



KYLE VANDERBURG

# COURSE OF EMPIRE

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Woodwind Quintet

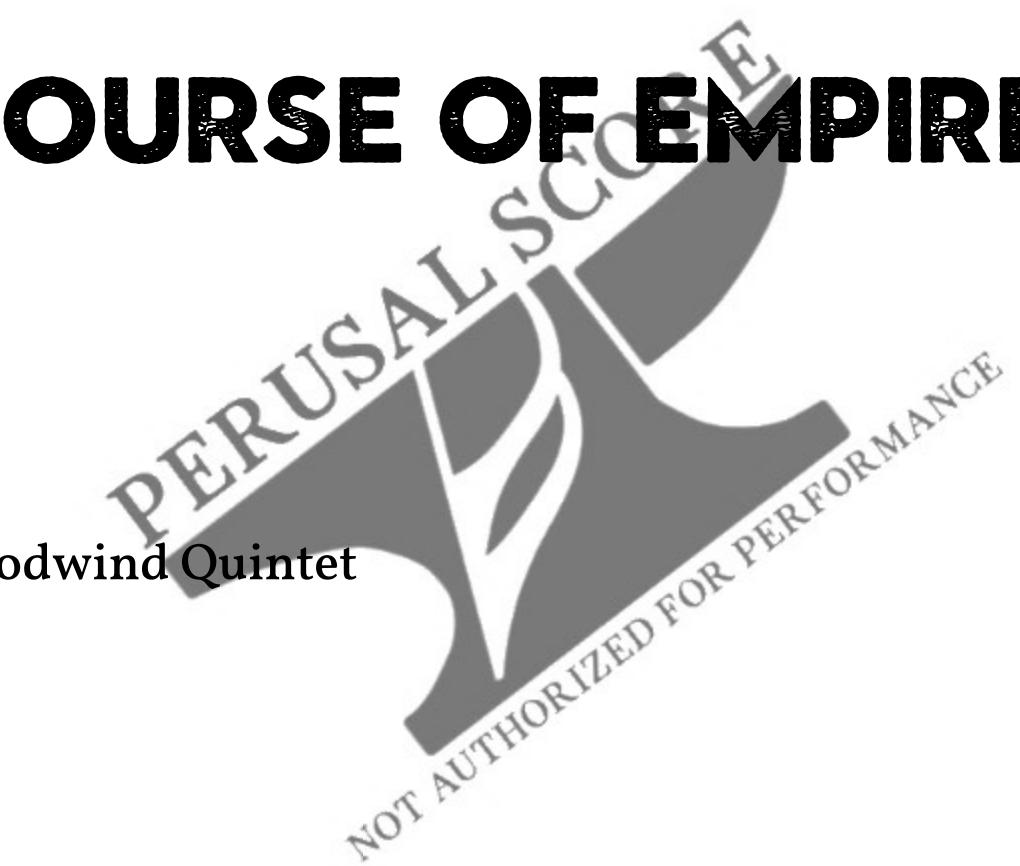




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## Program Note

*Course of Empire* takes its title and theme from a series of paintings by Thomas Cole. Over the course of these five paintings, an imaginary city rises and falls. A large boulder atop a cliff watches the scenes unfold: a wild and untamed landscape in the first painting; an agrarian, peaceful, arcadian state in the second; a decadent celebration in the third; the sack and destruction of the city in the fourth; and the ruins in the last.

I tried to work unifying musical motives throughout the quintet. The first movement, *The State of Nature*, begins with a twelve-tone texture. There is no sense of tonal hierarchy or pitch center. The music is in a state of balance, adhering to a natural system not discernable to the listener. The bassoon introduces the main motive representing the cliff, a pastoral sort of hiccup.

The second movement, *Daydreams of Arcadia*, begins with and develops the cliff motive, and has a more defined tonality. There is more action throughout the movement, as we're led to the peaceful beginnings of civilization. The Empire motive, a series of syncopated chords, shows up toward the end of the movement: This is the beginning of the end, where our imaginary city makes the change from existing in harmony with nature to conquering it.

