Implacable Gifts

i.   *Irresistible Urges*
ii. *Folk Story*
iii. *Fairytale*
iv. *Inevitable Conclusion*

Program Note:

The principle of a concerto with a single soloist is well understood: the soloist is a hero assisted, and sometimes challenged, by the orchestra. But what is the rationale for two heroes? Are they at war, competing, collaborating, or just chatting? While wondering how to reconcile these options, I was assailed by a stream of musical ideas perfect for two pianos with accompaniment, but which didn't conform to a wider architectural scheme.

These ideas were so persistent that they simply demanded inclusion, leaving me to find a binding principle later on. This situation brought to mind *The Arrival of Implacable Gifts*, the 1985 painting by Australian surrealist James Gleeson (1915-2008) in which disparate dazzling images are woven into a roiling sea of intrigue. Gleeson spoke, about this painting, of gifts dropping from the sky, things that we longed for but which on arrival became unavoidable, and not always completely welcome.

The first movement, *Irresistible Urges*, is a collection of the original striking sonic images that were the inescapable, implacable gifts that engendered the composition. The middle two movements emerged with distinctly narrative characteristics, and so became *Folk Story* and *Fairytale*, the latter becoming increasingly fanciful. Since music contains neither verbs nor nouns, I can't tell exactly what the stories are, and invite the listener to imagine their own. The final movement returns to the ineluctable and inexorable, motifs that lead us to the unpreventable end of the music.

Carl Vine, February 2018

Orchestration:

piccolo
flute
oboe
cor anglais
clarinet in B♭
bass clarinet in B♭
bassoon
contrabassoon
4 horns in F
2 trumpets in C
2 tenor trombones
bass trombone
tuba
timpani
percussion (2 players)
>   I: bass drum, tamtam,
>   II: glockenspiel, xylophone, vibraphone,
>   2 low concert tomtoms, snare drum, crash cymbals

harp
two pianos
strings

SCORE IN C