

RITUS, for flute, violin, clarinet, guitar and piano

"Ritus" is a great composition project by Giovanni Grosskopf.

The piece, for flute, violin, clarinet, guitar and piano, in twelve movements, has been keeping the Author busy for twelve years, since it has been composed during the years from 2003 and 2014. The total duration, when all the movements are performed, exceeds one hour of music. Nonetheless, it is also possible to perform only a selection of some movements from "Ritus" (even only one or two), according to the instructions written hereafter on this text. "Ritus" originated from a collaboration with the [Ensemble Webern](#).

GENERAL FORM OF THE PIECE

The whole piece, in twelve movements, is structured as follows:

- 1 – Introitus et declamatio
- 2 – Cantus auspicii et consecrationis
- 3 – Narratio
- 4 – Invocatio
- 5 – Ignotum
- 6 – Planctus
- 7 – In secreto mysterium
- 8 – In nemore clamores
- 9 – Rota
- 10 – Diaphonia
- 11 – Ad cunas
- 12 – Nubes pluerunt lustum

When all the movements are performed, it is necessary to keep their order and their titles, without any change, as indicated above.

FORM OF THE PIECE

All the movements are linked together by the use of the same motivic and thematic cells, constantly used throughout the piece. All the piece, therefore (in all its twelve movements), is based on three very short melodic fragments, combined in various ways. Those fragments and their combination form a musical "motto", a motivic base on which the whole work relies.

The different movements, with highly contrasting characters, are like the different moments of a journey, conceived in order to attain a calibrated narrative path, passing through balanced moments of tension and relaxation. After an introductory part (the first three movements), the piece is conceived as a "descent to the underworld", having its most dramatic moment in a dark passage (the movement *Ignotum*) and in the following sad *Planctus* (movement 6), after which a new rising follows, a rebirth (movements from 7 to 10), until a double conclusion is reached, formed by the two last movements (11, *Ad Cunas* – a purely "human" conclusion and 12, *Nubes pluerunt lustum* – an ending that wouldn't have been possible without God's intervention in the human history).

In a word, the whole atmosphere of "Ritus" can surely be labeled as "epic".

THE INTRODUCTORY PART

The first three movements narrate the preparations, the greetings and the initial celebrations (as when somebody is leaving for a venture or a long adventurous journey). In detail:

- The first one, *Introitus et declamatio*, is a real introduction;
- The second movement, *Cantus auspicii et consecrationis*, is an auspicious well-wishing song;
- The third one, *Narratio*, is a long prophecy, like an anticipated narration of all what will happen in the future, in the rest of the piece.

THE DESCENT TO THE UNDERWORLD

- The fourth piece, *Invocatio*, is a further invocation to facilitate and support the preparation to meet something terrible and dangerous.

– The fifth movement, *Ignotum*, is this dreadful meeting with a terrible and dangerous reality, which hurts and strikes mercilessly. Within the general context of “Ritus”, the movement *Ignotum* is the most disquieting, dark and gloomy moment. The moment of the trial, from which it's impossible to survive without wounds. The moment of fear, of the infringed prohibition, of the mortal terror. We are brought in front of enigmatic petroglyphs, in front of mysterious threats; in front of monstrous evil symbols, at the sound of distorted voices; in front of frightening curses screamed in the wind by wild insane demoniac beings; in front of the ferocity of pitiless doom sentences, among the bestial shouts of remorseless shamans. The sacred world can sometimes be very dangerous. Coping with it leaves a lasting mark. One would never pass through this place. Yet, it is necessary to do so.

– The sixth movement, *Planctus*, is therefore a mournful and intimate weep. It is a deeply tragic and sad piece: a funeral lament.

THE RISING

– The seventh movement, *In secreto mysterium*, represents the refreshment in an intimate hidden safe shelter, where the inner peace is regained, and people are being re-created.

– The eighth, ninth and tenth movements are the announcement that the promised time has come, the announcement of a return to the world, full of contemplation and wonder (*In nemore clamores*), of group secret dances (*Rota*), and then also of rediscovered boldness and regained courage (*Diaphonia*).

THE DOUBLE ENDING

– The fatigue of this inner adventure is in any case very heavy, and so the eleventh movement, *Ad cunas*, is a lullaby that, representing a sweet, tender, but merely human consolation, cannot but be a melancholy conclusion for this “journey of a human soul”, a soul who is no more the same, as when this journey began.

