



GREGORY LEE NEWSOME

Ouroboros

for solo piano + reverberation

Gregory Lee Newsome

Ouroboros

Acknowledgment

This piece was written at the request of Rachel Kiyo Iwaasa, and is dedicated to her in friendship and admiration.

Support for *Ouroboros* was provided by the Canada Council for the Arts.



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada

Duration

10:15

Instrumentation

Piano

Reverberation

This work requires a cathedral-like reverberation, either from the performance space or a sound system, or a combination of both. The reverb should be audible, diffuse, and transparent, never blurry or overwhelming.

Sound System

Rig: microphone, mixer, reverb unit, amplifier, speakers

Configuration: the sound of the piano (the input) is received by the microphone and sent to the mixer. The mixer is configured such that the operator may use faders to send the input to the reverb unit. The processed sound (the output) is then sent to the amplifier for broadcast through the speakers. The operator balances the processed sound from the speakers with the original sound from the stage.

Performance Instructions

The character of this work is continuous and legato throughout. Use the sustain pedal to facilitate performance of notated durations.

“+” indicates finger mute.

The piano requires preparation. On c4 and b-flat4, insert a small coin, preferably a Canadian ten-cent piece, at the exact midpoint of the string. The two outer strings should be under the coin, and the middle string above it. The coin should be placed such that it creates a resonant, gong-like tone; there should be no artifacts (e.g. buzzing, rattling).

Premiere

This piece was premiered by Rachel Kiyo Iwaasa on February 5th, 2013 at Cellar Restaurant and Jazz Club, Vancouver, presented by Music on Main. Ms. Iwaasa subsequently performed it on March 19th, 2013 at Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, Toronto, presented by Music TORONTO.

Version

Revision 2013-03-28 (ISO)

Programme Note

A typical portrayal of an alchemist is that of a half-scientist, half-hermetic, naïvely attempting to transmute a common metal into a noble one. But for an alchemist, this transmutation was but a metaphor for spiritual evolution, a personal quest to achieve perfection, immortality, and redemption. Transmutation, then, is subtly different from transformation -- to not merely change, but to create something higher, something more perfect. In this work, I explore the metaphor of transmutation, using something familiar to all of us: the sense of time passing. Through reiteration, this work's sonic material is constantly returning -- as a different timbre, with reverberation, echoing, as a distant memory -- striving for transmutation. But the ultimate point of return in this work is also its point of departure, a metaphor for the cycle of life and death that the alchemist sought to escape, the ancient symbol Ouroboros, the serpent eating its own tail.

Support for *Ouroboros* was provided by the Canada Council for the Arts.

for Rachel Kiyoo Iwaasa

Ouroboros

for solo piano + reverberation

Gregory Lee Newsome

♩ = 104, arcane

Musical score for measures 1-4. The piece begins in 3/2 time, which changes to 9/4 for measures 2 and 3. The dynamics are marked *mf*, *f*, and *ff*. The score features complex rhythmic patterns and a wide range of notes, including some with ledger lines.

Musical score for measures 5-9. Measure 5 is marked "impulse" and measures 6-7 are marked "echo I". The time signature changes to 9/8, 3/2, 2/4, and 3/4. Dynamics include *mf* and *p*. The notation includes various note values and rests.

♩ = 78, crystalline

Musical score for measures 10-15. Measure 10 is marked "echo III". The time signature is 9/4. Dynamics are marked *pp* and *p*. The score features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with some ledger lines.

Musical score for measures 16-20. The time signature is 9/4. Dynamics are marked *pp* and *p*. The notation includes various note values and rests.

Musical score for measures 21-25. The time signature is 9/4. Dynamics are marked *p* and *pp*. The score features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with some ledger lines.

26 ♩ = 104, arcane

mp *mf* *mf*

31 impulse echo I

f *ff* *mf*

ritualistic (to 114)

35 echo II echo III

p *pp* *pp* *pp*

(8) 8va

42

p *pp* *p*

(8) 8va (ecstatic) impulse

50

pp *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *mf*

59 8^{va-1} echo I 8^{va-} 8^{va-1} 3

p *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

67 (ecstatic) 8^{va-}

mf *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

76 8^{va-} (ecstatic)

pp *p* *pp* *mf* *f*

85 8^{va-1} 8^{va-1} 8^{va-}

p *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

94 (ecstatic) impulse 8^{va-1} 8^{va-1} echo I 8^{va-}

pp *mf* *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

4

(8) [] 8^{va} [] 8^{va} | (ecstatic) 8^{va} |

102 *pp* *p* 8^{va} *pp* *mf* *p* *pp*

transit (to 135)

111 8^{va} [] *p* 8^{va} [] *pp* *cresc.* []

119

123

126

8va

relentless (to 210)
(ecstatic)

133

Musical score for measures 133-140. The piece is in 3/8 time, changing to 6/4 and then 3/4. Dynamics include *pp*, *mf*, *f*, *p*, and *pp*. An 8va marking is present at the end of the system.

141

Musical score for measures 141-147. The piece is in 9/4 time, changing to 3/4. Dynamics include *p* and *pp*. An 8va marking is present at the beginning of the system.

148

(ecstatic)
impulse

echo I

Musical score for measures 148-155. The piece is in 6/4 time, changing to 3/4. Dynamics include *pp*, *p*, and *pp*. An 8va marking is present at the beginning of the system.

156

(ecstatic)

Musical score for measures 156-162. The piece is in 3/4 time, changing to 9/4 and then 3/4. Dynamics include *pp* and *mf*.

163

(ecstatic)
impulse

Musical score for measures 163-170. The piece is in 6/4 time, changing to 3/4. Dynamics include *p*, *pp*, *p*, *pp*, and *mf*. An 8va marking is present at the beginning of the system.

6
172 echo | *pp* *p* *pp* *p* (ecstatic) *p*
8^{va}-----| 8^{va}-----|
mf

(8) |

180 *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

188 *p* *pp* *mp*

197 *p* *pp* *mp* *p* *pp*

204 *p* *pp* *mp* *p* *pp* transit (to 231)

212

musical score for measures 212-216, bass clef, 4/4 time signature. The score features a *cresc.* marking and several triplet markings (3) over the notes.

217

musical score for measures 217-219, bass clef, 4/4 time signature. The score features a *mf dim.* marking and several triplet markings (3) over the notes.

220

musical score for measures 220-223, bass clef, 4/4 time signature. The score features an *8va* marking and several triplet markings (3) over the notes.

224

musical score for measures 224-231, bass clef, 4/4 time signature. The score features dynamic markings *pp* and *mf*, and an *8va* marking. The word *arcane* is written above the staff.

232

musical score for measures 232-235, bass clef, 4/4 time signature. The score features dynamic markings *mf*, *f*, and *ff*, and an *8va* marking. The word *impulse* is written above the staff.

8

echo I

echo II

echo III

236

♩ = 78, darkness

241

248

253

♩ = 104, arcane

257

262 *ff* *impulse* *mf* *echo I* *p* *echo II*

♩ = 78, transmutation

267 *pp* *echo III* *p*

273 *p* *mp*

279 *mp* *p* *mp*

285 (gong) *pp* *p* *ppp*