

An Archive of the musical compositions by Herb Bielawa

Composition: **Odyssey** – organ solo

Date: 2008

Duration: 15:52

Recording: by Sandra Soderlund

Program Note:

At the outset *Odyssey* was to be a major work. One of the varieties of forms available for this purpose is the 19th Century organ symphony. These are like instrumental symphonies, normally with four movements. The composer took from that model three aspects: four movement form (in my case four distinct uninterrupted sections) dramatic character and fugal counterpoint. Along the way there were unexpected compositional situations that arose that required constant attention. It was, in fact, a colorful journey of the mind; an Odyssey.

The first section is an energetic and extended fanfare. The second, a moody kaleidoscope of colors with reams of segues between two opposing sonorities which flow in and out of each other. The third features a parade of solos, each making a musical statement similar to verbal statements made at a town meeting complete with differing viewpoints. It was also an unabashed attempt to show off the Great Organ of Methuen. The fourth and final section of the piece is a fugue with cadenza. For those that belong to the Harvard Musical Club the fugue subject will be of special interest, although this “interest” also appears in the first section.

The piece was commissioned by the Harvard Musical Association. It received its World Premiere on May 9, 2009 on the Great Organ, Methuen Memorial Music Hall.