

Peter de Vocht

Complete Works Volume 1

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FOREWORD

It has taken me a few weeks, but I've managed to collect all the sketches and works I deemed of value for publication. In doing so I tried to arrange them in chronological order where possible and write down the original dates of the works.

This is hopefully the first of many volumes. The works covered in this volume are Opus 1 through 19, a period roughly from 1990 to 2005. Most of these works were exploratory in nature and cover some of my earliest and least mature work. There was a large burst of activity when I had a lot of spare time on my hands in 1996 and early 1997. At the end of 1997 I decided to focus myself solely on my career as a computer programmer. This resulted in a fairly quiet period for the next 7 years. At the end of 2005 I decided that it was time to fully focus on music again, the result being the first two symphonies Opus 18 and 19.

Opus 1, my Andrea sonata was the first large piece I wrote with some real structure in it. It was written in a few hours and flowed from the pen like most of the other works in this volume. Opus 2, my first string Quartet, was written at a time I was getting frustrated with the piano and wanted to move on to larger things. I always favored the first movement of this piece, but feedback suggested that no-one likes the first movement and everyone loves the second and third. Opus 3 and 4 are the trios. They were great fun to write and I had a lot of input from my composer friend Stirling Newberry.

Opus 5 and 6 mark the start of my orchestral music. Opus 5 was well received, and Opus 6 generally not, although again I like the Opus 6 better than my Opus 5. In the interim I tried to express myself more harmonically and rhythmically on the piano. The result was a set of dances for two pianos Opus 7 called the "Larsian dances". The Quintet Opus 8 was meant to be a birthday celebration piece for Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, but became a much more personal piece to the point where I did not deem it appropriate for a birthday celebration.

Opus 9 came as a result of some more experience in orchestral writing, especially the Gravity piece, the second of the two Scherzos written at the end of 1997. The second sonata's main theme was conceived long before it was written. The theme came to me during my stay in France in 1994. Due to its rather loud opening I called it "the Storm". The music as it stands in Opus 10 was then created using a really old sketch I had lying around (also called "the Storm") for the third movement and the French theme for the first and second movement.

Opus 11 happened by accident, the Serenade just flowed forth from the pen and didn't want to stop being written till about two hours later. The Redwood Forest Quartetsatz Opus 12 was conceived after a visit to the Redwood forest in Rotorua in 1996.

The New Zealand dances Opus 13 started as a set of 5. I however deemed the original first movement too feeble and the original 5th dance too unrelated to New Zealand. The surviving 3 dances were thus originally dances number 2, 3 and 4. Opus 14, pieces for piano represents the widest range of musical expression both in time and development. I was planning to include all four songs I wrote for the piano and male voice for Opus 15. However, I could only find one (the best one luckily).

Opus 16, my Shepherds mass was written for little Aidan. I started it before he was born in December of 1999 and finished it quite recently. I intentionally left

out the Gloria from these movements since it had too much text and would unbalance the other movements due to its required size.

Opus 17 was a piece for two pianos pre-dating the Shepherds mass. It was based on a Rachmaninoff prelude but soon took on a life of its own. The first of my two Symphonies, Symphony 1 Opus 18, was inspired by a visit to Castle Point during my stay in Martinborough. It was my first attempt at using the Sonata form on a larger orchestra structure and I guess could be called a mild success even though its duration is a bit short. It also represents the un-mothballing of my composer's pen and focusing on what I like doing best.

Having carefully analysed many Symphonies of many different styles I came to the conclusion that I must make my own mark on "the Symphony". Most works are repetitive to the point of annoyance. I haven't found my exact style yet in this medium, but I will keep trying and developing.

Symphony 2 had a much better structure and style than number 1 but still lacks the perfection I seek. It was shortly written after number 1 and given the next logical number Opus 19. The second and third movements were based on some 1997 pieces that were not going anywhere and required a major update. The symphonies subject is a large changing distant star called Betelgeuse. I dedicated this work my uncle, Piet Hartogs, who always encouraged me to write music and sadly died age 46.

The future is clear. I am working on a piano concerto Opus 20, and have started sketches for a third Symphony and have finished two movements of a string quartet. Let's see if we can get a second volume written sometime soon.

Peter de Vocht,
Wellington, January 2006

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