

Paul STEENHUISEN - PROGRAM NOTES

PIECE: *PENSACOLA*

As well as being a place in Florida, in this incarnation PENSACOLA is a sort of “melodrama” for narrator/computer, spatialized brass, and orchestra - a distorted cognate of *Ha pensato* (thought), or *di pensier* (of thoughts), and *cola* (glue) - thought glue. Based primarily on fragments of poetry by Michelangelo, the music explores the symbolic transfer of his ideas on sculpture into sound. Michelangelo believed that the figures of his sculptures were already present, alive within the blocks of Carrara marble with which he sculpted, and that his duty to was to release them from the stone. For me, the concert hall contains within its walls the memory of all the music already heard here, while present and future music is there to be released from it, bounced and reflected throughout the hall. In its perpetual state of becoming, the music looks within and beyond itself, into memory, away from the boundaries of one piece, seeping into others already heard, and those soon to be heard, outside the usual boundaries of the stage, and further into the wide sonic space of the loudspeakers. The central portion of the piece, a *quodlibet*, is built on shards of the 3rd movement of Luciano Berio's *Sinfonia* (itself quoted music), and sedimentary references to music by Britten, Shostakovich, Wolf, and Thea Musgrave. Aside from the Berio, the quoted fragments are from vocal pieces written using texts by Michelangelo, and are presented as potentialities, possible visions of the whole, unfinished like the rough edges and untouched portions of the stone block Michelangelo left to symbolize the passage of matter into form. Hidden within the imaginary landscape of the loudspeakers, the narrator is like the figure in the marble, from where he recites, whispers and hollers Michelangelo's sensual and intellectual relation to his materials and process.

First performed by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Jukka-Pekka Saraste. Commissioned by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra with the support of the Canada Council. Narrated by Giorgio Magnanensi

TEXTS BY MICHELANGELO (selected poetic fragments, in order of first appearance)

I - PROLOGUE

Fatto arsicciato e cotto dal sole E da maggior caldi

(Parched and baked by the sun and by greater forms of heat)

II - FIGURA

Non ha l'ottimo artista alcun concetto C'un marmo solo in sé non circonscriva

(The greatest artist does not have any concept which a single piece of marble does not itself contain)

III - QUODLIBET (excluding miscellaneous interference texts)

Di pensier Di mie mano Di pensier in pensier
(From thought· by my hand. From thought to thought)

fu' già vivo, tu sol, pietra, il sai, che qui mi serri, e s'alcun mi ricorda
(If I was ever alive you alone know it, oh stone, who here enclose me, for if anyone remembers me he seems merely to be dreaming)

Si amico al freddo sasso è 'l foco interno che l'arda e spezzi, in qualche modo vive, legando con sé gli altri in loco eterno
(So friendly to the cold stone is the fire within it the stone lives on in a certain way, binding with its substance other stones, into an eternal place.)

il mie passato m'e presente
(my past is my present)

IV- FIGURA

per levar, si pone In pietra alpestra e dura ona viva figura, Che la piu cresce u' piu la pietra scema

(it is by removing that one places in hard, alpine stone a living figure, which grows greater precisely where the stone grows less)

si morte e presta e 'ngorda
(so ready and greedy is death)

Rompasi il mur fra l'uno e l'altra messo
let the wall raised between these two be broken down

V - EPILOGUE

La memoria 'l fratel pur mi dipigne, E te· sculpisce vivo in mezzo il core
(Memory (indeed) paints my brother in me; (but) you· it sculpts alive within my heart)

INTERSPERSED SCULPTURE INDEX

Bacchus, Bacco, Brutus, Centauromachia, Crocifisso, Davitte Apollo, Ercole e Caco, Genio della Vittoria, Il Crepuscolo Il Giorno, Il Prigione - Atlante, L' Aurora, La Notte, Julius Caesar La Vittoria, Madonna col Bambino, Madonna della Scala Mosè, Pietà, Pietà Bandini, Pietà fiorentina, Pietà Rondanini San Matteo, St Petronius, St Proculus, Porta pia, Schiavi Rachel (contemplative life), Lea (active life)