

to the memory of Allen Dwight Sapp

Sonic Mandala is a work for pipa (a Chinese lute), trombone, voice, string quartet, and slide/light projection. The concept of the circle and center essential to many rituals (e.g., the Tibetan Mandala) is demonstrated here by the disposition and the movement of the musicians in a performing space. The acoustic aspects of the interacting phenomena between the musicians and the space are essential to this soundscape. The disposition represents the Mandala's center of eternity, and its periphery of perfection.

The segments of spiritual rhymes (those of Rumi's) accompanied by pipa based on the ancient piece of 'Ambush on The Sides' as the overture will unveil the following music. During the course of the piece, the strings will continue the harmonic drone with shifting overtones simulating the background chanting. The trombone will replicate the kind of sonority projected by the Tibetan trumpet. Contrasts of silence to loudness, consonance to dissonance will add opposing components to the 'stillness' of time and space.

The pulses in which the time cycles recur symbolize, if not coincide with, the pace of contemplation. Musical sounds also represent the rise and descent of energies along the meridians during the meditation state. The deviation and focus of the mind are also mimicked by the disintegration and integration of certain chords and notes. Some sections of the music are also intended to express the extreme emotions emancipating during the purifying processes. As the Mandala manifests the all-embracing human experiences, it serves as aid to meditation and inner peace. Ultimately, in meditation the vacuous spiritual and physical states are to be achieved. This work attempts to simulate some procedures and implied dimensions with symbolic sounds.

The original sources from which this new work draws include the ritual songs of the Taiwanese Bunun tribe, the chanting of the Tibetan monks. The piece also reflects on the orchestral music of the late Italian composer, Giacinto Scelsi, to convey spiritual music on a broader scale. Hildegard von Bingen's *De Sancta Maria* from *Symphoniae* is incorporated to interpret her vision which is similar to the concept of Mandala. The last section serves as a prayer for the earthquake victims in Taiwan.

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