"Essay for Orchestra," a thesis prepared by David Michael Roberts in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Music degree in the School of Music and Dance. This thesis has been approved and accepted by:

Dr. David Crumb, Chair of the Examining Committee

Date: 8/24/03

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Dean of the Graduate School
Essay for Orchestra is a one-movement concert piece scored for full orchestra. Since the definition of the genre “orchestral essay” is unclear, the composer has considerable latitude while still claiming a connection to a musical tradition. I have used the term “essay” to suggest a formal function. The piece is structured around the interaction between three main themes, each of which is derived from the same basic motivic material and corresponds to an element of a prose essay: an introduction; the advancement of a main argument; and the statement and eventual refutation of a counterargument. Each theme appears first in its own section and later in conjunction with the others, the coda functioning as a confirmation of the primary idea and a synthesis of all three. Harmonically, Essay for Orchestra is an attempt to blend the languages of Prokofiev, Hindemith, Shostakovich, Schnittke, and in deference to the title, Barber.
CURRICULUM VITAE

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For Lila B. Roberts, my grandmother, whatever she might have thought of it.
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  Crash Cymbals
  Large Tam-tam
Piano
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Bass
Essay
for Orchestra

David Roberts
b. 1983

Score in C
Ominous
($\approx c.130$)
* Indicates a chromatic cluster.
Cataclysmic

motto rit.

(J = c.80)

shrieking

J

Umf cresc.

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Pique.

J

Umf cresc.

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Pique.

J

Umf cresc.

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Pique.
Gradually becoming somber

Gradually becoming somber