

NICKY SOHN

SYMPHONY NO. 1

FOR ORCHESTRA

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(2023)

Instrumentation

Flute 1, 2, 3 (doubling piccolo and alto flute)

Oboe 1, 2, 3 (doubling English horn)

Clarinet 1, 2, 3

Bassoon 1, 2, 3

Horn 1, 2, 3, 4

Trumpet in C 1, 2, 3

Trombone 1, 2, 3

Tuba

Timpani

Percussion 1, 2, 3 (vibraphone, tubular bells, triangle, glockenspiel, bass drum, crash cymbal, marimba, large gong, chorales, snare drum, slapstick, claves, large cowbell, two flex atones, woodblocks, castanets, tambourine)

Keyboard - Piano, celesta

Harp

Strings

Duration - ca. 21 minutes

Program note — edited by Justin Son

Symphony No. 1 intertwines the depths of my personal experience with the boundless, inescapable realms of universal truths. Rooted in the transformative journey of being part of the Composing Earth Cohort through the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music, the work serves as a reminder of our planet's precarious state that urges contemplation and action.

My childhood in Korea was cradled under an expansive cerulean sky. Over my days of unburdened innocence and vibrant playgrounds, there it was, watching over me and my old neighborhood friends. Yet, upon my return to Korea as an adult after decades abroad, I was confronted with a grave reality: the once vivid blue had succumbed to a somber urban grey, an undeniable testament to the nation's unsuccessful battle against air pollution. This shift in the skies above—so different from the memories of my youth—was poignantly symbolized by the children of today, who, I discovered, reach for grey crayons to color it instead of the stubby blue ones that colored the skies of my own childhood.

In the midst of these reflections, another memory of blue seemed to bloom inside me. It was a recollection of blissful afternoons in the remote countryside of southern France in May of 2022. This epiphany came as I pondered the sky, realizing why those weeks in France felt like something that could most accurately be described as childlike euphoria. The uninterrupted blue, morphing into a pallet of rich tones with the day's progression, formed a canopy over a rose-adorned garden where I stayed, enveloped by nature and the warmth of a cherished love. Though the skies and the people of my life had since changed, the blue sky that hung over that secluded French garden was precisely the one I remembered. That blue has been woven into the very fabric of Symphony No. 1.

The symphony unfolds in four movements, each symbolizing stages of change, loss, introspection, and hope. A melody conceived in the summer of 2022, shortly after my time in France, threads through the work as a leitmotif. In the opening movement, "Memories of Blue", the melody presents itself delicately, painting an expressive landscape of past moments. This nostalgic feeling then transforms itself into an assertive force in "The Blue Hour". It then is filled with great tension, dancing between the edge of beautiful memories and stark realities in "Fading Blue", the third movement. Finally, in "Letter to My Blue," the symphony's finale, the recurring themes culminate with a powerful resonance to create a hopeful, invigorating closure.

The influence of Berlioz's "Symphony Fantastique" has been profound in my musical odyssey. His portrayal of personal experiences and emotions has been instrumental in shaping my creative ethos. Drawing inspiration from his innovative use of the "Idée fixe" to embody emotional states, I have too composed my symphony with a similar thematic persistence, creating an exploration of memory, sentiment, and transformation that echoes Berlioz's masterpiece.

In Symphony No. 1, I seek to illustrate that the most personal of experiences often resonate with what is universal. The symphony's narrative reflects a quintessential truth of life: while we cannot reclaim the past, we can find solace and hope somewhere in our own memory. It reminds us that in times of illness, we yearn for health, and during the long, grey winters, our hearts await the first of May. In the same vein as Berlioz's symphonic journey, this work is a tribute to the past, a reflection of the present, and an ode to the future. With the passing of one thing comes another. With the loss of an envisioned future there will be another dream to be had. With old dreams and new hopes in mind, Symphony No. 1 paints an auditory canvas that calls for introspection, transformation, and the enduring spirit of eternal renewal.

