

I do not know whether American school children still cut out paper silhouettes of famous historical figures. We did in my youth, of Jefferson and Lincoln, in black against an orange background. I wasn't very good at it. My Lincolns and Jeffersons, and Washingtons and Franklins, all looked like Brahms--which I claimed was intentional. No one was well enough informed to dispute me.

In 1988 I composed an orchestral work to serve as a companion piece for the Brahms D-minor Piano Concerto. In this brief orchestral prelude I attempted--once again--a silhouette. Delineated in sound rather than on paper, it was meant to convey a broad shape rather than the detailed working out of ideas. At several points during the piece, one instrument outlines another's more elaborate figure. This is true of trombone and timpani, bassoon and timpani, violins and a woodwind pair, violins and flute, violins and trumpet etc. In fact, this reducing or simplifying of a melody occurs often enough to be a basic motif, perhaps a musical equivalent of silhouetting.

Silhouette was premiered in London at the Barbican Centre by the London Philharmonic, Leon Botstein conducting, on November 12, 1988. It was played, again under his direction, by The American Symphony in seven cities in Japan in January and February of 1994. When Leon Botstein asked me to write a short work to mark the 40th anniversary of The American Symphony I decided to add a celebratory extension to the existent work. Thus, *Silhouette with Revelry*.

--RW