

Lad, a Dog: the Trio

Jon Deak

Part I: The Coming of Lad (1991)

Part II: The Visitor (1996)

“The longer I continue to write, the more personally I seem to get involved in relation to the performers for whom the work is intended. Sometimes, I feel as if I’m even sculpting a portrait of them. While this has not stopped other performers from playing these pieces, there will always be this element of personal involvement on the part of the performer. The present work is surely a case in point. In no other work have I enjoyed thinking of the performers as personal friends more than in this one. Over a period of several years, we discussed the parameters of this piece, the text if there was to be one—the style, the approach, and the techniques. We discussed texts ranging from Norse legends to current events. What finally emerged for me was the most personal avenue for the piece—one which the Trio had early on suggested and had been staring me in the face: hence the selection of *Lad, A Dog*. Even though the text is taken from the wonderful Terhune stories, working with the Verdehrs on it was exciting because I felt they embodied the spirit of those stories in their own lives.

The musical materials are simple in the extreme and inevitably reflect the atmosphere of the times in which the stories were written. Beyond this, I mean no musicological message. The actual speech patterns of the main characters are reflected in the music they play, as will be clearly evident, and this is of course true of *Lad, the dog, himself*. I might add that since I am a dog owner and lover myself, it was no great leap of difficulty on my part to enter into the playful mind of a puppy.”

—Jon Deak

The world premiere of *Lad, a Dog: the Trio, Part I: The Coming of Lad* was on June 23, 1991 at the Grand Teton Music Festival, Teton Village, Wyoming.

The world premiere of *Lad, a Dog: the Trio, Part II: The Visitor* was on July 2, 1996 in the Verdehr Trio Summer Chamber Music Concert Series at the Wharton Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan. (The Verdehrs’ collie, Laddie, appeared on stage for bows.)

Jon Deak (born 1943, Ogden Dunes, Indiana) was educated at Oberlin College, The Juilliard School of Music, the University of Illinois, and as a Fulbright Scholar, at the *Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia* in Rome. His training also includes work in the visual and theatrical arts, and he was active in the “performance art” movement in New York’s Soho. For many years he was the associate principal bassist of the New York Philharmonic and the resident composer of the Apple Hill Chamber Players and the Grant Teton Music Festival.

Deak has written over three hundred compositions which have been performed at music festivals worldwide and by such institutions as the New York Philharmonic, the Rochester Philharmonic, the Atlanta, Chicago, Cincinnati, National, New Jersey, and Seattle Symphonies, the New York Woodwind Quintet, and many of the major string quartets. His concerto for contrabass and orchestra, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, was nominated for the 1990 Pulitzer Prize by the National Symphony; his concerto for string quartet and orchestra, *The Headless Horseman*, was nominated in 1992. His discography includes releases on Centaur, CRI, Innova, and Naxos.

Deak regularly participates in fundraising events to aid symphony orchestras, and as an outspoken educational advocate, he has become particularly noted for his successes in bringing new music to young people. In 1995 he founded Very Young Composers, an international award-winning program, whereby public school children ages nine to thirteen compose and orchestrate their own music for major ensembles across the country and on four continents. He also serves as the Young Composer Advocate of the New York Philharmonic.

Deak was chairman of the New York Philharmonic Artistic Advisory Committee that helped select Kurt Masur as the Philharmonic’s Music Director. He also participated in Leonard Bernstein’s

historic Freiheitskonzert (freedom concert) in what was then East Berlin on Christmas Day, 1989, an occasion that he regards as one of the musical highlights of his life.

Also an environmental advocate and avid wilderness mountaineer, Deak has led climbing expeditions into the Canadian Rockies, Alaska, and the Himalayas. He is married to cellist Jacqueline Mullen.

Additional information is available at www.jondeak.com.