

THE ZOUAVE, the third and shortest movement, features the percussion section. Zouaves were soldiers of North African origin which were first used by Napoleon and later hired by other military leaders for several subsequent European conflicts. They always wore brightly colored uniforms with red pants. In a letter to his brother Theo, Van Gogh makes a reference to having found a Zouave model to paint. The music begins slowly with the traditional rhythms of the zouave cadence and gradually speeds up to a feverishly fast tempo. The tom toms symbolize the sound of the zouave's large boots on the brick floor. The snare drum exemplifies the military nature of the soldier, while the use of one chinese cymbal paired with a standard crash cymbal hints at the middle eastern origin of the zouave. Many of the rhythms found in the movement forecast those found in the finale of the composition. Brass instruments make a brief appearance beginning in bar 62 while intoning a somewhat inverted statement of the "Van Gogh motif".

The fourth movement, **THE DRAWBRIDGE**, was inspired by the artist's painting of the Langlois bridge. This is the most exposed and delicately scored movement of the set and features the woodwinds, primarily the clarinets. "Water sounds" open the movement with water ripples (solo cl 1), the constant motion of the water (trills in solo cl 2 and 3), and water splashing on the shore (suspended cymbal). To this texture is added the sound of a ship's horn (solo bass cl) signaling the arrival of a ship at the bridge (there is no ship in the painting, however) and a haunting melody (solo fl and solo bsn) which also has a "signaling" quality. These and other "water sounds" later contrast with the opening and closing of the bridge (brass cresc. and dim.). After a development of these ideas depicting somewhat turbulent waters, the solo cl 1 intones the "Van Gogh motif" (bars 26 - 31) and the movement ends calmly with a return to the "water sounds".

I have always respectfully referred to Van Gogh as "the artiste". Thus, I have chosen to call the last movement of the work **FINALE - SELF PORTRAIT OF THE ARTISTE**. This last movement was actually the first to be written. It is a musical essay on the last and one of the greatest of the self portraits. Van Gogh painted this work while recuperating at the mental assylum in Saint-Remy, France only months before his suicide. In keeping with the compulsive and restless ornament of the painting's background, the music features sudden changes in emotion (labeled on the score) ranging from anger and confusion to jubilation and a tragic and transfixed catatonic and hypnotic state. During this section featuring the hypnotic state (bars 47 - 77) there are several ostinati stated simultaneously which seem to be "stuck in time". Eventually the anxiety of the music builds to a cacophonous climax and the "Van Gogh motif" is stated one last time in a chaotic and dissonant manner (bars 140 - 148). Quick tutti 16th notes (bars 149 - 151) depicting the suicide bullets lead to a glorious section symbolizing the artistic legacy left to us by Van Gogh. The work ends with a spirited coda.

I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Capt Lang for asking me to compose this work, for his advice and intuitive insight, for making it come to life with such a superb and outstanding interpretation, and for preserving the renditions for posterity by recording the work on his first CD with the USAF ACC Heritage of America Band.

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