The third movement, *Fulfillment of Empire*, begins with a cliff motive that has been added to, almost to the point of unrecognizability. Scenes of empire are shown musically, from a grand parade, to a show of naval forces, to the temple that occupies most of the painting. The Empire theme returns, expanded upon, but somehow sounding a little overextended.

The fourth movement, *The Fall*, alternates between unfriendly chords (and noises) and the Empire motive. Every iteration of the Empire motive gets a little weaker, as the foundations of the civilization are destroyed. The movement ends with a lone flute.

Movement five, *Redemption*, features some scenes that are familiar, but are now in ruins. The movement slips slowly back into the twelve-tone texture from the beginning. The Empire motive, or something like it, makes a brief appearance and passes through the ensemble, starting in the upper voices and sinking into the lower.

## Performance Notes

A slideshow of images from Thomas Cole's *Course of Empire* is available from NoteForge. Cues for this slideshow are designated by triangle cues throughout the score.

In *The Fall*, performers are given diamond noteheads throughout the movement. This can be any unpleasant sound: multiphonics, fluttertongue, pitch bends, etc.



Print Score and Parts ISMN: 979-0-60006-024-5

Digital Score and Parts ISMN: 979-0-60006-025-2

Duration: 15'

This work was engraved by NoteForge in Fargo. The music is set in Norfolk, provided by NYC Music Services. The text is set in Vollkorn, designed by Friedrich Althausen. The title font is Sonder Sans by Andrew Herndon.

The cover was designed by Jamie Trosen Design + Creative. Where possible, we print on  
Whip Cream Hemptone made by French Paper.

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# COURSE OF EMPIRE

## I. The State of Nature

Kyle Vanderburg  
(2012/2022)

1 ▶

2 ▶

Organically ( $\text{J} = 60$ )

Musical score for measures 1-2. The score includes parts for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, Horn in F, and Bassoon. Measure 1 starts with the Flute and Oboe. Measure 2 begins with the Bassoon.

3 ▶

Musical score for measure 3. The score includes parts for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, Horn in F, and Bassoon. The bassoon has a prominent melodic line.

4 ▶ I4

Musical score for measure 4. The score includes parts for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, Horn in F, and Bassoon. The bassoon continues its melodic line.

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23 5

2  
19

f      mp      mf

f      mp

f      mp

mf

f      mf

f

mf

25

mp

mp

mp

mf

f

29 6

7

mf

f

mf

mp

p

mf

f

mf

mp

p

mf

f

mf

mp

p

mf

f

mf

## II. Daydreams of Arcadia

3

8

Peacefully and rustic ( $\text{♩} = 63$ )      A bit faster ( $\text{♩} = 69$ )

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Hn.

Bsn.

*rubato*

*in time*

7

I3

9

Musical score page 18, measures 4-10. The score consists of five staves. Measures 4-7 are mostly rests. Measure 8 starts with a dynamic **ff**. Measures 9-10 show rhythmic patterns with dynamics **mf**.

Musical score page 24, measures 1-10. The score consists of five staves. Measures 1-3 are mostly rests. Measures 4-10 show rhythmic patterns with dynamics **mf**, **mp**, and **mf** again.

Musical score page 30, measures 1-10. The score consists of five staves. Measures 1-3 show rhythmic patterns with dynamics **mf**. Measures 4-10 show rhythmic patterns with dynamics **p**, **mf**, **mf**, **f**, and **mf**.

38 ▶

rit. Slow ( $\text{♩} = 40$ )

36

Suddenly faster ( $\text{♩} = 108$ )

molto accel.

42

12

48

13

55

A bit slower

ff

ff

ff

ff

ff

ff

p

p

p

p

p

66

Familiar Territory ( $\text{♩} = 72$ )

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

14 rit.