– The last movement, *Nubes pluerunt lustum* (the title of which has been taken from the Gregorian chant “Rorate caeli et nubes pluant lustum”), contains the melody of a Christian song about Christmas and on the subject of the Incarnation (a medieval Christmas carol, entitled “Verbum caro factum est”, that is “The Word was made flesh”) that, forming a chacony, is combined in turn in its various repetitions with all the former materials (taken from the former eleven movements), and shows the answer that, invoked in the first eleven pieces (that is: invoked in all the human history, in every culture, nation, people and place), has really come, and transforms and saves the religiosity of every time and place, flowing and converging into a final hymn. Everybody, in any age and place, has invoked an answer to the need of a meaning for life and history: now the answer has come, for the direct intervention of God in the history of the mankind: He let everybody know Him, while everybody was seeking Him, and now He is present, here. The answer exists, has come in a precise given moment and in a precise given place, concretely, and one can meet it now, in our everyday life. Everything is transfigured, valorized in any aspect and saved, starting exactly from the deepest needs of the mankind, represented by the first eleven movements, the musical materials of which are exactly transfigured, valorized, renewed and brought to their true full completion and fulfillment by their combination with the melody of the carol, until they even identify themselves with the Christmas carol itself.

The first eleven movements are therefore the expression of different moments of a “natural” religiosity, a “primitive” one, so to speak (according to the meaning explained hereabove in this text), that is the invocation of an answer about the meaning of life and history, while the title of the twelfth movement, *Nubes pluerunt lustum* (“The clouds let the Right One come down as rain”), expresses the meaning of the Incarnation as the coming of the answer invoked – and expresses it by following an attitude which is the same of the other movements, given its reference to a natural element (the clouds).

The sentence written on the music score at the end of the twelfth movement, and therefore at the end of the whole piece, speaking about Jesus Christ, summarizes the meaning of “Ritus” in this way:

“Thus He affirmed the value of the old rule, but, at the same time, He renewed the nature of the man, freeing it from any burden and from any residual trace of sin. Without any disdain for the ancient world, He started a new world; by obeying the Law, He became the lawgiver and, bearing His divine richness in the poverty of our nature, He donated a new substance to the mystery of the old rites.”

(Preface in the Octave of the Holy Christmas, Ambrosian rite).

The titles are in Latin, in order to emphasize the sacred character of the piece, which must have, also during the performance, the aspect of a ritual in music. Should I choose an attribute to summarize the atmosphere of the piece, as I have already said before, I think therefore that the right one would certainly be “epic”, in an almost Tolkienian sense.

MOTIVATION FOR THIS COMPOSITION

I hope now to describe correctly the idea that moved me to compose "Ritus", but it will not be so simple.

I have been influenced by the reading of the book "The religious sense" by Fr. Luigi Giussani, dealing with the natural religiosity which is common in every human being. I am by nature very touched, in an intimate way, by the evocative power of the natural environment around me, especially when I am in the mountains. Could I do it, I would live in the woods, or perhaps on the Alps at a high altitude; I feel part of that environment myself. The cathedrals of trunks made by the fir forests, the boulders, the meadows, a tree, the streams and the waterfalls, the mosses and the signs of the presence of animals have always something to tell me, and they are telling it to me personally, and I am part of their world. My friend, the musicologist Enrico Raggi, once told me that I must have a spirit like that of a Paleolithic hunter... and he was right, of course.

Now, in the same way, I have always been close to the sensibility and to the art forms of those who, before me, have experienced a similiar sensibility: peasants, shepherds, the so-called "primitive" or prehistoric societies. For this reason, I have always been strongly attracted by anthropology, ethnology, linguistics, ethnomusicology, fairy tales, legends, myths, mediaeval and ancient symbology, barbaric art, prehistoric art, rock paintings, and analogous and somehow related things. Sometimes, all this pours into the music I compose. Nonetheless, in order to avoid remaining at the state of a superficial "primitivism" or a pose, it is necessary to experience a strong connection between these interests and my concrete self, my own ordinary and daily life. Now, in my ordinary life, I have to deal every day with the fact that I am a Christian and I have met somebody who is the answer to the natural religious sense, somebody who does not only play a part in the great question about the meaning of life, but answers it.

