

MASON BATES

SELECTED REPERTOIRE FOR ORCHESTRA

SYMPHONIES

ART OF WAR

for orchestra & electronica 2018 27'

A symphony exploring the perspectives of soldiers, weaponry, and the collision of civilizations. Animating a three-movement symphonic structure are original field recordings of weapons tests made with the US Marines; elements of American and Iraqi folk music; and the printing presses of the US Treasury.

ANTHOLOGY OF FANTASTIC ZOOLOGY

for orchestra 2015 29'

A concerto in the form of a psychedelic Carnivale of the Animals, this work colorfully conjures imaginary mythological creatures in concise 'character movements' reminiscent of ballet suites. A setting of the book by magical-realist author Jorge-Luis Borges, the piece is teeming with onstage spatial effects and theatrical touches, ending with an epic finale in which all the animals fuse together.

"Anthology of Fantastic Zoology is the largest piece Bates has composed to date. A huge percussion battery essentially co-opts the role of electronica, typically a key element of Bates' orchestral arsenal. While individual movement titles reference nymphs, sirens, a sprite and a gryphon, this fantastical menagerie becomes a pretext for a grand, playful, surprising, exuberantly colorful concerto for orchestra, one that pays homage to both the full ensemble and to individual members of that ensemble. The tone of the piece gets increasingly dark once the bestiary gets more menacing, until all the animals are herded together in a thunderous finale that recalls the conclusion of Saint-Saens' *Carnival of the Animals*, but on a meth high...This is great, audience-pleasing fun going down...I can imagine other orchestras wanting to take up this accessible orchestral showpiece." *Chicago Tribune*

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

for orchestra & laptop* 2011 27'

An 'energy symphony' that spans hundreds of years, the work conjures the 19th Century junk-yard of Henry Ford and subsequently moves through a present-day particle accelerator, a future Chinese meltdown, and distant dystopian paradise.

"A formidable and inventive new work...Bates' most ambitious and epically scaled work to date, and it shows his mastery of the orchestral landscape like nothing before it." *San Francisco Chronicle*

THE B-SIDES

for orchestra & laptop* 2009 23'

This surreal suite touches down briefly onto five imaginative landscapes. From the bent-note lyricism of Kauai to a setting of a NASA archival recording, *The B-Sides* is quite a trip.

"...characteristically colorful and puckish score from a composer whose cheerful disregard for stylistic boundaries is a godsend...The piece is vibrant and amusing..." *San Francisco Chronicle*

LIQUID INTERFACE

for orchestra & laptop* 2007 23'

Blurry symphonic textures glide over evolving electronica in this 'water symphony' enriched by the power and drama of electronic sounds. Beginning with recordings of glaciers melting in Antarctica, the work explores the beautiful & destructive sides of water on a large scale.

"...surpassed in sheer sonic beauty even the works by Mendelssohn and Tchaikovsky that rounded out the program." *The Washington Post*

ORATORIO

CHILDREN OF ADAM

for chorus & orchestra 2017 27'

A collection of exuberant celebrations of creation, from American poets to sacred and Native American texts, enlivened by vibrant "fanfare intermezzos."

OPENERS

THE RHAPSODY OF STEVE JOBS

NEW for orchestra & laptop 2021 10'

This opener swirls together many key musical elements of his opera *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*, which was premiered by Santa Fe Opera in 2017 and currently in its second production. This lively symphonic work stays true to the kinetic surface of the opera, which uses an electro-acoustic soundworld to conjure the excitement of the early Information Age.

SOUNDCHECK IN C MAJOR NEW

for orchestra & laptop 2021 6'

A fanfare animated by sonic effects, Soundcheck in C Major opens with shimmering chords that echo electronically and appear fly past the audience. At first a tentative testing of the concert hall, the orchestra soon builds to a resonant unison. A resolute march ensues and then evolves into a quicksilver passage showcasing solo players, before soon building back triumphantly to the opening sonorities. This short work is equally informed by the textural brilliance of Wagnerian overtures, the psychedelic sound design of Pink Floyd, and the famous THX 'sound test' that once kicked off many a night at the movies.

