

GRANT LUHMANN

(B. 1994)

ARKTISLIED

-PERFORMANCE NOTES-

INSTRUMENTATION

2 FLUTES (2ND DOUBLES

PICCOLO)

2 OBOES

2 CLARINETS IN B \flat

2 BASSOONS

4 HORNS IN F

3 TRUMPETS IN C

3 TROMBONES (3RD=BASS)

HARP

TIMPANI

PERCUSSION, 2 PLAYERS:

GLOCKENSPIEL, TUBULAR

BELLS, CRASH CYMBALS,

SUSPENDED CYMBAL, 2 BONGOS,

BASS DRUM, SLAPSTICK

SOLO TUBA

STRINGS

SCORE IS TRANSPOSED

DURATION: CA. 16 MINUTES

PROGRAM

Arktislied (German for "arctic song") puts the tuba soloist in the role of an abstract, benign presence, similar to how one might envision a mythological nature spirit. This being undertakes a journey across a frozen land (evoked by the orchestra), resulting in a work that is vaguely programmatic, if only in a loose, pseudo-Impressionistic sense of the word.

I. INVOCATION

We begin in glasslike silence – a tundra, amber-suspended by a wintry breath – bound by bonecracking cold.

From the spectral wisps of snow rises the voice of an ancient, arcane presence – embodied by the solo tuba – spinning an incantation of ages past. Majestic yet lumbering in its flight, it soothes the cracked earth over which it passes, soaring slowly towards far-away mountains with flocks of white birds in tail. Briefly, it touches over the slumbering peaks, the stony faces of giants waking and echoing its song, and alights upon an intimate, ice-wreathed glen.

Fat flakes patter on the bough on which perches a single crimson cardinal, the bird sweetly intoning its own silvery song in counterpoint to the evergreen's humming. The spirit-presence moves forward again, the trees dissolving into an immense field of ice – a millennia-old glacier. Hovering above the creaking landscape, the tuba now sings a hushed, mournful lullaby.

Life gradually return to the terrain, and the solo voice now catches the rising wind like an albatross, the horizon curving out ever further as it soars to dizzying heights

and at the peak of its ascent – the sun cascades upon an endless expanse of ice and rock, the light reflecting back with dazzling brilliance. Far away, a white-dotted ocean roars in reverence of the soaring guardian-spirit. Its journey complete, the old presence finally touches down upon the tundra again – returning to the icebound earth from which it came.

II. AURORA

Nightfall – a glassy black sky gashed by flashes of writhing emerald – all under watch of a god's silver eye.

The tuba awakens again, then darts, sparrow-like, to the highest reaches of the atmosphere – dancing with the flashes and flames in the sky.

Tumbling! spinning!

pirouetting with gossamer strands of the aurora, miles above the sleeping visage of an ochre earth.

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gluhmann@grantluhmann.com

www.grantluhmann.com