

# **A Frankenstein Overture**

**for orchestra**

**by Greg Sandow**

Instrumentation:

2 flutes (second doubles piccolo)

2 oboes

2 clarinets in A

2 bassoons

4 horns in F

2 trumpets in C

3 trombones

timpani

strings

Duration: c. 6' 40"

This piece comes from portions of my 1982 opera *Frankenstein*. I and my librettist—the novelist and poet Thomas M. Disch—adapted Mary Shelley's novel, trying to imagine how we'd have done it if we lived when she did, in the first half of the 19th century. That's why the music often echoes the styles of two composers I love, Verdi and Bellini.

The first section of this overture (up to letter E) is the opera's short orchestral prelude. The extravagant trombone solo that follows comes from three passages sung by the Creature. The gentle music at letter I is an orchestral postlude to a brutal scene at the end of Act 2, in which the Creature murders Victor Frankenstein's bride. After she dies, the Creature, full of remorse, lays her body on her bridal bed, while this music plays. At the dissonant chords just before letter K, the Creature is overcome by rage, and stabs the corpse. The end of this piece, from letter K onward, comes from the end of the opera, where the Creature dies all alone on the ice near the North Pole. (Though the climax just before letter L is an interpolation from somewhere else). The final measures are its dying heartbeat.

*A Frankenstein Overture* was commissioned by Orchestra X, which premiered it in Houston in 1998. I've made revisions since then. For more information, for performance materials, or for a synthesizer recording of the piece, please contact me:

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# A Frankenstein Overture

Greg Sandow (1982, 1998, 2004)

**3/4** Grave  $\text{♩} = 48$  A **4/4**

Flute *ff*

Piccolo *ff*

2 Oboes *f* *ff* *p dolce, espress.*

2 Clarinets in A *ff*

2 Bassoons *f* *ff* *heavily*

Horns 1, 2 in F *f* *ff heavily*

Horns 3, 4 in F *ff heavily*

2 Trumpets in C *ff heavily*

3 Trombones *ff heavily*

Timpani *ff = f* *ff*

**3/4** Grave  $\text{♩} = 48$  A **4/4**

Violin I *f* *ff heavily* pizz. *p*

Violin II *f* *ff heavily* pizz. *p*

Viola *f* *ff heavily* pizz. *p*

Violoncello *f* *ff* pizz. *p*

Contrabass *f* *ff*

A little more quickly;  
rit. . . slightly agitated

7  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$

Ob. *p dolce, espress.* *sustained*

Cl. *p dolce, espress.* *p*

Vln I *pizz.* *p* *arco*

Vln II *p* *arco*

Vla *p* *arco*

Vc. *p* *arco*

Cb. *p*

12  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{2}{4}$

Fl. *sustained* *p*

Ob. *p*

Cl. *sustained* *p*

Bsn. *sustained* *p*

Hn 1, 2 *p*

Vln I  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{2}{4}$

Vln II  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{2}{4}$

Vla  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{2}{4}$

Vc.  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{2}{4}$

Cb.  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{2}{4}$

C

15  $\frac{2}{4}$

$\text{♩} = 80$   $\frac{3}{4}$  Warmly, a little faster

I

Fl. *mf*

Ob. *p* *mf*

Cl. *p*

Bsn. *p*

$\frac{2}{4}$

$\frac{3}{4}$

Hn 1, 2

Hrn 3, 4

I. *mp*

II. *p*

III. *mp*

C

$\frac{2}{4}$

$\text{♩} = 80$   $\frac{3}{4}$  Warmly, a little faster

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

Cb.

*p* *mf* *mf* *p*

19

Ob. I *rfz*

Cl. *rfz*

Bsn. *rfz* *rfz* *p* *poco*

Hn 1, 2 *mf* *mp*

Hrn 3, 4 *rfz*

Vln I *rfz* *rfz*

Vln II *rfz* *rfz*

Vla. *rfz* *rfz*

Vc. *rfz* *rfz* *p* *poco* *legato, sinister*

Cb. *rfz* *mp* *p* *poco* *legato, sinister*

2/4 3/4 2/4

2/4 3/4 2/4

2/4 3/4 2/4

2/4 3/4 2/4

**D**

26 **2/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Fl. I. *mp*

Ob. I. *p* *mp* *rfz*

Cl. *p* *mf* *rfz*

Bsn. *p* *mf* *rfz*

Hn 1, 2 II. *mf* *rfz*

Hrn 3, 4 III. *p* *mf*

Tpt. I. *mp*

**D**

**2/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Vln I. *mf* *rfz*

Vln II. *p* *rfz*

Vla. *p* *mf* *rfz*

Vc. *p* *mf* *rfz*

Cb. *p* *mp*

30  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$  [in tempo]

Fl. *mp*

Cl.

