintest hint of softness in the air...a promise that hadn't been there before."

The Loons of Lac La Croix

"The loons of Lac la Croix are part of the vast solitudes, the hundreds of rocky islands, the long reaches of the lake...my memory is full of their calling...Once years ago on the open reaches of Lac la Croix I heard them under the light of a spring moon, a wild, blending harmony that has haunted me ever since...

...The great surfaces of Running Rock [Warrior Hill] were alive with movement. glittering with thousands of rivulets that spread fanlike over the granite slopes, caught the light, and lost it when they ran over the mosses and lichens and into the crevices....we paddled to the cliff and sat there studying the paintings: the imprints of hands, the moose, the war canoes, the suns and moons....

...In the old days [the] young...started at the water's edge, raced clear to the top a thousand yards or more away...and ran back to their canoes."

PART TWO: SUMMER

Campfires

"Something happens to a man when he sits before a fire. Strange stirrings take place within him, and a light comes into his eyes which was not there before."

The Way of a Canoe

"Is there any suspense that quite compares with that moment of committment when the canoe heads toward the lip of a long, roaring rapids and then is taken by its unseen power? At first there is no sense of speed, but suddenly you are a part of it...a sense of fierce abandonment when all the voyageurs of the past join the rapids in their shouting."

Silence

"It was before dawn, that period of hush before the birds had begun to sing. The lake was breathing softly as in sleep; rising and falling, it seemed to me to absorb like a great sponge all the sounds of the earth...This was a time for silence, for being in pace with ancient rhythms and timelessness, the breathing of the lake, the slow growth of living things. Here the cosmos could be felt and the true meaning of attunement."

PART THREE: AUTUMN

Caribou Moss

"Here the caribou moss grows and has never been disturbed...In those veins and in thousands of tiny fissures grow tufts of the silvery-gray moss...Gouged ten thousand years ago by a hard rock in the base of the ice, it provided a growing place for the first spores that drifted across the ridge after the recession. There the caribou moss is growing and will continue to grow for centuries to come."

Smoky Gold

"The leaves are gone from the hillsides and the glory of the red maple and of the yellow aspen and birch is strewn upon the ground. Only in the protected swamps is there any color, the smoky gold of the tamaracks...these are days of quietly falling needles when after each breath of wind the air is smoky with their drift."

PART FOUR: WINTER

Trapper's Cabin

"Charley Raney, the mad trapper who built it, found there a mystery and wildness that complemented his own nature...He loved to sit on his stoop and play his violin to the accompaniment of the rapids. He was as much a part of his setting as the Sibelius he loved was part of the forests and lakes of Finland...Charley's violin blended with the music of the rapids so closely that I could not tell them apart and I know he was feeling not only the scene around him but the wilds and hinterlands of Europe's North."

Northern Lights

"The lights of the aurora moved and shifted over the horizon. Sometimes there were shafts of yellow tinged with green, then masses of evanescence which moved from east to west and back again...Streaks of yellow and orange and red shimmered along the flowing borders. Never for a moment were they still, fading until they were almost completely gone, only to dance forth again in renewed splendor with infinite combinations and startling patterns of design...

...Shafts of light shot up into the heavens above me and concentrated there in a final climactic effort in which the shifting colors seemed drained from the horizons to form one gigantic rosette of flame and yellow and greenish purple."

Skyline Trail

"This afternoon we will take the Skyline Trail, the trail that more than any other gives us a feeling of distance and space. Vistas of wilderness will be ours, frozen swamps and lakes and ridges and winding trails through the woods. Along that trail towards sunset the light effects are more striking than anywhere else, for here the whole country lies before us...

...Down the last long slope our skis fairly sing."

