BEETLES, DRAGONS, & DREAMERS
FOR ORCHESTRA

BY
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Aaron Travers
Beetles, Dragons, & Dreamers

For Orchestra

(2013)

Melody Eötvös
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I. Draconian Measures

Draco (600BCE) was the first legislator of Ancient Rome and was known for instituting particularly harsh, cruel and unforgiving laws. Where previously there had only been a system of oral law and blood feuds, Draco replaced these with a written code that could only be enforced by a court. I wanted to capture both the notion of lawful, stringent sternness as well as the desperation to escape it (as the victims of these laws would have sought) in this movement. As such, the repetition of small motivic units plays a central role, as well as the fleeting presence of some more florid, scale-like gestures.

II. Lilith, Begone

The word ‘lullaby’ originated from the Jewish ‘Lilith-Abi’, which translates as ‘Lilith, begone.’ In particular versions of Jewish folklore, Lilith was known as Adam’s first wife, and she was molded by God out of the same dust as Adam (whereas Eve is said to have been made from one of Adam’s ribs). Because of this, she saw herself as Adam’s equal and did not respond well to his desire to rule over her. Eventually she left Adam and the Garden of Eden. However, she was pursued by three angels who demanded she return to the Garden. She refused and vowed to forever steal the souls of little children as vengeance for Adam’s suppressive treatment of her. The angels would not agree to this, and so Lilith made the condition that if the mother of a child hung an amulet above the baby as it slept in its cradle, Lilith would pass over that child.

Primarily conceived of as a lullaby, this movement unfolds delicately, with the main theme eventually culminating in a forceful climax.

III. The Inanimate Spider

The title of this movement was inspired by the Native American dreamcatcher, an object that originated in the Ojibwe and Chippewa cultures. The native word used for this object is actually the inanimate form of the word ‘spider’, inanimate here being an additional inflectional category when expressing person or gender combinations in language (i.e. proximate/obviate, singular/plural, animate/inanimate).

The function of the dreamcatcher bears a remarkable semblance to the Lilith amulet. One of its uses is to protect the sleeper, over which it hangs, from nightmares and demons. Furthermore, it also aids in transferring good dreams, which are caught in the many web-like threads of the object and moved down through the beads and feathers that hang from the central hoop. The nightmares are said to pass through the gaps and holes in the web, as though fading away through a window.

As a way of making a connection between the dreamcatcher and the amulets of Lilith, I designed this movement as an extended variation of the main theme from ‘Lilith’.

IV. The Trojan Horse

This final movement is based on the concept of the Trojan Horse and how it has evolved over time. In Ancient Greece, it was a deceptive device constructed by the Greeks to invade Troy. The Greeks pretended to abandon the Great War they had been waging on Troy and left a large wooden horse as a gift. However, inside the horse was an elite force of Greek soldiers who, once the horse had been dragged into the city of Troy like a trophy, emerged and slaughtered the Trojans in the night.

Today, a Trojan Horse is the term used for a computer virus that is secretly embedded in another file which you might, unknowingly, download on to your computer or electronic device. Once you have the file on your computer, the virus can attack from within, potentially destroying everything.

This final movement is designed to be a kind of semi-transparent Trojan Horse. The music as a whole carries within it an almost hidden impression of a melodic, linear idea. This idea is strong and independent on its own, but the obscurity of the context it is in blurs the edges dramatically. The goal, therefore, is to get from the beginning of the movement to the end without the idea being heard as an entire cohesive entity; for it to be ‘smuggled’ as such to the end.
Instrumentation (score in C)

2 Flutes (2nd doubling on Piccolo)
Oboe
English Horn
2 B-flat Clarinets (2nd doubling on B-flat Bass Clarinet)
2 Bassoons (2nd doubling on Contrabassoon)
4 F Horns
2 C Trumpets
2 Trombones
Tuba

3 Percussion (see below)
Harp
Piano

Strings (min. 8.8.6.4.2)

Percussion:
Percussion I – Large Tam-tam (may be shared with III), Small Suspended Cymbal, Bass Drum, Vibraphone (may be shared with II).
Percussion II – Triangle (may be shared with III), Vibraphone (may be shared with I), Marimba (5 octave), Tubular Bells, Tambourine, Glockenspiel (may be shared with III), Medium Suspended Cymbal.
Percussion III – Glockenspiel (may be shared with II), Crotales (one-octave), Triangle (may be shared with II), Large Tam-tam (may be shared with I), Large Suspended Cymbal, Tom-toms (4), Xylophone.

Harp:
Harmonics – sound an octave higher than written.

Piano:
Use palm to strike the strings inside the piano in the approximate range indicated.

Transpositions at the Octave:  Piccolo, Contrabassoon, Xylophone, Contrabass.

Transpositions at the Double Octave:  Glockenspiel, Crotales

Duration: approx. 12mins
Score in C

Beetles, Dragons, & Dreamers

for Orchestra

L. Draconian Measures

Melody Eötvös b.1984
Meno mosso

\( \text{\textbf{A}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{B}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{C}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{D}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{E}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{F}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{G}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{H}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{I}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{J}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{K}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{L}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{M}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{N}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{O}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{P}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{Q}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{R}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{S}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{T}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{U}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{V}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{W}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{X}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{Y}} \)

\( \text{\textbf{Z}} \)
II. Lilith, begone

\( \frac{\text{f} = 96}{\text{A}} \)

Flute

Oboe

English Horn

Bb Clarinet

Bb Bass Clarinet

Bassoon

Horn in F

Trumpet

Trombone

Tuba

Timpani

Percussion 1

Percussion 2

Percussion 3

Harp

Piano

Violin I

Violin II

(\text{div})

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

always l.v.

always l.v.

always l.v.

inside piano - strike strings with palm

pizz

fp

arco

pizz

fp

pizz

fp
III. The Inanimate Spider

\[ \text{\( d = 50 \)} \]

Flute
- English Horn
- Oboe

Bassoon
- Clarinets
- Violin I
- Flutes
- Viola
- Oboe
- Violin II
- Violin
- Viola
- Viola da Gamba
- Violinda Gamba

Percussion:
- Triangle
- Xylophone
- Vibraphone
- Tam-tam
- Cymbals
- Med. Mallets
- Straight Mute

Piano

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