

Program Notes

Andrew Thomas

Loving Mad Tom

(1989-1990 - revised 2002)

From the hag and hungry goblin
That into rags would rend ye
All the spirits that stand by the naked man
In the Book of Moons defend ye!
That of your five sound senses
You never be forsaken
Nor wander from yourselves with Tom
Abroad to beg your bacon.

While I do sing 'Any food, any feeding,
Feeding, drink, or clothing'
Come dame or maid, be not afraid,
Poor Tom will injure nothing.

O thirty bare years have I
Twice twenty been enraged,
And of forty been three times fifteen
In durance soundly caged
On the lordly lofts of Bedlam,
With stubble soft and dainty,
Brave bracelets strong, sweet whip's ding dong,
With wholesome hunger plenty.

With an host of furious fancies,
Whereof I am commander,
With a burning spear, and a horse of air,
To the wilderness I wander.
By a knight of ghosts and shadows
I summoned am to tourney,
Ten leagues beyond the wide world's end.
Me thinks it is no journey.

- Anonymous, Seventeenth Century

I dedicate *Loving Mad Tom* to William Moersch. When he commissioned me to compose a Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra, this poem leapt into my mind as a dramatic program for the work. The narrator's raffish and alarming personality, his desperate hunger, zest for life, bitterly comic language, and barely suppressed violence grab the reader's attention like a scene from today's streets.

The four stanzas I chose from the poem each personify one movement of the Concerto. The music opens upon a pastoral country scene. Bizarre rapping sounds, emanating from within the string section, interrupt this idyllic landscape as Tom approaches a cottage. He begs for food. At the Marimba's entrance, he conjures up the horrors of the road, and of the insane mind. The incantatory music of the first movement proceeds without pause into a vigorous begging dance. Here, in the second stanza, Tom is agile, stiff, funny, ingratiating, and just a bit frightening. His statement that poor Tom will injure nothing may or may not be true. In the third stanza he describes his confinements at the Bedlam lunatic asylum. The music invokes flat, enchained expanses of time, scurrying rats in the walls, and a flogging. In the last stanza Tom sees himself as a knight adventurer. I find his charm greatest here as he follows his vision "ten leagues beyond the wide world's end." He is a frightening lunatic. He is also an artist entering the wilderness, battling with strange forms, apparitions, and possibilities. This movement is a celebration of his questing spirit. I composed it in loving memory of Richard E. Drake (1941-1989) and Jeff Mulholland (1955-1989).

-A.T.

Loving Mad Tom is scored for:

2 Flutes (2nd Flute doubles Piccolo), 2 Oboes, 2 Clarinets in *Bb*, 2 Bassoons,
4 Horns in *F*, 2 Trumpets in *Bb*, 2 Tenor Trombones, 1 Bass Trombone, 1 Tuba,
1 Percussion playing:

Tubular Chimes, Vibraphone, Orchestra Bells, 3 Timpani, Concert Bass Drum, Tamtam, Snare
Drum, Maracas,
Strings (minumum 10-10-8-6-4).

The Score is approximately 30 minutes in duration.

1: ...From the hag and hungry goblin...

*Andrew Thomas, 1989-1990
revised 2002*

I. ...I from the rag and hungry gesture

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Tubular Chimes

Percussion

Marimba

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Cello

Bass

Score Details:

- Tempo: ♩ = 104
- Time Signature: 4/4
- Key Signature: One flat (B-flat)
- Dynamic markings: *p*, *pp*, *solo*, *gl'altri div.*, *pizz.*, *arco*.
- Performance instructions: *g'l'altri div.*, *pizz.*, *arco*.