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INSTRUMENTATION

flute 1-2
flute 3/piccolo

oboe 1-2
oboe 3/english horn

clarinet in B♭ 1-2
clarinet in B♭ 3/bass clarinet in B♭

bassoon 1-2
basoon 3/contrabassoon

horn in F 1-4
trumpet in C 1-3
trombone 1-2
bass trombone
tuba

timpani a 4

percussion 1-3
bass drum, 3 tom-toms
large tam-tam, 2 suspended cymbals, clash cymbals, triangle
3 wood blocks, claves, cabasa, rain stick
marimba, vibraphone, glockenspiel
all 3 percussionists require a bow for arco playing

harp

violin I
violin II
viola
cello
double bass

DURATION: ca. 37 minutes

TRANSPOSED SCORE

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to celebrate conductor Steven Amundson's retirement and musical legacy

Symphony No. 1

The Singing Wilderness

TRANSPOSED SCORE

Matthew Peterson (2021)

PART ONE: SPRING

The Winds of March

"When March comes in...the time is ripe for signs. It makes no difference if the ice is still thick on the lakes...when that something is in the wind, the entire situation is changed...just the faintest hint of softness in the air...a promise that hadn't been there before."

molto adagio - placido ♩. = 44

Piccolo/Flute 3
Flute 1-2
Oboe 1-2
English Horn/Ob. 3
Clarinet in B♭ 1
Clarinet in B♭ 2
Bass Clarinet in B♭/Cl. 3
Bassoon 1-2
Bsn. 3/Cbsn.
1-2 Horn in F 3-4
Trumpet in C 1
Trumpet in C 2
Trumpet in C 3
Trombone 1
Trombone 2
Bass Trombone
Tuba
Timpani
Vibraphone
Glockenspiel
Percussion 3
Harp
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass

1. solo

pp lontano e espressivo, ma non troppo

mf

p

arco

tam-tam

divisi a 3
sul tasto, non vib.

divisi
con sord., pochiss. vib.

div. a 3

1, 2

3.

pp sempre

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Fl. 3
Fl. 1-2
Ob. 1-2
Eng. Hn.
Cl. 1
Cl. 2
B. Cl.
Bsn. 1
Bsn. 2
Bassoon
Bsn. 3
Hn.
C Tpt. 1
C Tpt. 2
C Tpt. 3
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
B. Tbn.
Tba.
Vib.
Glock.
Perc. 3
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

2.
(1. solo)
4.
unis
div.
unis.
div. a 3
molto
Ped.

7 8 9 10 11 12 13

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A piu mosso - mormorando ♩ = 80

Flute 3

solo, liberamente
without metric accents (even 16ths)

Fl. 3

p

solo, liberamente
without metric accents (even 16ths)

Fl. 1

p

solo, liberamente
without metric accents (even 16ths)

Fl. 2

Cl. 1

pp < molto

pp < molto

Cl. 2

pp < molto

hold pedal until complete fade

Vib.

Hp.

bisbigliando

pp

A piu mosso - mormorando ♩ = 80

Vln. I

div. a2

ord.

pp

Vln. II

div., senza sord.
senza vib.

ppp

unis., ord.

pp

14 15 16 17 18

Fl. 3

pp

ff

Fl. 1

pp

ff

Fl. 2

pp

ff

Ob. 1

pp

fp

ff

Ob. 2

pp

fp

ff

Eng. Hn.

Oboe

pp

fp

ff

Cl. 1

pp

pp

ff

Cl. 2

pp molto

pp

ff

Cl. 3

B♭ Clarinet

pp

ff

susp. cym.

Perc. 3

pp

ff

Hp.

ff

Vln. I

div.

div.

div. a 3

ff

Vln. II

ff

Vla.

senza sord.

p

ff

19 20 21 22

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B

3/2 maestoso ♩ = 72 — 5/4 accel. — 3/2

Fl. 3

Fl. 1-2

Ob. 1-2

Ob. 3

Cl. 1-2

Cl. 3

Bsn. 1-2

Bsn. 3

Hn.

pp cresc. poco a poco pp

pp cresc. poco a poco pp

<molto>

C Tpt. 1.2.3

Tbn. 1-2

p <molto> cresc. poco a poco

B. Tbn.

Tba.

pp cresc. poco a poco pp

Timp.

pp cresc. poco a poco pp

Vib.

Glock.

Perc. 3

Hp.

B maestoso ♩ = 72 — accel.

Vln. I

unis. sul pont. ord.

pp sub. <molto> cresc. poco a poco

div. simile

Vln. II

unis. sul pont. ord.

pp sub. <molto> cresc. poco a poco

simile div.