Bsn. *f*

Hn 1, 2 *mp*

Hrn 3, 4 *f*

Vln I *rfz* *f* [in tempo]

Vln II *mf* *f*

Vla. *rfz* *f*

Vc. *rfz* *f*

Cb.

[The Creature Speaks]

More quickly; strongly,  
with marked rhythm

rit. . . accel. . . a tempo

**E** ♩ = 86  $\frac{4}{4}$

$\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{2}{4}$

Bsn.  $\frac{4}{4}$   $f$   $\text{---}$   $ff$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{2}{4}$   $f$   $\text{---}$   $ff$   $f$

Hn 1, 2  $\frac{4}{4}$   $f$   $\text{---}$   $ff$   $f$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{2}{4}$   $f$

Tpt.  $f$   $\text{---}$   $ff$   $f$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{2}{4}$   $f$

Tbn. *freely, like an operatic vocal declamation  
(though the accompaniment stays in strict time)*  
*solo*  $f$   $\text{---}$   $ff$  *grandiose*  $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{2}{4}$

Timp.  $f$   $\text{---}$   $ff$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{2}{4}$

[The Creature Speaks]

More quickly; strongly,  
with marked rhythm

rit. . . accel. . . a tempo

**E** ♩ = 86  $\frac{4}{4}$

$\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{2}{4}$

Vln I  $f$  *savagely*  $f$   $\text{---}$   $ff$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{2}{4}$   $f$   $\text{---}$   $ff$

Vln II  $f$  *savagely*  $f$   $\text{---}$   $ff$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{2}{4}$   $f$   $\text{---}$   $ff$

Vla  $f$  *savagely*  $f$   $\text{---}$   $ff$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{2}{4}$   $f$   $\text{---}$   $ff$

Vc.  $f$  *savagely*  $f$   $\text{---}$   $ff$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{2}{4}$   $f$   $\text{---}$   $ff$

Cb.  $f$  *savagely*  $f$   $\text{---}$   $ff$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{2}{4}$   $f$   $\text{---}$   $ff$

allarg.

A tempo, a little slower

molto rit.  $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

$\text{♩} = 80$

42

**2/4** **F** **3/4** **4/4** **2+2+2/8**

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn. I. a2

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

Hn 1, 2

Hrn 3, 4

Tpt.

Tbn. *sinister, brooding* *huge*

*f* *ff* *f* *f*

Timp. *tr* *tr*

*mf* *f* *f*

**2/4** **F** **3/4** **4/4** **2+2+2/8**

Vln I

Vln II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

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

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

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

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

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

**G**

A tempo; slow, almost halting; sustained

$2+2+2$   
8 I.

$\text{♩} = 33$

not detached

$4$   
8

$3$   
8

Bsn

*p*

(melody, divided among the horns)

Hn 1, 2

*p espress.*

*p espress.*

Hrn 3, 4

*p espress.*

*p espress.*

Tbn.

*p espress.*

**G**

A tempo; slow, almost halting; sustained

$2+2+2$   
8

$\text{♩} = 33$

not detached

$4$   
8

$3$   
8

Vln I

*p*

Vln II

not detached

*p*

Vla

not detached

*p*

Vc.

not detached

*p*

Cb.

not detached

*p*

54

Warmly  $\text{♩} = 48$  **3/4** I. **molto rit.** **4/4**

Cl. *p*

Bsn *mp*

Hn 1, 2

Hrn 3, 4

Tbn. *p* *espress.* *huge, freely*

Vln I *sul g* **3/4** **4/4**

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

Cb.

A tempo, a little slower

accel.

Very measured, not too fast

$\text{♩} = 60$

**H**

57  $\frac{4}{4}$

Fl. *ff*

Picc. *ff*

Ob. I. *ff*

Cl. *ff*

Bsn. *ff*

Hn 1, 2 *ff*

Hn 3, 4 *ff*

Tpt. *ff*

Tbn. *tutta forza* *ff*

Vln I *ff*

Vln II *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

Cb. *ff*

Freely, like a cadenza

rit. . . . .

62

Picc.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn

Hn 1, 2

Hrn 3, 4

Tpt

Tbn.

Timp.

*very grand and stern*

*f*

*f*

*2/4* *4/4* *3/4*

Freely, like a cadenza

rit. . . . .

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

Cb.

*2/4* *4/4* *3/4*

[The End of Innocence]

**I** Flowing, very simply; expressively,  
but never lingering

**3/4** ♩ = 68

Cl.

Musical notation for Clarinet (Cl.) in 3/4 time, starting at measure 67. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music begins with a whole rest, followed by a half note chord (F#4, C#5) and a half note chord (G#4, C#5). A slur covers the next two measures, containing a half note chord (F#4, C#5) and a half note chord (G#4, C#5). The piece concludes with a half note chord (F#4, C#5) and a half note chord (G#4, C#5). The dynamic marking *p* is placed below the first measure.

