

More About **VOICES OF THE NIGHT: A NOCTURNAL FANTASY FOR BAND**

In 1977, I wrote two compositions for orchestra that I shelved without even copying the parts. One was a companion piece to a concert band composition which I called **Expansions for Orchestra**, and the other one was named **Symphonic Essay**, a title I had borrowed from Samuel Barber's **Essay for Orchestra**, although it didn't much owe much to either of his two pieces with that title.

Both compositions lay dormant until 2018, when I pulled them out of the drawer, tweaked them a little, and published them. I kept the original title for **Expansions**, but I didn't like the **Symphonic Essay** name and asked a few friends to listen to it and suggest titles.

The music has a dark, nocturnal quality, even in its fast section, and I thought something to do with night, like some variation on "nocturne," might be appropriate, so I mentioned that when asking for suggestions. One friend suggested "Nocturnal Fantasies," which I liked, and another said the music certainly conveyed "the voices of the night." That phrase--though he hadn't intended it to be his title suggestion--grabbed me.

So I started looking to see if someone had already used it. Sure enough, I found a poem by none other than Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, but no other music. So I lifted an epigraph for the score from the poem (below) and added Erv and Andrea's actual suggestion as a subtitle. The generic and uninspired **Symphonic Essay** had become **Voices of the Night: a Nocturnal Fantasy for Orchestra**.

As soon as I was finished with it, I decided that **Voices of the Night** would also make a good band composition, so I transcribed it for band, and both versions are available on Dacker Music.

All forms of sorrow and delight,
All solemn Voices of the Night,
That can soothe thee, or affright...

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow