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Time(e)scap(ad)es

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Author
Chen, Haosi Howard

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Time(e)scap(ades) for Marimba and Chamber Ensemble

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
Requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
in Composition

by

Haosi Howard Chen

2016
ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Time(e)scap(ades) for Marimba and Chamber Ensemble

by

Haosi Howard Chen

Master of Arts in Composition

University of California, Los Angeles, 2016

Professor David S. Lefkowitz, Chair

Time(e)scap(ades) for Marimba and Chamber Ensemble (2016) is an original work by Haosi Howard Chen that explores the interweaving of musical textures as determined by pre-determined musical time. This is achieved with rhythmic patterns, as well as metric/hypermetric patterns. The traditional sense of orchestration, of material development, and of form, is challenged amicably through this approach. The inclusive pun in the title expresses the feeling of time as fleeting moments, as (in)measurable spaces, and the experience of it as the adventurous play that is abound in this work.
The thesis of Haosi Howard Chen is approved.

Theresa Dimond

Movses Pogossian

Neal Stulberg

David S. Lefkowitz, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2016
PROGRAM NOTES

I. Detours

“Inspired,” if you will, by the morning rush of L.A. traffic, I was quick to learn the difference between heading out the door at 7:30AM in the morning, and getting into the car at 7:35AM. It is a lamentable phenomenon that a difference of few minutes will make all the difference in a somewhat pleasant or painful drive. This idea is transcribed musically in this movement, a brief and compact introduction to the entire piece. As patterns repeat themselves, they grow in density and change rhythmically to accommodate the workings of other lines. The marimba makes these adjustments to stay ahead and above the chamber ensemble, trying to reach its intended destination.

II. Möbius Mobile

Despite its best efforts, the marimba is somehow pushed off by the ensemble into an offshoot, an extended tangent, if you will. Here, it encounters an eccentric mobile, a system that is its own reflection (the möbius strip), its own complement (the möbius strip cut twice), its own complementary reflection (the möbius strip cut twice), and finally, its own offshoot (the möbius strip cut thrice)! It is a system of busywork that projects frightfully its self-perfection and self-completion. Terrified, the marimba runs to escape.

III. Stills

After much hustle and bustle, and still no goalpost in sight, the marimba is disappointed, and wanders through a structure that seems just as weary. Yet gradually, as it discovers the inner gear-works of the monument, the marimba picks up the effort to get going once more. There is a time for everything.

IV. Encroaching Mirage

As the pace quickens, The attempts of the ensemble to egg-on the soloist into another goose chase is tried in vain, as the marimba is now able to juggle between the pending waves while cleverly finding moments of rest. It is not distracted by the enticements from the ensemble, but goes on its way toward the original destination at its own pace. Nearer to the arrival, it discovers that perhaps the wrong address had been given since the very beginning, or perhaps that it never was about the arrival itself.

Program notes by Haosi Howard Chen

INSTRUMENTATION

- Flute (dbl. Piccolo)
- Oboe
- Clarinet in B-flat (dbl. Bass Clarinet in B-flat)
- Bassoon
- Horn in F
- Trumpet in C
- Trombone
- Timpani (2 drums, 29 in. and 26 in.)
- Crotales (written C4 – C5 octave)
- Wood Blocks (5 blocks)
- Flexatone
- Celesta
- Marimba (soloist)
- Violin I
- Violin II
- Viola
- Violoncello
- Contrabass

PERFORMANCE NOTES

1. P# – this indicates that the written pitch is a sounding partial above a fundamental. Play as indicated by the microtonal accidentals. For the string instruments, sometimes the P7/P9/P13 harmonics will sound more airy than with pitch. This is fine and intended.

2. In the 3rd movement, during the section where J.S. Bach’s “Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste zeit” is quoted, the effect of the notation is to achieve a sense of timelessness in that groupings of instruments are proceeding with the line at their own pulse. The conductor may wish to indicate entrances here for the clarity of the ensemble.

3. The marimba soloist plays stopped-harmonics near the end of the 3rd movement. This can be executed by placing a mallet/finger under the bar of indicated pitch, and adjusting the placement in accordance to produce the desired harmonics overtones.

