



A Gift to Professor Anthony Maiello and the  
George Mason University Symphony Orchestra

# The Isle of Calypso

From Symphony No. 2 (*The Odyssey*)

ROBERT W. SMITH (ASCAP)

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## INSTRUMENTATION

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|   |                         |   |                                                                                                       |   |                                                              |
|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Conductor               | 1 | 1st B $\flat$ Trumpet                                                                                 | 4 | Percussion I<br>(Suspended Cymbal,<br>Optional Gong/Tam-Tam) |
| 1 | 1st C Flute             | 1 | 2nd B $\flat$ Trumpet                                                                                 | 1 | Percussion II<br>(Temple Blocks)                             |
| 1 | 2nd C Flute             | 1 | 3rd B $\flat$ Trumpet                                                                                 | 2 | Percussion III<br>(Ocean Drum, Wind<br>Chimes)               |
| 1 | Oboe                    | 1 | 1st Trombone                                                                                          | 1 | Optional Solo Violin<br>(English Horn Double)                |
| 1 | English Horn            | 1 | 2nd Trombone                                                                                          | 8 | 1st Violin                                                   |
| 1 | 1st B $\flat$ Clarinet  | 1 | 3rd Trombone                                                                                          | 8 | 2nd Violin                                                   |
| 1 | 2nd B $\flat$ Clarinet  | 1 | Tuba                                                                                                  | 5 | Viola                                                        |
| 1 | 3rd B $\flat$ Clarinet  | 1 | Piano                                                                                                 | 5 | Cello                                                        |
| 1 | B $\flat$ Bass Clarinet | 1 | Mallet Percussion<br>(Tubular Bells [Synthesizer Patch],<br>Optional Handbells/Chimes/Helium<br>Tank) | 5 | String Bass                                                  |
| 2 | Bassoon                 | 2 | Timpani<br>(Ocean Drum)                                                                               |   |                                                              |
| 1 | 1st Horn in F           |   |                                                                                                       |   |                                                              |
| 1 | 2nd Horn in F           |   |                                                                                                       |   |                                                              |
| 1 | 3rd Horn in F           |   |                                                                                                       |   |                                                              |
| 1 | 4th Horn in F           |   |                                                                                                       |   |                                                              |

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## PROGRAM NOTES

“The Isle of Calypso” is the third movement of Symphony No. 2 (*The Odyssey*) by Robert W. Smith. Based on Homer’s literary epic of the same name, *The Odyssey* brings to the listener an incredible series of adventures and torments as seen through the eyes of Odysseus, King of Ithaca.

As the movement begins, Odysseus is on the isle of Ogygia, called the Delightful Island. The shipwrecked chief was cast naked upon the shore by the fury of Poseidon and now has a goddess, Calypso, to attend to him. Calypso’s island paradise is full of delights: crystal fountains, running brooks, flowering meadows, and other endless luxuries. If Circe loved Odysseus sincerely, Calypso loves him with tenfold more warmth and passion. She can deny him nothing, except his departure. She offers him everything, even to join her in immortality. If he will stay and share in her pleasures, he shall never die.

But death with glory has greater appeal for Odysseus than a shameful life that shall never die in an endless prison of time. When he pledged his vows to his Penelope, he made no stipulation that he would forsake her whenever a goddess should think him worthy of her. They had sworn to live and grow old together. He would not survive her if he could, nor meanly share in immortality itself, from which she was excluded.

These thoughts kept him in a reflective state of sadness in the midst of pleasure. His heart was on the seas, making voyages to Ithaca. Twelve months had worn away when the gods ordered Hermes to go down to the earth to command Calypso to dismiss her guest. The divine messenger tied fast to his feet his winged shoes, which carried him over the land and seas. He took in his hand his golden rod, the ensign of his authority.

With a heavy heart, Calypso promised to fulfill the command. To Odysseus’s great surprise, she provided timber from her sacred woods, linen for the sails, and tackling to build a ship for his departure. By the fifth day of his renewed labor of love, Odysseus launched the ship and left the idyllic paradise of Calypso behind.

“The Isle of Calypso” is dedicated to Professor Anthony Maiello and the George Mason University Symphony Orchestra of Fairfax, Virginia.

## NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

“The Isle of Calypso” was composed as the third movement of *The Odyssey* (Symphony No. 2). However, it may be performed as the second movement to segue from “The Iliad (...in the 10th Year of the Trojan War)” to either “The Winds of Poseidon” or “Ithaca.” This option allows you several programming options depending on the performance situation. Should “The Isle of Calypso” be performed as the second movement, this will also reconcile the programmatic variation from the original text of Homer. With all due respect to Homer’s timeless literary work, I chose to use the “Calypso” theme later in the musical composition to provide the needed musical contrast before the fury of “Ithaca,” the final movement. As with all of the movements of Symphony No. 2 (*The Odyssey*), this work may stand alone as an individual piece. It is my hope that it will be programmed to provide a quiet and reflective addition to any concert.

