Title
A Leaf Falls After, for orchestra

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A Leaf Falls After, for orchestra

By

Lily Chen

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Music in the Graduate Division of the University of California, Berkeley

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Professor Ken Ueno, Chair
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Fall 2017
Abstract

A Leaf Falls After, for orchestra

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Lily Chen

Doctor of Philosophy in Music

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Ken Ueno, Chair

A Leaf Falls After is inspired by my recent memories of living in Europe. In the fall of 2015, I received the Ladd Prize funded by UC Berkeley and had the great opportunity to live in Paris for ten months. This was my first time in Paris as well as in Europe; I experienced intimate incidents of fragile beauty that touched me, but also shocking and terrifying ones during my residence there. I was impressed by the most clear and colorful fall I’d ever seen when autumn leaves fell to the ground, sizzling as if drizzling; I was terrified by the terrorist attack but also touched by the toughness of the Parisians that winter; on a visit to St. Paul’s Cathedral in London, I was fascinated to hear twelve bells constantly ringing, intertwining together as a huge chaotic but illusory whirl; I was stunned when visiting the installation ‘Fallen Leaves’ at the Jewish Museum in Berlin, watching thousands of open mouthed steel metal faces on the ground create, when walked on, harshly grating sounds like the victims’ screams.

Inspired by mixed emotions and diverse sounds, this piece traces the journey of a leaf: a solitary leaf falling with loneliness as described in an e. e. cumming’s poem; a light leaf falling with other leaves in autumn; a heavy metal leaf fallen on the ground. However, no matter what vibrations it has undergone during its falling and fallen time, the leaf will eventually be reincarnated into a rising butterfly, flapping its wings to cause a tornado in spring until the next falling comes. Based on such images, I created a constantly flowing process of different kinds of vibrations along with air sounds to represent falling leaves, fallen leaves, and flaps of rising butterflies’ wings. Besides this, metallic sounds/noises either with pure resonances or with intense pressure make up another important element, which is associated with my memories of the ringing bells and the metal “fallen leaves.”

Structurally, there are three large uninterrupted sections with an introduction and a coda, expressing several different scenarios in sequence: a leaf falls (Intro), falling leaves (Section 1), ringing chaos (Section 2), rising butterflies (Section 3), and a leaf falls after (coda). In the intro (a leaf falls), an image of a huge leaf shaped by multiple linear gestures gently emerges from behind the air sounds but then falls abruptly and heavily with metallic noises. Section 1 (falling leaves) reveals a falling/descending process, starting from pitchless noises and air sounds, gradually accumulating more and more, clearer and clearer descending gestures, and then finished by an very intense dark grating phrase, which is a metaphor of the metal “fallen leaves.” Section 2 (ringing chaos) is a long transition between the previous and the following section as well as from purity to chaos, based on the constant bell-like sounds of chimes as drone and fused with other complex sounds and resonances to shape a chaotic dizzy atmosphere. As an inverted image of falling leaves, Section 3 (rising butterflies) mainly focuses on ascending gestures with vibrations and bright timbre scattering and echoing in different parts to draw a picture of the wing flutters of rising butterflies and the fluctuations of the “butterfly effect.” In the coda (a leaf falls after), the gasp-like breath sounds are not just a kind of struggle in a fading decay, but also a hint of rebirth recalling the beginning gestures: the falling leaf turns over a new leaf in the cycle of transmigration.

A Leaf Falls After was premiered by National Taiwan Symphony Orchestra in Taichung, Taiwan on August 17th, 2017.
Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank the community of the music department at UC Berkeley for offering me lots of support and kindness as well as giving me such a great environment with boundless vision of learning and unlimited freedom of creating during my six-year studies.

I want to express my thanks to my teachers: Ken Ueno, for always being inspiring and helpful in so many aspects, not just in music, and always pushing me to challenge myself and think out of my comfort zone; Edmund Campion, for leading me to the world of electronic music, giving me sincere counsel on my music, as well as encouraging me to view far and dream big; Cindy Cox, for her thoughtful advice regarding my music, my writing, and my career; Franck Bedrossian, for sharing with me his creative perspectives and precise comments on music of many composers and me; and David Milnes, for truly loving contemporary music, knowing what I want to do in my works and interpreting them for me so beautifully, and making it possible to bring this dissertation piece to the stage of the Hertz Hall next spring.

I would also like to thank other faculty and staff members of the music department who have helped me or encouraged me technically or spiritually, and all my colleagues, who have been stimulating me with their creativity and passion. Besides, I want to thank my friends in Berkeley who have constantly cheered each other as international students, and my friends in Taiwan who have expressed their love and concern for me in spite of the distance between us.