Hence, also on the artistic side, my need to avoid to feel a division, a conflict or a break between my "primitivist" sensibility (so to speak), which is spontaneous and natural in me, and what I believe, that is that Jesus is the answer, the meaning of life and of everything. I feel necessary to take this step also in my own "inner poetic world". If I look to what I sincerely believe, I think I should compose sacred Christian music, and even also liturgical music, but if I look to what comes spontaneously and instinctively to my mind by nature, I should compose things that have to do with the rocks, the trees, the sound of flowing water, the terror of thunder or the disquieting shapes of certain stones. Now, I feel the absolute need of seeing that the two things are not at all in conflict, but have to do with each other deeply: the natural religious sense, in fact, is a very good and essential reality, and the Lord created it to make us seek Him. "Ritus" is a first step in this direction. I think that my own musical creativity will gain new forces from putting in contact these two things, from taking this step in my inner world, in this piece, as well as in my future compositions, as the case may be. As already explained above, the first 11 movements, which form a sort of "inner story", are like the result of different moments of a natural, and, so to speak, "primitive" religious sense, according to the meaning that I have explained hereabove, that is the quest for a meaning of human life and history and the search for an answer to this fundamental question, made by any human being and by every people in any epoch and place, while the last movement (the title of which has been taken from the Gregorian chant "Rorate caeli", and has been later modified) features a Christian song about the birth of Jesus and the Incarnation (a mediaeval Christmas carol), which is combined with the musical materials taken from all the former movements, transforming them, signifying the answer that, first invoked by every nation, age and people, has actually come. The Latin title of the twelfth movement ("Nubes pluerunt iustum", which can also be translated as "The clouds dropped the Just One [down to the Earth]") indicates the meaning of the Incarnation as the appearance of an answer to the natural religious sense of every people and of every human being (but, as I said above, indicates it with an approach which is close to the sensibility shown in the other movements, through its allusion - in a metaphor - to a natural element: the clouds).

All this is rooted in a precise idea and in a precise personal story, developed by starting from three factors: the reading of the book "The Religious Sense" (link: [introduction to the book](#)) by [Luigi Giussani](#), the personal sensibility of the Composer, and his story made of Christian faith and of being part of the Church.

REFERENCES TO ORAL ETHNIC MUSIC TRADITIONS AND LINKS RELATED TO THEM

The use of ethnomusicological materials, that is musical materials taken from the oral music traditions of many places throughout the world, was absolutely indispensable and essential in "Ritus". Actually, just starting from the deepest meaning of the initial project of the piece, some musical traditions of the world have been selected from the very beginning, preferably traditions having strong religious and ritual features, also pre-Christian ones, in order to make them become the basic musical materials of the first eleven movements (all the movements, but the last one). These materials are here the expression of the human soul, that is always the same in all the peoples, who, in any age and place, invoke and have always invoked in their heart an answer to the question of the meaning of life and human history.

The knowledge of many traditional musical forms taken from the ethnic music of different Countries and peoples led therefore me (within my own precise and well-identifiable style that I always maintain) to derive from them forms, evocative passages, compositional techniques, atmospheres, rhythms, melodies, avoiding at the same time any possible inclination to a banal plain imitation of them.

In other words, when creating the music of each movement, I use structures, melodies, forms, rhythms, polyphonic techniques, ideas, suggestions, atmospheres and musical procedures taken from various oral musical traditions of the world. Nevertheless, I never use melodies that are simply "copied" from those traditions; I just take from them many basic ideas, I study their style, and then I re-create completely new musical materials, within my own personal musical language, adapting them freely also to my three melodic fragments that I use as a starting point for all the composition (the "motto" that unifies the whole piece "Ritus", as already explained at the beginning of this text); I also adapt them to my atonal harmonic systems and to the classical instruments I am using, and sometimes I combine these materials (derived from traditional music styles) also with structures, forms, ideas, atmospheres and procedures that come from my classical music studies. Many passages are thus created that have an appropriate expression, since I chose as a basis for each part of this piece traditional materials that had already in their original context a sacred and ritual character, that fits easily the nature of this composition.

