

ROGER J. HENRY, D.M. RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

Project 4: Symphony 2: Dance, Tan Tan

Abstract

Symphony 2: Dance, Tan Tan was commissioned by the Division of Culture for the National Philharmonic Orchestra. The piece is scored for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets in B Flat, 2 bassoons, 2 horns in F, 2 trumpets in B Flat, 2 trombones, euphonium, percussion, steel pan ensemble, and strings. The work contains four movements:

I: *Fanfare*, 4/4, E flat major

II: *Dirge*, 4/4, c minor

III: *Promenade*, 3/4, 3/4, 2/4, G major

IV: *Jam*, 2/2, E flat major

The full run time is roughly 35 minutes.

Context

Outside of Panorama Pieces, Trinidad and Tobago does not have a sustained cultural tradition of formal composition. In his symphonic writing, the composer explores elemental aspects of the local musical traditions – melody, rhythm, harmony, texture, and colour – in the context of a formal symphonic structure.

Purpose and Significance

This symphony is the second of this genre by composer Roger J. Henry. The composer's symphonic work seeks to extend and enrich a neglected tradition of formal symphonic composition by local composers. The work itself is an archive of constructs and practices derived through close study of the tropes of local composition, of folk, popular, and other musical styles.

Methodology

N/A

Theoretical Approach

This work is named for the famous Carnival Queen by Peter Minshall, Tan Tan. The idea behind the choice of Tan Tan to be included in the name is that Tan Tan herself is an image, a representation of the vivaciousness, elegant abandon, and the cherishing of culture and heritage that is at the root of all of Minshall's works of mas. The choice of Tan Tan is an effort to link this symphony to those same ideals.

The fourth movement (Jam) is composed following the formal layout of a Panorama Piece: it is a five-part structure consisting of Introduction, Exposition (verse and chorus), Development (variations), Recapitulation, and Conclusion. The composer uses many of the compositional tropes and melodic devices common to Panorama genre.

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Review of Resources

N/A