

## Jorge E. Lopez *Kammersymphonie*

Born in Cuba 1955, Jorge E. Lopez grew up in New York and Chicago. By the early 1970's he had discovered a love of composition inspired by the pioneering figures of contemporary music (Xenakis, Schoenberg, Charles Ives etc.) which lead him to further studies in music and composition with Leonard Stein and Morton Subotnik at the California Institute of the Arts (1971-5). However he later destroyed all his early works and declared himself 'self-taught', beginning a nomadic existence dedicated to self-exploration and experimentation in various artistic and scientific disciplines. Governing all this however, is his discovery of the mountain wildernesses of firstly North America and later Central Europe, in which Lopez now lives in isolation. This relationship with nature in it's most primitive grandeur, inspires his music and defines his philosophy.

While much of the early years of experimentation in the USA can be seen as an active struggle to discover and define an original, musical language, Lopez also produced film and video works during the 1970s which continues to be part of his current artistic life. In 2000-1 he was visiting artist in video and acoustical design at the Karlsruhe Art and Media Technology Centre and a recent release of *Mountain War Project* (recorded by Klangforum, Wien) is described as a 'Dream structure for video design with concrete and instrumental surround sound'.

In *Kammersymphonie* Lopez portrays an intense, dark and often savage musical landscape. Scored for small chamber orchestra (flauta, flauta de bisel, oboé, clarinete, cor de bassetta, clarinete contrabaixo, contrafagote, trompete, tubas wagnerianas, trombones, tuba, harpa, percussão, violino-trompete, viola, violoncello e contrabaixo) he constructs a curious blend of low strings and brass and a series of almost continuous glissandi phrases passed throughout the Ensemble. This preoccupation with glissandi also finds an outlet in prominent timpani writing and the use of a 'sliding saw'. There is a compelling sense of narrative and drama to Lopez music, which in the strength of the composer's personality seems to be stripping the rich and decadent musical language of Schoenberg (for example) to a psychological skeleton. Lopez himself states that "I don't search for the new, rather I seek to liberate that which has been repressed.. My roots and sources lie in Western Music (partly in surrealism (understood as method), in science and in the experience of wilderness. The motivation for creation originates in myself and is always connected to a strong effort of will- with respect to overcoming social barriers, overcoming the bourgeois concept of culture, overcoming the artificial boundaries between the various art forms."

An example of breaking down these 'artificial boundaries' is shown in the literary quotations heading each of the four movements. While Lopez draws on a variety of different sources (as does Grisey in *Quatre Chants pour franchir le seuil*) he also varies the intended influence of the quotation itself on the listener.

For example the first movement contains a philosophical statement of Sigmund Freud "Wo Ich war, kann Es werden" a concise reflection on the personal state or experience of an individual becoming a changing influence in the world. In the second movement there is a multi-layered allusion: 'De la vista del frailea los jardines del rey' coming from a book *O mundo alucinante* (1966) by the writer Reinaldo Arenas; this writer was in turn inspired by two triptych paintings in a surrealist style from Hieronymus Bosch entitled *The Garden of Earthly Delights* and *The Temptation of St. Anthony* which in his literary transcription became the quoted title. The coarse insult of the third movement "Du bist ein richtiges Arschloch" is reflected in the rough rhythmic ostinatos of a Scherzo

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Co-commissioned by Casa da Musica with Klangforum Wien, the first two movements were premiered in Vienna (December 2006) by Klangforum Wien, conducted by Stefan Asbury, former principal conductor of Remix Ensemble. Tonight's performance represents the first performance of the entire four-movement work by Remix Ensemble.

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