Symphony No. 1

Co-commissioned by the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra,
José-Luis Novo Artistic Director and Conductor
and the Gabriela Lena Frank Academy of Music

Transposed Score

Nicky Sohn

I. Memories of Blue

♩ = 60

Flute 1
Flute 2
Flute 3
Oboe 1
Oboe 2
Oboe 3
Clarinet in B♭ 1
Clarinet in B♭ 2
Clarinet in B♭ 3
Bassoon 1
Bassoon 2
Bassoon 3
Horn in F 1,2
Horn in F 3,4
Trumpet in C 1,2,3
Trombone 1,2
Trombone 3
Tuba
Timpani
Vibraphone 1
Tubular Bells
Marimba
Piano
Harp
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

rit. a tempo ♩ = 60

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with multiple staves for each instrument family. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *f*, *ff*, and *mp*, as well as performance instructions like *rit.* and *a tempo*. The piece is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 60 beats per minute. The score spans from measure 14 to 23, with a section labeled 'B' starting at measure 17. The instrumentation includes Flutes (Fl. 1, 2, 3), Oboes (Ob. 1, 2, 3), Clarinets in Bb (Cl. in Bb 1, 2, 3), Bassoons (Bsn 1, 2, 3), Horns in F (Hn in F 1, 2 and 3, 4), Trumpets in C (Tpt in C 1, 2, 3), Trombones (Tbn. 1, 2 and 3), Timpani (Timp.), Vibraphone (Vib. 1), Glockenspiel (Glock.), Triangle (Tri. 2), Celesta (Cel.), Harp (Hp.), Violins (Vln I, II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (D. B.).

C

This musical score is for the piece "Memories of Blue" and covers measures 24 through 34. The score is arranged for a full orchestra and includes the following parts:

- Flutes (Fl. 1, 2, 3):** Flute 1 has a melodic line starting in measure 24 with a forte (*f*) dynamic. Flutes 2 and 3 provide harmonic support.
- Oboes (Ob. 1, 2, 3):** Oboe 1 has a melodic line starting in measure 24 with a forte (*f*) dynamic.
- Clarinets (Cl. in Bb 1, 2, 3):** Clarinet in Bb 1 has a melodic line starting in measure 24 with a forte (*f*) dynamic.
- Bassoons (Bsn 1, 2, 3):** Bassoon 1 has a melodic line starting in measure 24 with a forte (*f*) dynamic.
- Horns (Hn in F 1, 2; Hn in F 3, 4):** Horns in F provide harmonic support.
- Trumpets (Tpt in C 1, 2, 3):** Trumpets in C provide harmonic support.
- Trombones (Tbn. 1, 2, 3):** Trombone 1 has a melodic line starting in measure 24 with a piano (*p*) dynamic.
- Percussion (Timp., Vib. 1, Glock., Cr. Cym. 2):** Percussion instruments provide rhythmic support.
- Cello (Cel.):** Cello provides harmonic support.
- Harpsichord (Hp.):** Harpsichord provides harmonic support.
- Violins (Vln I, Vln II):** Violins provide harmonic support.
- Viola (Vla.):** Viola provides harmonic support.
- Violoncello (Vc.):** Violoncello provides harmonic support.
- Double Bass (D. B.):** Double bass provides harmonic support.

The score includes various dynamics such as *f* (forte), *p* (piano), and *ff* (fortissimo). It also features triplets and slurs. The piece concludes in measure 34 with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic.

Memories of Blue

Fl. 1 *pp* **D**
 Fl. 2 *pp*
 Fl. 3 *pp*
 Ob. 1 *p* *f*
 Ob. 2 *f*
 Ob. 3 *f*
 Cl. in Bb 1 *p* *f*
 Cl. in Bb 2 *f*
 Cl. in Bb 3 *f*
 Bsn 1 *f*
 Bsn 2 *f*
 Bsn 3 *f*
 Hn in F 1,2 *p* *f* *ff*
 Hn in F 3,4 *p* *f* *ff*
 Tpt in C 1,2,3 *p* *f* *ff*
 Tbn. 1,2 *p* *f* *ff*
 Tbn. 3 *p* *f* *ff*
 Tbn. *ff*
 Timp. *ff*
 Vib. 1 *f* **To B. Dr.**
 Glock. *f* *mp*
 Cr. Cym. 2
 Cel. *f* *ff* **To Pno**
 Hp. *f* *ff*
 Vln I *fp* *ff* *ppp* *p* *pp* *mp* *p* *f*
 Vln II *fp* *ff* *ppp* *p* *pp* *mp* *p* *f*
 Vla. *fp* *ff* *ppp* *p* *pp* *mp* *p* *f*
 Vc. *fp* *ff* *ppp* *p* *pp* *mp* *p* *f*
 D. B. *p* *f*

35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45