4. The marimba soloist plays a “mallet slide glissando” at the end of the 3rd and 4th movements. This is executed by hitting the bar of indicated pitch, and immediately gliding on the vibrating bar with a hard mallet to bend the pitch about a semi-tone up.

5. The timpanist plays a crotale glissando on the 29 in. drum near the end of the 4th movement. This is executed by placing the crotale of indicated pitch on top of the 29 in. drum, hitting it, letting it vibrate as the player pedals the drum freely.

6. The bass clarinetist plays a low concert B-flat near the end of the 4th movement, indicated by a crossed note-head to indicate the sound of audible, flowing air into the instrument, but without producing the actual pitch. Hints of the pitch is okay, but very minimal if need be, even at the “quasi cresc.” portion to the cutoff.
TIME(e)SCAP(ad)ES
for marimba solo and chamber ensemble

I. DETOURS

with enchanted reluctance

\[ \text{\textit{with enchanted reluctance}} \]

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MAR. SOLO

p, curioso

FL.

TIMP./ CROT.

CEL.

MAR. SOLO

p

VLA.

pizz.

VC.

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

p.

sub. p,
dolce

(allargando poco a poco)
cresc.

sub. p,
dolce

sf

f

sf

fp

a tempo

(2 + 2 + 3)

(2 + 2 + 3)

(2 + 2 + 3)

p, dolciss.

(f)

p

p

p

p

p, dolce
arpeggiate/blocked ad lib., in any direction as desired
III. STILLS

\( \frac{1}{4} = \text{ca. 56} \) \( \frac{7}{8} = \text{ca. 112} \)

Spacious, distilling

\( \sim \)

FLEX.

\( p \rightarrow (f) \)

Decresc. pochiss.

\( pp \)

Cresc. pochiss.

\( pp \)

Stringendo poco a poco a \( \frac{5}{8} \) in tempo
p. tranquillo, stringendo poco a poco a \( \frac{5}{3} \), in tempo

lip gliss. 5 5 5

f

decresc. molto

p. tranquillo

CROT.

quasi mp

III (P8 - P7)
repeat this set arhythmically, in any order/combination, and any number of repetitions, as desired

stringendo e cresc.
poco a poco dal ff
BACH: "GOTTES ZEIT IST DIE ALLERBESTE ZEIT"
("GOD'S TIME IS THE BEST OF ALL TIMES")

q = ca. 60
IV. ENCROACHING MIRAGE

\[ \text{\( \frac{4}{2} \text{ ca. 72 (} \frac{\text{}}{\text{}} = \text{ca. 108) with forward momentum} \)} \]

\[ (3 + 2 + 2) \]

\[ (\text{to B. Cl. in B)} \]

\[ \text{B. Cl. in B} \]

\[ \text{(arco)} \]

\[ \text{\( \frac{4}{2} \text{ (3 + 2 + 2)} \)} \]

\[ \text{\( \frac{4}{2} \text{ (3 + 2 + 2)} \)} \]

\[ \text{\( \frac{4}{2} \text{ (3 + 2 + 2)} \)} \]

\[ \text{\( \frac{4}{2} \text{ (3 + 2 + 2)} \)} \]

\[ \text{\( \frac{4}{2} \text{ (3 + 2 + 2)} \)} \]
PICC.  OB.  CL. in B♭  BSN.  HN. in F  TPT. in C  TBN.  TIMP./CROT.  W.B./FLEX.  CEL.  MAR.  VLN. I  VLN. II  VLA.  VC.  CB.

allargando (to FL.) a tempo

(3 + 2)

f cresc.
Sempre ff, martellato

Gradually add more time between each note, and subsequently add more rolled repetitions.
TIMP. w/ CROT. on top of drum, pedal gliss. freely

(TIMP. w/ CROT. on top of drum, pedal gliss. freely)

B. CL. in Bb

(TIMP. w/ CROT. on top of drum, pedal gliss. freely)

W.B./ FLEX.

B. CL.

MAR.

sub. p poco f f p

sub. p poco f f p

ppp

(f)

ppp

(f)

sub. p poco f f p

sub. p poco f f p

(f)

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