"The opening fanfare by Bates, *Soundcheck in C Major* — with the composer, 44, sitting in the percussion section, playing an Akai drum machine and two MacBook Pros — was cinematic and bracing...The whirl of electronic sounds he generated flew out across the audience, ricocheting among the sound-and-light towers." *The New York Times*

WHALESONG NEW

for orchestra & laptop 2022 5'

Celebrating the majesty and power of Earth's largest animals, the piece integrates recordings of whalesong into a symphonic narrative about a lone humpback that ultimately reunites with its pod in the soaring finale. Commissioned by and premiered on BBC Radio 3.

RESURREXIT

for orchestra, 2018 9'

Rising from an exotic, biblical darkness into an exhilarating, supernatural finale, the work animates a classic narrative with propulsion and magic.

UNDISTANT NEW

for orchestra & electronica 2020 7'

"Out of the darkest days of the pandemic comes a wondrous premiere for orchestra and laptop: this 7 1/2-minute piece by California composer Mason Bates sparkles with the same kind of wonder as John Williams winking at the cosmos. Composed during "challenging times for music and fellowship" — the early part of the pandemic — *Undistant* was envisioned as "an affirmation of human connection" ...*Undistant* moves quickly out of the electronic and into warmth, humanity, and the decidedly nondigital character of instruments and their players...What's great about the musical language Bates uses is how emotionally direct it is. It plays a bit with the first three notes of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" — though you have to listen for it — and the piece's big-screen qualities are incredibly evocative...Momentum builds, triumph arrives, and then comes peace. And the listener is let off in a place of contentment. Who today isn't ready for this kind of emotional journey?" *Philadelphia Inquirer*

DEVIL'S RADIO

for orchestra, 2014 9'

A dark and exuberant opener filled with errant grooves and vainglorious fanfares.

GARAGES OF THE VALLEY

for orchestra, 2014 10'

Conjures the whirlwind energy of the early workshops of Silicon Valley, this unplugged opener draws on unusual orchestral effects to create a world of bytes.

MOTHERSHIP

for orchestra & laptop* 2011 10'

A fast-paced opener that imagines the orchestra as a mothership 'docked' by virtuosic soloists. Premiered by the YouTube Symphony at the Sydney Opera House before an online audience of millions, the piece showcases the orchestra's top individual players in its brief solo passages.

ATTACK DECAY SUSTAIN RELEASE

for orchestra 2013 5'

A curtain-raiser equally informed by early modernism and 1970's funk.

WHITE LIES FOR LOMAX

for orchestra 2009 7'

A dreamy homage to the early, anonymous blues musicians, many of whom were recorded by the famed ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax.

ODE

for orchestra 2001 11'

"And never has a Beethoven's Ninth Symphony been so colored by the music that preceded it on the program." *The Arizona Republic*

TONE POEMS

THE RHAPSODY OF STEVE JOBS NEW

for orchestra 2021 14'

Commissioned by the Philadelphia Orchestra, this visceral work reimagines the music from the Grammy-winning opera *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*.

SEA-BLUE CIRCUITRY

for orchestra 2010 13'

Grooves hiccup quietly from measure to measure as rapidly as data on the silicon innards of a computer, yet the piece is entirely unplugged. Shattered, off-kilter jazz figuration.

Listen to excerpt

*All electro-acoustic works require only two house speakers and a few onstage monitors.

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APPALACHIAN AYRE **NEW**

for baroque or modern orchestra 2024 6'

A dreamy meditation on the fascinating connection between baroque music and early bluegrass. "A fascinating, lyrical, and beautiful work, in which American bluegrass fiddle music, early music airs common to colonial America, and marvelous bluegrass stylizations echoed in dialogues." *Boston Musical Intelligencer*

DESERT TRANSPORT

for orchestra 2010 14'

Evoking a helicopter flight over the Arizona landscape, the work superimposes a 'machine piece' with the pastoral.

