

## THE ALCHEMY OF HOPE

THE ALCHEMY OF HOPE is a short orchestral meditation on the transformative and healing qualities of hope, vision and effort. It was written as something of a self-directed pep talk, encouragement for the darker times. It is scored for chamber orchestra.

A solo piano begins softly, laying out a simple chorale, slightly mystical but also reverent and comforting. What follows is a series of challenges and the responses to those challenges. The middle strings go first, setting a soft but insistent minor-key pattern. Solo cello and solo violin sing a moody duet over this dark backdrop, which at its end transforms into an affirming chorus from the entire string section.

The naggingly persistent string ostinato returns, this time louder and with more force. Melodic statements enter again from the cello and violin, but this time with the power of the full sections, leading to the powerful entry of the double bass near the very bottom of its register. Again the clouds part and give way to a sunny and bright figure in the higher woodwinds, followed by a wandering lyric melody and more of the sunny figure, expressed by the horns.

Yet one more time the droning minor-key pattern comes back, with the moving line now transferred ominously to the low end in the basses and celli. It grows and grows in power, threatening to become totally overwhelming and roll over everything in its path. At the peak of its intensity, the spell breaks and we find ourselves back at the starting point, slightly transformed. The piano chorale reappears, brighter and in a higher key, joined by gentle winds and eventually muted strings as it winds its way to the end.