Ruth Wiesenfeld

spun yarn

for orchestra

(2008)

NM 11477
Explanations / Instructions

durations are not specified, each double page should last for approximately two minutes, page 18 for approximately one minute.

symbols

↓ signal for an entrance or for the beginning of a decrescendo to be given by the conductor

* the players decide when to enter

events notated in a box may be played at any time within the timeframe of this box and may be repeated any number of times (or only played once)

text

the text notated in the score describes the imagery of the piece’s sound world. It is only included to suggest what the textures and colors refer to. It is not to be spoken or read aloud. It refers to the overall sound, not to specific instruments.

Lines tell the performer to continue with a certain sound. The lines for timpani, bowed piano and vibraphone are thicker than the other ones, as these instruments constitute the central group of players (see preface).

timpani
+ cowbell: a cowbell is to be placed on the instrument. The playing should take place on the cowbell.
+ cymbal: a cymbal is to be placed on the instrument. The playing should take place on the cymbal.

bowed piano: the indicated strings are to be bowed with rosined fishing line; both players use the same piano

winds: when sustained notes are notated, breathing is possibly at any time – as needed

Double Bass and Bass Clarinet sound one octave lower than written
In *spun yarn* I want to make the listening itself audible – a listening to what is coming about in the present moment. I am thinking of sound here as the result of the sensory contact with the instrument; not as expression, but as an extension of one’s physical being in a state of highest perceptiveness. It is my intention to design a landscape of sound, where the playing is placed in the realm of experience. I assume that if the musicians are able to listen to what emerges in the present moment as an overall sound, instead of striving for an ideal ensemble and in doing so remain aware of the physical and sensorial aspects of their playing, the orchestra will be able to consist of individuals rather than of a mass of players. I conceive of the orchestra here as a large ensemble, as a vast number of vibrating sound sources. I regard the instruments as objects with secret possibilities, from which one could lure out a particular tone when applying the adequate touch.

The bowed piano (with two players), two timpani and a vibraphone, constitute the central group of players in *spun yarn*. I conceive of them as a trio that continuously moves through the piece like a river of ongoing, slowly transforming sound. Sometimes we hear only one of them; sometimes they overlap. When designing the parts for timpani and vibraphone I was mainly focusing on resonance, on all the nuances in between *secco* and *laisser vibrer*. Regarding the piece’s unfolding over time, I imagine a crystalline wandering through iridescent textures, nurtured by the idea that within the trio’s resonant viscosity a wide band of sound is ever present, which at times will be fanned out by the other instruments of the orchestra or illuminated in one of its aspects only.

There is no fixed duration for most of the events, instead either the players or the conductor decide to move on or to enter whenever the moment seems right. The performers have to take responsibility for the final shape of the piece and thus need to listen and to respond to each other very carefully.
A SOUND ESCAPING INTO THE NIGHT

AS IN A TOUCH

YOU DIDN'T KNOW EXISTED

CONSTELLATIONS WITHDRAWING

AS IF INTERRUPTED

EXPOSED RESEMBLANCE

THE STRANGENESS OF STANDING ALONE

A TIMID SHIMMER OF MURMURING

TUMBLING INTO APPEARANCE

RAPT IN ABUNDANCE

FLARING INTO A DUSTY STREAM

PURLING NO LONGER

DISSOLVES

INTO RESONANT HOLLOWNESS

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A SOUND RECONCILING THE EMPTINESS
AS IN A TOUCH
YOU DIDN'T KNOW EXISTED
CONSTELLATIONS INFLECTED
INEXTRICABLY WOVEN
EXPOSED REFRACITION
THE STRANGENESS OF STANDING ALONE
A TIMID BECOMING OF SHIMMERING
PATIENTLY MURMURS
Rapt in Temptation

Dispersing into a Graceful Stream

Prismatic Allusion

Withdraws

Into Volatile Knowingness