

### *Triple Concerto* (1993)

David Ott

The *Triple Concerto*, composed under commission from Michigan State University and the Verdehr Trio, may well be the first work ever composed for these three instruments as joint soloists with orchestra. It is dedicated to the Verdehr Trio.

In addition to the three solo instruments, the concerto uses a small orchestra: a single flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon; two horns; trumpet; trombone; timpani; percussion and strings. Additional notes are provided by the composer:

“The combination of violin, clarinet, and piano is rather unusual in traditional literature. It has become more popular with composers of the twentieth century because it offers such a variety of colors. The opening movement is written in two broad sections. The first is quiet and slow (*Andante sostenuto*). Without orchestral accompaniment, each solo instrument is introduced separately: the clarinet presents the main theme; it is followed by the violin, then by the piano, and finally the orchestra joins in. Here the emphasis is on lyricism and the individual timbres of each of the solo instruments. The second half of the movement is rapidly paced (*Molto allegro con energico*), with a consistently high level of nervous energy. A single motto dominates the melodic material, and all the solo instruments are given equal treatment; much contrast between the trio and the orchestra pervades the texture. The opening *adagio* theme is recalled to end the movement.

The second movement (*Adagio sostenuto*) is a series of long and sustained solos, beginning with the piano, followed by clarinet and violin. Ample opportunity is given for each soloist to develop expressive and melodic playing.

The finale (*Allegro con spirito*) is more light-hearted and fun. It is sectional in nature, its jocular opening theme followed by a slightly jazzy second theme. The *Concerto* comes to a head in a virtuosic cadenza near the end of the movement, and then a fast-paced and bright coda carries the music at breakneck speed to its conclusion.”

—David Ott

The world premiere of the *Triple Concerto* was on November 4–5, 1993 with the Grand Rapids Symphony Orchestra, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Catherine Comet conductor.

David Ott (born 1947, Crystal Falls, Michigan), is a composer, conductor, author, and educator. He completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Wisconsin at Platteville in 1969. He earned a Master of Music in piano performance at Indiana University in 1971 and received a Doctor of Musical Arts in music theory and composition at the University of Kentucky in 1982.

Ott’s young music career had immediate impact, and he was named Outstanding Alumnus of the University of Wisconsin at Platteville in 1987 and was inducted into its Hall of Fame in 2007. In 1996, he was named Outstanding Alumnus of the University of Kentucky, College of Fine Arts.

Ott has served on the faculties of Houghton College (New York), Pfeiffer College (North Carolina), and DePauw University (Indiana) where he was Composer-in-Residence and held an endowed chair as the Seigusmund Professor of Music. He was honored as Outstanding Professor at two of these institutions. In 1991, he was named Composer-in-Residence of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra and retained that position until 1997.

From 1999 to 2002, Ott was Music Director/Conductor of the Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra. In 2001, he founded the Philharmonic of Northwest Florida and served as its Music Director/Conductor until 2008. Concurrently, he held the appointment of Pace Eminent Scholar and Composer-in-Residence at the University of West Florida. As Director of Music Ministries and

organist at Christ the King Episcopal Church in Santa Rosa Beach, he created a series of programs called Concerts at Christ the King. In 2016, became conductor of the Panama City Pops Orchestra, and embarked on a new experience as conductor of the Northwest Florida Ballet Symphony Orchestra.

Ott has composed a large portfolio of compositions in every genre of music ranging from his five symphonies to an opera to various pieces of children's music. Ranking at the top of American composers born after World War II, his works are among the most frequently performed of any American composer of the era. They have been performed by over a dozen major orchestras in the United States and at festivals throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Ott has been nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in Music four times, first in 1988 for the *Concerto for Two Cellos and Orchestra*, a work commissioned by the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C. and premiered at the Kennedy Center under the baton of Mstislav Rostropovich. He has also received two nominations for a Grammy award. In 2003, he was honored with the Music Alive Award, a prestigious national award co-sponsored by the American Symphony Orchestra League and Meet the Composer.

The success of the *Concerto for Two Cellos* premiere led to a commission for *DodecaCelli*, a work for the twelve cellists of the National Symphony to perform during the World Cello Congress at the University of Maryland, and for *Three Brass and Orchestra* also for the National Symphony. Both works were premiered with Rostropovich conducting. Other commissions include one from the Indianapolis Ballet Theatre, a viola concerto for Paul Neubauer, principal violist of the New York Philharmonic; the orchestral work *Music of the Canvas* for the Indianapolis Museum of Art; and *Celebration at Vanderburgh* for the one hundred seventy-fifth anniversary of the Evansville (Indiana) Symphony Orchestra. Ott's *Symphony No. 2* and *Symphony No. 3* were commissioned by the Grand Rapids (Michigan) Symphony, Catherine Comet, conductor. *Symphony No. 5* was written for the Reston (Virginia) Community Orchestra, and Ott's opera *The Widow's Lantern* was premiered by Pensacola (Florida) Opera.

Ott is the author of two books on composers, and he created a thirteen-part television series distributed through Florida Education television that ties together American history and symphonic music.