

Jacob Beranek

Ecce!

for Violin, Viola, Violoncello, Harp, and Piano

(SCORE)



BERANEK MUSIC

INSTRUMENTATION

Violin
Viola
Violoncello
Harp
Piano

Duration: *approx. 6' 30"*

PROGRAM NOTE

Commissioned by the New York Choreographic Institute for its 2025 Session, *Ecce!* seeks to blend the ancient and the modern—encapsulated in feelings of ecstatic joy, longing, trial, and triumph—into one, tight, energetic package. The title, Latin for “behold” or “hark,” was inspired by a verse from the Song of Songs: “The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes, leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills” (2:8), or, as the second sentence reads in Latin: “*Ecce iste venit, saliens in montibus, transiliens colles...*” The image of a lover springing with eagerness through the mountains immediately appealed to me, as I began composing the piece a few weeks before my own wedding.

The majority of my work on this composition also happened to occur during Advent and Christmastime. I found myself preparing for the Nativity by praying a set of ancient meditations called the “O” Antiphons (seven prayers, all beginning with “O,” which count down from the 17th to 24th of December). I had heard of these prayers once before through Arvo Pärt’s 1988 setting in German, but I had not given them much thought since then. Nevertheless, this time, they captivated my imagination so strongly while working on this piece that I chose to pepper the antiphons throughout the score as an extra layer of meaning—small spiritual guideposts which evoke the expression of a given section.

Musically, the piece begins with the “leaping and bounding” suggested by the Song of Songs verse. A lower-neighbor figure permeates the texture and remains motivic throughout the work. As the first joyous section builds to a climax—consistently in E-flat—a new, slower section interrupts a tritone away on A major. In this ensuing section, lines of faux-Renaissance polyphony in the strings swirl by, with comments (either supportive or undermining) from the harp and piano. Finally, the greatest climax of the piece arrives—a moment of extreme tension—but it is dissipated quickly by a gently descending scale in the harp, again evoking antiquity, before a “sunrise” with each of the instruments layering on top of one another brings the music back to its joyful opening material in E-flat. But, not to be out done, A major returns with whirling frenzy to cap off the dramatic journey.

—JACOB BERANEK

Performance materials available for sale at www.BeraneMusic.com.

for the New York Choreographic Institute

ECCE!

Jacob Beranek

[*O Sapientia*: O Wisdom, you came forth from the mouth of the Most High, and reached from end to end, and disposed of all things sweetly and mightily: come and teach us the way of prudence.

Leaping and bounding ($\text{♩} = 80$)

Violin

Viola

Violoncello

Harp

Piano

Leaping and bounding ($\text{♩} = 80$)

[*O Adonai*: O Lord, and leader of the house of Israel, you appeared to Moses in the flame of the burning bush and gave him the law on Sinai: come, and with an outstretched arm, redeem us!

Vn.

Va.

Vc.

Hp.

Pno.

7

Musical score for measures 7-9. The score includes parts for Violin (Vn.), Viola (Va.), Violoncello (Vc.), Harp (Hp.), and Piano (Pno.). The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 4/4. The music features dynamic markings such as *mf*, *fp*, *f*, *mf*, and *ff*. The Violin part has accents and slurs. The Viola and Violoncello parts have triplets. The Harp part includes octaves (*8va*) and glissandos. The Piano part features triplets and slurs.

10

Musical score for measures 10-12. The score includes parts for Violin (Vn.), Viola (Va.), Violoncello (Vc.), Harp (Hp.), and Piano (Pno.). The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 4/4. The music features dynamic markings such as *mf*, *f*, and *ff*. The Violin part has accents and slurs. The Viola and Violoncello parts have triplets. The Harp part includes glissandos and octaves (*8va*). The Piano part features triplets and slurs.

12

Vn. *f* *ff* *mf* *ff*

Va. *f* *ff* *mf* *ff*

Vc. *f* *ff* *mf* *ff*

Hp. *f* *ff*

Pno. *f*

14

Vn. *mf* *ff* *fp* *ff* 16

Va. *mf* *ff* *fp* *ff*

Vc. *mf* *ff* *fp* *ff*

Hp. *ff* *fp* *ff*

Pno. *fp* *ff* 16

17

Vn. *mf* *ff* *mf* *ff* *mf* *ff*

Va. *mf* *ff* *mf* *ff* *mf* *ff*

Vc. *ff* *sffz* *mf* *ff* *mf* *ff*

Hp. *ff* *8va* *gliss.* *8va*

Pno. *ff* *3* *3*

Vn. *fp* *ff* *mf < ff* *ff*

Va. *fp* *ff* *mf < ff* *ff*

Vc. *fp* *ff* *mf < ff* *ff*

Hp. *ff* *mf* *ff*

Pno. *f* *ff*

24 *poco riten.*

Vn. *f — ff*

Va. *f — ff*

Vc. *mf — ff* *mf — ff* *f — ff*

Hp.

Pno. *mf — ff* *poco riten.* *sfz*

27 Prayerfully, with peace (♩ = 52)

Vn.

Va.

Vc.

Hp. *f* *mp* *p < mp*

[*O Radix Jesse*: O Root of Jesse, who stood as a sign for the people, before you kings shall remain silent and to you the Gentiles shall make supplication: come deliver us, and delay not!

27 Prayerfully, with peace (♩ = 52)

freely

Pno. *ff* *p* *p* *mp*