Continuoso Cycles and Continuum

(Three inflections of the past)

For string orchestra and harpsichord

Ian Percy
2015
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I. ... And then they noticed the light ...  
Duration: ca. 5 minutes 

Composed for Gli Archi del Cherubino 

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This is a three-movement work conceived within a quasi-sinfonia form (fast-slow-fast) exploring the concept of pseudo-modulation within tonal stasis.

It was a delight when *Gli Archi del Cherubino* agreed to perform a new piece composed specifically for them at the Liverpool Hope Cornerstone Arts Festival 2015. Along with my friend and colleague (violinist-musicologist) Dr Alberto Sanna, I was involved in a recording project with the orchestra during the scorching summer of 2015 in L’Aquila, Italy and had thoroughly enjoyed the visit, their company and the musical memories I retained.

Respectful of the repertoire usually performed by the ensemble, this piece was composed upon a sequence of consonant chords, which expand at each iteration to introduce the first six pitches of the cycle of fourths: C-F-Bb-Eb-Ab-Db. Although the score was realised entirely in Ab, the expanding harmony within the first movement creates pseudo-modulation through the keys of F, Bb, Eb and Ab, whilst blurring the sense of ‘home tonic’ and producing notation devoid of accidentals.

Building chords upon the whole-tone and perfect-fourth intervals (instead of the largely triadic harmony the ensemble are used to) shaped modal and consonant phrases sympathetic to their usual repertoire, whilst producing original music that is clearly a product of the twenty-first century. The resolution to (and prominence of) the home-tone heard in the final stages of the first movement caused initial concern for the composer, but seemed appropriate within the context of the subtitle for the work: *Three inflections of the past.*

Once composed, the score was transposed up a semi-tone in order to take advantage of the open strings of the instruments and the increased acoustic resonance that brings from the orchestra. Writing the score in A also eliminated the need to retune the harpsichord before each performance. Scores and parts are available in both keys.
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\[ q = 104 \text{ Misterioso...} \]
\[ q = 108 \text{ ... and then they noticed the light ...} \]

\[ q = 112 \text{ A} \]

\[ \text{Violin I} \]
\[ \text{Violin II} \]
\[ \text{Viola} \]
\[ \text{Violoncello} \]
\[ \text{Hpsd.} \]
poco rubato

pp ——— p

mp ——— mp

mp

mp

emlilh, expand, reduce and extemporise ad. lib.

...With increasing intensity ...
... In cycles of momentum and release ...

poco accel.

\[ \text{mf} \]

\[ \text{f} \]

\[ \text{mf} \]

\[ \text{f} \]

\[ \text{mf} \]

\[ \text{mf} \]

\[ \text{mf} \]

... In cycles of momentum and release ...

poco accel.
D \( j = 116 \) ... and the light grew stronger ...

poco accel. \( j = 120 \)
E \( \frac{\text{E}}{\text{E}} = 112 \) ... A temporary release of tension ...

F ... With increasing anxiety ...

\( \sum m \)
... Sometimes we just have to 'let it go' (and go with it) ...
In consonant counterpoint and confident continuum...

poco accel.
poco rit. ........................................... 

\( N \) \( \frac{f}{j} = 112 \) ... An opening emerges ...
(a closing appears) ...

\( N \) \( \frac{f}{j} = 112 \) ... An opening emerges ...
(a closing appears) ...

poco rit. ...........................................
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