ADAM SILVERMAN • 2013

CARBON PAPER AND NITROGEN INK

CONCERTO FOR MARIMBA AND WIND ENSEMBLE

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CARBON PAPER AND NITROGEN INK
composed by Adam Silverman (2013). Duration: 20 minutes.

I. Spiral threads of vital spirit
II. glowing
III. on the fabric of the human body

» Instrumentation «
- Piccolo 4 Saxophones (SATB)
- 4 Flutes * 4 Trumpets in B♭ *
- 2 Oboes 4 French Horns in F
- English Horn in F 3 Tenor Trombones
- Clarinet in E♭ Bass Trombone
- 4 Clarinets in B♭ Euphonium
- Bass Clarinet in B♭ Tuba
- 2 Bassoons Contrabass
- Contrabassoon Piano
- Timpani
- Solo Marimba (5-octave) **
- Percussion (6 players)

Superscripts indicate which percussionist plays each instrument. Group all suspended cymbals and Snare Drum as a single "set-up" for quick switching between instruments.

Mallet percussion: Crotales (2) (two octaves), Glockenspiel (4), Xylophone (5), Vibraphone (6)

Drums: Snare Drum (1, 4) with drum sticks and wire brushes, Bass Drum (1, 2, 6)

Cymbals: Orchestral Cymbals (3, 6), Sizzle Cymbal (8, 4, 5) with drum sticks, soft yarn mallets and wire brushes, Suspended Crash Cymbal (6, 4), 2 Ride Cymbals (high/low) (3), Hi-hat (1).

Other: Chimes (3, 9), 3 Triangles (1), Wood Block (5, 4)

* Flutes 2, 3 and 4 double on piccolo; Trumpet 1 doubles on piccolo trumpet in B♭.

** The marimba may be amplified to balance the ensemble. Instructions for amplification are included below.

» Program note by the composer «

In Michael Pollan’s popular book The Omnivore’s Dilemma, the author describes carbon as “supplying life’s quantity, since it is the main structural element in living matter,” and nitrogen as “supplying life’s quality,” since it is the essential ingredient in amino acids, proteins and nucleic acids. I particularly enjoyed his turn-of-phrase when he wrote “the genetic information that orders and perpetuates life is written in nitrogen ink,” and it also reminded me of some artwork by Hannah Burr, in which faint landscapes are inscribed on fragile leaves of carbon paper. The titles of the first three movements were extracted and loosely adapted from lines of The Human Genome: Poems On The Book of Life by Gillian K. Ferguson and the third movement’s title, On the fabric of the human body, is the translated name of a landmark text on human anatomy, Andreas Vesalius’ De humani corporis fabrica (1543). This book, a copy of which I inherited from my father, features intricately detailed illustrations of human dissections set in allegorical poses and settings. Together, the movement titles form a small poem.

The music was composed freely, without attempts to “pictorialize” its topic. Instead, it takes as its overall approach the concept of “inscription,” with instrumental layers etching impressions on one another. The solo marimba, in particular, imprints upon the rest by triggering notes of the accompaniment that extend the marimba’s notes through sustaining, echoing, and forming cascading trails.
This work was commissioned by:

Arizona State University Wind Orchestra
Gary W. Hill, conductor | J. B. Smith, marimba

Auburn University Wind Ensemble
Richard Good, conductor | Douglas Rosener, marimba

Brigham Young University Wind Symphony
Donald Peterson, conductor | Ron Brough, marimba

Colorado State University Wind Ensemble
Christopher Nicholas, conductor | Eric Hollenbeck, marimba

Florida State University Wind Ensemble
Richard Clary, conductor | John W. Parks IV, marimba

Furman University Wind Ensemble
Leslie Hicken, conductor | Omar Carmenates, marimba

Kutztown University Wind Ensemble
Jeremy Justeson, conductor | Frank Kumor, marimba

Rowan University Wind Ensemble
John Pastin, conductor | Matthew Witten, marimba

South Dakota State University Wind Ensemble
Eric Peterson, conductor | Aaron Ragsdale, marimba

