

COMPOSER'S NOTES:

Behold the Night

I have always enjoyed working with children's choirs. There is a purity and clarity in their sound which is unlike any other musical medium.

When Peter Oundjian and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra asked me for this new work, I immediately thought of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Shakespeare, both because it is one of my favourite Shakespeare plays, and because of the magical atmosphere of the play. It seemed like a natural choice for children, because it has a fairy-like quality that children can relate to. As a child, I always hoped that fairies were real. Their magic takes us to another place, far from the world we live in.

The work opens with a short orchestral introduction, which leads to the first section, "*Over hill, over dale*", a bubbly and innocent song. An orchestral interlude changes the atmosphere to a more serious mood. The second song, "*Now the hungry lion roars*", starts with a solo flute accompanied by horn and strings, suggesting the spirit of nature haunting the night. The song gradually builds from mystery to exaltation as the night's secrets yield to morning.

"*Behold the Night*" runs for approximately 12 minutes in performance and is scored for children's chorus, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, celesta, and orchestral strings.

Larysa Kuzmenko / 2011