

## = Orchestral Works by Tomas Svoboda =

Orchestral Works by Tomas Svoboda ( sometimes abridged as Orchestral Works ) is a classical music album by the Oregon Symphony under the artistic direction of James DePreist , released by the record label Albany in 2003 . The album was recorded at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall in Portland , Oregon during three performances in January and June 2000 . It contains three works by Tomáš Svoboda , a Czech @-@ American composer who taught at Portland State University for more than 25 years : Overture of the Season , Op. 89 ; Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra , Op. 148 ; and Symphony No. 1 ( of Nature ) , Op. 20 . The album 's executive producers were Peter Kermani , Susan Bush , and Mark B. Rulison ; Blanton Alspaugh served as the recording producer .

Overture of the Season and Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra were commissioned by the Oregon Symphony . The latter was dedicated to principal percussionist Niel DePonte , who encouraged Svoboda to compose the work and who is featured on marimba ; it was the first concerto commissioned by the orchestra for one of its musicians . Though the album received a mixed critical reception , DePonte 's performance earned him a Grammy Award nomination for Best Instrumental Soloist Performance with Orchestra . Selected tracks from the album have been broadcast by classical music radio stations throughout the United States .

## = = Background and composition = =

Orchestral Works by Tomas Svoboda , released by Albany Records in July 2003 , was recorded under the artistic direction of James DePreist and contains three works by Czech @-@ American composer Tomáš Svoboda : Overture of the Season , Op. 89 ; Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra , Op. 148 ; and Symphony No. 1 ( of Nature ) , Op. 20 . Svoboda has been regarded as Oregon 's " most prolific and performed " classical composer . Following his education at the Prague Conservatory ( 1954 ? 1962 ) , the Academy of Music in Prague ( 1962 ? 1964 ) and the University of Southern California ( 1966 ? 1969 ) , Svoboda taught composition and music theory at Portland State University for more than 25 years .

Overture of the Season and Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra were recorded at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall in downtown Portland on January 9 ? 10 , 2000 ; Symphony No. 1 was recorded at the same venue on June 13 , 2000 . Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra features principal percussionist Niel DePonte , who joined the orchestra in 1977 at age 24 , on marimba . Peter Kermani , Susan Bush and Mark B. Rulison served as the album 's executive producers . Blanton Alspaugh served as the recording producer . John Newton was the recording engineer , and mastering was conducted by Mark Donahue . Svoboda is credited for the album 's cover art . The album 's liner notes also credit Wendy Leher , Pavlina Honcova @-@ Summers and Henry Hillman for photography , and Dave McLaughlin for graphic design . Mixing console mastering occurred at Soundmirror , based in Massachusetts .

The recording was funded by Mary Ausplund Tooze , a longtime philanthropist and patron of Portland 's arts community , who specifically requested the inclusion of Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra for being a " good , solid piece and one you find out more about each time you hear it " . Tooze considered the concerto the " real star " of the recording .

## = = = Works = = =

Overture of the Season was commissioned by the Oregon Symphony for its 83rd season ; the work 's world premiere was presented by the orchestra on October 7 , 1978 . In 1994 , the classical music writer for Philadelphia Daily News said the composition had been performed by 55 orchestras within the three previous seasons . According to Svoboda 's website , as of May 2013 the work has been performed 270 times by 141 orchestras , under the direction of 93 conductors . The " festive " overture , which is approximately eight minutes in length , employs flutes , piccolo , oboes , clarinets , bassoons , horns , trumpets , trombones , tuba , timpani , percussion , and strings .

Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra was commissioned by the orchestra in 1993 in conjunction

with its centennial celebration . It features solo marimba and a " keyboard " quintet ( piano , harp , celeste , orchestra bells and crotales ) , with parts for flutes , piccolo , oboes , clarinets , bassoons , horns , trumpets , trombones , tuba , timpani , and strings . According to Svoboda , the work took a year to compose and marks the first concerto commissioned by the Oregon Symphony for one of its musicians . Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra is dedicated to DePonte , who encouraged Svoboda to compose a marimba concerto . For the album 's liner notes , Svoboda wrote :

" My approach to this work is to expose the beauty of the marimba . The gentle and majestic sounds found in the instrumental mixture within the orchestra is always respectful of the somewhat limited powers of projection of the solo instrument . Overall the concerto is stylistically lyrical and neo @-@ romantic . The energy and vitality of the marimba is highlighted through the rhythmic vitality of the composition , while marimba 's warm and resonant sound , emanating from its rosewood keyboard , is ideally suited for the lyrical sections of the piece . "

When the concerto is performed , according to Svoboda , instruments on stage are separated into three contrasting sections : the solo marimba , the quintet , and the remainder of the orchestra . The quintet is placed near the conductor and solo marimba , " which is the prominent voice of this uncommon ensemble " . The composition contains several instances where the quintet plays for extended periods , referred to as " islands " by Svoboda , which create " concerto grosso @-@ like interplay " with the orchestra .