Vla.

div., senza sord.

p pp cresc. poco a poco

Vc.

div., senza sord.

p pp cresc. poco a poco

Db.

senza sord.

p pp cresc. poco a poco

23 24 25 26

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allargando

Fl. 3
Fl. 1-2
Ob. 1-2
Ob. 3
Cl. 1-2
Cl. 3
Bsn. 1-2
Cbsn.
Contrabassoon
Hn.
C Tpt. 1.2.3
Tbn. 1-2
B. Tbn.
Tba.
Timp.
Vib.
Glock.
Perc. 3
susp. cym.
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
div. a 3
a2
mf
mp
f
ff
ffp
pp
p
piu ff
crescendo

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C

adagio - teneramente ♩ = 50

attacca

Fl. 3
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Ob. 1-2
English Horn
Eng. Hn.
Cl. 1-2
Cl. 3
Bsn. 1-2
Hn.
C Tpt. 1
C Tpt. 2
C Tpt. 3
Tbn. 1-2
B. Tbn.
Tba.
Timp.
Vib.
Glock.
tam-tam
Perc. 3
l.v. sempre
Hp.
ord., div. a 2
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
ord.
div.
non div.
pizz.
bisbigliando

pp sostenuto
pp dolce
pp sost.
ppp
pp
tr
Led.

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the calling of the loons
"The loons of Lac la Croix are part of the vast solitudes, the hundreds of rocky islands, the long reaches of the lake...my memory is full of their calling...Once years ago on the open reaches of Lac la Croix I heard them under the light of a spring moon, a wild, blending harmony that has haunted me ever since."



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Fl. 3
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Ob. 1
Ob. 2
Eng. Hn.
Cl. 1
Cl. 2
Vib.
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

echoing Ob. 1
in background of Fl. 1
a piacere
in background of Ob. 1
tam-tam., arco
susp. cym, arco
non vib.
con poco vibrato

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Fl. 3
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Ob. 1
Ob. 2
Eng. Hn.
Cl. 1
Cl. 2
B. Cl.
Bsn. 1
Bsn. 2
Vib.
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

a piacere (with Ob. 1)
a piacere
div.
ord. vib.
unis.
espr.

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morendo

attacca

Fl. 3

Fl. 1 — echo Cl. — pp

Fl. 2 — echo Cl. — pp

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Eng. Hn.

Cl. 1 — p mf

Cl. 2 — p mf

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Vib. — pp

Perc. 2 — pp

Perc. 3 — susp. cym., arco — pp; tam-tam, with beater — pp; l.v. — p

Hp.

Vln. I — unis. — pp; ppp

Vln. II — pp; ppp

Vla. — pp; ppp

Vc. — pp

Db. — pp; ppp

55 56 57 58 59

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pictographs
"The great surfaces of Running Rock [Warrior Hill] were alive with movement. glittering with thousands of rivulets that spread fanlike over the granite slopes, caught the light, and lost it when they ran over the mosses and lichens and into the crevices....we paddled to the cliff and sat there studying the paintings: the imprints of hands, the moose, the war canoes, the suns and moons."



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E **largo - misterioso** ♩ = 84

Picc. — Piccolo, non vib. — *pp*

Fl. 1-2 — non vib. — *pp*

Ob. 1-2 — *ppp*

Eng. Hn. — solo, *liberamente* — *p espr.* — *poco* — *molto*

Cl. 1-2 — *pp*

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1-2

Cbsn.

Hn.

C Tpt. 1.2.3

Tbn. 1-2

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Vib.

Perc. 2

Perc. 3 — *pp*

Hp. — l.v. — *p* — *sim.*

E **largo - misterioso** ♩ = 84

Vln. I — *ppp*

Vln. II — *ppp*

Vla. — unis., arco — *ppp*

Vc.

Db.

66 67 68 69 70 71

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F

poco piu largo ♩ = 76

Picc.

Fl. 1-2

1. solo, *liberamente*
ord. vib.

p espr.

non vib.

non vib.

pp

non vib.

pp

Ob. 1-2

ppp

Eng. Hn.

Cl. 1-2

ppp

Cl. 3

Clarinet in B♭

ppp

Bsn. 1-2

Cbsn.

Hn.

C Tpt. 1.2.3

Tbn. 1-2

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Vib.

