

## ***Tragedy Tomorrow*—Michael Gilbertson**

Gilbertson is a native of Iowa who has studied at the Juilliard School in New York with some well-known composers (including John Corigliano, who was in Cheyenne with the CSO some years back), and who has garnered enviable success with American orchestras and awards committees. Characterized by the young composer as inspired by his encounter with images of New York City during the 1920s, this work is a dark reflection, indeed. The composer cites the “Art Deco” style of the times (a French style, essentially, and most call the American version “Depression Modern”), and expresses hope that its “glamour and elegance” is redolent in “Tragedy Tomorrow.” Expanding the thought, he also cites George Gershwin as inspiration for the work, as well. Considering the 1930s followed, the evocative title seems appropriate.

It’s essentially a modern tone poem, aspiring, as it does, to depict the imagery of something specific in the mind’s eye. A mastery of understanding an orchestra’s technical capabilities is important in composing works like tone poems, and this work has it. Cast into several continuous, contrasting sections, it opens with thunderous, spiky accents that intrude upon a floating, ominous atmospheric tension. Soon, there follows a driving, rhythmic—almost motoric—evocation of muscular, mechanical energy—think, perhaps, of Bartók. Interludes of quiet reflection appear from time to time, occasionally surprising you with lush evocations of—Gershwin? A kind of plodding march follows—perhaps these are the jobless lines after the stock market crash. Familiar ideas and sounds return, tying all together, and the dramatic conclusion seems a fitting end to this haunting cityscape.

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