THROUGH THE VULCAN'S EYE

(Red Mountain Celebrations)

ROBERT W. SMITH (ASCAP)

INSTRUMENTATION

- I Conductor
- I C Piccolo
- 6 Ist & 2nd C Flute
- 2 Ist & 2nd Oboe
- 2 Bassoon
- 3 Ist B Clarinet
- 3 2nd B Clarinet
- 3 3rd B Clarinet
- 2 B♭ Bass Clarinet
- I E Contra Bass Clarinet
- 2 Ist & 2nd E Alto Saxophone
- I By Tenor Saxophone
- I E Baritone Saxophone
- 3 Ist B Trumpet
- 3 2nd B Trumpet
- 3 3rd B Trumpet
- 2 Ist & 2nd Horn in F
- 2 3rd & 4th Horn in F

- 2 Ist Trombone
- 2 2nd Trombone
- 2 3rd Trombone
- 2 Baritone
- I Baritone Treble Clef
- Tuba
- 3 Mallet Percussion
 - (Chimes, Marimba, Xylophone)
- Timpani
- 3 Percussion

(Snare Drum, Bass Drum,

Triangle)

Percussion 2

(Crash Cymbals,

Suspended Cymbal)

Percussion 3

(Spoons, Tambourine,

Wind Chimes, Wood Block)



PROGRAM NOTES

High atop Red Mountain, overlooking the magnificent city of Birmingham, Alabama, stands an iron sentinel...a monument which keeps watch over Alabama's City of Steel. The "Vulcan" can see and be seen from virtually every corner of the city. *Through the Vulcan*'s Eye is an original composition for wind band, inspired by the composer's childhood experiences in the state's largest metropolis.

Through the Vulcan's Eye is comprised of four melodies that describe views from the top of the mountain. The opening statement in the brass, which is answered by the full ensemble, depicts the grandeur of the downtown skyline with its towers of concrete, glass, and steel. The brisk melodic statement that follows is quite hectic by comparison. As one watches in the early morning, the city comes to life with its network of busy highways and crowded streets. Even the accompaniment seems to have a "mind" of its own under the energetic melodic line. Looking into the distance, one can see a more rural picture with rolling hills and green pastures and fields. The composer created a 7/8 jig which is reminiscent of a country fiddler playing at a family gathering. The landscape is dotted with various church steeples which seem to glisten in the early morning dawn. A simple hymn captures those images in sound.

The work was commissioned by the University of Alabama-Birmingham for performance at the 1995 Honor Band Festival. The event was held in December on the campus of UAB. The Honor Band was under the direction of Clifford M. Winter, III, Director of Bands at the University of Alabama-Birmingham. The composer had the honor of conducting the first performance.

NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

The opening statement should be as stately and majestic as possible. By no means should it feel "pushed" or "hurried." The ensemble response at measure 5 should be interpreted in the same fashion. Note that the tempo changes abruptly in measure 15. The brass and low woodwinds should continue the crescendo as if the final chord of the introduction was not yet complete. The upper woodwinds and timpani/mallets create a sense of momentum that carries the listener to the melody at measure 16. I would suggest subdividing the last two beats in measure 14 to set up the new tempo at 172 beats per minute.

The accompaniment figures under the melody at measure 16 may be a bit tricky in the early stages of rehearsal. I would suggest rehearsing the tuba/low woodwinds separately to reinforce the four-bar rhythmic pattern which repeats several times. I would also consider adjusting the presence of the bass drum during the early rehearsals for security in the ensemble. Following the successful performance of the bass line, the eighth notes in the horns/bassoons should fall into place.

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