We can therefore notice traces of the *Icelandic Rímur* and of the *Bulgarian Koleda songs* in movement 1; echoes of the *Joik songs* of the Sami in movement 2; of the *Kalevala*, the Finnish epic poetry, and again of the *Icelandic Rímur* and *Scottish Waulking songs* in movement 3; of the *Bulgarian female songs in interval of seconds* and similar *songs of Croatia and Bosnia* in movement 4; of the *Australian didjeridoo* and *Maya and Papua sacrificial rites* in movement 5; of *sad Hungarian and Romanian laments* in movement 6; of the fascinating *Lok*, the "angelical" *Swedish pastoral calls*, in movement 8; of the complex and driving polyrhythmic canons called *Sutartine of Lithuania* in movement 9; of the *Vatoccu song style of Central Italy and Istria*, and of the *Icelandic Tvísöngur* in movement 10; and echoes of the tenderness of *Norwegian lullabies* in movement 11.

The traditional ethnic music materials that must be considered a reference for the various movements (combined in various ways and reinvented) are many. Here is a detailed list of them, and we invite strongly the performers and the listeners to listen to them as soon as possible, using the links provided here for each of these traditions, and to compare them carefully to the various movements of "Ritus", in which, once you have listened to the original traditions, you will easily recognize them. The character of these examples will be absolutely essential and will be an indispensable reference guide to understand each of the movements of "Ritus" correctly and properly and to perform them in the right way.

1. Introitus et declamatio: the Icelandic *rímur* (sung declamations of ancient poems, of sagas or of improvised rhymes following strict ancient rules), a Bulgarian *koleda* (Christmas carol on archaic melodies, with elements of pre-Christian origin). The atmosphere of the central episode of the movement is that of the declamation of an epic poem, celebrating the deeds of heroes.

LINKS:

Icelandic *rímur*:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=xisBERxHJ6g

(only starting from 0:25)

<http://www.folkmusik.is/static/files/Tjodlaga%20stor.mov>

(only from 0:30 to 0:43 and from 4:23 to 4:39)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Numa_rimur_extract.ogg

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/18/Numa_rimur_extract.ogg

(audio in OGG format)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Icelandic_folk_music

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/R%C3%ADmur>

2. Cantus auspicii et consecrationis: a song to propitiate the growth of millet from the Bunun ethnic group in Taiwan, a funeral hymn from the Faroe Islands, but, above all, the *joik* of the Sami ("Lapps") (shamanic songs), the Siberian shaman songs, some Native American songs, some Norwegian music for traditional fiddle, and a Lithuanian song probably linked to pagan myths. The atmosphere is that of an auspicious good-wishing hymn, like one sung for somebody who is about to leave for a long venture and for a long venturesome journey. More precisely: the hymns are actually two, a slow one, in background, sung by a group, solemn, and another one in the foreground, sung by a solo, powerful, more quick and fierce, superimposed on the first one.

LINKS:

The *joik* songs of the Sami (Lapps):

www.youtube.com/watch?v=eaitEJidUs0

www.youtube.com/watch?v=0JNrFIPRQdQ

www.youtube.com/watch?v=M3igg89Jpic

Songs to propitiate the growth of the millet of the Bunun from Taiwan:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=0mKEk4qSE5I (only from 1:25 to 3:24)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtwW7wzfM8E (only from 45:25 to 48:56)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X2cYelr3zCQ>

3. Narratio: the Finnish songs of the Kalevala (declamation of epic and mythical poems), the Scottish work songs made while fulling the wool in the Hebrides (*waulking songs*), an antiphonal song from Brittany, and, again, the Icelandic *rimur songs*. The atmosphere is that of the ritual narration of a long mythical story, in front of the whole community gathering, using repetitive and sacralized melodic formulas.

LINKS:

The Kalevala songs, Finland:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hz-2FoCqpr0

(original: please notice the characteristic rhythm and metre)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8UfdehDqm4

(a commercial arrangement, in which is nonetheless still well perceivable the characteristic rhythm of the typical Kalevala metre)

Waulking songs, Scotland:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFoO6A7oRH0

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ekO8W0zSZO8

www.youtube.com/watch?v=rAbtAVOL7wA

www.youtube.com/watch?v=dT_bRfCK7jw

www.youtube.com/watch?v=heYDV5chh9A

4. Invocatio: the harsh female group songs from Bulgaria (Shop region), some two-parts songs from the Croatian mountains, a polyphonic Lithuanian song. The main features of all these songs are the large number of splendid dissonances and the harsh, sharp, biting sonorities: the atmosphere is that of a ritual invocation screamed to the Heaven.