The opening cymbal scrape should be assigned to as many percussionists as personnel and equipment allow. This effect serves as the transition to the incessant ticking of the clock (the frustrating passing of time that Odysseus endures on the island).

The clock effect may be accomplished in several ways. The most effective performance would include the use of two wooden boxes with sound holes (ports) cut into one side. The two boxes should sound approximately a third apart. The boxes should be staged at the front of the stage with one percussionist. The player should use a wooden board approximately five feet long.

Holding the board perpendicular to the floor with both hands at approximately eye level, the player should gently swing the board back and forth, alternately striking each of the boxes. This movement simulates the pendulum of an old clock, providing a visual as well as a musical effect. I suggest attaching a short block of wood to the bottom of the board (to form the letter “T”) to serve as the beater for the clock. Should this option be used, I also suggest having the clock “tick” for the entire piece yet varying the dynamic intensity as not to distract from the other musical elements.

Other options for the clock effect are the use of high and low wood blocks with smaller sticks or an actual old clock with amplification. If the actual clock is preferred, please place it on a small table near the front of the stage. Again, you may wish to let the clock run throughout the entire movement, turning the volume up for the beginning and end as notated on the score.

The two ocean drums should carefully overlap their “waves” to create a realistic effect. At no point should the ocean sound be overpowering.

The piano part should be performed on a grand piano if possible. Expressive playing should be the ultimate goal between the piano and the soloist. The piano is truly collaborative, not just accompaniment. The English horn solo is cued for various strings to provide as many performance options as possible.

Feel free to be as expressive as possible throughout through varying tempi. The notated metronome markings are for general reference only. I leave the ultimate expression in your capable hands.

The keyboard percussion part features tubular bells. The desired effect is one of cathedral bells. This effect can be achieved in several ways. The easiest way may be the use of standard chimes. As an option, you may wish to use a synthesizer with a tubular bell patch. However, please strive for the cathedral effect by choosing a lower bell sound. I have had luck with the tubular bell patch on a vintage Yamaha DX-7. In addition, the Church Bell 2 patch by Roland works nicely. I have also had success with another acoustic option: Have a welder cut a helium tank in half, creating two rather heavy “bells” that produce an incredible sound. Be sure that the tank is cut off-center to allow for two distinct pitches. A note of caution: Take extreme care when hanging the two “bells” because they are very heavy—yet worth the effort!

The final phrase includes the reintroduction of the ticking clock in measure 67. Please note the dynamic shaping. The clock should capture the audience’s attention and then fade away into the distance. In similar fashion, the final three tolls of the bell should fade as well. Great care should be given to an even decrescendo in the ocean drums to avoid an abrupt release.

I thank my dear colleague Professor Anthony Maiello for his continued friendship and support of my work. In addition, I thank Ms. Paula Williams for her help with the percussive effects in the piece.

I hope that you and your ensemble find “The Isle of Calypso” to be a musically rewarding experience. I hope that you will continue your musical journey through the remaining three movements of Symphony No. 2 (*The Odyssey*). Best wishes for a wonderful performance.

*Robert W. Smith*

CONDUCTOR

A Gift to Professor Anthony Maiello and the  
George Mason University Symphony Orchestra  
**THE ISLE OF CALYPSO**  
From THE ODYSSEY-Symphony No. 2

By ROBERT W. SMITH (ASCAP)

Gently ♩ = 72

C Flutes 1 2

Oboe

English Horn

B♭ Clarinets 1 2 3

B♭ Bass Clarinet

Bassoon

B♭ Trumpets 1 2 3

Horns in F 1 2 3 4

Trombones 1 2 3

Tuba

Piano

Mallet Percussion  
(Tubular Bells [Synthesizer patch], Optional Handbells/  
Chimes/Helium Tank)

Timpani  
(Ocean Drum)

Percussion I  
(Suspended Cymbal,  
Optional Gong/Tam-Tam)

Percussion II  
(Temple Blocks)

Percussion III  
(Ocean Drums,  
Wind Chimes)

Ocean Drum (overlap "waves" with Perc. III)

Susp. Cym./Gong/Tam-Tam  
Scrape *pp* (scrape: use as many as personnel and equipment allows)

Clock Effect (see notes to conductor)

Ocean Drum (overlap "waves" with Timpani)

Gently ♩ = 72

Violins 1 2

Viola

Cello

String Bass

1 2 3 4

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