

Program Notes for An Uncommon Hero

An Uncommon Hero was commissioned by the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphony with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, and premiered by Symphony on April 20, 2006, at the MENC National Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. The piece is written in the style of a concert overture, featuring the different sections of the orchestra throughout the composition.

“When I was thinking about what I would write for the excellent Symphony musicians, I thought about how I had been given the gift of music in my life from my parents. I remembered how my father in particular, drove me to every piano and violin lesson from the time I was six years old, and waited patiently. Without his commitment of time, money, and encouragement, I would not be doing what I am today, working in the art form I love.

I decided to dedicate this composition to my father, and to use his name with musical pitches assigned to each letter of the alphabet, as the basis for themes and motives for the piece. I then used transpositions, inversions, retrogrades, and octave displacements of these themes and motives to craft the structure.

The gift of music has also been given to many of us by parents, teachers, and other special people in our lives. Perhaps we can think about these people as this piece is performed, because in the composing, performing, and listening to music, we pass this gift on to others.”