LINKS:

Female group songs, Bulgaria:

www.tagg.org/Clips/BulgarianHarvest.mp4

(video with visual didactic comments, comparing the meaning usually given to dissonances in Western culture to the meaning given to them in the traditional Bulgarian peasant culture)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=34ZHJj0IW0I

(another link to the former video)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKTAp4BiUY0

(only from 7:19 to 8:35)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-WNyNoXshM

(from Macedonia, but in a very similar style)

Songs from the mountains of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=5tYpWZqOYFo

www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrVuM9_p2Pc

www.youtube.com/watch?v=0eUPI-DXnPk

www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_v4ctEquzM

www.youtube.com/watch?v=LvMFmVY8Krs

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rggt5hffSd8

www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPxIYJU3r5I

www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCdIU2NFBKw

www.youtube.com/watch?v=U7bqJ-R6Cpo

www.youtube.com/watch?v=RupjhRYmSj0
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Me5O9BlzFL0
www.youtube.com/watch?v=QVsYv12ZkZc
www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_Su8WpY7C8

(only from 1:01 to 1.45, during the celebration of the 100th birthday of a woman)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=fjm9QXUVYLA
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zr91fnZQPem
www.youtube.com/watch?v=J0ftnPBnvg

5. Ignotum: music of the Australian Aborigines for *didgeridoo* (their traditional wind instrument), a litany from Papua Nuova Guinea, a ritual chant made in a cavern while sacrificing to the ancestors by the Mayas in Mexico, the music of a Japanese Shintoist ceremony. Besides, with regard to the atmosphere of this movement, I was also under the influence of a character from an ancient saga of the Dolomites (Eastern Italian Alps), called "The Kingdom Of The Fanes" ("Fanes", pronounced "fàh-nehs", being the name of an ancient legendary people). This disquieting and threatening character is named "Spina de Mul" ("Mule Backbone"), a powerful and evil sorcerer, horrible, mighty, extremely dangerous and remorseless.

LINKS:

Music for *didgeridoo*, the typical wind instrument of the Australian Aborigines:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=geCft2kOHWU
www.youtube.com/watch?v=qBZzopV4iyo
www.youtube.com/watch?v=2upMYciVz-c
www.youtube.com/watch?v=e3jWQvgrSNk
www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Bs5gnh6vF0
www.youtube.com/watch?v=EGgYJEI7oMY
www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7Kbt0YG-6s

A ritual chant made in a cavern while sacrificing to the ancestors by the Mayas in Mexico:

http://mfile.akamai.com/85904/asf/natgeodm.download.akamai.com/54799/media/ngm/0411/ft2_au_01.asx

(complete audio of the songs of the ritual, in ASX format, Windows Media; a shaman declaims litanies and invocations; then, after a long time, starting from 8:11, the other people present at the ceremony, among which there were many children, add their voices, imitating the calls of the totemic animals thought to be the ancestors of their group, especially frogs and jaguars)

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0411/feature2/fulltext.html> (introductory text)

http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0411/sights_n_sounds/media2.html

(multimedia presentation with short audio fragments of parts of the ritual song: requires a high-speed connection and the Flash plug-in, usually already installed on any computer; requires also to click with the mouse when requested, in order to go on)

A video having something in common with the atmosphere of *Ignotum*, even if it does not have any direct musical connection with it (it's a version, made for a movie, of the ritual dance called *Kecak* from Bali, in Indonesia):

www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGXcnWUqV-Y

An extremely well-known scene from a very famous movie which (though being obviously a parody) has something in common with the atmosphere of *Ignotum* (in which, of course, this mood must on the contrary viewed in an extremely serious way, without any parodic element at all):

www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGUMh5rOyys
www.youtube.com/watch?v=mk2E1CoGe98

6. Planctus: a Hungarian lament for female voice, group songs (laments) of the Aromanians (an ethnic group of Proto-Romanian origin present also in Greece, Macedonia, Albania and other Countries), a polyphonic Albanian song based on a drone, a medieval German song to Our Lady Mary.

