

Cover to Cover for Full Orchestra (2004)

Commissioned by the Youth Orchestra of Greater Columbus GA for the occasion of the opening of Columbus's new public library

It is not *always* a bad thing to judge a book by its cover. Should we see a book on a shelf and choose to read it merely based on what we see, then we have at least made the judgment that the book is worth greater attention. If we don't regret that decision once we've begun the book (and especially if we finish it), then it will have been a good thing to judge a book by its cover. In the case of this overture, its seven minutes of music are book-ended by two pitches: F and G. The musical narrative unfolds from the single pitch F, given by the full orchestra at the beginning. In the second loud orchestral outburst, the G emerges from the unison F and they are played against one another: the front and back cover of the book, if you will. From there, the piece unfolds following the adventures (or misadventures) of five chords which change order, textures, instrumentation and register (high and low), not unlike characters of a comedy changing allegiances, costumes (and/or disguises) and settings until the plot unwinds in the happy finale. From the beginning you may rest assured that all ends well. The thick harmonies gradually dissolve into G the way they emerged from F at the beginning. The end foretold at the beginning is like a musical prophecy fulfilled—or it is as if we had cheated and glanced at the last page when we began the book.