Losing steam ( $\text{♩} = 64$ )

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

75 As the beginning ( $\text{♩} = 60$ )

75 As the beginning ( $\text{♩} = 60$ )

*p*

*mf*

*mp*



## III. Fulfillment of Empire

**16** Bustling ( $\text{♩} = 120$ )

Fl. *mf* *cresc.*  
 Ob. *mf* *cresc.*  
 Cl. *mf*  
 Hn. *mf* *cresc.*  
 Bsn. *mf* *cresc.*

**17** **10** Stately ( $\text{♩} = 100$ )

ff *f* *mf*  
*ff* *f* *mf*  
*ff* *f* *mf*  
*ff* *f* *mf*

**14** **15**

*mp* *f* *mp*  
*f* *mf* *mp*

**20**

**25**

**26**

**30**

**31**

**35**

**18**

36

mf

f

f

f

f

41

mf

mf

mf

mf

46

mf

mf

mf

mf

**52** 19

51



Musical score page 51. The score consists of five staves. The first three staves are in G major (two staves) and the last two are in A major (one staff). Measure 51 starts with a rest followed by eighth-note patterns. Dynamics include *f*, *f*, *mf*, and *f*. The bass staff has a sustained note with a fermata.

**60** 20

56



Musical score page 56. The score continues with five staves. Measures 56-57 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 58-59 feature sustained notes with grace notes. Measures 60-61 show eighth-note patterns. Measure 62 begins with a dynamic *mp*.

62



Musical score page 62. The score consists of five staves. Measures 62-63 show eighth-note patterns. Measure 64 features a sustained note with a grace note. Measures 65-66 show eighth-note patterns. Measure 67 begins with a dynamic *f*.

68

75

## IV. The Fall

**24** Ominous ( $\text{♩} = 63$ )

Suddenly faster ( $\text{♩} = 108$ ) molto accel. 13

Fl. *mp*      *mf*

Ob. *mp*      *mf*

Cl. *mp*      *mf*

Hn. *mp*      *mf*

Bsn. *mp*      *mf*

*cresc.*

**9** Frantic ( $\text{♩} = 144$ )

**13** **25**

*f*

*f*

*f*

*cresc.*

**15**

*f*

*ff*

*ff*

*f*

*ff*

*f*

*ff*

*f*

*ff*

Musical score page 14, measures 24-26. The score consists of six staves. Measure 24 starts with a rest followed by a 4/4 time signature. Measure 25 begins with a 3/4 time signature. Measure 26 starts with a 4/4 time signature. The music includes dynamic markings such as *f*, *ff*, *mf*, and *p*. Measure 26 concludes with a repeat sign and a 3/4 time signature.

30

34

*increasingly unpleasant*

Musical score for orchestra and piano, page 27, measures 38-39. The score consists of five staves. The top three staves are for the orchestra, featuring woodwind instruments like oboes and bassoons. The bottom two staves are for the piano. Measure 38 begins with a dynamic of *p*. The first two measures of the orchestra section feature sustained notes. Measure 38 ends with a fermata over the piano's eighth-note pattern. Measure 39 begins with a dynamic of *fff*, followed by *f*, *fff*, and *f* again. The piano part includes eighth-note patterns and sixteenth-note runs. Measure 39 concludes with a dynamic of *f*.

51 28

15

46

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

*disconcerting*

*f*

*disconcerting*

*f*

56

54

*f*

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

*deranged*

*mp cresc.*

*deranged*

*mp cresc.*

29

65 slipping into madness ( $\text{J} = 66$ )

30

62

*disturbing*

*f disturbing*

*f disturbing*

*f disturbing*

*f*

## V. Redemption

16

31

Unsure ( $\text{♩} = 60$ )

Fl.  
Ob.  
Cl.  
Hn.  
Bsn.

32

IO with motion ( $\text{♩} = 69$ )

Fl.  
Ob.  
Cl.  
Hn.  
Bsn.

16

17

33

Fl.  
Ob.  
Cl.  
Hn.  
Bsn.

23

17

21

34

28 a bit slower ( $\text{♩} = 63$ )

32

35

36

March 28, 2022  
Fargo, North Dakota  
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