LINKS:

Aromanian laments (with images representing the life and costumes of the Aromanians):

www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUXYUJgPbXk
www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwUsjP0kU5E
www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ted6EzCw5c

A Hungarian lament with a style similar to the one studied by the Author:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBoOa3PzPg8

A Romanian funeral lament:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=8AmVWXIAMcw

7. In secreto mysterium: this piece does not contain any reference to oral musical traditions. While conceiving its mood, however, I have been influenced by a particular episode from an ancient saga of the Dolomites (Eastern Italian Alps). This saga was, again, “The Kingdom Of The Fanes”. This episode is the descent to the secret hidden realm of the marmots (allied to the Fanes people), seeking shelter there, in order to heal (by the use of magic arts) from the wounds suffered by the warriors, exhausted after the battle, defeated and reduced to a handful of survivors. The atmosphere is that of a secret refuge, sweet, intimate, secluded, where the people tries to regain their strength and, through what is gently whispered, tries to recover from deep spiritual wounds. Another input, one day, was given by coming across an old abandoned tiny wooden watermill in the deep of the forest, all covered with moss (which reminded to me another legend of the Dolomites, the one called *Molin de salvans*, “The Mill Of The Savage People”). The sentence written at the beginning of the piece is as follows: “*A charming forest. Ancient trunks, like pillars, and the stream, and the rocks covered with moss seemed to be whispering secrets...*” The piece contains compositional techniques typical of the medieval Ars Nova period: mensuration canons (imitations of the same motive in which the voices proceed at different speeds), hockets (the practice of fragmenting the melodies among various different instruments, so that each instrument performs only a few notes and the total resulting melody can be perceived only from the interlocking play of all the instruments together), isorhythm (the periodical repetition of the same sequence of durations, applied on different sequences of notes, with the two sequences – durations and notes – proceeding independently from one another). Besides, it is not by chance that the piece contains various quotations (partially hidden) from the theme of the initial *Introitus* (the first part of the first movement of “Ritus”): after the moment of suffering, this movement has actually the meaning of a new beginning.

LINKS:

<http://500px.com/photo/11428185>

http://it.hallpic.com/carta-da-parati/498647-mulino_pietre_fiume_muschio_cascade/

www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdkIGus3wRk

www.flickr.com/photos/11068690@N05/1491431268/

www.flickr.com/photos/david_m_cobb_image_gallery/5700586849/

www.flickr.com/photos/21179930@N04/10363225793/

http://lemiegite.escursioniliguria.it/immagini_2008_2/2008-12-04_portofino05_valle_dei_mulini.JPG

http://photographs.mccumber.us/540/brief_mconnells-mill_pa05.jpg

https://www.flickr.com/photos/albi_tai/7184340161/lightbox/

https://www.flickr.com/photos/albi_tai/7435514820/in/photostream/

<http://www.parcopan.org/img/pages/big/dentro-la-foresta.jpg>

<http://mw2.google.com/mw-panoramio/photos/medium/101733048.jpg>

http://www.nostrofiglio.it/uploads/images_new/0001/00000000001/c4/6d//c46d260d60b565b67e26a3202e861ba1_unique_id_02_violini_cmc_image_1.jpg

8. In nemore clamores: the main input were many evocative pastoral calls, performed by the shepherdesses in Sweden and Norway, outdoors, in the middle of the forest, audible from afar, while they are calling one another, or call their animals, or communicate through signals with their calls. A less important input was a group Siberian song (most probably a hunting song) with the singers imitating various animal calls. The atmosphere is that of the awakening of presences and beings that are calling each other, coming back to life and repopulating the forest, while announcing to each other that not everything is dead, that a new existence may begin, that the time has come. It's like the indication that something important is about to happen, and they are alerting each other about this.

