RICE UNIVERSITY

Distorted Visions for Wind Ensemble

by

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Doctor of Musical Arts

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Abstract

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*Distorted Visions* is a two-movement piece that marks my return to writing for large wind ensemble. Much of my recent work has been stimulated by issues concerning the human mind. Topics ranging from mental disorders to the ability of the mind to project imagery provided impulse for my work. *Distorted Visions* continues along that vein, focusing on recollection and how the mind may remember something differently than actually occurred. It may be compared to looking at an image, and then looking at that same image through the bottom of a drinking glass. The image is recognizably there, but it is greatly distorted. Each movement of this work thus focuses on the distortion of a different musical idea.

The first movement, *Broken Memory*, features a solo bassoon that attempts to recall a distant melodic memory. It first emerges from a haze of material in the marimbas and low brass, and begins to materialize, only to be interrupted by another memory. The movement then begins to solidify as these two ideas overlap. The principal melody of the bassoon desperately tries to develop and sing, but is constantly interrupted by a stronger, more violent idea. The music continues until the interruptions overtake the melody completely, forcing the memory to fade back into another haze at the end.
The second movement, *Malfunctioning Process*, is concerned with the process of building an ostinato, one that disintegrates and takes off in different directions. I think of this movement as an “ostinato machine” that keeps breaking down. The movement begins with an initial process that builds the musical material into a recognizable form, a melody. The music is then overwhelmed by the first malfunction, heard in the low brass. The process begins anew, distortedly attempting the creation of another melody but leading only to another breakdown. The final process takes place in the woodwinds, leading to a return of the opening material, this time slowed down. As the “machine” continues to slow, the entire ensemble comes together on a unison B-flat, leading to the final moment at which the machine, violently yet inexorably, shuts off.
### Instrumentation

- Piccolo
- 2 Flutes
- 2 Oboes
- English Horn
- Clarinet in E\textsuperscript{b}
- 4 Clarinets in B\textsuperscript{b}
- Bass Clarinet
- 5 Bassoons
- Contrabassoon
- 2 Alto Saxophones
- Tenor Saxophone
- Baritone Saxophone
- 4 Horns in F
- 4 Trumpets in C
- 8 Tenor Trombones
- 2 Bass Trombones
- Euphonium
- Tuba
- Piano

Timpani

(+ Pitch Pipe and Ice Bell, see note*)

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<td>Marimba**</td>
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<td>Suspended Cymbal</td>
<td>Suspended Cymbal</td>
<td>Tom-toms (8)</td>
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<td>Hammer and Block***</td>
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<td>Templeblocks (5)</td>
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### Performance Notes

*The timpanist plays a pitch pipe in the first movement only. The ice bell, also used in the first movement, should be placed on the timpani head and struck with a snare drum stick.

**Percussion 1, 2, and 3 share a single marimba for the first movement only.

***The hammer and block for the last note of the piece should be a large wooden or metal hammer, and should strike a large block of wood or wood table. The sound should be quite loud and deep.

All brass mutes should be metal.

Contrabassoon sounds one octave lower than written. Piccolo sound one octave higher than written.

Duration: 12 minutes
Distorted Visions
for Wind Ensemble

I. Broken Memories

Slow and distant \( \text{\scriptsize \( J = 52 \)} \)
II. Malfuctioning Processes

Aggressive \( J = 100 \)
*Play beamed notes as fast as possible regardless of the tempo. The result will sound asynchronous.*
These figures should be repeated rapidly, ad lib., for the extent of the wavy line.
**These figures should be repeated rapidly, ad lib., for the extent of the wavy line.**