ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: VISION OF EQUINOX FOR ORCHESTRA
Maiko Chiba, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2005

Dissertation directed by: Professor Robert Gibson
School of Music

The artistic play of light seen on a pyramid in some Mayan ruins located in Cancun, Mexico provided the inspiration for Vision of Equinox. On both the spring and autumn equinox days, the sunlight projected on the pyramid forms a shape which looks like a serpent moving on the stairway of the pyramid. Vision of Equinox was composed with an image of light as the model for the artistic transfiguration of sound. The light image of sound changes its shape in each stage of the piece, using the orchestra in different ways - sometimes like a chamber ensemble, sometimes like one big instrument. The image of light casting on a pyramid is expressed by descending melodic lines that can be heard several times in the piece. At the final climax of the work, a complete and embodied artistic figure is formed and stated, expressing the appearance of the Mayan god Quetzalcoatl, the serpent, in my own imagination.

The light and shadow which comprise this pyramid art are treated as two contrasting elements in my composition and become the two main motives in this piece.
To express these two contrasting elements, I picked the numbers “5” and “2,” and used them as "key numbers" in this piece. As a result, the intervals of a fifth and a second (sometimes inverted as a seventh) are the two main intervals used in the structure. The interval of a fifth was taken into account for the construction of the pyramid, which has five points of contact. The interval of a second was selected as a contrasting sonority to the fifth. Further, the numbers "5" and "2" are used as the number of notes which form the main motives in this piece; quintuplets are used throughout this piece, and the short motive made by two sixteenth notes is used as one of the main motives in this piece. Moreover, the shape of the pyramid provided a concept of symmetry, which is expressed by the setting of a central point of the music (pitch center) as well as the use of retrograde and inversion in this piece.
VISION OF EQUINOX FOR ORCHESTRA

By

Maiko Chiba

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts 2005

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INSTRUMENTATION

3 Flutes (Flute I doubling Piccolo, Flute III doubling Alto Flute)
2 Oboes
1 Cor Anglais
3 Clarinets in Bb (Clarinet III doubling Bass Clarinet)
2 Bassoons
1 Contrabassoon

4 Horns in F
3 Trumpets in Bb
2 Tenor Trombones
1 Bass Trombone
1 Tuba

Percussion (5 Players)

Percussion I
  Suspended Cymbal
  Gong
  Cymbals

Percussion II
  Triangle
  Wood Blocks (high and low)
  Bass Drum
  Whip Crac

Percussion III
  Glockenspiel
  Guiro
  Bongo Drums

Percussion IV
  Vibraphone
  Sleigh-bells

Percussion V
  Antique Cymbals
  Marimba
  Sleigh-bells
  Tubular-bells

2 Harps
Celesta

Strings

Duration: about 20 minutes.
This score is noted in C.
with soft mallets.

accel.

piccolo