**Sinfonia Concertante for Four Winds - The D.A.R.K. Knights**

Early in 2015 the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra (Jeffrey Kahane, Music Director) offered me a commission to write a Sinfonia Concertante that would feature the long-serving LACO principal wind players David Shostac (flute), Allan Vogel (oboe), Richard Todd (horn) and Kenneth Munday (bassoon).

After a few days of ruminating on how to approach the composition I decided to take the Sinfonia Concertante concept one step further and additionally highlight the four soloists by giving each of them a mini concerto within the piece. The composition’s full title was the result of serendipity – I’ll let you figure out what it means!

Once I started writing it quickly became clear that the piece would be in one movement, and that the Sinfonia Concertante sections would take care of establishing its main thematic material and general harmonic environment. Also, these would be the more energetic parts of the composition and they would bookmark the four mini concertos, which in turn would represent the more lyrical aspects of the piece. I liked the idea of introducing the soloists via a main theme that would be played in unison by all of them, each in a different octave.

Then, out of the blue, a “fifth element” revealed itself. I had never included a drum set in my concert pieces before, but instantly felt that this would be the right occasion to do so. As it turned out, the drums fulfill several distinct functions within the composition – to support motoric string section rhythms, to independently generate grooves behind atmospheric orchestral textures, and also to venture into the world of free jazz by complimenting some passages with improvised, and not necessarily synchronized gestures.

But back to our four soloists. In the outer, Sinfonia Concertante segments they are featured in above-mentioned thematic multi-octave unison passages, in duos (flute-oboe and horn-bassoon), as well as in brief individual solos.

In the four lyrical mini-concertos I wanted to create unique, personal sonic environments for each of the soloists. The principal source of inspiration for these was each musician’s distinct instrumental sound. Musically, the mini-concertos are related to each other through an introductory chord progression established by the strings, and through textural orchestral material already introduced during the opening Sinfonia Concertante segment.

Duration: 17 minutes

Gernot Wolfgang

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