



Emma Lou Diemer

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Anna Edwards

Diemer wrote *Santa Barbara Overture* in early 1995 for Gisèle Ben-Dor and the Santa Barbara Symphony for their 1995-1996 season. This work was premiered on March 23, 1996. Maestro Ben-Dor requested Diemer to write “happy, beautiful” music and this composition certainly offers these characteristics.

Diemer writes of her composition, “There were a number of ideas and reflections that I wanted to express in writing musically about Santa Barbara. Here are some of them: An opening, rhythmic crescendo leading to a loud and joyful theme of ‘deliverance,’ reflective perhaps of seeing the Pacific Ocean and Santa Barbara for the first time after crossing the desert and enduring the clogged freeways and smog of Los Angeles; Transitional material using pentatonic scale figures vaguely reminiscent of Asian music; Intimations of ragtime filtered through a ‘honky-tonk’ piano in a gold miners’ saloon in a Hollywood movie; a Native American melody done up in a brief jazz setting; Musical puns on Spanish and Mexican music; The bells of the Old Mission of Santa Barbara; Organum at the interval of a fourth reminiscent of the imagined friars at the Mission (imagined because they did not sing organum but rather music more in the style of Schubert). This may be quite a lot to put into one eight-minute piece, but I wanted to express musically at least some of the diversity of the wondrous city of Santa Barbara.”

Santa Barbara Overture · London Symphony Orchestra

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Eud5NmVj0g>