[The End of Innocence]

**I** Flowing, very simply; expressively,  
but never lingering

**3/4** ♩ = 68

Vln I

Musical notation for Violin I (Vln I) in 3/4 time. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music begins with a whole rest, followed by a half note (F#4), a half note (C#5), and a half note (G#4). A slur covers the next two measures, containing a half note (F#4), a half note (C#5), and a half note (G#4). The piece concludes with a half note (F#4), a half note (C#5), and a half note (G#4), with a triplet of eighth notes (F#4, C#5, G#4) marked with a '3'. The dynamic marking *p* is placed below the first measure.

Vln II

Musical notation for Violin II (Vln II) in 3/4 time. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music begins with a whole rest, followed by a whole rest, and then a half note (F#4) and a half note (C#5) in the final two measures. A slur covers the last two measures. The dynamic marking *p* is placed below the first measure.

Vla

Musical notation for Viola (Vla) in 3/4 time. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music begins with a whole rest, followed by a half note (F#4), a half note (C#5), and a half note (G#4). A slur covers the next two measures, containing a half note (F#4), a half note (C#5), and a half note (G#4). The piece concludes with a half note (F#4), a half note (C#5), and a half note (G#4). The dynamic marking *p* is placed below the first measure.

Vc.

Musical notation for Violoncello (Vc.) in 3/4 time. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music begins with a whole rest, followed by a half note (F#4), a half note (C#5), and a half note (G#4). A slur covers the next two measures, containing a half note (F#4), a half note (C#5), and a half note (G#4). The piece concludes with a half note (F#4), a half note (C#5), and a half note (G#4). The dynamic marking *p* is placed below the first measure.

Cb.

Musical notation for Contrabass (Cb.) in 3/4 time. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music begins with a whole rest, followed by a half note (F#4), a half note (C#5), and a half note (G#4). A slur covers the next two measures, containing a half note (F#4), a half note (C#5), and a half note (G#4). The piece concludes with a half note (F#4), a half note (C#5), and a half note (G#4). The dynamic marking *p* is placed below the first measure.

71

Fl. *p* *poco* *p* *poco*  $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$

Cl. *poco* *poco*

Bsn. I. *p* *poco* *p* *poco*

Hn 1, 2 I. *p* *poco* *p* *poco*  $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$

Timp. *p dolce* *p*

Vln I *poco* *poco*  $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$

Vln II *poco* *poco*

Vla. *poco* *poco*

Vc. *poco* *poco*

Cb. *poco* *poco*

77 **3/4** **J**

Fl.

Ob. *I*  
*p*

Cl.

Bsn

Hn 1, 2

**3/4** **J**

Vln I *3*

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

Cb.

84

Fl. *mp* *p* *poco*

Ob. *p* *poco* *p* *poco*

Cl. *poco* *p* *poco*

Bsn. *p* *poco* *p* *poco*

Hn 1, 2 *p* *poco*

Timp. *p*

Vln I *poco* *p* *poco*

Vln II *poco* *p* *poco*

Vla. *poco* *p* *poco*

Vc. *poco* *p* *poco*

Cb. *poco* *p* *poco*

rit. . . . . Much more slowly, heavily

♩ = 48

91

Fl.

Picc.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn 1, 2

Hrn 3, 4

Tpt.

Tbn.

Timp.

*p*

*ff*

rit. . . . . Much more slowly, heavily

♩ = 48

Vln I

Vln II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

*p*

*ff*

[The Triumph of Death]

Grave

poco rit. . . A tempo

$\text{♩} = 48$

**K**

98

Picc. *p*

*(melody going from oboe to viola and piccolo, then to horns and cellos)*

Ob. *p*

Cl. *p*

Hn 1, 2 *p*

Hn 3, 4 *p*

Timp. *p*

2/4 3/4

[The Triumph of Death]

Grave

poco rit. . . A tempo

$\text{♩} = 48$

**K**

2/4 3/4

Vln I *p*

Vln II *p*

Vla *p*

Vc. *p*

Cb. *p*

solo

non divisi

Slower; very broadly

molto rit.

As before, as if nothing had happened, but more slowly

107

Fl. *f*

Picc. *p*

Ob. 1. *mp* *f*

Cl. *mp* *f* 1. *p* *p* *dim. --*

Bsn. *f*

Hn 1, 2 *f*

Hrn 3, 4 *f*

Tpt. *f*

Tbn. *f*

Timp. *tr* *tr* *tr*

**L** ♩ = 31

Slower; very broadly

molto rit.

As before, as if nothing had happened, but more slowly

**L** ♩ = 31

Vln I *f* *p* solo with little or no vibrato

Vln II *f* *p* solo with little or no vibrato

Vla *f* *p* solo with little or no vibrato tutti *p* *dim. --*

Vc. *f* *p* *p* *dim. --*

Cb. *f* *div.* *unis.* *p* *p* *dim. --*

115

Cl.

Timp.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

*pp* *sffz* *ppp*

*tutta forza*