



Clark Ross

Composer, Director, Interpreter, Teacher

Canada, St. John's, Newfoundland

About the artist

Clark Winslow Ross's compositions have been performed in England, Ireland, the United States, and across Canada by some of Canada's finest musicians, ensembles, and orchestras. He was Composer-in-Residence at Ireland's Waterford New Music Week in 2003, and has won Young Composer's Awards in national competitions by the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra and the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra. He has also received over 30 commission grants through the Canada Council, the CBC, the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council, and other funding agencies. He is the founder and Artistic Director of the Newfound Music Festival, held every February in St. John's, and was a founding member and later President of Continuum, the Toronto-based new-music group.

Born in Maracaibo, Venezuela, Clark was raised there and in Caracas, Lima (Peru), Lennoxville (Quebec), New York City, Fort Lee (New Jersey), Brussels (Belgium), and Toronto. He holds a Doctor of Musical Composition degree from the University of Toronto (1992), and is Professor of composition, orchestration, theory, electronic music, and classical guitar at Memorial University of Newfoundla... (more online)

Personal web: <http://www.clarkross.ca>

About the piece



Title:	La Muerte Me Está Mirando [#2 of "3 Lorca Sketches..."]
Composer:	Ross, Clark
Licence:	Copyright © Clark Ross
Instrumentation:	String orchestra
Style:	Modern classical
Comment:	Also titled "Interlude for String Orchestra."

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Three Lorca Sketches for Orchestra

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Clark Winslow Ross

- I. *Es Verdad*
- II. *INTERLUDE: La Muerte Me Está Mirando*
- III. *El Niño Come Naranjas*

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Three Lorca Sketches for Orchestra

First performance on 11 March, 1995, by the Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Kjellrun Hestekin, St. John's, Newfoundland.

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INSTRUMENTATION (DURATION) BY MOVEMENT

- I. ***Es Verdad*** (3')p. 1
Fl.; E. Hn.; Cl. 1, 2, in Bb; Bn. — Hn. 1, 2, in F; Tpt. in C — 1 Perc.—Strings
- II. **Interlude: *La Muerte Me Está Mirando*** (5')p. 23
String Orchestra
- III. ***El Niño Come Naranjas*** (6')p. 29
Fl. (doubling Picc.); Ob., Cl. 1, 2; Bn. 1, 2 — Hn. 1, 2; Tpt. 1, 2 — 2 Perc.—Strings

INSTRUMENTATION (ALL MOVEMENTS)

1 Flute (doubling Piccolo)
1 Oboe (doubling English Horn)
2 Clarinet in Bb
2 Bassoons

2 Horns in F
2 Trumpets in C

2 Percussion

Strings

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Dedicated to the memory of my mother (1922-1978)

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PROGRAMME NOTE BY THE COMPOSER

I don't often recycle old works into new ones (the only other example I can think of in which I did something somewhat similar is *Memory Quilt*, for flute and piano), but I had been looking for an opportunity to arrange some music I wrote in the 1980's for orchestra when I was asked by Peter Gardner to provide something for the *Newfoundland Symphony* in 1995. Two of the *Three Lorca Sketches for Orchestra* grew from a set of songs I wrote in 1988 (revised in 1996) for soprano and string quartet, called *Canciones Sobre el Amor y la Muerte* ("Songs of Love and Death"), based on the poetry of **Federico García Lorca** (1898-1936). The third *Lorca Sketch* is loosely based on *Passage 2 for Orchestra* (1992), but this is a substantial revision (and scored for a smaller orchestra).

1. *Es Verdad* ("It is True") is a straightforward orchestral arrangement of the song of the same name from my earlier set, with the soprano melody given to the English horn. The poem's protagonist is bemoaning the amount of effort involved in loving another. The mood seems both melodramatic and somewhat tongue-in-cheek (one verse is, "Because of my love for you, air pains me, as does my heart. And my hat hurts too."), which I tried to capture in the music.

2. *Interlude*, is again drawn from my Lorca songs; originally for string quartet, it is arranged here for string orchestra. My goal was to compose an instrumental interlude between songs/movements that conveyed both the beauty and the fatalism expressed in Lorca's poetry. The Interlude's subtitle, *La Muerte Me Está Mirando* ("Death is Watching Me"), is a reference to a line in *Canción de Jinete*, a Lorca poem about someone taking a long journey by eerily red moonlight to Córdoba on a road he knows very well, but, although he can see it in the distance, he knows he will never get there (see poem below). The poem was set to music in my Lorca songs, but this string orchestra piece is unrelated to the song. The lyricism of the long melodic lines is interrupted occasionally by short bursts of passionate energy by a solo violin; I think of these gestures as representing attempts to break free of the fatalism by exercising free will. The attempts prove futile, however, and the violin ultimately becomes more subdued along with the other players; the long, descending string slide at the end marks the demise of the poem's protagonist.

3. *El Niño Come Naranjas* ("The Boy is Eating Oranges") is a line from a Lorca poem called *Despedida* ("Farewell"), which juxtaposes mundane everyday acts, like eating oranges and the harvesting of wheat (by a reaper), with a serene acceptance of the inevitable ("if I die, leave the balcony open"). The character of this *Lorca Sketch* is completely different from the others; the mundane is represented by the up-beat sections (like the opening fanfare for the trumpets and the jazz-like "walking" bass lines), while the mystical serenity is suggested by the steadily pulsing and hypnotic middle section.

This third movement has no musical connection to my Lorca song set, although it borrows some of its materials from the second of my *Three Passages for Orchestra* (1992).

Three Lorca Sketches is dedicated to the memory of my mother, who died in 1978, and who encouraged my love for music. The Interlude in particular was composed with her in mind.

