

Birthday Trio

for Violin, Viola, and Violoncello

Composed September 11—November 15, 2010

Duration: about 18 minutes

cover art: lower image, CERN particle detector

In early 2010, I had a peculiar dream of a respectful conversation with Elvis Presley. He said I should write a symphony based on a speech by Martin Luther King. Well—who can refuse the King of Rock and/or Roll? Especially since I share my birthday, January 15, with MLK, and classical radio stations frequently play a composer's music on his birthday.

I always have chamber versions of my larger works, both to demonstrate the content and so that I can hear the music in my lifetime. The first three movements were what you might think of as “my part”; the last movement would be a setting of the *I Have a Dream* speech for orchestra, without singers. That is beyond the capacity of a string trio, so this piece is just the first three movements of a possible future *Birthday Symphony*. But on reflection, this orchestral version may not actually happen. Who knows?

The second movement's title refers to the famous bicycle ride of Dr. Albert Hofmann, respected Swiss chemist, who in 1943 took the world's first acid trip. He died in 2008, at age 102.

The third movement reflects the dark, cold part of the year, which I find particularly difficult due to my arthritis; North Carolina is about as far north as I care to live.

This trio was first performed at Duke University on February 22, 2011 by Eric Pritchard, violin; Yoram Youngerman, viola; and Elizabeth Marshall, cello. The violin part is Eric's edition.

Bill Robinson

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