

Pictures of a North Idaho Family

A 6-section suite of music with narration.

Movements:

No. 1: Preface

Narration

No. 2: Coot

Narration

No. 3: The Couple

Narration

No. 4: Being Married

Narration

No. 5: The Bonner Family

Narration

No. 6: Epilogue

In 2016, the idea formed to create a performance based on music with interspersed narration, which guide the listener through a story about a fictional family. The music was to enhance the story.

In early 2015, I was living in Spokane, Washington, which is some 45 minutes west of the north Idaho towns of Post Falls and Coeur d'Alene. I had resided in that region for 12 years, and had many good friends in said communities and surrounding.

The concept was to take names of places in that area of Idaho, and convert the names to people. There are 5 people at the heart of the story:

Cuthbert Bonner (father)	AnnaMarie Carlson (mother)
Wallace Bonner (son)	Darlene Bonner (daughter)
Blanche Bonner (Cuthbert's mother)	

My intention was to submit this suite to north Idaho music entities (which could mount an orchestra), for performance. I hoped the audience members would understand the references in the story being places very familiar to them.

Here are the "veiled connections" of regional places which became the 5 family members:

Blanche Bonner: Some 75 miles north of Coeur d'Alene, is Priest Lake, Idaho. In that city is a catholic church, St. Blanche.

Cuthbert ('Coot') Bonner: 'Coot' is derived from the county just east of the city of Spokane, Kootani ('coot - en - ee'). 'Bonner' is the county north of Kootani.

AnnaMarie Carlson ('Annie'): Her nickname takes the two last syllables of Kootani. Therefore, the couple is referred to by mixing Coot & Annie, which closely achieves Kootani.

Wallace Bonner: Wallace is a city east of Coeur d'Alene by about 50 miles.

Darlene Bonner: The Kootani city of Coeur d'Alene had it's 'Coeur' portion removed, and the remaining 'd'Alene' became 'Darlene. (In actuality, Coeur d'Alene is pronounced 'core duh-lane'.)

With the family "fleshed-out", the next step was to compose a story about them. As the story is narrated, it is punctuated by music, which tends to be programmatically suggestive of the progression of the story. Here are the narration episodes.

Narration #1:

Cuthbert Bonner came into this world in the usual way. He grew up straight and true, was kind, friendly, with a creative curiosity that occasionally got him into trouble. By third grade, Cuthbert came to hate his name so much that late one evening his mother Blanche sat him down, and they decided on a nickname: 'Coot'. Cuthbert died, and - a full 8 years old - 'Coot' was born. Life continued.

Narration #2:

During her second year at the local junior college, AnnaMarie Carlson found herself sitting next to Coot Bonner in a boring history class. Her down-to-earth nature was a surprising contrast to her beguiling beauty. After graduating, AnnaMarie and Coot found their missing half in each other. They had many shared interests plus their personalities fit hand-in-glove. In exactly one year, three months and 19 days, they were married. Life continued.

Narration #3:

Whatever the world threw at Coot and Annie, they prevailed. She brought a quiet strength and positive outlook to their love. Coot always figured out how to deal with setbacks, problems, or the unexpected. They grew together in a comfortable, safe community with many friends and family nearby. Life continued.

Narration #4:

In the blink of an eye, Mr. and Mrs. Bonner found themselves parents of an intense bookworm-slash-geek of a son, named Wallace. Never 'Wally'... Always 'Wallace'. Wallace may have tried to ignore his ram-bunctuous younger sister Darlene, but in all things, he was her protector, confidante and true friend. As Wallace finished college, Darlene successfully outgrew her tomboy character as she entered high school. Life continued.

Narration #5:

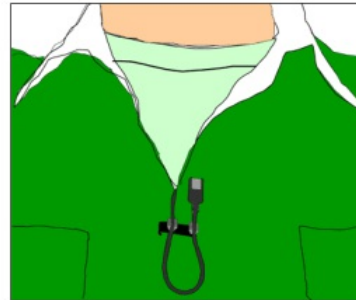
This story has no end. The wheel turns, the sun rises and sets. People laugh, and people cry. Our large world took no notice of the passing of Coot and Annie Bonner, no matter they had just celebrated their 93rd birthdays. Wallace Bonner has his own young family. Darlene Bonner has her sights set on making a difference. Their world is a tapestry full of color, texture, meaning... where joy mostly outweighs sorrow. We can be assured... Life continues.

It is **essential** this performance include narration. Narration is included here. Male narrator is preferred. The narrator should be dressed at least "business casual", though a man's suit is fine. There are elements of "stage direction" for the narrator, given below.

1) A chair should be placed in front of (or to a side of) the orchestra, as can be convenient. This chair might be similar to the graphic provided. Next to the chair, a standing lamp that can be turned on - as shown. The setting would be a lamp to help with reading while sitting in a 'comfy' chair.



2) If possible, the narrator should be given a wireless microphone to be clearly heard in the hall. A microphone of the "head-set" or lavalier variety (not held by hand) is best. Please avoid a microphone-on-stand or hand-held arrangement.



3) After the conductor has taken the stage but before he raises his baton, the narrator will come to stage, approach the chair, turn on the lamp (if it is not already turned on), and take his seat. He should already be set with his microphone. It is encouraged his narration text be inside a folio or binder - as shown. From this he can open, then read narrations.



4) As the orchestra begins, the narrator should casually (VERY SLOWLY) page through the folio as if reading silently. Other blank or dummy pages can be inserted to help with this illusion. The narrator must be ready to speak the narration text as soon as the orchestra ends a section of music. A natural, unhurried, story-telling tone is desired. Delivery should be appropriately modulated given the punctuation seen in the text - a warm, conveying style... not flat or mechanical.

5) When each segment of narration is finished, the narrator should return to slowly paging through the folio, but has to be ready to speak each next narration, a few moments after the music stops.

6) At the end of the final section of music, the narrator should close the folio, wait, then stand when recognized by the conductor.

Robert John Magnuson 2016



I wish attribution to include my name, date, and title of composition, as are listed in each score. I request that any public performance of any work I have released be recorded to video with sound, and that recording be forwarded to me (as video file or website URL of video). Please use the 'Contact' form on my website listed below if you have a video of a performance, to arrange how I might receive such.

Special Note: On my personal website, there is an audio file rendering of this suite - with narration - that can be listened to. It was rendered in a different software from MuseScore.

All my free compositions (and further info) are found at:
<https://www.gandsnut.net>