

Carnynx

Instrumentation

- 2 Flutes (2nd doubling Piccolo), 2 Oboes, 2 Clarinets in Bb (2nd doubling Bass Clarinet), 2 Bassoons
- 3 Horns in F, 2 Trumpets in Bb (1st doubling Piccolo Trumpet in A), 2 Trombones, 1 Bass Trombone (doubling Baritone), 1 Tuba
- Perc. 1: Suspended Cymbal, Snare Drum, Marimba, Claves, Tam-tam; Perc. 2: Vibraphone, Gran Cassa, Wood Blocks, Whip
- Strings

Carnynx, for orchestra.

Duration: 12 minutes.

Though not a programmatic piece, most of the content of this work has been influenced by some images that kept involuntarily coming to my mind during the whole compositional process. The word "carnynx" has no meaning in any language and I invented it in order to express, phonetically, the general feeling that the piece suggests to me. In the first movement, 'Sordid Dance', the sinuous melodic lines draw with elegance the bodily movements of a couple enveloped in a dance of seduction and sensuality. While the harmonic structure is based on chords built upon thirds, the horizontal plane is dominated by the interval of fifth. This interval should be nevertheless considered just a coloring of the melodic line. This is reinforced by the fact that most of the melodies are being doubled a fifth above. This first movement has the character of a *moto perpetuo* and is intended to be an organic unit from beginning to the end. The whole piece is born from the very first measures.

The second movement, 'In the Darkness', has a gestural quality to it. Though the harmonic and melodic principles are similar to those of the first movement, they are here explored in diverse ways. The energy grows from an almost imperceptible *pianissimo* at the beginning as the strings are introduced subtly with the use of mutes and the wind players are asked to breathe. This apparent calm turns menacing as the lower register starts to convulse in agitated crescendos, which lead to a ferocious brass section solo based upon the main motive (of the first movement). The whole orchestra is then introduced. The narrative character of this movement suggests the underlying existence of a powerful yet inexpressible story. Certainly, it carries a meaning that cannot be conveyed in words.

Jimmy López © 2002