LINKS:

Examples of *Lok*, Scandinavian pastoral calls (used by the shepherdesses in Sweden and Norway):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1fWgqtrwqI&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRQ6eAqnvxE&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jfrAoakV9SY&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hd1lx6vBk8A&feature=related>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqJUx0iGu_U

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V2DIdfle5MY&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7sZ4kx7kQc&feature=related>

A fragment of a beautiful documentary movie made many years ago (in six parts, regrettably only in Swedish) containing a scene with some *Lok* made “in the field” in the original authentic context:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eqi_Pcs-PNo

Signal of the arrival of Spring, played on the long Romanian horns named *tulnic* in Romania (the images, too, are evocative of the right mood):

www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lZEIBQotzo

9. Rota: the main suggestion were the danced songs that are called *sutartine* in Lithuania, in form of a canon, often danced by the women who are themselves singing in canon while dancing. The atmosphere is that of a magical repetition, charmed and somehow obsessive and hypnotic, of formulas that trigger a sort of circular dance, quicker and quicker, as with people enraptured by a spell. To understand the mood of the piece correctly, please try to imagine the following picture: a natural environment, very green and idyllic, where a group of maidens are dancing in circle reciting formulas, spells and ritual songs, with deep, mysterious serenity. The title has three meanings: (1) it is a reference to the medieval meaning of the word "Rota", that was an ancient form of canon; (2) at the same time, it is also a reference to the linguistic root of the word "Ritus" (**rta*): there is indeed a situation of cross references among various words having common linguistic roots in many Indoeuropean languages, including Latin and another rather conservative language, Lithuanian: the Latin *ritus* ("rite"), *rota* ("wheel, circle"), *rectus* ("right") and the Lithuanian *rytas* ("morning, sunrise, east"). They all derive from the same root. The meaning of the common root stems from the idea that the rising of the Sun, which every day makes a circle in the sky, keeps the "sacred and right" order of the reality; (3) suggests a reference to a group of people dancing in form of a circle (*rota*, "wheel" in Latin), while singing.

The piece ends withdrawing on tiptoes, as if we had spied a gathering of fairies dancing in the woods, and they were disappearing in a whisper, or with a faint whirring of wings.

LINKS:

Sutartine songs of Lithuania:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6vm9ZUFSZw&feature=related
www.youtube.com/watch?v=9RFA7JVzpP4&feature=related
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y9oG0InoysA&feature=related
www.youtube.com/watch?v=4YbUrCB1h1s&feature=related
www.youtube.com/watch?v=_js8azo1lmw&feature=related
www.youtube.com/watch?v=38BYI-tXwaA&feature=related
www.youtube.com/watch?v=MRMU3FIOz-o&feature=related
www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHMITkJLd6g&feature=related
www.youtube.com/watch?v=uCV-ySGNcWI&feature=related
www.youtube.com/watch?v=XprNMc-ACOI&feature=related
www.youtube.com/watch?v=ziQLKMHmKbW&feature=related
www.youtube.com/watch?v=U_QI90DCWXg&feature=related
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wij_cgVGOxw&feature=related
www.youtube.com/watch?v=dew8r5-HRaw&feature=related
www.youtube.com/watch?v=ToelimfG2wE&feature=related

Another site on the same subject (go there, then click on "Folklore", then on "Songs" and then on "Sutartines"; at that point, it is very important to click on each of the audio examples in order to open some very interesting pages containing also the musical transcriptions of the examples and the explanations about the various kinds of *sutartine* songs):

<http://ausis.gf.vu.lt/eka/EWG/default.htm>

Some pictures that have a lot to do with the mood of *Rota*:

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ängsälvor_-_Nils_Blommér_1850.jpg (mainly this one)
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rackham_fairy_ring.jpg
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Dancing_Elves_-_August_Malmstrom.jpg

10. Diaphonia: the main influence was given by the songs of the style called *a vatoccu* from the regions Marche and Umbria, in central Italy, and similar forms (songs for two voices of the "Adriatic discant" type, in hendecasyllables) from various Italian-speaking villages in Istria. The rhythm of the hendecasyllables is clearly reproduced in the piece. Besides, there are also some references to the sound of the Icelandic *tvísöngvar* (songs for two male voices in parallel fifths). The atmosphere is powerful, solemn, fierce, stern and majestic.

LINKS:

Songs *a vatoccu*:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=rMCMqqCn4LI
www.youtube.com/watch?v=G62Ax4umPk4
<http://www.amazon.it/Canto-vatoccu-Perugia-Umbria/dp/B008LDYQWG>
<https://soundcloud.com/trainana-archivio-sonoro/vatoccu-matelica>
<https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/vatoccu-canti-popolari-dellumbria/id638829646> (track 1)

An example of Icelandic *tvísöngur*:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=LBxLPiMk7rl (only from the beginning up to 1:03")

11. Ad cunas: influenced mainly by Swedish, Norwegian and Icelandic lullabies, but also by some slow and lulling traditional pieces for solo string instruments (traditional fiddles), from Norway and Iceland. The atmosphere is precisely that of a lullaby, here structured in a simple rondo. The mood, of course, is very tender, but with some hints of sadness and even of tragic (in the traditional lullabies, slumber is often compared to death and texts containing gloomy moments are not rare).

