Drømde Mik en Drøm i Nat ... 

by

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Composed entirely of runes, the 14th century manuscript Codex Runicus is comprised of 101 sheets and contains historical documents such as “Kings until Erik Menved” and “Boundaries between Denmark and Sweden.” The end of the codex contains the oldest surviving Nordic music fragment with lyrical text “Drømde mik en drøm i nat um silki ok ærlik pæl” which translates as [I] dreamt me a dream last night of silk and lovely cloth.¹ This melody, alongside three Norwegian folk slåttar written for fiddle, Fjellbekken (The Mountain Stream), Fjøllrosa (The Mountain Rose), and Syrgjefuen (The Bird of Sorrow), is used to generate the pitch material for this composition for string orchestra, english horn and french horn.

The piece is contrapuntal in nature. A large portion of the work is formed from essentially five groups or layers of melody that comfortably co-exist towards, as well as away from, each other, their independent natures being most evident in the first half of the piece. Additionally, there are fluctuations within each group itself, for examples, forms of imitation, slippage, change in register, variation in playing technique, and micro-displays of rhythmic independence set against more heterophonic textures (Considerable use of rhythmic embellishment is derived from the ornamental style found in harding fiddle slåttar). Such micro-fluctuations further distinguish the texture-intentional orchestration of each group. Although the use of layered melody forms the framework for the entire composition, there is continual exploration of its possibilities through various parameters such as density vs. transparency, and continuation vs. fragmentation.

¹ Songs from Denmark, edited by Peter Balslev-Clausen, The Danish Cultural Institute, Copenhagen, 1988.
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*for Martin Arnold*

English Horn  
French Horn  
3 Violin I  
3 Violin II  
4 Viola  
3 Cello  
1 Contrabass (extends to low C)

c. 14 minutes

score in C

Notes:

The title for this composition refers to the oldest surviving Nordic music fragment with lyrical text: *Drømde mik en drøm i nat um silki ok ærlik pæl* which translates as… *[I] dreamt me a dream last night of silk and lovely cloth.*

This piece also references three Norwegian harding fiddle songs: *Fjellbekken (The Mountain Stream), Fjøllrosa (The Mountain Rose), and Syrgjefuen (The Bird of Sorrow).*

Grace notes are before the beat.

Performers are to be seated in five groups, each at a distance of 1- 1.5 metres from each other (as possible), in the following configuration:

```
English Horn  
French Horn  
3 Violin II  
3 Cello/1 Bass  
3 Violin I  
4 Viola
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drømde mik en drøm i nat...

for Martin Arnold

\( \frac{3}{4} \) 48, comfortably, with warmth and slippage, like a folk song

\( j = 48 \), comfortably, with warmth and slippage, like a folk song
Più mosso; $j = 72$
Più mosso; \( \text{\( \frac{1}{2} \) \( \frac{1}{2} \) \( \frac{1}{2} \) \( \frac{1}{2} \)} \) = 80
Tempo primo; \( \frac{j}{= 48} \)

*Syrgjefuen (The Bird of Sorrow)*