

The Vision of Cataclysm

“Precession of the Equinox”

Five Movements for
For Solo Flute and Piano

~ Jordan Alexander Key ~

2017

~ The Vision of Cataclysm ~

“Precession of the Equinox”

~ Movements ~

Precession of the Equinox

The Vision of Cataclysm: “The Song of the Sybil”

De Regressu ad Deorum

Ekpyrosis: “The Great Conflagration”

Apocatastasis: “The Primordial Return”

Instrumentation:

Flute tripling on Alto flute and Piccolo

Piano with magnetic tape

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Program Notes:

Astrology, as it is known today, was developed between the fourth and first centuries BCE in the Mediterranean Basin. At this time, the beginning of the year was marked by the Spring Equinox (approximately the 20th of March) when the Sun rose in the constellation Aries. Around 125 BCE, however, following many centuries of previous observations, the Greek astrologer, Hipparchus, noticed that the Sun was not rising in exactly the same position in the sky every few years, and over long periods of time, its position on the morning of the Spring Equinox changed significantly. He discovered that the Sun gradually moved in relation to the Zodiac. This motion would later be called the precession of the equinox.

This precession is caused in part by the tilt of the Earth, spinning on an axis slanted at about 23 degrees in relation to its orbit around the Sun. Many know that this slant accounts for the change of seasons throughout Earth's revolution. However, because Earth is not a perfect sphere, it also wobbles slightly as it spins on its axis. It is also this wobble that causes the Zodiac to move slightly backwards in the sky each year. That movement is hardly noticeable, however, being only one degree every 71 years. This movement is slight from year to year, but consequently, over many centuries, precession can make a significant difference. It takes approximately 2,150 years for the Spring Equinox to move from one zodiac sign to another and approximately 25,800 years for the wobble to make that point return to its previously held position in the Zodiac. This complete cycle, taking almost 26 thousand years, is called the Great Year.

The Vision of Cataclysm is about the Ancient Grecian Stoic belief in the periodic destruction of the cosmos by a great conflagration every "Great Year." The cosmos is then recreated, only to be destroyed again at the end of another new cycle. The Ancient Stoics believed that this Great Year (the complete cycle of the equinox through all zodiac signs) would end with the complete destruction of the cosmos in a conflagration or great cataclysmic fire, to then be recreated in a primordial state. The movements of this piece follow the progression of this Cosmic Consummation, called Ekpyrosis by the Greeks, from the final "Precession of the Equinox", to the "Vision of Cataclysm" portrayed in the ancient Greek poem *The Song of the Sybil*, then "De Regressu ad Deorum" (The Return of the Gods) to destroy the universe, followed by the destruction of the universe in the Ekpyrosis or "The Great Conflagration," and then ending with the "Primordial Return" to the beginning or the "Apocatastasis."

THE VISION OF CATAclySM

I. Precession of the Equinox

Jordan Alexander Key

Incantatory (♩ = c. 40)
as little vibrato as possible

Flute
Piano

Fl.
Pno.

mp *p* *mf* *p* *f* *pp* *ppp* *mp*

8vb *ppp* *8vb*

mp *mp* *Pno.* *8vb*

Led. * Led. *

bend flater

*on tape

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*A piece of magnetic tape should be gently tied to the low B-flat string of the piano. Hold tape firmly at the loose end with the right hand. With the left hand, grasp firmly between the middle joint of the index finger and the thumb. Stroke tape using fingers of the left hand. Maintain smooth up and down stroking with finger on lower half of tape near the piano string.

7

Fl.

mp *mf* *p*

Pno.

p *mp* *p*

on tape

8^{vb} *Ped.* *

10

Fl.

mp *p* *mf* *p*

Pno.

pp *mp* *p*

on tape

8^{vb} *Ped.* *

II. Vision of Cataclysm "The Song of the Sybil"

Fevered (♩ = c. 200) (2+2+2+2)

Fl. 13 *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *f* *mf* *mp*

Pno. *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *p*

8^{vb}.....|

Fl. 18 *f* *f* *ff* *p* *f* *mp* *sfz* *mf* *p*

Pno. *f* *f* *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *p*

8^{vb} *mp*.....|

23

Fl. *f* *mp* *f* *ffp* (2+2+1)

