

Mandolin Concerto “From the Blue Ridge”

Total timing: 20 minutes

Orchestration: 2222 4231 T+I mandolin and strings

jeff midkiff

Jeff Midkiff's concerto for mandolin and orchestra, "From the Blue Ridge," was commissioned by Music Director David Stewart Wiley and the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra. The Concerto has subsequently been performed with the Rochester Philharmonic, the Shreveport Symphony, the Williamsburg Symphonia and the Northwest Florida Symphony. Performances are scheduled with the Boulder Philharmonic and the Symphony of Southeast Texas, Beaumont.

Your marriage of contemporary folk elements with the rich tradition of the western European orchestra is masterful and original. You've invented something new, and done it very well.

Wallace Easter
Associate Professor
Department of Music
Virginia Tech

The piece directly reflects Midkiff's roots in the Blue Ridge Mountains and his fondness for the bluegrass music tradition, with a touch of swing and jazz in the mix. Not that this suggests "Blue Ridge" is all fast mandolin pickin' because it isn't. In fact, it's a work that cleverly blends a sophisticated orchestral foundation with mandolin playing suitable for classically-oriented lines as well as those more down-home. The final movement is full of foot-stomping, toe-tapping rhythms and was just great fun to hear.

—John Shulson, *Virginia Gazette*,
January 19, 2013

Wow, really terrific—damned impressive! Gorgeous middle movement. Bravo Jeff, a real accomplishment both pragmatically and artistically.

—David Royko, *Chicago Tribune*

I have rarely encountered a new work that inspired such rapturous praise from musicians and audiences from a single hearing.

By turns toe-tapping, wistful, spiritual and downright fun, the concerto is colorfully scored and features the virtuosic talents of the composer as soloist.

—Michael Buttermann, Conductor, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra

“...toe-tapping...spiritual...colorfully scored...fun...”

—Michael Buttermann, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra conductor



I truly enjoy the color, language and structure of the symphony orchestra. I felt a deep-seated desire to bring my favorite instrument in line with that experience. Deep down, I wanted to bring my most natural companion and the orchestra — two seemingly different worlds — together.

“Orchestras are looking for new music that expands the classical repertoire, and a new and wonderful mandolin concerto by Jeff Midkiff fits this need perfectly. It fuses naturally the bluegrass and classical orchestra styles, allows for the soloist to communicate both profound lyricism and technical virtuosity, and is both fun and challenging for the orchestra to play...the audience immediately responded with a sustained standing ovation.

—David Stewart Wiley, Music Director and Conductor, Roanoke Symphony Orchestra, Virginia and Long Island Philharmonic, New York

www.jeffmidkiff.com/concerto.html