LINKS:

Norwegian lullabies:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=3UFrnI1Ssu8

www.youtube.com/watch?v=7t08j0el6ys

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zx3xyBmiung

12. Nubes pluerunt lustum: the final movement, true expressive center and core of the meaning of "Ritus", is based, as already explained, on the medieval Christmas carol "Verbum Caro Factum Est", which is combined with all the materials of the former movements, transforming them.

LINKS

www.youtube.com/watch?v=CUDdUFes8Os

http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Hymns_and_Carols/Images/Woodward-Piae_Cantiones/pc-002.jpg

http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Hymns_and_Carols/Images/Piae_Cantiones/Facsimile-1400/03_Piae.jpg

Various different medieval versions of this carol, used in the piece, have been transcribed directly at the beginning of the score of the last movement of "Ritus". Please see that score in order to know the main variants of this song.

Basilica of the Annunciation:

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7e/Nazareth_09.08.2011_15-01-28.JPG

Church of the Nativity:

http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Nativity_Church15.jpg

Adoration of the Magi, Giotto:

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/82/Giotto_di_Bondone_-_No._18_Scenes_from_the_Life_of_Christ_-_2._Adoration_of_the_Magi_-_WGA09195.jpg

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POSSIBILITY OF REDUCED PERFORMANCES FEATURING ONLY SOME MOVEMENTS

The whole piece "Ritus", in 12 movements, has a duration of more than one hour (actually, almost one hour and a half) and, therefore, forms in itself a complete concert program. For practical reasons, however, it is not always possible to organize a concert featuring only all the movements of "Ritus". The performances including only some of the movements are therefore certainly possible and acceptable, if they are organized according to two modalities. In the first modality, the piece keeps the title "Ritus" and any effort is made in order to preserve the global sense of its development; in the second modality, the movements performed are on the contrary considered as an arbitrary selection, not equivalent in any way to the complete piece, the global sense of which is not preserved.

First modality: keeping the global sense of the piece (performing five movements, at least)

In this first modality, the title "Ritus" is kept unchanged, as when the whole piece is performed.

To understand how this modality works, let's recall the titles of the various movements of "Ritus":

- 1 – Introitus et declamatio
- 2 – Cantus auspicii et consecrationis
- 3 – Narratio
- 4 – Invocatio
- 5 – Igotum
- 6 – Planctus
- 7 – In secreto mysterium
- 8 – In nemore clamores
- 9 – Rota
- 10 – Diaphonia
- 11 – Ad cunas
- 12 – Nubes pluerunt lustum

To keep its coherence, a performance of the piece can be considered as divided in groups of movements, in this way:

- Group A, introductory movements
- Gruppo B, central part of the piece
- Gruppo C, second part of the piece
- Gruppo D, ending movements

As already stated above, a performance including only some movements is possible (keeping the title "Ritus" in the performance, and considering this reduced version as equivalent to the whole piece), with the following criteria, provided none of the movements is repeated:

- Group A: 1, 2, 3 or 1, 2 or 1, 3 or 2, 3 or 1 or 2 or 3.
- Group B: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 or 10, 5, 6, 7, 8 or 8, 5, 6.
- Group C: 9, 10 or 9, 4 or 10 or 4 or nothing.
- Group D: 11, 12 or 11 or 12.

The total will amount from five to twelve movements. At least one movement belonging to each of the groups A, B and D must be present. All the combinations forming a total number of eleven movements must be avoided (they would convey a sense of incompleteness; besides, it is not professionally acceptable to study all the movements but one...).

Second modality: selected movements, not connected to each other

It is also possible to perform also less than five movements (and even only one movement), but, in this case, the performance shall not be entitled "Ritus"; in this case, the correct title will be «[Title of the movement / of the movements], from "Ritus"» and will not be considered equivalent to the whole piece, but rather as an arbitrary selection from it (for example: «Planctus - Diaphonia - Ad Cunas, from "Ritus"»).