Vibraphone

pp

Ped.

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

tam-tam, ord.
susp. cym, scrape

pp *p*

Hp.

(l.v.)

pp

F

poco piu largo ♩ = 76

Vln. I

pp

Vln. II

pp

Vla.

pp

Vc.

Db.

72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80

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G **larghetto - come campane ♩ = 60**

Picc.
Fl. 1-2 (n.v.)
Ob. 1-2
Eng. Hn. Oboe
Cl. 1-2
Cl. 3
Bsn. 1-2
Hn. 1. 3.
C Tpt. 1 senza sord.
C Tpt. 2 senza sord.
C Tpt. 3 senza sord.
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
B. Tbn.
Tba.
Vibes, arco, motor off
Glockenspiel
susp. cym., scrape with metal vary placement and speed
Perc. 3
Hp.
Vln. I div. non vib.
Vln. II div. non vib.
Vla. arco div. non vib.

81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88

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H

Picc.
Fl. 1-2
Ob. 1-2
Ob. 3
Cl. 1-2
Cl. 3
Bsn. 1-2
Cbsn.
Hn.
C Tpt. 1.2.3
Tbn. 1-2
B. Tbn.
Tba.
Timp.
Vib.
Glock.
Perc. 3
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

susp cym, arco
tam-tam, arco
susp. cym., arco
non vib.
con vib.
molto vib.
non div.
div.
ord.
arco
gliss.

89 90 91 92 93 94

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Running Rock
"In the old days [the] young...started at the water's edge, raced clear to the top a thousand yards or more away...and ran back to their canoes"



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Picc.
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Ob. 1-2
Ob. 3
Cl. 1-2
Cl. 3
Bsn. 1-2
Cbsn.
Hn.
C Tpt. 1.2.3
Tbn. 1-2
B. Tbn.
Tba.
Timp.
sempre marcato
tom-toms, yarn mallets (heavy full sound)
Perc. 1
Glock.
Perc. 3
susp. cym.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

101 102 103 104 105 106 107

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Picc.
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Ob. 1-2
Ob. 3
Cl. 1-2
Cl. 3
Bsn. 1-2
Cbsn.
Hn.
C Tpt. 1.2.3
Tbn. 1-2
B. Tbn.
Tba.
Timp.
Perc. 1
Glock.
Perc. 3
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

108 109 110 111

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J K

Picc.
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Ob. 1-2
Ob. 3
Cl. 1-2
Cl. 3
Bsn. 1-2
Cbsn.
Hn.
C Tpt. 1.2.3
Tbn. 1-2
B. Tbn.
Tba.
Timp.
Perc. 1
Glock.
Perc. 3
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

112 113 114 115 116

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Picc.
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Ob. 1-2
Ob. 3
Cl. 1-2
Cl. 3
Bsn. 1-2
Cbsn.
Hn.
C Tpt. 1.2.3
Tbn. 1-2
B. Tbn.
Tba.
Timp.
Perc. 1
tam-tam
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

2/4 4/4

117 118 119 120 121

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Picc.
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Ob. 1-2
Ob. 3
Cl. 1-2
Cl. 3
Bsn. 1-2
Cbsn.
Hn.
C Tpt. 1.2.3
Tbn. 1-2
B. Tbn.
Tba.
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

122 123 124 125

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L

meno mosso - maestoso ♩ = 108

Picc.
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Ob. 1-2
Ob. 3
Cl. 1-2
Cl. 3
Bsn. 1-2
Cbsn.
Hn.
C Tpt. 1
C Tpt. 2
C Tpt. 3
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
B. Tbn.
Tba.
Timp.
Vibraphone, hard
Vib.
Glockenspiel
Glock.
clash cymbals
Perc. 3
Hp.

L

meno mosso - maestoso ♩ = 108

non div.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

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a tempo ♩ = 120

Picc.
Fl. 1-2
Ob. 1
Ob. 2
Ob. 3
Cl. 1
Cl. 2
Cl. 3
Bsn. 1-2
Cbsn.
Hn.
C Tpt. 1.2.3
Tbn. 1-2
B. Tbn.
Tba.
Timp.
Vib.
Glock.
Perc. 3
Hp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

sim.

gliss.

div.

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