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New York Art Installation Inspires Music Professor's Spellbound Composition

Winthrop University

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New York Art Installation Inspires Music Professor's Spellbound Composition

Quick Facts

- The composition was created in 2005 and recorded by the Kiev Philharmonic, conducted by the late Robert Winstin.
- It will be featured on Navona Records' "Spellbound."
- The CD goes on sale May 28 online and on iTunes.



Ron Parks

ROCK HILL, S.C. - During a composition residency in New York several years ago, [Winthrop University Associate Professor of Music Ron Parks](#) became entranced by a large art sculpture situated in an island between traffic. Written at the base of the piece was just one word: **Torque**.

"This piece was amazing because it was not a static work of art," he said. "When the cars would come by, the breeze would cause the component parts to move around and make a different shape every time. I wanted to somehow translate that experience into sound."

The result is his "Torque," a work for full orchestra Parks composed in 2005 that was recorded by the [Kiev Philharmonic](#) and conducted by the late Robert Winstin. The recording is featured on a new CD from Navona Records entitled "**Spellbound**," which hits iTunes and online Tuesday, May 28.

"The piece works in the same way [as Torque]," Parks said. "There are sections of the music that move and rotate in relation with each other to create new composite sounds. It's never quite the same twice."

But the journey to get "Torque" into the hands of the public has been nearly a 10-year effort. In 2005, Alan Yamamoto, former conductor in residence of the [Charlotte Symphony](#), was substituting for the [Charlotte Civic Orchestra](#) when he decided he needed a local composer to create new works for upcoming concerts. Parks was on the list, and "Torque" was born.

Famed conductor Winston somehow heard the piece and recorded it with the Kiev Philharmonic, but he passed away in 2010, and the entire project was put on hold. Out of the blue, an official at Parma Recordings contacted Parks after hearing an excerpt of the piece and included it in "**Spellbound**."

Though it's not the first orchestra piece he's ever composed, having the piece included is a dream come true, Parks said.

"It's always a different experience when hearing a recording versus a live performance," he said. "Even the best live performances are never perfect. They're always a mistune in there, or someone in the audience coughs. But in the studio recordings, you can keep going back and editing and creating the illusion of perfection. In some sense, studio produced recordings of orchestral works can be artificial. But this one I was quite pleased with. It sounds to me very natural."

Parks holds degrees from North Carolina School of the Arts and the University of Florida as well as a Ph.D. in composition from the University of Buffalo. He has written for numerous performers and

ensembles, including the Georgia Contemporary Ensemble, the International Music Program Chamber Ensemble and the Out of Bounds ensemble. His compositions and papers have also been included at national and international festivals and conferences including the Malgrat del Mar Music Festival, the National Flute Association Conference, the Australian Flute Festival and the Two-Sided Triangle concert series in Germany. His honors and awards include the **Aaron Copeland Award**, the **Outstanding Junior Professor Award at Winthrop** and the **S.C. Music Teacher's Association Commission**.

To hear a clip of "Torque" visit [Parma's Youtube page](#). To purchase "Spellbound," visit the [Navona Records site](#). For more information on Ron Parks visit [his official website](#) and [artist page](#).

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