

**UNDER THE STARRY SKY OF THE RHINE**

**Unter dem Sternenhimmel des Rheins**



**by José Elizondo**

# Unter dem Sternenhimmel des Rheins

## Under the Starry Sky of the Rhein

dedicated to Benedict Klöckner

Music composed by José L. Elizondo  
with quotes by J. S. Bach's Gigue from his Cello Suite #6

### PROGRAM NOTES

*Unter dem Sternenhimmel des Rheins (Under the starry sky of the Rhine)* was commissioned by German cellist Benedict Klöckner as a companion piece for Bach's Cello Suites. The composer was particularly inspired by Mr. Klöckner's performance of the Gigue in Bach's Cello Suite #6, and even incorporates some quotes from that piece in his composition. In his attempt to include other elements that referenced Mr. Klöckner's homeland in Rhineland-Palatinate, he was captivated by the evocative landscapes and medieval castles of the region. The composer imagined a medieval knight riding a horse through these epic landscapes under the starry sky of the river Rhine. At several points of his journey, the knight is so moved by the beauty of nature, that he halts his ride to engage in contemplation and reflection. The setting for this composition's premiere perfectly suited this imagery: it was performed masterfully by Benedict Klöckner at an outdoor concert, in the evening, literally under the starry sky of the Rhein, at the magnificent castle Schloss Burg Namedy on the banks of the Rhein.

*Unter dem Sternenhimmel des Rheins* is also the first movement of Jose Elizondo's composition *Die Legende des edlen Ritters (The Legend of the Noble Knight)*, a four-movement suite that further develops the themes presented and first explored in *Unter dem Sternenhimmel des Rheins*.

## Unter dem Sternenhimmel des Rheins

dedicated to Benedict Klöckner

Inspired by his performances of the Gigue from J. S. Bach's Cello Suite #6

composed by José L. Elizondo

with quotes from J. S. Bach's Cello Suite #6

**Reverent, stately, passionate** (♩. = c. 44-50) (*somewhat free, cadenza-like tempo*)

An epic landscape at night during a storm. A mysterious figure is standing imperturbably at the top of an imposing rock. It is a brave Knight, with great aplomb, kind eyes and a noble countenance.

Cello 1

Cello 2

*mf* confident and daring, but elegant and noble

*p* mysterious and suspenseful

*mf* confident and daring, but elegant and noble

*mf* confident and daring, but elegant and noble

*p*

*f* confident and daring, but elegant and noble

*f*

*mf* mysterious, suspenseful

*mf*

*p*

*ff*

*mf*

*mf* suspenseful, like a gust of wind in a storm

*mf* suspenseful, gaining impetus

The score is written for two cellos in 6/8 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It consists of five systems of music. The first system (measures 1-3) shows the two cellos playing in parallel motion, with Cello 1 in the upper register and Cello 2 in the lower register. The second system (measures 4-6) continues the parallel motion, with Cello 1 playing a melodic line and Cello 2 providing a rhythmic accompaniment. The third system (measures 7-9) features more complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes. The fourth system (measures 10-12) shows a change in dynamics and texture, with Cello 1 playing a more active role. The fifth system (measures 13-15) concludes the piece with a final cadence.

**A** With more energy (like a gentle horse trot) (♩. = c. 56)

The Knight rides along the Rhine through a storm.

15

*f* stately, noble

*f* rhythmic, confident, gallant, noble

19

**B** Flashback to one of the Knight's victories, when he bravely fought against a dragon.

Differentiate the two voices: upper voice (main melody) vs. lower double stops (reminiscent of a horse trot)

23

*f* rhythmic, solemn, elegant

*ff* heroic, noble

27

**C** More relaxed, serene, romantic (♩. = c. 50)The Knight stops to admire nature and turns his eyes skyward to the stars.  
His noble disposition is symbolized by a quotation from Bach's Suite #6.

31

*mp* open, broad, a bit romantic, noble

*mf* lovingly, luminous, noble

35

**D Reverent, graceful**

The Knight meditates about his motivations.  
Flashback to tender moments between the Knight and his beloved.

39

*mf* lovingly, luminous, noble

*mp* sweet, light and graceful

43

*mp* sweet, light and graceful

*f* like a fanfare

**E With more energy (like a gentle horse trot) (♩. = c. 56)**

The Knight resumes his horse ride along the Rhine through the storm.

*Differentiate the two voices: upper voice (main melody) vs. lower double stops (reminiscent of a horse trot)*

47

*f* rhythmic, solemn, elegant

*ff* heroic, noble

50

53

**F** More luminous, bright (*but still with the energy of the horse trot*)

The storm has passed. The sky opens up to reveal the stars. The Knight rides placidly and cheerfully.

55

*f* cantabile, graceful

Keep the lower fanfarre rhythmic, but make the upper melody as expressive as possible

*f* luminous, joyful

confident, daring but elegant and noble

59

*mf*

luminous, joyful

**G** A bit more relaxed, joyful ( $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 52$ )

The Knight rejoices in the beauty of nature around him, now illuminated by the light of dawn.

Keep the lower fanfarre rhythmic, but make the upper melody as expressive as possible

63

*f* sweeter, more expressive

*ff* cantabile, graceful, joyful

65

confident, daring but elegant and noble

67

69

**H** Reverent, graceful (♩. = c. 46)

71

*f* confident, daring but elegant and noble

*subito mp*

*f*

*very light tremolo*

*very light tremolo*

*f* confident, daring but elegant and noble

*subito mp*

*f* confident, daring but elegant and noble

*subito mp*

73

*f* cantabile, graceful

*f* almost heroic

**I**

75

*mp* passionate

*mf* graceful, like a Baroque dance

*mp* passionate

*f* graceful, like a Baroque dance

78

*mp* passionate

*mp* passionate *f* graceful, like a Baroque dance

82

*mp* passionate *mf* graceful, like a Baroque dance

*mp* passionate *f* graceful, like a Baroque dance

85

*mp* passionate *mf* cantabile, graceful

*mp* passionate *f* graceful, like a Baroque dance

**J** Serene, bright, romantic (♩. = 50)

Sunlight imbues the landscape with a golden shimmer. The Knight is in harmony with nature.

88

*mf* rhythmic, solemn, elegant

*f* luminous, stately, noble

*poco rit.* **K** Ad lib (♩. = c. 40)

The Knight gets ready to commence a new adventure.

92

(start slowly, with rubato, gradually accelerating)



*accel.*

*un po' tenuto*

95

*gradually increasing in intensity*

**L** With more motion and energy (*like a horse trot*) (♩. = c. 56)

97

**ff** *exciting, with energy*

*Differentiate the two voices: upper voice (main melody) vs. lower double stops (reminiscent of a horse trot)*

**ff** *rhythmic, confident, gallant, noble*

100

102

**fp** *very dramatic*

**sfz**

**fp** *very dramatic*

**sfz**