Finally, my deepest thanks go to my mom, who has always been my strongest supporter and anchor for thirty-two years anywhere and anytime, and especially to my partner Fang-Wei, who has not only been my closest friend but my best listener and consultant during these past ten years, tasting with me all the sweet and the bitter as well as walking with me through the good and bad times wherever we have been: in Taiwan, in the US, or in Paris. Without you two, I couldn’t have completed my degree studies and been what I am today.
Lily Chen

A Leaf Falls After

for orchestra

2016-17
INSTRUMENTATION

2 flutes
2 oboes
2 clarinets in B flat
2 bassoons
4 horns in F
2 trumpets in C (straight mute, cup mute)
2 trombones (straight mute, Harmon mute)
1 bass trombone (straight mute, Harmon mute)
1 tuba

Percussion (3 players)*

I: bass drum, suspended cymbal, chimes (9 tubes), flexatone
II: timpani, suspended cymbal, sizzle cymbal, triangle, crotales, glockenspiel, chimes (5 tubes from Perc.1)
III: tam-tam, suspended cymbal, bell tree, bar chimes, vibraphone, chimes (4 tubes from Perc.1)

Piano*

Strings (16.14.12.10.8 players)

*detailed requirements and other accessories listed below

The score is transposed.
Approximate duration: 12 min.

INSTRUMENTAL DISPOSITION SUGGESTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perc.1</th>
<th>Perc.2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perc.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brass</td>
<td>Woodwind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piano</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass</td>
<td>Cello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Viola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violin I</td>
<td>Violin II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conductor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AUDIENCE
PERCUSSION REQUIREMENTS & ACCESSORIES

Percussion I:

Bass drum  
Suspended cymbal  
Chimes (9 tubes with pedal, the other 9 tubes will be separated)  
Flexatone  
Styrofoam

Other accessories:
- 2 soft bass drum beaters, for bass drum  
- 2 soft yarn mallets, for suspended cymbal  
- 2 wire brushes  
- 2 chime hammers, for chimes  
- bow  
- superball mallet  
- drumstick  
- thick napkin paper (or paper)

Percussion II:

2 timpani, 29 inches (in F2-B2)  
26 inches (in B2-F3, with a suspended cymbal on the head)  
Suspended cymbal (to put on small timpani)  
Sizzle cymbal  
Triangle  
Chimes (5 tubes, separated from the chimes in Percussion I)  
Crotales (2 octaves)  
Glockenspiel  
Styrofoam

Other accessories:
- 2 hard unwrapped mallets, for glockenspiel & crotales  
- 2 soft timpani mallets, for timpani and suspended cymbal  
- 2 soft yarn mallets, for suspended & sizzle cymbals  
- triangle beater, for triangle  
- 2 chime hammers, for chimes  
- superball mallet  
- 2 bows
Percussion III:

- Tam-tam
- Bell tree
- Suspended cymbal
- Bar chimes
- Chimes (4 tubes, separated from the chimes in Percussion I)
- Vibraphone

Other accessories:
- 4 soft yarn mallets, for vibraphone & suspended cymbal
- 2 soft tam-tam beaters, for tam-tam
- 2 chime hammers, for chimes
- Hard beater/mallet, for bell tree
- A metal stick (or triangle beater), for tam-tam
- 2 bows
- Superball mallet
- Steel wire ball
- Paper

PIANO REQUIREMENTS & ACCESSORIES

Preparation:
Hang 2-3 large paper-clips on the lowest A string (to produce vibration when the string is played)

Other accessories:
- Wire brush
- Superball mallet
- Aluminum foil paper
- Plastic or metal ruler (or metal stick)
- Mug
SPECIAL NOTATION

General

Accidentals are held through the measure.
Trills are always played up a semitone unless otherwise specified.
Tremolo should always be as dense as possible.

\[\text{accelerando / decelerando over given time span with the specified number of notes}\]
\[\text{change gradually from one sound/position to another}\]
\[\text{rhythmic figures with slashes indicate playing rapidly but freely}\]

Woodwinds

\[\text{flutter-tongue}\]
\[\text{pure air sound (breathy timbre, almost toneless)}\]
\[\text{pitch with air sound (a mixture of breathy timbre and pitch)}\]
\[\text{audible inhale (exaggerated and hard)}\]
\[\text{audible exhale (exaggerated and hard)}\]
\[\text{key slap, with random pitches and random rapid rhythm according to indicated notation}\]
\[\text{harmonics (for flute & clarinet); whistle tone (for flute)}\]

