RICE UNIVERSITY

The Evening Shadow
for Symphony Orchestra

by

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

Doctor of Musical Arts

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HOUSTON, TEXAS
MAY, 2013
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ABSTRACT - Doctoral Thesis, Spring 2013

The Evening Shadow for Symphony Orchestra

The Evening Shadow, a six-minute work for symphony orchestra, is a short symphonic poem composed with the intent of evoking a sensation of lament and eventual deliverance. Drawing from the “Neapolitan Complex” found in Beethoven’s string quartet in C-sharp minor, op. 131 (exploitation of the semitone between C#-D), I attempted to create a dramatic “storyline” utilizing the semitone relation between E and F. From a programmatic standpoint, upward motion from E to F is meant to represent yearning (mm. 5-6, violins, mm. 14-15, violin/vibraphone, m. 18, cello, embedded in m. 20, flute 2) while downward motion from F to E (mm. 110-113, brass) symbolizes rescue and redemption.

Motivic transformation was paramount to the construction of The Evening Shadow. Five primary motives are stated and developed. The first appears in the solo violin from mm. 3-4 and is transformed at m. 44 in the oboe and 2nd violins. The second motive is stated in mm. 9-12 in the 1st violins, and returns in canon from mm. 96-106. The third motive appears in the oboe in mm. 29-30 and is developed extensively (mm. 41-42, 47-48, 110-113). The fourth motive is stated in the 1st violins at m. 33 and returns in m. 52 in the 2nd violins. The final motive is first heard in the horns in mm. 39-40 and ends the piece from mm. 127-129. The motivic transformations make use of transposition, modal “adjustment,” and built in rubato effects, as well a large degree of fragmentation and recombination.

Traditional contrapuntal technique was utilized throughout the work. Global harmonic motion of the piece, which makes use of skeletal tonic/dominant relations, can be heard as a progression through the following “tonicizations” and respective modalities: E/F (pitch-centric, no modality, mm. 1-33), D (Dorian, mm. 34-55), A (Dorian, mm. 52-54), E (pseudo-Phrygian, mm. 65-87), C (Mixolydian, mm. 108-121), G (Mixolydian, mm. 127-132), and E/F (pitch-centric, no modality, mm. 133-137). Atonal pitch-class set sonorities were used as structural rhetoric throughout. The aggregate collection, drawing from dodecaphonic theory, is used sparingly both melodically (mm. 16-17, violins and violas), and harmonically (mm. 2-3, 64, 66, 69, 137).

Conceptual difficulties arise from orchestrational considerations in a contemporary work due to the broad array of possibilities demonstrated in the scores that span the history of orchestral music. I sought to create a hybrid of advanced traditional orchestration (Mahler, Strauss) and texturalist practices (Lutoslawski, Ligeti).
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The Evening Shadow

(2013)

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duration: ca. 6'

Instrumentation

3 Flutes (second doubling Piccolo)  Tuba
3 Oboes (third doubling English Horn)  Timpani
3 Bb Clarinets (third doubling Bass Clarinet)  Percussion (3 players)
3 Bassoons (third doubling Contrabassoon)  Celesta
4 F Horns  Piano
3 C Trumpets  Harp
2 Trombones  Strings
Bass Trombone

Percussion

Player 1: Xylophone, Glockenspiel, Small Suspended Cymbal, Low Floor Tom-tom, 3 Crotales (written f4, e5, f5)
Player 2: Vibraphone, Medium Suspended Cymbal, Chinese Cymbal, Metal Plate, Medium Tam-tam (shared), 2 Congas
Player 3: Bass Drum, Large Suspended Cymbal, Riveted/Sizzle Cymbal, Medium Tam-tam (shared), 5 Tom-toms, Brake Drum

Notes

The score is in C. Standard octave transpositions are in effect for Piccolo, Contrabassoon, Celesta, Glockenspiel, Crotales, Xylophone, and Double Bass.

Accidentals never carry past a barline. Accidentals are always active for the entire measure that they are stated in unless redefined by another accidental. They are often reiterated within a measure for the sake of clarity, or stated unnecessarily (in cautionary circumstances) to avoid instinctive tonal associations.

Articulations are to be treated as follows:

The tenuto marking simply serves as a milder accent than the conventional one (>), yet in certain cases the traditional interpretation is called for; the discrepancy is contextually inferable. A note articulated by both staccato and tenuto symbols calls for the note to sound slightly longer than staccato. The marcato articulation denotes a heavier accent than the conventional one, therefore the accented marcato represents the strongest accent possible. The last figure above (<> ) requires a “leaning” into and out of a note with a rapid and pronounced crescendo and decrescendo.