

SCORE LIBRARY

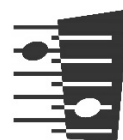
Matthew Whittall

NORTHLANDS

*album for horn and
string orchestra*

(2009)

STUDY SCORE



Instrumentation:

Solo F horn (optional: doubling natural horn in D)

Strings (min. 5-5-4-3-2)*

*Divisi are indicated with this number of players in mind. For larger groups, divisi may be adjusted as necessary to correct instrumental balances.

Performance instructions (strings):

s.p. = sul ponticello

q.s.p. = quasi sul pont.

ord. = normal tone

Notes on use of vibrato:

- A warm, romantic tone is not desired at any point. Vibrato in "normal tone" passages should be restrained.

-Where vibrato (or non-vibrato) is marked, it is to the conclusion of that particular phrase, gesture or held note. Normal tone resumes thereafter.

-Vibrato markings are placed only on the top staff of each part for clarity, but apply to all players in the section. Where vibrato applies to a solo player only, this is marked specially.

Program note:

This work came about as commission from my friend Tommi Hyytinen for a concertante-type piece. Initially apprehensive about both the concerto form, with its attendant expectations of virtuosic display, and about writing such a work for my former main instrument, I felt I wasn't ready, that I was still too close. The additional request for a piece with chamber string orchestra was another stumbling block, as I'd thought my first contribution to the horn concerto repertoire as an ex-player myself should be a rather grand statement. After some thought on the matter, though, I realized that Tommi had in fact saved me from myself, offering me the opportunity to write a subtler, more intimate piece. I began to think about his background and mine, and our shared love of the solo and chamber, rather than orchestral repertoire of the horn, and of the sound of the valveless natural horn. It also occurred to me that the clean, cool soundworld of horn and strings was highly evocative of the Nordic landscapes I find so inspiring, and therefore it seemed that what was called for was a contemporary take on the gentle "pastoral" concerto popular in the early 20th century, in which overt technical virtuosity takes a supportive role to the lyrical beauty of the solo instrument's voice. The "album" of the title refers simply to a collection – of images, of songs, of writings – in keeping with the formal construction of the piece as a series of loosely interconnected episodes.

When the première performance was arranged with the Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra in Tommi's hometown of Kokkola, the themes of North and nordicity took on a sudden prominence. I found myself drawn to my countryman Glenn Gould's thoughts on the subject in his radio composition *The Idea of North*, in which he saw geographical isolation and solitude as engendering a deep introspection. Gould also dealt with the romanticizing of an imagined North that takes place in the mind of the inexperienced versus the sometimes harsher reality of life in northern climes, a reality brought into sharper focus for me by a trip to Iceland in the fall of 2007. In fact, much of the structure and content of *Northlands* was influenced in one way or another by my brief experience with Iceland, its epic landscapes and otherworldly light, which had an immediate and powerful impact both on me and the concept for the piece, and whose rich vocal music tradition was a revelation. The world the string orchestra creates for the soloist in *Northlands* is at first a melancholic one of shadows and diffuse light, but also increasingly of sun and bright, clear skies as the piece gradually unfolds. Toward the end the music coalesces around a quotation on the natural horn of the Icelandic hymn *Sjóferðabæn* ("The Seafarer's Hymn") – a tune graciously passed on to me by folk singer and composer Bára Grímsdóttir, and which generates much of the material of *Northlands* – before giving way to a pulsing, joyous music that calls the horn home.

Northlands was commissioned by Tommi Hyytinen with the assistance of the Sibelius Fund and LUSES, and is dedicated to him.

Recording ALBA ABCD 416. Tommi Hyytinen,
horn, Tapiola Sinfonietta, Nils Schweckendiek,
conductor.

Northlands

(album for horn and string orchestra)

MATTHEW WHITTALL (2009)

Part I

(Conductor cues)

Calm; Timeless

1

2

3

♩ = 60-66

Solo Horn

Violin I
div. a 5

Violin II
div. a 5

Viola
div. a 4

Violoncello
div. a 3

Contrabass

The musical score is written for a Solo Horn and a string orchestra (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass). The Solo Horn part is in the treble clef, while the string parts are in their respective clefs. The score is divided into four measures. The first measure is marked 'Calm; Timeless' and features a 'seagull' glissando on the Solo Horn and strings. The second measure is marked 'sim.' (similando). The third measure is marked 'pp' (pianissimo). The fourth measure is marked 'ppp' (pianississimo) and 'no vib.' (no vibrato). Conductor cues 1, 2, and 3 are indicated by vertical dashed lines. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 60-66. The score includes various performance instructions such as 'Sul D', 'Sul G', 'Sul C', and 'Sul D' with 'seagull' gliss. markings, and dynamics ranging from 'n' (natura) to 'ppp'.

Emerging; Serene

5

Hn. *p* (freely, poco rubato) *mp*

Vln. I div. a 5

Vln. II div. a 5

Vla. div. a 4

Vcl. div. a 3

Cbs.

The musical score is for a piece titled "Emerging; Serene". It is a page from a larger score, indicated by the number "5" in the top left. The score is written for several instruments: Horn (Hn.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vcl.), and Contrabass (Cbs.). The Horn part is in bass clef and features a melodic line with triplets and a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) followed by *mp* (mezzo-piano). Performance instructions include "(freely, poco rubato)". The string parts (Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., Vcl., Cbs.) are in treble clef and play a sustained, harmonic accompaniment. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines, and the time signature changes from 6/4 to 5/4 and back to 6/4. A large, semi-transparent watermark is visible across the center of the page.

Forward

rit.

18

Hn. *mp* *f*

no vib. *ppp* *p* *f*

div. a 5 Vln. I *ppp* *p* *f*

no vib. *ppp* *p* *f*

div. a 5 Vln. II *ppp* *p* *f*

Vla. *ppp* *p* *f*

div. a 4 *ppp* *p* *f*

div. a 3 Vcl. *ppp* *pp* *f*

Cbs. *ppp* *p* *f*

A Forward ♩ = 80

(a tempo)

23

Hn. *mp* *freely* *mp sim.*

Vln. I *mf* *mf*

Vln. II *mf*

Vla. *mf* *pizz.* *arco*

Vcl. *mf*

Cbs. *mf*

28

(a tempo) slightly slower

Hn. *mp* *gentler* *p* *mf* *ff*

Vln. I *mp* *gentler* *p* *mf* *ff*

div. a 4

Vln. II *mp* *gentler* *p* *mf* *ff*

div. a 4

Vla. *mp* *gentler* *p* *mf* *ff*

div. a 3

Vcl. *mp* *mp* *ff*

div.

Cbs. *mp* *mp* *ff*

B Bleak; Melancholy

33

Hn. *mf* freely *mp* *f* *mp* *sfz* *mf* (still free, but moving) *mp*

solo (no vib.) (play 1/4 tone higher than normal) *mp*

Vln. I *p-mp* no vib.

altri div. a 4 *p-mp* no vib.

solo (no vib.) (play 1/4 tone higher than normal) *mp*

Vln. II *p-mp* no vib.

altri div. a 4 *p-mp* no vib.

solo (no vib.) (play 1/4 tone lower than normal) *mp*

Vla. *p-mp* no vib.

altri div. a 3 *p-mp* no vib.

37

Hn. (distant) *mf*

solo *mp*

Vln. I *p-mp* no vib.

altri div. a 4 *p-mp* no vib.

solo *mp*

Vln. II *p-mp* no vib.

altri div. a 4 *p-mp* no vib.

solo *mp*

Vla. *p-mp* no vib.

altri div. a 3 *p-mp* no vib.