

***Rondo Brillante* (1972)**

**Jere Hutcheson**

"The rondo was a favorite form of the classical composers. In the *Rondo Brillante* I have attempted to capture the lighthearted spirit which typifies the classical examples. Formally, the work consists of an introduction followed by the rondo proper in the design A-B-A-C-A-D-A.

*Rondo Brillante* was composed with the knowledge that I was composing for highly professional players, and I was free to exercise my penchant for virtuoso writing. Thus, bristling cadenzas, perpetual motion passages, and coloristic writing abound.

In variation rondo form, the theme was an ascending chromatic scale, varied each time it recurred. The episodes highlighted various intervals and their inversions, but were subjected also to chromatic development.

*Rondo Brillante* is dedicated to Harriette Forbes Oliver, a painter and long-time friend of my first wife's family. Harriette made two abstract oil paintings for me and they hang in my office. Musical symbols from my manuscript and silhouettes of my head form the basic ingredients of the composition. The dedication of the rondo to her was my show of appreciation.

The work was premiered on February 1, 1973. Student reviewer David M. Burge wrote in the Michigan State University *State News* following the premiere: '...the trio, gave the piece a performance that caught the drive and menace of the piece. Yet, the piece, because it is written with virtuoso performers in mind, dealt mostly in technical display passages that ended up sounding like a swarm of bees.'

Chris Brockman wrote in the *Lansing State Journal*: '*Rondo Brillante* is a work of tremendous energy and good humor, and virtuosic demand—the score is spiced with usual and unusual directions to guide the performer in achieving these qualities. One, which reads "like Heifetz," means he wants the violinist to start high. In another, he wants a low start, so naturally puts "like Lowfetz." In another place, he wants a snappy rhythm, so he writes "Like Batman," meaning like the theme from the television show. *Rondo Brillante* is a happy combination of old and new; something Hutcheson seems to be particularly adept at achieving. The harmonies and the rhythms are largely in the modern idiom, but the work as a whole is quite perspicuous in form, a rondo, "tight knit, with variety," allowing for a basis of understanding and appreciation in two different musical orientations.'

Mary Lynn Griffin of the *Observer Eccentric* called the work '...one of tremendous vitality and considerable humor, but was, nonetheless, tightly structured.' In a review for the Detroit *Free Press*, Collins George wrote: 'A wildly difficult work, it simply radiates good nature and has the entire audience smiling at its end.'

—Jere Hutcheson

The world premiere of *Rondo Brillante* was on February 1, 1973 in the Music Auditorium, Music Department, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

Jere Hutcheson (born 1938, Marietta, Georgia) studied composition with Frances Buxton at Stetson University, Helen Gunderson at Louisiana State University, H. Owen Reed at Michigan State University, and Gunther Schuller, and Ernst Krenek at the Berkshire Music Center, Tanglewood Massachusetts. His earliest inspiration to become a composer came in his early teen years from his piano teacher, Harry Bolza.

He has received composition fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood, and the Vermont Composers Conference. He has been accorded grants

from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Michigan Council for the Arts, and the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music. In 1976, the National Music Teachers Association honored him with the citation Distinguished Composer of the Year.

In addition to a large output for the band and wind ensemble media, Hutcheson has written extensively for orchestra, chorus, voice, chamber ensembles and piano. His works have been performed throughout the United States and Canada, as well as in Europe, Asia and Australia. He has received performances by the symphony orchestras of St. Louis, Detroit, and Lansing, the Edward Tarr Brass Ensemble, the Norman Luboff Choir, the Duo Contemporain of the Netherlands, DuoDenumof Denmark and many of the finest university wind ensembles and concert choirs in most of the United States. Hutcheson's instrumental compositions are published by C. Alan Publications, G. Schirmer, Subito Music, American Composers Edition and Dorn Publications. His choral works are published through Walton and Subito Music.

Hutcheson's teaching career at Michigan State University spanned fifty-one years, from 1965 until 2016. He chaired the composition area from 1975 until 1992. He stated on more than one occasion that MSU was a land of opportunity for anyone with ideas and dreams. He recognized that the great institution provided an environment in which he could grow in his scholarship, in his teaching skills, and most especially, in his passion-composition. He recognized the value of a composer's being able to work side-by-side with conductors, performers, theorists, musicologists, as well as other composers.

Hutcheson co-authored *Musical Form and Analysis* with Glenn Spring in 2013. His earlier texts include *Music for the High School Chorus*, co-authored with James Niblock (1967) and *Musical Form and Analysis: A Programmed Course* in two volumes.

The Jere Hutcheson Archive in the library at Michigan State holds Hutcheson's complete compositional output (scores and recordings), as well as many early drafts, notes on compositional processes, and correspondence.

Additional information is also available at [www.jerehutcheson.com](http://www.jerehutcheson.com).