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Renderings

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RENDERINGS

by

Zachary David Fischer

An Abstract

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Music in the Graduate College of The University of Iowa

July 2010

Thesis Supervisor: Professor David K. Gompper
In February of 2009 I began collaborating with the poet Margot Lurie on a series of songs for soprano voice and a large chamber ensemble. We worked separately for the following year and a half, meeting intermittently to exchange ideas and materials. I chose three poems of similar tone and thematic content, each illustrating a different "scene" which serves as a metaphor revealing a perspective of the human condition. Then I composed the music to support the text, preserving its raw clarity by allowing the piece to unfold on the surface level through simple harmonies and a primarily conjunct, speech-like vocal melody, as well as by controlling the density of instrumental textures and the rate at which new pitch information is introduced. The multiple meanings of the title are reflected in the work on several representational levels: as the vocal melody is rendered (distilled) from the surrounding harmony, the harmonies themselves render (surrender) their perceptual weight to the text, which is in itself a rendering (depiction).

Abstract Approved:  

Thesis Supervisor

Title and Department

Date
RENDERINGS

by

Zachary David Fischer

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Music in the Graduate College of The University of Iowa

July 2010

Thesis Supervisor: Professor David K. Gompper
This is to certify that the Ph. D. thesis of

Zachary David Fischer

has been approved by the Examining Committee
for the thesis requirement for the Doctor of
Philosophy degree in Music at the July 2010 graduation.

Thesis Committee: ____________________________

David Gompper, Thesis Supervisor

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Lawrence Fritts

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Jennifer Iverson

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Jerry Cain

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Charlotte Adams
To Monica
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INSTRUMENTATION

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Oboe
Clarinet in B♭
Bassoon/Contrabassoon

Horn in F
Trumpet in B♭
Trombone
Tuba
Percussion 1
  Drum Set
    Bass Drum, Floor Tom, Snare Drum, Wood Blocks (2),
    Cowbell, Suspended Cymbal, Triangle
  Glockenspiel
  Vibraphone
  Gong (large)
Percussion 2
  Marimba
  Vibraphone
  Crotales
  Large Bass Drum
  Suspended Cymbal
  Timpani (2)
Piano
Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass
In February of 2009 I began collaborating with the poet Margot Lurie on a series of songs for soprano voice and a large chamber ensemble. We worked separately for the following year and a half, meeting intermittently to exchange ideas and materials. I chose three poems of similar tone and thematic content, each illustrating a different "scene" which serves as a metaphor revealing a perspective of the human condition. Then I composed the music to support the text, preserving its raw clarity by allowing the piece to unfold on the surface level through simple harmonies and a primarily conjunct, speech-like vocal melody, as well as by controlling the density of instrumental textures and the rate at which new pitch information is introduced. The multiple meanings of the title are reflected in the work on several representational levels: as the vocal melody is rendered (distilled) from the surrounding harmony, the harmonies themselves render (surrender) their perceptual weight to the text, which is in itself a rendering (depiction).
Still Life

I went to disgorge the bird from the cat's jaw.
   Flayed on its neck-gut, its gargoyle perch
   held an unidentifiable pulp.

A glimmer of matter. At its haunches
   there were summer ears of corn, blood-polished.
   Hip-bones

paused in leaping, one paw still positioned
   to urge the bird downward
   its polyped tongue like tinder

poised to flush the cornhusks orange
   against the butchered mass
   as if birthing the baby through the mouth

Figure: Geese

The geese were out, big as myth
Their sand-grit knuckles slapping
the asphalt. They rasped
he stumbled - and tracking
through the grass
He almost felt
The iron heat of the neck
constricted as if a cry: Repent!

A fiery brushstroke in the sky.
His heart was a target,
his heart was a target

and he had sewn gold coins into his breast pocket
his heart was a target
his heart was a void
A Russian Self-Portrait

1
I draw the shawl around my arms. There is a waltz playing.
I am bent over the sewing machine. My fingers are wax-cold, like tapers.

