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Oíche Nollag

by

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Thesis
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Eastern Michigan University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC
in
Composition

Thesis Committee:

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Abstract

“Oíche Nollag” is an original composition for orchestra of approximately 6 minutes and 10 seconds in length. It is based on a traditional Irish jig tune of the same name, meaning “Christmas Eve” in Irish Gaelic. The piece is through-composed and follows a basic ternary form (fast-slow-fast). The folk tune is easily recognizable in its initial form but becomes transformed through a series of continuous variations. These variations increase in complexity and energy before reaching a high point and transitioning into a slower, middle section with the brass. The music gains energy again with the addition of the winds and strings, increases in tempo, and ends with the full orchestra. “Oíche Nollag” is written in a neo-tonal style using extended harmonic techniques. Density and harmonic intensity create tension and drive the music toward high points.
Instrumentation

Piccolo
2 Flutes
2 Oboes
2 Clarinets in B♭
2 Bassoons

4 Horns in F
3 Trumpets in C
3 Trombones
Tuba

Timpani
Percussion:
Small Suspended Cymbal
Snare Drum
Glockenspiel

Violins I
Violins II
Violas
Violincellos
Contrabasses

C Score

Duration: approx. 6 minutes

All instruments sound as written except octave-transposing instruments: Piccolo (sounds 8va higher), Glockenspiel (sounds 15ma higher), and Contrabass (sounds 8va lower).

Performance Note: This work is based on the Irish folk melody “Oíche Nollag,” meaning “Christmas Eve” in Irish Gaelic. Pronounced as “ee-huh no-lahg.” Source: Breathnach (CRÉ I), 1963; No. 60, pg. 26.
Allegro ($\approx$ ca. 180)