Clark Winslow Ross is Associate Professor at Memorial University of Newfoundland's School of Music, where he teaches composition, theory, electronic music, and classical guitar. He is one of Canada's more active composers, with over 20 commissions and many performances of his works throughout Canada, as well as in England, Ireland, and the United States, since moving to Newfoundland in the fall of 1992. His compositions have had frequent radio broadcasts, and he has been awarded many grants by the *Canada Council*, the *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*, the *Newfoundland Arts Council*, the *Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra* (NSO), and other organizations. His music has been performed by numerous artists and groups, including the *Atlantic Arts Trio*, the *Atlantic String Quartet*, *Duo Concertante*, *Continuum*, Mark Fewer, Rivka Golani, the *Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra*, Bev Johnston, the *Nashua Chamber Orchestra* (USA), the *NSO*, Barbara Pritchard, *Symphony Nova Scotia*, and the *Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra*. He was Composer-in-Residence at the *Waterford New Music Festival* in Ireland in January of 2003.

Clark Ross was awarded Memorial University's *President's Award for Outstanding Research* in 1999, the first composer to receive that honour. Other prizes have included *Young Composer's Awards* for works in national competitions by the *Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra* and *Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra* in 1993, and, more recently, *Newfoundland Arts and Letters Awards* (2002, 2004). Ross holds B.A. (humanities), M.Mus., and Mus.Doc. (composition) degrees from the University of Toronto, as well as an ARCT (composition). He performs in St. John's occasionally as a classical or electric guitarist, and was Music Director (evening services) at St. Thomas' Anglican Church in St. John's from 1997-2002.

Clark has three children (Julia, Andrew, Alexander), and is married to Dr. Jennifer Porter (Memorial U. Dept. of Religious Studies).

POETRY BY FEDERICO GARCÍA LORCA (FROM *CANCIONES*, 1921-24)

I. CANCION DE JINETE

Córdoba.

Lejana y sola.

Jaca negra, luna grande,
y aceitunas en mi alforja.
Aunque sepa los caminos
yo nunca llegaré a Córdoba.

Por el llano, por el viento,
Jaca negra, luna roja.

La muerte me está mirando
desde las torres de Córdoba.

¡Ay qué camino tan largo!
¡Ay mi jaca valerosa!
¡Ay que la muerte me espera,
antes de llegar a Córdoba!

Córdoba.

Lejana y sola.

II. ES VERDAD

¡Ay qué trabajo me cuesta
quererte como te quiero!

Por tu amor me duele el aire,
el corazón
y el sombrero.

¿Quién me compraría a mí,
este cintillo que tengo
y esta tristeza de hilo
blanco, para hacer pañuelos?

¡Ay qué trabajo me cuesta
quererte como te quiero!

III. INTERLUDE

(La muerte me está mirando ...)

IV. DESPEDIDA

Si muero,
dejad el balcón abierto.

El niño come naranjas.
(Desde mi balcón lo veo.)

El segador siega el trigo.
(Desde mi balcón lo siento.)

¡Si muero,
dejad el balcón abierto!

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I. SONG OF THE RIDER

Córdoba.

Distant and solitary.

Black pony, big moon,
and olives in my saddle-bag.
Although I know the roads
I will never reach Córdoba.

Through the plain, through the wind,
Black pony, red moon.

Death is watching me
from the towers of Córdoba.

Ay what a long road!
Ay my valiant pony!
Ay but death awaits me,
before I reach Córdoba!

Córdoba.

Distant and solitary.

II. IT IS TRUE

Oh what work it is
to love you as I do!

Because of my love for you, air pains me,
(and also) my heart
and my hat.

Who would buy from me
this ribbon that I hold
and this white thread of
grief, to make handkerchiefs?

Oh what work it is
to love you as I do!

III. INTERLUDE

(Death is watching me ...)

IV. FAREWELL

If I die,
leave the balcony open.

The boy is eating oranges.
(From my balcony I can see him.)

The reaper is harvesting the wheat.
(From my balcony I can hear him.)

If I die,
leave the balcony open!

II. Interlude For String Orchestra

La Muerte Me Está Mirando...

Clark Winslow Ross

q = 56 - 72; Intense

First system of the score, featuring five staves: Vn. I, Vn. II, Va., Vc., and D. B. The time signature is 4/4, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music is marked with dynamics *p*, *mp*, and *pp*. Vn. I and Vc. have triplets and accents. Vn. II and Va. have accents. D. B. has a triplet. The system concludes with a 4+5/8 measure.

Second system of the score, continuing the five staves. The music is marked with dynamics *pp*, *p*, *mp*, and *pp*. Vn. I and Vc. have triplets and accents. Vn. II and Va. have accents. D. B. has a triplet. The system concludes with a 4+5/8 measure. A *solo; molto espr.* marking is present above the Vn. I staff.

II. Interlude: La Muerte Me Está Mirando

16

mf
gli altri
mf
p
pizz.
arco
p espr.

21

mf
mf
p
mf
f
mp
mf

II. Interlude: La Muerte Me Está Mirando

26

f *mf* *fp* *f* *f*

p *p*

arco *fp* *p*

Solo: Burst of energy;
a little desperate

31

ppp *mf* *mp*

pp *pp* *p* *mp*

ppp *pp* *p* *mp*

ppp *pp* *p* *mp*

ppp *mp*

even more desperate

arco

(big *cresc.*
during gliss.)

II. Interlude: La Muerte Me Está Mirando

45

ff 3 3 mp fp mf f mp fp pp fp p mp fp pp fp

50

pp mf p mf fp p mf p mf

II. Interlude: La Muerte Me Está Mirando

56

dim. al niente

p

pp

dim. al niente

p

pp

dim. al niente

p

pp

dim. al niente

dim. al niente

*Start gliss. immediately on beat 1. The sound should die away *before* the gliss. ends.