- Flute:
\[\text{jet whistle}\]
\[\text{tongue pizzicato (woodwind pizzicato)}\]
*could be replaced by staccatissimo or other percussive sounds
normal playing angle
turn flute inwards to bend pitch down
turn flute outwards to bend pitch up

- Oboe & Bassoon:
\[\text{smack tone, sucking on the reed in a very noisy manner ("kiss")}\]
*could be replaced by staccatissimo or other percussive sounds

- Clarinet:
\[\text{tongue slap}\]
*could be replaced by staccatissimo or other percussive sounds

Brass

\[\text{flutter-tongue}\]
\[\text{pure air sound, blowing air through the instrument}\]
\[\text{fingerings (valve positions) while playing air sounds}\]
* fingering is at the performer's discretion if not indicated
audible inhale (exaggerated and hard)
audible exhale (exaggerated and hard)
valve change: randomly change valves fast (for Hn & Tp)
vib. vibrato (for Hn & Tp); slide back and forth fast (for Trb)
+ mute in (closed); stopped horn (for Hn)
○ mute out (open)

Percussion

# The choice of mallets:
Unless otherwise specified, performers usually use default mallets if possible (see the list of accessories above), but the mallets may also be changed at the performer’s discretion in some occasions, especially for suspended and sizzle cymbals.

- soft yarn mallet (for vibraphone, cymbals)
- soft timpani beater (for timpani)
- soft tam-tam / bass drum beater (for tam-tam / bass drum)
- hard unwrapped mallet (for glockenspiel & crotales)
- wire brush
- rub with superball mallet
- with finger tip(s)
- with finger nail (f.n.)
- let vibrate
- scrape circularly
- stop / dampen sound
- bow Styrofoam with pressure according to graphic indication

Piano

# The pitches inside piano may be approximated due to differing designs inside the instrument

i.p. play inside piano
ord. play ordinarily (on the keys)
ft. with finger tip(s)
☞ with finger nail
☞ with wire brush
☞ rub along string(s) with superball mallet
l.v. let vibrate
* stop / dampen the sound
+ mute (damp at the end of the string with finger tip)
cluster produced by tapping with the palm or other tools (indicating approximate pitches)
harmonics
(touch the partial on the string while pressing the key)

change the speed or range according to the graphic indication

Strings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ord.</th>
<th>s.p.</th>
<th>m.s.p.</th>
<th>s.t.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ordinario (play in the ordinary way or back to the ordinary position)</td>
<td>sul ponticello</td>
<td>molto sul ponticello (very close to the bridge, rich in harmonics/noise)</td>
<td>sul tasto</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

harmonic trill: a trill produced by rapidly alternating the finger pressure between normal and light (the sounding result should be a rapid alternation of a normal and a harmonic sound)

- on the bridge (with x notehead)
- behind the bridge (with square notehead)

col legno battuto (strike with the wood of the bow in a straight downward motion)

- left hand pizzicato

Bartók (snap) pizzicato

the highest possible pitch

bow on tailpiece

vibrato

molto vib.

- keep the same spacing of the hand through glissando (“seagull effect”)

harmonic glissando

muffle/mute the string with left hand, to make no pitch, only noise

apply very hard pressure to the bow to produce an extremely loud and grating sound

over pressure (add bow pressure gradually according to graphic instruction to produce a scratching sound, in which the audible pitch is gradually replaced by noise)

LH tapping randomly, no bowing
(left fingers alternately press random pitches on four strings without bowing)

repeat gesture within the square with glissando
A Leaf Falls After
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\[ j = 55 \]

1. Flute
2. Oboe
2 Clarinet in B
2 Bassoons
2 Violins
Divisi
2 Violas
Divisi
2 Cellos
Double Bass
*) the beginning note of each gesture can be an approximate high pitch

s.p. seagull

randomly change keys (slow to fast)

slow fast randomly change keys (slow to fast)

slow fast

f.t.

beyond damper

aa

i.p.

(f.t.)

to approximate one due to inside design

m.s.p.

seagull

Sizz.
= 70 (66-70)

Chimes

let ring (let all chimes notes ring)

let ring (let all chimes notes ring)

let ring (let all chimes notes ring)

let ring (let all chimes notes ring)

let ring (let all chimes notes ring)

Q = 70 (66-70)

let ring (let all chimes notes ring)

let ring (let all chimes notes ring)

let ring (let all chimes notes ring)

let ring (let all chimes notes ring)
\[ \text{\textbf{V}} \]

\[ \text{\textbf{j} = 80} \]

\[ \text{\textbf{49}} \]