2
The needle stops and I am singing

3
My arms are pools of lymph, they are dripping
I see the horses coming at a gallop.

4
The color of my hair, a paper bag. The cabinets thick wood and newspaper-clotted.
Nylon pools at my knees.

5
I kicked and kicked at the church door.

6
My name is Manya
But in the new world they will call me Margot,
and my grandchildren will have long names, names of angels

7
You pick a fish by its eye. The eye of a good fish is clear as a sleepwalker's.

8
I kicked and kicked. I could hear them breathing inside
My face was clay, was stone. My skull a vault of sky.

9
My name is Margot
But call me Mara
For my life has been made bitter

10
The needle stops and I am shaking
I went to disgorge the bird from the cat's jaw. Flayed on its neck-gut its
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Tba.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Pno.
S.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Db.
gar-goyle perch held an un-i-den-ti-fi-a-ble pulp.

\* gar-goyle perch
\* held an un-i-den-ti-fi-a-ble pulp.
Very Slowly (¶=45)

A glimmer of matter.
Piu Mosso ($\frac{1}{2}$=60)

At its haun-ches, there were summer-ears of
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Tba.
Perc.
Pno.
S.
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

take Flute

corn,

blood-polished

p Spoken, softly

pizz.
to urge the bird downward

its poly-ped tongue like tinder poised...
Freely, Faster ($\omega=100$)

---

Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Cbn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Tba.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Pno.
S.
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

Contrabassoon

Whisper, excitedly

to flush the corn-husks orange
A tempo ($\nu=72$)
bir-thing the ba-by through the mou-th
The geese were out, big as...
Più Mosso (\( \dot{=96} \))

their sand-grit knuckle slapping the asphalt.
They rasped, he stumbled and tracking through the grass.
he al-most felt the i-ron heat of the neck con-stric-ted as if a
Much Slower ($\text{\textsuperscript{\textbullet}=45}$)

- **Fl.**
- **Ob.**
- **Cl.**
- **Bsn.**
- **Hn.**
- **Tpt.**
- **Tbn.**
- **Vln. 1**
- **Vln. 2**
- **Vla.**
- **Vc.**
- **Db.**

**Perc. 2**: Various percussion instruments and techniques.

**Pno.**: Piano.

**S.**: Various string instruments and techniques.
Tempo Primo (q=76)

to Vibraphone

His heart was a target, His heart was a target,
get and he had sewn gold coins into his breast pocket.
His heart was a target.
His heart was a void.
A Russian Self-Portrait

Forcefully ($q=60$)

Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Bsn.
Horn in F
Tpt.
Tbn.
Tba.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Piano
Soprano
Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

Bassoon

Triangle
Large Bass Drum
To Vibraphone

Crotale
To Marimba

loc

pizz.
arco

pizz.
arco

p
Vigorously draw the shawl around my
arms. There is a waltz playing. I am bento-ver the
sewing machine. My fingers are wax-cold, like tapers.
The needle stops and I am singing.
My arms are pools of lymph, they are drip-pling
I see the horses - coming - at a gallop.

Snares off to Timpani

Pizz.
The color of my hair, a paper bag. The cabinets thick wood.
and news-pa-per clot- ted.  Ny-lon pools at my knees.
Angrily \((j=84)\)

I kicked and kicked at the church door
My name is Man-ya but in the new world they will
call me Mar-got, and my grand-child ren will have long names, names of an-gels
Slightly Faster, with Determination ($\frac{2}{3}$=92)
Spoken, as a mother to a child

You pick a fish by its eye. The eye of a
good fish is clear as a sleep-walker's.
Più Mosso (\(\text{q}=100\))

I kicked and kicked. I could hear them breathing inside.
molto rit. .......................... Largo (\( \frac{L}{=50} \))

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.
	on open

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Perc. 1

to Large Bass Drum

Perc. 2

Pno.

S.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

Softly, with building intensity

My face was clay,
was stone. My skull a vault of sky.
Anxiously ($\omega=100$)

My name is Mar - got but call me Ma-ra - for my life has been made

Fl.  
Ob.  
Cl.  
Bsn.  
Hn.  
Tpt.  
Tbn.  
Tba.  
Perc. 1  
Perc. 2  
Pno.  
S.  
Vln. 1  
Vln. 2  
Vla.  
Vc.  
Db.  

Vibraphone
Marimba

ppp
Anxiously (q=100) rall.

240

sfzpp
ppp

mf

Angrily

My name is Mar-got but call me Ma-ra for my life has been made
Very Slowly ($\approx 50$)

The need-le stops and I am shak-ing

Spoken sadly

Spoken reverently

Sul pont.