

Harbour Symphony (1986)

By Hildegard Westerkamp

It sounded like a herd of happy elephants caught in a traffic jam. —Globe and Mail

Is it going to sound like Oh Canada? —Richmond Review.

Mere words are inadequate to describe what took place when the Symphony began. —Harbour and Shipping Magazine.

On May 2nd 1986, nearly 150 boats of all sizes and shapes gathered in Vancouver Harbour around Canada Place to perform the first-ever Vancouver *Harbour Symphony* for boat horns.

The piece was composed on commission from the Canada Pavilion for its Expo 86 opening. It is probably the largest environmental music event ever to be mounted in Vancouver.

Special thanks to Bernard Bomers, Special Events Coordinator for the Canada Pavilion, who first conceived and commissioned the event; Joe Carter for pioneering the Harbour Symphony idiom (on a smaller scale) in St. John's Newfoundland, and for helping direct and conduct this one; to Brian Lewis, Marine Consultant, and Mary Jane Green, Logistics Coordinator. Special thanks also to Vancouver's Marine Community for participating so enthusiastically in all facets of the event and for performing vigorously; to Bob Swanson who designed, and who's company Airchime made most of the boat horns heard in this piece; and finally to Ina Dennekamp for playing on Swanson's horn-set the beginning of *Song of the Sockeye*, put to melody by Phil Thomas, based on a poem found on a notice board in River's Inlet and written by an unknown fisherman describing his life in the 1930s.

Final thanks go to the late Howard Broomfield, Peter Thompson, Victoria Fenner, and Leon Wolf, who recorded the live performance of the *Harbour Symphony* in the following places in and around the harbour: on the water from one of the participating boats, in the Main Street docks area, in Stanley Park near the nine-o'clock gun and on Canada Place.

The *Harbour Symphony* was composed in memory of my brother, Helmut Westerkamp, who, as a cadet sailor on the German training ship "Pamir," went down in a hurricane in the mid-Atlantic on September 21, 1957.

Length: 7:00

Hildegard Westerkamp