Symphony No. 1 was completed in 1956 and premiered in Prague on September 7 , 1957 . Inspired by Svoboda 's exposure to nature within a pastoral setting , the composition was commissioned anonymously 25 years later ( 1982 ) , providing Svoboda an opportunity to make revisions . The work was influenced by Ludwig van Beethoven , Antonín Dvořák , and Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky ; it features polyphonic textures and asymmetrical and harmonic rhythmic elements . The symphony consists of four movements : " Moderato " , " Presto " , " Andante " , and " Allegro ? Moderato " . The first , considered a chorale , is in the key of C @-@ sharp minor and features a theme performed by flute . The second movement , a scherzo , features a " quick , motoric " triple rhythm and meter . The third is a pastorale that highlights the woodwind section and incorporates a piece called " The Bird " , composed by Svoboda in 1949 at age nine . The final movement , a rondo , was influenced by Czech folk music and mixes themes supplied by earlier movements .

= = Reception and broadcasts = =

The album received a mixed reception . Blair Sanderson of AllMusic found Svoboda 's compositions to be imitative , specifically comparing Over of the Season to work by Leo Janáček and Symphony No. 1 to " equal parts " of Hugo Alfvén and Jean Sibelius , with " just a dash " of Carl Nielsen . Sanderson criticized the harmonic language of Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra and found DePonte 's performance to be admirable but " weakly planned " . Similarly , Robert Dettmer of Classical CD Review found Svoboda 's work to be derivative and " expressively sterile " , and " no more engaging than any other marimba concerto " . However , Dettmer acknowledged that the marimba was one of his least favorite solo instruments . Dettmer wrote that DePriest " serves the composer dutifully , but not as enliveningly as one might have expected " .

For his marimba performance , DePonte earned a Grammy Award nomination for Best Instrumental Soloist Performance with Orchestra , the first time that the Oregon Symphony or any of its musicians had been recognized by the Recording Academy . Following the announcement , DePonte admitted that he was surprised by the nomination and had not felt similar emotions since learning of his invitation to join the orchestra 26 years earlier : " I am completely overwhelmed . I had no idea the recording had been submitted . " DePriest said : " The credit goes to Mary Tooze for making the recording possible , to Niel for his fine playing and to Tomas for writing such a wonderful piece . I am thrilled for everyone concerned . " Svoboda said of the nomination : " The prestige goes to the orchestra . This is a great moment for our symphony . " The Oregon Symphony 's director of public relations commented : " The running joke is that forever more , the name of this organization is ' The Grammy @-@ nominated Oregon Symphony Orchestra . ' The Grammy acknowledgment is recognized as a mark of great artistic achievement . To be nominated is about as good as it gets . "

Selected tracks from the album have been broadcast by classical music radio stations . Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra was aired by WFMT ( Chicago ) in March 2012 , WWFM ( Trenton , New Jersey ) in September 2013 , and KUAF ( Fayetteville , Arkansas ) in November 2013 . Symphony No. 1 was broadcast by Interlochen Public Radio in August 2012 and by WRTI ( Philadelphia ) in November 2013 . WNYC ( New York City ) has aired the marimba concerto and Symphony No. 1 as recently as January 2011 and January 2014 , respectively .

= = Track listing = =

All works by Tomáš Svoboda .

Overture of the Season , Op. 89 ? 8 : 42

Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra , Op. 148

" Con moto " ? 8 : 48

" Adagio " ? 8 : 08

" Vivace " ? 8 : 39

Symphony No. 1 ( of Nature ) , Op. 20

" Moderato " ? 10 : 08

" Presto " ? 8 : 13

" Andante " ? 6 : 56

" Allegro ? Moderato " ? 10 : 18

Track listing adapted from the album 's liner notes .

= = Personnel = =

Credits adapted from AllMusic .

= = = Orchestra roster = = =

Orchestra roster adapted from the album 's liner notes .

" \* " designates acting orchestra members ; " \* \* " designates musicians on a leave of absence ; " \* \* \* " designates extra musicians ; " \* \* \* \* " designates contract musicians .