



Unter dem  
Sternenhimmel  
des Rheins

For Benedict Klöckner

Composed by  
José L. 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

Cover image by Paulina Drummond

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

# The Legend of the Noble Knight

## I. Under the starry sky of the Rhine

Inspired by Benedict Klöckner's 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

**PERFORMANCE NOTE:** Several sections of this piece need to be performed in a passionate manner akin to a cadenza, taking some tempo liberties to allow the musical passages to sing with bravery or in whichever manner is indicated by the corresponding descriptive expressions. That is particularly the case for the opening section, as well as sections H, I, and K.

**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

*mf* confident and daring, but elegant and noble

4

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

10 (G) *f*

**Tempo a piacere (molto rubato)\***

13 *mf* suspenseful, gaining impetus

**\*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) ( $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 56$ )

The Knight rides along the Rhine through a storm.

Violin

*pp*  $\rightarrow$  *mp*  
mysterious, suspenseful

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

Cello

*mf* rhythmic, confident, gallant, noble

Violin

Cello

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

Violin

*ff* heroic, noble

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

Cello

*f* rhythmic, solemn, elegant

Violin

Cello

**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

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

*f* lovingly, luminous, noble

35

(A)

**D** Reverent, graceful

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

39

*mf* delicate, graceful as if dancing a Baroque dance

*Differentiate the two voices: lower voice (main melody) vs. upper voice (double stops).  
The upper voice should be flautando, legato, delicate and gentle (reminiscent of a graceful curtsy)*

voce B

tenderly, a bit melancholic

43

voce B

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

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

*pp* *mp*  
mysterious, suspenseful

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

*mf* rhythmic, solemn, elegant

**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.

*f* cantabile, elegant, almost heroic

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

*f* luminous, joyful

confident, daring but elegant and noble

luminous, joyful

**G** A bit more relaxed, joyful (♩. = c. 52)

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

61

*mf cantabile, elegant*

*f luminous, joyful*

65

*a piacere*

*confident, daring but elegant and noble*

67

*a tempo*

*luminous, joyful, graceful*

*luminous, joyful*

69

**H Reverent, graceful** (♩. = c. 46)

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

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

73 *f cantabile, graceful*

*f almost heroic*

**I Più rilassato** (♩. = c. 54)

Alternating between freer tempo and a more standard "tempo giusto" for the measures in the style of a Baroque Gigue

75 *a piacere* *tempo giusto*  
*mp passionate* *mf graceful, like a Baroque dance*

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

78 *a piacere* *tempo giusto*  
*mp passionate* *f graceful, like a Baroque dance*



82 *a piacere* *tempo giusto*

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

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

85 *a piacere* *tempo giusto*

*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* *luminous, open, gentle*

*f* *luminous, stately, noble*

**K** Ad lib (♩. = c. 40)

The Knight gets ready to commence a new adventure.

92

(start slowly, with rubato, gradually accelerating)

*accel.* -----

95 *un po' tenuto*

*gradually increasing in intensity*-----

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

97 *exciting, with energy*  
*mf crescendo*

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

*rhythmic, confident, gallant, noble*  
*f crescendo*-----

99 *(cresc.)*

*(cresc.)*-----

102 *(cresc.)*

*fp* ----- *sffz*  
*very dramatic*

*fp* ----- *sffz*  
*very dramatic*