

COMPOSER'S NOTES:

Golden Harvest

The Orchestral overture opens with a famous Ukrainian folk tune, the title of which translates as "The mighty Dnieper river roars and bellows". I grew up loving this folk tune and felt that since the tune is almost a kind of Ukrainian national anthem that it would be perfect for this piece. The tune becomes an important element that runs through the course of all of the movements in some shape or form. The overture represents the immigrant's ocean journey to Canada. The music reflects the sound of the waves and wind. Exciting and fearful at the same time. The choir gently enters on the words "The wind whispers Canada." The movement ends with an ominous oboe solo, while the choir becomes the sound of the dark wind, foreshadowing the many struggles to come.

The second movement begins with a very exciting and energetic train ride across Canada. The music becomes darker as the immigrants angrily realize that there is no homestead here, and that they will have to work the land. In order to survive, the Father character, and the men, must leave their families to find work. While the father is away, his son dies from starvation. The mother is grief stricken. She sings a heartfelt melody, that she alone must bury her son. The male choir accompanies her with a Ukrainian funeral dirge which translates as "Forever memory".

The final movement opens with a very stern and rhythmic motive. It represents the start of World War I. The men are taken to camps, treated as prisoners because they were considered to be part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, while the women stay to work the land. Once the war is over, the men come home to the harvest of the red fife wheat. The music ends on a very optimistic note, with full orchestra and choir, celebrating the harvest that became one of the economic engines of Canada, and our most important international export.

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