Erkki Veltheim

tract

for 15 instruments
Tract was commissioned by the 2010 Adelaide Festival and composed for the London Sinfonietta for a concert on February 28, 2010 at the Adelaide Town Hall, conducted by Brad Lubman. It is to be performed alongside the Manikay "Djupalwarra" ("Wild Blackfella") by the Young Wagilak Group from Ngukurr, Arnhem Land, under the leadership of Benjamin Wilfred, with the optional addition of an improviser. For reasons of balance, it is recommended that all instruments and vocalists be amplified.

Instrumentation

2 Piccolos
2 Bass Clarinets in Bb
Contrabassoon
2 Percussion
Piano
2 Violins
2 Violas
2 Cellos
Double Bass

Percussion 1 instruments: bass drum, high tom-tom, 3 woodblocks (low, medium, high), corrugated iron sheet (90cmx120cm, suspended), ratchet
Percussion 2 instruments: bass drum, 3 tom-toms (low, medium, medium-high), corrugated iron sheet (90comx150com, suspended), ratchet
The Percussion 1 bass drum and ratchet should be of perceptibly higher pitch than the Percussion 2 equivalents.

The score is at sounding pitch except for Piccolos (sounding an octave higher), Contrabassoon and Double Bass (sounding an octave lower).

Suggested seating arrangement

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.
Performance directions

General: All parts are marked *sempre forte*. The general tone quality should be quite harsh and clear. All articulations should be well marked and notes held without phrasing off. No vibrato should be used. Glissandi start immediately on attack and should last for the duration indicated by the note value. When a note is tied, the glissando should start from the beginning of the ultimate tied note value. Accidentals hold for immediately repeated notes in the same register.

Woodwind:

All notes not under a slur should be tongued.

- 1/4-tone sharp
- 3/4-tone sharp

Bass Clarinets:

- fluttertongue
- slap tongue
- overtone multiphonics effected by the embouchure. The lower stave gives the fingered fundamental, the upper stave the highest desired partial.
- any noisy multiphonic based on the given pitch

Contrabassoon:

- embouchure glissando as far as possible towards the next notated pitch
- any noisy multiphonic based on the given pitch

Percussion:

- bass drum beaters (soft, medium, hard)
- mallets (soft, medium, hard). The percussionists are asked to find three suitable mallets of varying hardness for the tom-toms, woodblocks and corrugated iron sheets. Each of these instruments may require a different set of mallets. The softest of the mallets should still give some clarity of attack.
- snare drum sticks
- arco (for corrugated iron sheets) bow the side of the corrugated iron sheet with a bass or cello bow

Piano: bars 1-24 are identical to bars 127-150.

Strings:

- +1/3-tone
- -1/3-tone

- bowing with much pressure. When combined with sul tasto, find a node near the edge of the fingerboard at which point the pressed sound becomes audibly amplified.

MSP  molto sul ponticello
SP  sul ponticello
ST  sul tasto
LH  bow as close to left hand as possible
N  normal bowing position

Bartok pizzicato.

Note to the conductor: In performance, Tract should begin at the end of the first song or group of songs by the Young Wagilak Group. The Young Wagilak Group will also keep singing after the end of the notated score for some time. As the Manikay will be somewhat different each time, no further specific co-ordination between the two groups is necessary. Whilst the general dynamic is loud, the conductor is free to indicate additional dynamic changes to the ensemble or parts of the ensemble during the performance, if this is judged as appropriate in the context.