Symphony No.1

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SYMPHONY NO. 1

A Thesis

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Jessica Mahan
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INSTRUMENTATION

Piccolo (Picc.)
2 Flutes (Fl.)
2 Bb Clarinets (Bb Cl.)
Bass Clarinet in Bb (B. Cl.)
2 Bassoons (Bsn.)
4 Horns in F (Hn.)
3 Bb Trumpets (Bb Tpt.)
3 Trombones (Tbn.)

Timpani (Timp.)

Percussion (Perc.)

(snare drum, 3 wood blocks, triangle)

Violin I (Vln. 1)
Violin II (Vln. 2)
Viola (Vla.)
Cello (Vc.)
Contrabass (Cb.)
ABSTRACT

Symphony No. 1 is a programmatic piece based on the sabbat holidays of the traditional Celtic calendar. The holidays of the Celtic year celebrate the human spirit in context with the changes of the earth during the course of a year. Beginning with autumn, Samhain celebrates death and the preparation for the darkness of the winter months. Yule is the longest night of the year, and the time the Goddess is crowned. Signs of spring come at Imbolg. Ostara is the Spring Equinox, and an equal relationship exists between the Goddess and the God. Beltane is celebrated by wrapping ribbons around a pole, a symbol of the fertility of the Earth. Litha is the longest day of the year, and the time the God is crowned. Signs that the earth will give a good harvest are at Lughnasadh. The year ends with the celebration of life and harvest at Mabon. Each of the eight movements is named for one of the eight holidays.

The piece is based on a theme and variations form. There are a total of three main themes for the entire piece. When presented, these themes are usually contrasting in orchestral colors. The chosen themes, or motives from the themes, are altered and transformed throughout each movement. Inversions, retrogrades, rhythmic manipulations, and key changes are used to create these variations. The variations are also used for the harmonic content. Each movement is contained within its own form. However, the same variations and motives are repeated in more than one movement to bring the entire symphony together as a whole.

The Celtic year is thought of as a circle that continues without an end. In Symphony No. 1, the final movement ends with themes from the beginning of the first movement to incorporate the idea of a continuous circle.
SYMPHONY NO. 1

Jessica Mahan
III. Imbolg

Piccolo

Flute 1

Flute

Flute 2

Oboe 1

Oboe

Oboe 2

Clarinet in B

Clarinet in B♭

Clarinet in B♭

Bass Clarinet

Bassoon 1

Bassoon

Bassoon 2

Horn in F 1-2

Horn in F

Horn in F 3-4

Trumpet in B♭-1

Trumpet in B♭-2

Trumpet in B♭-2-3

Trombone 1

Trombone

Trombone 2-3

Tuba

Timpani

Percussion

Violin 1

Violin

Violin 2

Viola

Cello

Contrabass
IV. Ostara
V. Beltane
VI. Litha
Picc.

Fl.

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

B♭ Tpt.

Tuba

Timp.

Perc.

Vln.

Vc.

Cb.

Fl.

Ob.

Bb Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Bb Tpt.

Tbn.

Vln.

S. Drum

Perc.

401

402

403

404

99
VII. Lughnasadh

Piccolo

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet in B♭

Bass Clarinet

Bassoon

Horn in F

Trumpet in B♭

Trombone

Tuba

Timpani

Percussion

Violin

Viola

Cello

Contrabass
Picc.

Fl.

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

B♭ Tpt.

Tbn.

Tuba

Timp.

Perc.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.
Picc. 1
Fl. 2
Ob. 2
B♭ Cl. 2
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt. 3
Tbn. 3
Tuba
Timp.
Perc.
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
VITA

Jessica Mahan enrolled in the bachelor’s program in music liberal arts at Adams State College in 1997. There she studied under Dr. Peter Fischer in composition. She was awarded Honorable Mention in the Ars Nova Singers Composition Competition for her choral work *The Gorchan*. Mahan completed her degree in liberal arts, emphasis on composition, in 2003. Mahan was a winner in the Louisiana Sinfonietta LSU Student Competition in November 2005, with her chamber orchestra piece *Bleidonii*. Jessica Mahan is currently pursing her master’s degree in composition at Louisiana State University as a student of Boyd Professor Dinos Constantinides.