Orbis Mentis

DIANE HILEY

Duration approx. 15 min.

For 16 solo players:

Flute (doubling Piccolo)
Oboe
Clarinet in Bb
Bassoon
Horn in F
Trumpet in Bb
Trombone
Percussionist I (Vibraphone, Tam-Tam, Bass Drum)
Percussionist II (Xylophone, Cymbal, Bass Drum)
Piano
Harp
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass

Orbis Mentis was inspired by a memoir of manic depression, An Unquiet Mind by Kay Redfield Jamison. The title means ‘mental world’ and it aims to reflect the changing moods associated with the illness. The musical material is underpinned by a sequence of numbers: 21312132. This pattern governs the rhythmic patterns, modes and temporal co-ordination of different gestures. The structure is also based on this sequence; the ‘ones’ correspond to manic episodes, the ‘threes’ to depressions, and the outer ‘twos’ represent normal moods whilst the central ‘two’ reflects a mixed state. The duration of the sections is also proportional to the number; thus depressive sections are three times longer than manias and so on. Several different modes were derived from the sequence using sections of rotations of the pattern which added up to 12 (each number here defining the number of semitones in an interval between adjacent pitches). Different modes are associated with different sections (and hence, different moods). The characters of the different sections are further distinguished by distinct tempi, textures and motives, all of which are combined in the central ‘mixed state’ in a quasi-developmental fashion.

Note:
Score in C; octave transpositions apply for Piccolo and Double Bass.
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