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Sonority of Spheres

陳 玫 琪

By May-Tchi Chen

For Flute Orchestra

Dedicated to Pierre-Yves ARTAUD

2009

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英文曲解

La Sonorité de la Sphère
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La Sonorité de la Sphère (Sonority of Spheres) is dedicated to Pierre-Yves Artaud and his group "OFF". The work is sponsored by the National Cultural and Arts Foundation, R. O. C. It celebrates the twentieth anniversary of the last virtuosic piece "*Roncier Rose sur Treillis*" en Novembre, à Paris I composed for Mr. Artaud in 1989. In *Sonority of Spheres* I utilized the sonority of the spectrum music as the backbone of the piece, (though not on the theoretic level). This helped me to reveal the concept and sonorities of the natural sound properties. The music dwells on the richness of the world of fundamentals and partials, with it's own rich acoustics, yet avoiding just one tonality.

There are consciously other French influences, homage to Debussy and Varèse; and I also couldn't resist the temptation of incorporating the birdcalls from outside of my windows. I let my inner ears be my guide in exploring the organic dynamics of materials, and let these materials evolve freely, to develop, to extend, in a segmented, or layered form. The duration of events results from its context. The approach is not at all analytical. Only after the piece was finished, I discovered the 5 sections to be the lengths of 3 minutes 30 seconds, 4 minutes, 3 minutes 55 seconds, 4 minutes and 22 seconds, with the shortened ending section of 2 minutes 5 seconds.

They just turned out to be amazingly well proportioned.

The work is largely through composed with sweeps of harmonics, repeated notes and birdcalls as motives to bind the whole revelation. Some cascading chord sequences also serve as cadences in tonal music, as well as the Coda passage in the first section recapitulates in the fourth section to foreshadow the real ending.

Section I: The high partials of C to enter the realm of C starts out the section, then through temple gong kind of chords to reach the key area of D, followed by the logical A to the surprising Bb ending chord for the first part of the section.

The tremolo makes a fresh start of the new section on F#. Tremolos and arpeggio motives become the characters of this part, as coda for

the 1st section. While F# has the embellishment of G#, which later becomes the emphasis, only to arrive at the more stable F# chords. Section II: Like birds in the woods, echoing and responding to one another, interacting in mostly 5 parts, forming different textures. Recognizable patterns intersect in a seemingly sound chaos, which do reappear and imitate and form sequences. Other voices shine with trills and tremolos to reinforce.

The inverted motives usher the second half slightly after halfway in the section. With the support of pounding chords that articulate several rounds, the phrases draw progressively longer with crispier short rhythmic figures, as opposed to the sparkles of short motives in the first half. These long, lyrical sentences climax into conversations among C flutes. After sweeping cascades of overtones, the two low parts finally have the last statement. The cascading overtones with trills finally form a substantial cadence.

Section III: Transition. The C# was emphasized, but soon it subsides to other chromatic sequences. Meanwhile the textures thin out to 2 part counterpoint for most part, C flute and alto flute, then after the 2nd cascading cadence counterpoint occur between those of extreme ranges: C flute and Contrabass, piccolo and contrabass. The sonorities arrive very harmoniously on F#, due to being highly consonant. The music marches into the cascading cadence for the 3rd time.

Section IV: In the beginning, we hear the introduction of 2 new birds, one on alto flute, and another later on C flute. The birdcalls unfold, respond, and intertwine with other expressive lines. The texture was punctuated by accumulation of chords. The cascading cadence recurs to separate the 2 halves. In the 2nd part, the *bisbigliando* repeated notes and sweeps of harmonic series were the distinctive features. The Music on the whole, moves in a wavy fashion to arrive at the 5th cascading cadence. Then the mode is light and dance-like, the strong C# inclination leads naturally to the recapitulation of the Coda from the beginning section like gravity.

Section V: The previous materials reiterate themselves in this section in a faster pace. The motion and density increases to reach an 'Aeolian sound' realm. The very last bar briefly reconnects the music to the very beginning in a nutshell.

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$\text{♩} = 96$

First system of the musical score, measures 1-3. The score includes parts for Piccolo, C Flute (solo), Flute 1, Flute 2, Alto Flute, Bass Flute, and Contra Bass Flute. The Piccolo part features a sixteenth-note triplet pattern in the first measure, followed by sustained notes in the second and third measures. The C Flute part has a similar triplet pattern in the third measure. Flute 1 and Flute 2 play sustained notes with dynamic markings of *mf* and *pp* to *f*. Flute 2 includes a *divi.* marking. Alto Flute and Bass Flute play sustained notes with *mf* and *p* dynamics. The Contra Bass Flute part is mostly silent.

Second system of the musical score, measures 4-6. The score includes parts for Picc., solo, Fl. 2, A. Fl., B. Fl., and CB. Fl. Measure 4 shows a *mf* dynamic for Fl. 2 and A. Fl. Measure 5 features a *pp* to *f* dynamic for Picc. and solo, and a *mf* dynamic for Fl. 2. Measure 6 shows a *f* dynamic for solo and *p* dynamics for Fl. 2, A. Fl., B. Fl., and CB. Fl. Fl. 2 includes a *divi.* marking. The solo part has a triplet of sixteenth notes in measure 6.

*Accidentals are effective within one measure, and do not apply to their octave-equivalents.