

INCUBUS

In this series of three pieces I have ventured into some technical and emotional territories of which I had no previous experience. It is conceived for performers rather than instruments. Players are asked to shout, speak and stomp their feet against the ground on several occasions. It has not been thought of as a theatre piece, but all players are certainly expected to make use of their histrionic capabilities.

Paul Williams's poem, which is hereby reproduced with his permission, depicts the sinister world of the Incubus, which in Western Medieval legends, is a demon believed to lie on sleeping women in order to have sexual intercourse with them. This dark subject matter forced me to explore a vast array of extended techniques; normally absent from my musical vocabulary.

While working on the piece, I realized it was pointless to set the poem in a song cycle fashion. The poem constitutes an independent body in its own right, while the music conveys the atmosphere and overall form of the text. My approach has been to extract fragments or large portions of the text and use them in key instances, underlining the overall sense of agitated confusion, which pervades throughout the text. This composition is divided into six movements, all played without interruption: Cast, Shadow, Sleep, Waltz, Thrusting and Gasping.

"Incubus", scored for alto saxophone, accordion and double bass, was commissioned by the 2008 Tampere Biennale (Finland) and is dedicated to the members of POING.

"Incubus II", scored for alto saxophone, baritone saxophone, piano and percussion, was first performed at the 2008 Darmstadt International Course for Contemporary Music (Germany) and it was awarded the Kranichsteiner Musikpreis, the highest possible distinction at that festival.

"Incubus III", scored for clarinet, percussion and live electronics, is my first, and so far only, composition employing electronic media. It was commissioned by the Südwestrundfunk (Southwest Broadcasting Company) on the occasion of the 2009 Donaueschingen Festival (Germany). My thanks are due to: Armin Köhler for entrusting me this commission; Detlef Heusinger and Michael Acker for their continuous support; Carl Rosman and Dirk Rothbrust for their outstanding musicianship and Gregorio Karman for his patience and dedication during the creation of this piece.

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Incubus

Cast from heaven, amongst the
fallen am I
Wings clipped, unable to fly.
A demon cursed
in lust and arrogance well versed

So `neath gibbous moon as substance
that can be called shadow.
I hunt the scent of innocence.
A loathsome lothario dancing on the wind
delivering desire to those yet to be sinned.

Calling on you in your sleep
expect not foreplay, nor kindness,
nor kissing or anything deep.
Just a hint of pleasure
and pain to make you weep.

From a dead skin mask
I'll watch with hemlock eyes,
enduring the rapture of alluring thighs
...for a little while at least..
until libidinous in the extreme
ready to join in toxic waltz
cometh the beast.

I'll enter and take dominion over you
mouldering, mephitic breath hardens
thrusting deep in your mind
nightmares pumping as you
become one with my kind.

Palpitating breast heaves as
Hells inferno grips your soul
and your body loses control
throbbing with licentious greed
accepting the demon seed.

Withdrawn gasping for breath
I'll leave you disturbed
Until you wake, as if from death
haunting memories will soon to fade
of the night of love with a shade.
But do ye well, not to dismiss it
as nothing more than a bad dream
everything is not as it may seem

For after nine months your womb
junket filled,
will give...
and my hideous progeny
be spilled
your nightmare... fulfilled.

Poem by Paul Williams © 2005