2015

Valle Grande: Overture for Double String Orchestra

Michael D. Mauldin

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MICHAEL MAULDIN

VALLE GRANDE:
Overture for Double String Orchestra

Commissioned by the Eldorado High School Orchestra,
Albuquerque, New Mexico
Ruth Striegel, Director
Valle Grande: Overture for Double String Orchestra, commissioned by the Eldorado High School Orchestra in Albuquerque NM, was premiered by the school’s top two string orchestras, conducted by Ruth Striegel, May 3, 2016 at the school. It was inspired by a trip the composer, the conductor and the students made to Valles Caldera National Preserve the previous September.

When Ruth asked me to write a piece for her orchestras that was inspired by a place I loved in New Mexico, it coincided with the opening of the Valles Caldera National Preserve. Since the Jemez Mountains are my favorite place in the state, I had often admired the expansive caldera—then private land—from the highway. But getting a guided tour of it with the students that fall was a peak experience—a lovely confluence of old and new.

The wandering opening of the piece is reminiscent of the winding road we took then, and the arduous journey that the first visitors made. The “airborne” primary melody reflects the joy of experiencing the broad overview and the enchanting details of the expanse. The pensive second melody imagines the adversities—loneliness, loss of loved ones, hunger, harsh winters—that early settlers experienced there. Developments of those two melodies occupy the middle of the piece, followed by a return to the wandering introduction and celebratory ending.

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Orchestra I Violin II-2

[poco a poco cresc.]

con [slower]

senza [without] sordino

div. [divisi]

rit. [ritardando]

ff [forte]
Orchestra I Viola

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Orchestra II Bass-2

(poco a poco cresc.) $\text{Slower}$

$\text{a tempo}$ $\text{pizz.}$

$\text{arco}$ $\text{rit.}$