RUSTY AIR IN CAROLINA

for orchestra & laptop* 2006 13'

Imaginative electronics bring the buzzing white noise of Southern insects into the concert hall, pairing these sounds with fluorescent orchestral textures in this new spin on the pastoral.

CONCERTOS

PHILHARMONIA FANTASTIQUE: THE MAKING OF THE ORCHESTRA **NEW**

for orchestra & animated film 2020 25'

A collaboration with Lucasfilm's Gary Rydstrom and animator Jim Capobianco, this imaginative and kinetic work follows a mercurial Sprite inside instruments to see how they work. This unique multimedia work appears on a range of programs, from the 'concerto slot' to film nights to family concerts, and can also be programmed as a pure symphonic work without the film.

NOMAD CONCERTO **NEW**

for solo violin & orchestra 2024 27'

Exploring the mysterious and soulful music of the wanderer, the concerto is informed by a diverse range of traveling cultures from Eastern Europe to the Middle East. "A wanderer through different worlds is reflected in a succession of musical styles through which Bates moves beautifully...broods, floats and glimmers...Bates in this new piece once again proves a composer unusually commanding of atmosphere and emotion." *Philadelphia Inquirer*

PIANO CONCERTO **NEW**

for piano & orchestra 2021 25'

Composed for Grammy-winner Daniil Trifonov for Philadelphia Orchestra and SF Symphony, the work will also appear on concerts from Israel to Germany.

PASSAGE

for mezzo, orchestra & laptop* 2017 18'

Commissioned to commemorate the centennial of John F. Kennedy, the work examines the theme of American exploration through the visionary words of Walt Whitman and actual recorded fragments of JFK's "moonshot" speech. "focuses on exploration and legacy, new pathways to the moon echoed in Whitman's thoughts on India — a good match for Bates's forward-looking, computer-enhanced, slightly steampunk aesthetic, which carried the score back and forth...at one climax, disco-club levels of sternum-vibrating loudness..." *Washington Post*

CELLO CONCERTO

for cello & orchestra 2013 25'

A shimmering and transparent work that is at turns elegiac and virtuosic, the work showcases novel effects (such as the use of a guitar pick) and a soaring melody.

VIOLIN CONCERTO

for violin & orchestra 2012 24'

Conjuring the earliest bird / dinosaur hybrid, the concerto features the soloist in fiery and lyrical writing in front of an earthy, indigenous orchestra.

REDUCED FORCES

THE RISE OF EXOTIC COMPUTING

for sinfonietta & laptop* 2013 12'

Like a self-replicating synthetic computer, the material of this lean-and-mean new work rapidly duplicates itself. Premiered by the Pittsburgh Symphony at the club Static.

ICARIAN RHAPSODY

for string orchestra 1999 12'

A long-lined, three-octave melody shatters in the stratosphere, sending its many shards pulsing throughout the ensemble.

AUDITORIUM

for chamber (classical) orchestra & laptop* 2016 15'

Premiered with the San Francisco Symphony. *Auditorium* is a baroque thriller that haunts the orchestra with ghostly processed recordings of a baroque ensemble, with the electronic part comprise entirely of original neo-baroque music recorded on period instruments. Essentially it is a work for two orchestras — one live, one dead.

"Melodic and exciting...The orchestra fell into a kind of conversation with a recorded and electronically processed Baroque ensemble. Amazingly integrated, and sounding absolutely original, this made a great impression." *Bournemouth Daily*

 Listen to excerpt

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Mason Bates accepting the
2019 Grammy Award for
Best Opera Recording



Named the second most-performed living American composer and Musical America's 2018 Composer of the Year, Mason Bates recently served as the first composer-in-residence of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. He writes music that fuses innovative orchestral writing, narrative forms, the harmonies of jazz and the rhythms of techno. His symphonic music has been the first to receive widespread acceptance for its expanded palette of electronic sounds.

"Mason Bates's musical language lies at the intersection of three major streams of contemporary music—jazz and its offshoots, classical music with all its harmonic and textural experimentation, and electronica. It exudes a sense of Americana for the 21st century (much as Dvorák's music did in the 19th century, and Copland's in the 20th)."

The Washington Post

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