

Continuoso Cycles and Continuum

(Three inflections of the past)

For string orchestra and harpsichord

Ian Percy

2015

Continuoso Cycles and Continuum

(Three inflections of the past)

For string orchestra and harpsichord

I. ... And then they noticed the light ...

Duration: ca. 5 minutes

Composed for *Gli Archi del Cherubino*

Ian Percy

2015

Continuoso Cycles and Continuum

For string orchestra and harpsichord

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.

Continuoso Cycles and Continuum

(Three inflections of the past)

for string orchestra and harpsichord

Ian Percy

$\text{♩} = 104$ **Misterioso...**

... and then they noticed the light ...

$\text{♩} = 108$

A $\text{♩} = 112$

Musical score for string orchestra and harpsichord. The score consists of four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature is A major (no sharps or flats). The time signature is common time (indicated by a '4'). The tempo is $\text{♩} = 108$. The harpsichord part is labeled 'Hpsd.' at the bottom left. The vocal line is provided in the Violin II staff. The vocal line starts with 'molto rubato' and includes lyrics like '... and then they noticed the light ...'. Dynamics include **ppp**, **pp**, **poco rubato**, **p**, **pp**, **poco rubato**, **p**, and **p**.

$\text{♩} = 104$ **Misterioso...**

... and then they noticed the light ...

$\text{♩} = 108$

A $\text{♩} = 112$

Musical score for string orchestra and harpsichord, continuing from the previous page. The staves and dynamics remain the same. The vocal line continues with 'molto rubato' and '... and then they noticed the light ...' at $\text{♩} = 104$ Misterioso.

B

... With increasing intensity ...

12 *poco rubato*

pp — *p* — *mp* — *mp* — *mp* — *mp*

mp

mp

mp

B

... With increasing intensity ...

embellish, expand, reduce and extempore ad. lib.

C

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

3

22

poco accel.

C

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

poco accel.

mf

p

mf

p

mf

p

mf

p

mf

p

mf

p

D $\text{♩} = 116$... and the light grew stronger ...

poco accel.

 $\text{♩} = 120$

31

The musical score consists of four staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps. The first staff starts with a dynamic of *mf*. The second staff starts with *f*. The third staff starts with *mf*. The fourth staff starts with *p*. The music continues with *ff* and *f* dynamics. Articulations include slurs and grace notes. Measure 31 concludes with *p* and *mp* dynamics.

D $\text{♩} = 116$... and the light grew stronger ...

poco accel.

 $\text{♩} = 120$

The musical score consists of two staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps. The top staff begins with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp. The bottom staff begins with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp. Both staves feature sustained notes and chords, primarily in the bass range, creating a harmonic foundation for the upper voices.

poco accel.

[♩ = 126]

39

This musical score page contains four staves. The top staff is for the first violin, the second for the second violin, the third for the cello, and the bottom staff is for the piano. The key signature is three sharps. Measure 39 begins with eighth-note patterns in sixteenth-note groups. The dynamics are marked *mf*, *f*, *ff*, and *fff*. Measure 40 continues with eighth-note patterns, with dynamics *mp*, *f*, *mp*, and *ff*.

poco accel.

[♩ = 126]

This section of the score continues from the previous page. It features two staves: the top staff for the piano and the bottom staff for the cello. The piano part consists of sustained chords and rhythmic patterns. The cello part provides harmonic support with sustained notes and rhythmic patterns. The key signature changes to two sharps.

E $\text{♩} = 112$... A temporary release of tension ...

48

F ... With increasing anxiety ...

E $\text{♩} = 112$... A temporary release of tension ...

poco accel.

[♩ = 120]

G

♩ = 112 ... Sometimes we just have to 'let it go' (and go with it) ...

7

58

ff f mf mp f

mp mf

f mp mf

mf f mf

poco accel.

[♩ = 120]

G

♩ = 112 ... Sometimes we just have to 'let it go' (and go with it) ...

H

... In consonant counterpoint and confident continuum ...

poco accel.

Musical score for orchestra and piano, page 8, measures 69-75. The score consists of four staves: Violin 1, Violin 2, Cello, and Piano. The key signature is A major (three sharps). Measure 69 starts with a dynamic of *mf*. The first violin has a sixteenth-note pattern. Measures 70-71 show a transition with dynamics *f*, *mf*, *f*, and *mf*. Measures 72-73 continue with the same pattern. Measure 74 begins with *f*, followed by *mf*. Measure 75 ends with *f*. The piano part provides harmonic support throughout.

H

... In consonant counterpoint and confident continuum ...

poco accel.

Continuation of the musical score for orchestra and piano, page 8, measures 76-82. The score remains the same with four staves: Violin 1, Violin 2, Cello, and Piano. The key signature changes to G major (one sharp). Measures 76-77 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 78-79 continue with eighth-note patterns. Measures 80-81 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 82-83 end with eighth-note patterns. The piano part continues to provide harmonic support.

$\text{♩} = 116$

I

... Chorus and continuum ...

9

81

This section contains four staves of musical notation. The top two staves are in treble clef, the third is in bass clef, and the bottom is also in bass clef. Measure 81 starts with a forte dynamic (f) in the top staff. Measures 82 and 83 show dynamics of mezzo-forte (mf). Measure 84 begins with a very forte dynamic (ff). Measures 85 and 86 end with dynamics of mezzo-forte (mf). Measure 87 concludes with a piano dynamic (mp).

$\text{♩} = 116$

I

... Chorus and continuum ...

This section contains two staves of musical notation. The top staff uses a treble clef and the bottom staff uses a bass clef. Measures 88 through 92 feature various rhythmic patterns, including eighth-note pairs and sixteenth-note figures, along with different dynamics such as eighth-note pairs at mezzo-forte and eighth-note pairs at piano.

10

J

poco accel.

K

♩ = 120

93

f mf f mp

mf mp

f mf f

J

poco accel.

K

♩ = 120

L*poco rit.*

104

p *mf*

f

p

mf

p

mf

f

L*poco rit.*

p

p

p

p

M*J = 116 ... Searching for an exit ...*

115

f

mf

f

mf

f

mf

f

f

M*J = 116 ... Searching for an exit ...*

mf

f

poco rit.

N

$\text{J} = 112$... An opening emerges ...
(a closing appears) ...

124

mf

mf

f

mf

mf

p

mp

mf

p

mf

f

mf

poco rit.

N

$\text{J} = 112$... An opening emerges ...
(a closing appears) ...

mf

f

mf

O poco rit.

♩ = 96

134

p

pp

ppp

p

pp

pizz. molto rubato

pp

ppp

p mp

p

pp

ppp

O poco rit.

♩ = 96

p

pp

ppp

p

pp

ppp

p

pp

ppp

Continuoso Cycles and Continuum

(Three inflections of the past)

For string orchestra and harpsichord

Ian Percy
2015

iancarlpercy@gmail.com
percyi@hope.ac.uk