RICE UNIVERSITY

Invocatio for chamber orchestra

by

Philip Miller

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

Doctor of Musical Arts

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January 2005
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ABSTRACT

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Invocatio is scored for the following instruments: piccolo, flute, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets (2\textsuperscript{nd} doubling bass clarinet), 2 bassoons (2\textsuperscript{nd} doubling contrabassoon), 2 horns, trumpet, 2 percussionists, piano (doubling celesta), and strings. The duration is ca. seven minutes.

The material that forms the basis of the piece is exclusively derived from two pitch cell collections. These are based on the monograms of the composers Johann Sebastian Bach and Dmitri Shostakovich. The pitches come from the German musical spelling of the composers’ surnames: B – A – C – H and D – Ess – C – H (equivalent to B-flat – A – C – B-natural and D – E-flat – C – B, respectively, in English music terminology).

Invocatio may be regarded as consisting of two contrasting ideas, both presented already in mm. 1-5. This dual process evolves throughout the course of the work, and may also be described as a dynamic between “lightness” (mm. 1-3) and “darkness” (mm. 4-5). This process is ultimately resolved in the final section, beginning in m. 108.

Transpositions are basically limited to the Shostakovich tetra-cell, while the original pitch class collection of the Bach is almost always retained. The primary transpositions of the Shostakovich are: A – B-flat – C – D-flat, F-sharp – G – A – B-flat, and C – D-flat – E-flat – E-natural. Both tetra-cells are closely related in their respective pitch class sets: [0,1,2,3] (Bach) and [0,1,3,4] (Shostakovich), thus facilitating the juxtaposition and merging of the two tetra-cells. The Shostakovich cell, when transposed at the tritone, yields the octatonic scale. Fragments of the octatonic scale occur throughout the piece.

A final synthesis of the two tetra-cells is attained at the very end of the piece: in the final two bars, both monograms are simultaneously presented, the Shostakovich cell now stated in its original pitch class form (D – E-flat – C – B).
INVOCATIO

for

chamber orchestra

philip miller (2004)
Instrumentation

Piccolo
Flute
Oboe I
Oboe II
Clarinet in B-flat
Clarinet in B-flat and Bass Clarinet
Bassoon
Bassoon and Contrabassoon

Horn I in F
Horn II in F
Trumpet in B-flat

Percussion I:
Timpani, Snare drum, Tom toms, Xylophone, Vibraphone,
Tubular bells, 3 Gongs (high, medium, low), Triangle,
Thunder sheet, Tam tam

Percussion II:
Bass drum, Wood blocks, Marimba, Glockenspiel, Crotales,
Tam tam, Medium suspended cymbal,
Large suspended cymbal

Piano and Celesta

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Double bass

Duration: c. 7 minutes
Transposed score.
Invocatio