Southern Methodist University Meadows Wind Ensemble
Jack Delaney, conductor | Drew Lang, marimba

Temple University Wind Symphony
Emily Threinen, conductor | Phillip R. O'Banion, marimba

Troy University Symphony Band
Mark Walker, conductor | T. Adam Blackstock, marimba

University of Central Arkansas Wind Ensemble
Ricky Brooks, conductor | Blake Tyson, marimba

University of Central Florida Wind Ensemble
Scott Tobias, conductor | Thad Anderson, marimba

University of Minnesota Duluth Wind Ensemble
Mark Whitlock, conductor | Gene Koshinski, marimba

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Wind Ensemble
Tony Falcone, conductor | Dave Hall, marimba

University of South Carolina Wind Ensemble
Scott Weiss, conductor | Scott Herring, marimba

University of Texas Wind Ensemble
Jerry Junkin, conductor | Thomas Burritt, marimba

West Chester University Wind Ensemble
Andrew Yozviak, conductor
and West Chester University Percussion Ensemble
Chris Hanning and Ralph Sorrentino, directors
Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the many people who inspired and made this work possible, and I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the percussionists and directors of bands who supported the project by joining its commission consortium. Extra-special appreciation goes to Chris Hanning, who helped to connect so many of the consortium participants to this project. The marimba part of this concerto could not be played by any human were it not for the help of the amazing brain-trust of Phillip O'Banion, Gene Koshinski, and most of all Scott Herring, all of whom worked as generous collaborators and gurus on marimba technique, helping to refine the solo line through seemingly endless exchanges of draft copies, emails and videos. Extra-extra-special unending thanks go to John W. Parks IV, without whom this music could not have been made and whose encouragement and inexhaustible energy has provided a compass for my compositional work that points squarely at percussion.

— Adam Silverman

To amplify the marimba

Two large diaphragm condenser microphones (Neumann U-87, TLM-67, AKG 414 XL II, etc., set to cardioid if polarity is adjustable) placed with capsules pointed at a 45-degree angle towards the player's edge of the upper manual, two feet in front of the marimba, five feet off the ground, and 32-36 inches between microphones (16-18 inches off center of marimba). If performing on a wooden or stone stage, a carpet under the marimba and microphone stands will provide some mallet transfer isolation from frame to the stage. Amplification may come from the house or from a stereo pair of powered monitors to the immediate right and left of the marimbist, according to performer, hall, aesthetic and overall balance with the wind ensemble. You may contact John Parks with any technical questions (jpark@fsu.edu).

For performance materials

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Also available from Adam B. Silverman Music Publications

Music for Wind Ensembles

Alien Robots Unite! for wind ensemble
Alternating Current concerto for alto saxophone and wind ensemble
Hard Knocks for wind ensemble
I echo you, we are repeated for saxophone sextet or choir
Wait for trombone sextet or choir

Music for Percussion

Carbon Paper and Nitrogen Ink edition for marimba and percussion septet
Carbon Paper and Nitrogen Ink edition for marimba and piano
Gasoline Rainbow for percussion octet
Naked and On Fire for percussion sextet
Paper Covers Rock for percussion duet
Quick Blood for percussion quartet
Sparklefrog for percussion octet
Spiderweb Lead for steel drum, vibraphone, marimba and hand drum
stars, cars, bars for speaking marimbist
Together for flute and marimba
I. Spiral threads of vital spirit

Explosive, \( \dot{r} = 112 \)
III. on the fabric of the human body

Forceful, $\frac{4}{4}$

Flute 1 & 2
Flute 3 & 4
Oboe
English Horn
tuba
Euphonium
Cor Anglais
Trumpet 1 & 2
Trumpet 3 & 4
Horn 1 & 2
Horn 3 & 4
Timpani
Timpani & Bass Timpani
Percussion
Tuba
Double Bass
French Horn
Trombone
Timpani
Mallets