

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.

Viola

Cello

pp *mysterious and suspenseful*

mf *confident and daring, but elegant and noble*

4

mf *p*

7

mf *mp* *pp* *mp*

f *mf* *mysterious, suspenseful* *f* *confident and daring, but elegant and noble*

10

p *mf*

ff

13

suspenseful, like a gust of wind in a storm
mf

suspenseful, gaining impetus
mf

*Suggested rubato (measures 13 & 14): For each of these measures, start very slowly, then accelerate, but do a tenuto on the last couple of notes of the bar. Make sure the tenuto in measure 14 still has enough energy to lead into the next section with excitement.

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

The Knight rides along the Rhine through a storm.

15

pp < *mp*
mysterious, suspenseful

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

f *rhythmic, confident, gallant, noble*

19

pp < *mp*

mf

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

23

ff heroic, noble

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

f rhythmic, solemn, elegant

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

f 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

51

ff heroic, noble

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.

63

ff *cantabile, elegant*

f *luminous, joyful*

65

confident, daring but elegant and noble

67

luminous, joyful

69

H Reverent, graceful (♩. = c. 46)

71

very light tremolo
subito mp
f
confident, daring but elegant and noble
very light tremolo
f
very light tremolo
f
subito mp
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 *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

f *mf*

(start slowly, with rubato, gradually accelerating)

95 *accel.* *un po' tenuto*

f *mf*

gradually increasing in intensity.

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

97

ff exciting, with energy

ff rhythmic, confident, gallant, noble

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

99

Musical score for measures 99-101. The score is written for Cello and Viola. Measure 99 features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand. Measure 100 has a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand. Measure 101 has a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand.

102

Musical score for measures 102-104. The score is written for Cello and Viola. Measure 102 features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand. Measure 103 features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand. Measure 104 features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand. The score includes dynamic markings: *fp* very dramatic and *sffz*.