Pno. *f* *mp* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

29

Fl. *fff* *p* *mf*

Pno. *f* *fff* *p* *mf* *fff*

35 (2+2+2)

Fl. *mf* *f* *p*

Pno. *mf* *f* *p* *pp*

8va

To Picc. (2+2+3) Piccolo

39 *f* *ff*

Pno. *f* *mf* *ff*

8va

9

8vb

(2+2+2+2)

43 Picc. *ff* To A. Fl.

(3+2+2)

Pno. *ff* *ff*

III. De Regressu ad Deorum

Moderato (♩ = c. 150)
(3+2+2)
Alto Flute

46 A. Fl. *p* *mf* *pp* *ppp* *f* *p* *mf* *mp* *pp*

Pno. *pp* *mf* *p* *mp* *p* *pp*

ppp *8vb*

50

A. Fl.

ppp *mp* *f* *f* *p*

Pno.

ppp *p* *mf* *pp*

pp *mf* *pp* *mp* *

8va *8va*

Red. *Red.* *

54

A. Fl.

p *pp* *mf* *mp*

Pno.

p *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *mp*

8vb

A. Fl. 58 *f* *mf* *mp* *f* *p* *mf* *p* *f* *mp* *mf* *p* *mp*

Pno. *mf* *mp* *pp* *p* *p* *pp*

8^{va} *p* *mp* *f* *mf* *p* *pp*

8^{vb} *p* *f* *mf* *p* *pp*

A. Fl. 63 *p* *f* *f* *mf* *mp* *f* *mf* *mp* *molto rall.*

Flute *f* *mf* *mp* *f* *mf* *mp* *molto rall.*

Pno. *p* *pp* *p* *mp* *f* *mp* *p* *mf* *pp* *p*

Red. *p* *mf* *ff* *Red.* *p*

*** ***

IV. Ekpyrosis
"The Great Conflagration"

69 **Fevered** (♩ = c. 200)

Fl. *mf* *f* *mf*

Pno. *mf* *mf* *f* *mp* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

Detailed description: This system covers measures 69 to 73. The flute part begins with a dynamic of *mf* and features a series of eighth-note patterns with accents. It reaches a dynamic of *f* in measure 71 and returns to *mf* in measure 72. The piano part is highly textured, with the right hand playing chords and moving lines, and the left hand providing harmonic support. Dynamics range from *mf* to *f*. There are several five-finger chords and a fermata in measure 73. Fingering diagrams are provided for the piano part at the bottom of the system.

74

Fl. *mf* *f*

Pno. *f* *sfz* *f* *mp* *mf*

Detailed description: This system covers measures 74 to 78. The flute part starts with a dynamic of *mf* and features a prominent nine-measure rest in measure 75. It then plays a melodic line with a dynamic of *f*. The piano part continues with a dynamic of *f*, followed by a fortissimo (*sfz*) passage in measure 75, and returns to *f*. In measure 77, the piano part includes an *8va* marking for the right hand. Dynamics in the piano part range from *mp* to *mf*. Fingering diagrams are provided for the piano part at the bottom of the system.

77

Fl.

Pno.

f *ff* *f*

9

9

79

Fl.

Pno.

ff *mf* *ff* *mf* *f*

8va (=)

9 (=)

82

F1.

f

ff

Pno.

ff

ff

84

F1.

f

f

poco accel.

Pno.

f

f

poco accel.

8^{vb}

8^{vb}

8^{vb}

87

Fl.

f mp mf ff

Pno.

ff

90

Fl.

mf f ff f ff

Pno.

ff

Frantic ♩ = 120

8va

Fl. 93 *ff* *p* To A. Fl.

Pno. *p* *pp* *f* *p*

V. Apocatastasis

"The Primordial Return"

Incantatory (♩ = c. = 40)

A. Fl. 97 *p* *p* *mp* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Pno. *p* *p* *mp* *mp* *mp* *p* *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp*

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

101

A. Fl.

Pno.

p *mp* *mp* *p*

p *mp* *pp*

103

A. Fl.

Pno.

To Picc.

Piccolo

pp *p* *pp* *ppp*

p *p* *ppp*

pp *ppp* *ppp*

pp *mp* *8^{vb}* *pppp* *Ped.*

ppp *on tape*

*

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