

Gustav Mahler: Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen (Where the splendid trumpets sound)

Who stands outside and knocks at my door,
Waking me so gently?
It is your own true dearest love,
Arise, and let me in.

Why leave me longer waiting here?
I see rosy dawn appear,
The rosy dawn and two bright stars.
I long to be beside my love,
Beside my dearest love.

The girl arose and let him in,
She bids him welcome too.
O welcome, dearest love of mine,
Too long have you been waiting.

She gives to him her snow-white hand,
From far off sang the nightingale,
The girl began to weep.

Ah, do not weep, my dearest love,
Within a year you shall be mine,
You shall be mine most certainly,
As no one else on earth.
O love upon the green earth.

I'm going to war, to the green heath,
The green heath so far away.
There where the splendid trumpets sound,
There is my home of green grass.

James David: Secure. Contain. Protect.

The SCP Foundation is a fictional extra-governmental organization dedicated to securing, containing, and protecting numerous paranormal entities. Created by a thriving online community of writers, each “SCP” is a form of short fiction that describes the physical and mysterious properties of the entity, typically in a dry, bureaucratic tone. This sonata for trombone and piano was inspired by three of these remarkably creative stories.

SCP-882 “Machine God” describes a sentient collection of metallic gears that compels humans to add more and more components to its mass. Anyone near the entity will experience auditory hallucinations of ticking, grinding, and clicking sounds that gradually increase in intensity. The object is depicted musically as a persistent ostinato built by layer upon layer of polyrhythms and quick darting motives.

SCP-1342 “Future Voyager” is an object that is nearly identical to the Voyager I space probe launched in 1977. However, the SCP was constructed in the year 42,412 AD by a civilization hundreds of light years from Earth. Like Voyager, it contains a “golden record” that holds a message for humanity. The civilization that built it found Voyager and learned much of humanity’s achievements in art and science. The two cultures flourished from their communications across the stars. As technology improved and resources dwindled, they eventually clashed and humanity almost completely wiped out its rival. The few survivors sent a replica of Voyager into the distant past to warn humanity of its future and remind them of the music they shared. Famously, the Cavatina from Beethoven’s String Quartet no. 13 was included on the original “golden record” and is quoted in the movement.

SCP-682 “Hard-to-Destroy Reptile” is a large, hyper-intelligent reptilian creature that can withstand and adapt to almost any force or environmental hazard. One of the oldest and most beloved SCP’s, it has become something of a mascot for the author community. The big lizard is given a raucous Latin dance that incorporates slide glissandi as well as reincorporating the previous movements’ themes into its sturdy frame.

Susan Mutter: Ages

(The composer writes)

I was inspired to compose *Ages* when I contemplated how a man relates to the world around him so differently at various ages in his life. All six year old boys have something in common, as do all 92 year old men! It is what is in common, that I have tried to capture here.

In “Six”, for example, I picture a boy wandering aimlessly around his neighborhood in days of yesteryear, imagining whatever comes to him as he encounters various items he finds. At a construction site he finds some boards, perhaps, and he creates a little “home”...or perhaps he finds some fresh mint and decides to try to make chewing gum!

At “Fifteen”, he is the rebellious teen – not giving a care what his parents think – wanting to do everything HIS way, and at the same time, with so much energy, he just wants to grab the world in his hand – conquer all heights, and sing his heart out with abandon!

At “Thirty-four”, monotony has set in...he’s stuck in a repetitive job that’s relentless. At the key change, a brighter time appears as he gets a chance to spend some time with his precious 3 year old daughter, but soon after – he must go back to work again.

“Sixty-six” is probably one of the most satisfying times in a man’s life. He is a grandfather now, and is retired and can sit back and enjoy the family he has raised, and his grandchildren, too. His heart overflows with contentment and love.

At “Ninety-two”, his health and strength are fading, and he is on his deathbed at a hospital. The single notes in the piano are like a morphine drip that is keeping pain at bay for him. As he drops in and out of consciousness, glimpses of his beloved childhood come back to him, almost taking him completely back to his youth – but then life fades from him...