Joshua Denenberg

NIGHTSCAPE - DR3AMSC@P3 -
N_I_G_H_T_M_A_R_E_S_C_A_P_E

Tone Poem for Wind Band

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of DMA in Composition, Graduate Department of Music, in the University of Toronto

Duration: approx. 12'30"
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Abstract:

Nightscape - Dreamscape - Nightmarescape

Tone Poem for Wind Band

My thesis, pronounced “Nightscape - Dreamscape - Nightmarescape,” represents the convergence of multiple ideas of creativity, inspiration, and mechanism. This piece is written for an intermediate level band and the relatively simplistic lines and figures reflect this. Secondly, it was an opportunity to expand from certain habits of mine, such as focusing primarily on the higher woodwinds. This piece prominently features the percussion and low-mid brass sections. The work also serves as an omnibus of techniques that I have experimented with during my tenure at the University of Toronto. There is a great emphasis on colour, repetition, and reductive harmonies that rely on long sustained pedal points that is then combined with a more traditional applications of melody and rhythm.

The inspiration, which partly explains the title, is loosely based on ideas I investigated with an extended research project, emphasising the encroachment and increased relevance of digimodern ideas and the style of music called “vaporwave.” Central elements of melody and harmony are reconstructions and deconstructions of music from video games that were relevant to me as a child, specifically the games Alundra and Legend of Zelda, thus emphasising a mid 90’s conception of digitalism (it is worth noting that my approach is not analogous to vaporwave, only partially inspired by in theme). The title specifically refers to the game Alundra, in which the title character enters dreamscapes and nightmares in an effort to save the citizens of a doomed kingdom and future. The main trumpet melody references a major theme from that soundtrack. As well, the written title is a further expression of digital art and aesthetics as much of it is purposefully unpronounceable.

The projected duration of the piece is approximated twelve minutes and thirty seconds long. The instrumentation is for large wind ensemble (assuming doubling on parts): pic, fl 1-2, ob 1-2, bsn, clar 1-3, b.clar, a. sax 1-2, t. sax, b. sax, tpt in Bb 1-4, hrn 1-4, tbn 1-3, euph, tba, hp, pn, e. bass, timp, perc 1-4.
Program Note: Inspired by unsettling dreams, this piece is an exploration of several – specifically three – soundscapes and their interactions, or how they can adapt and contort to each others’ tempo, rhythms, and orchestration. In many ways they are inseparable even if their connotations diverge. All three of the soundscapes serve as important reflections of each other and are thus interconnected.

On a personal level, the piece involves the re-usage of music that is nostalgic to me. In this case, much of the music written serves as a deconstruction and reconstruction of music from an obscure video game, “Alundra.” The game’s story also serves as a parallel inspiration as it emphasizes exploring dreamscapes and the subconscious, with often lethal consequences. While not explicitly programmatically related to the music written, it does serve as the partial inspiration and is recognized as such.

Performance Notes:

Instrumentation:

- Woodwinds
  - Piccolo
  - Flutes 1-2
  - Oboes 1-2
  - Bassoon
  - Clarinets in Bb 1-3
  - Bass Clarinet in Bb
  - Alto Saxophones 1-2
  - Tenor Saxophone
  - Baritone Saxophone
- Brass:
  - Trumpets in Bb 1-4
  - Horns in F 1-4
  - Trombones 1-3
  - Euphonium
  - Tuba
- Strings and Keyboard:
  - Harp
  - Piano
  - Electric Bass
- Timpani
- Percussion Setup:
  - Perc. 1: Chimes, Tenor Drum
  - Perc. 2: Suspended Cymbal, Hi-hat, Marimba.
  - Perc. 3: Glockenspiel, Bass Drum.
  - Perc. 4: Vibraphone, Gong, Snare Drum.

Composer Bio:

BIO: Joshua Denenberg is an American born composer currently living, working, and studying in Toronto, Canada. His music has been featured at the Hartt School 20/20 Ensemble, Hartt Symphony Band, Hartt Theater, the highSCORE Festival, the Orford Creations festival, the Lumenberg Academy of Music Performance, and the University of Toronto Opera Division and Wind Ensemble. Awards he has won include the inaugural Nick Mirkoupolus Scholarship, the Burton Family Scholarship, and the University of Toronto Wind Ensemble call for works. As a multidisciplinary composer, he has also contributed to incidental theater music, installations, and scores for short films and video games.

Joshua is currently pursuing a doctorate in music composition at the University of Toronto. His primary teachers have included Norbert Palej, Christos Hatzis, Robert Carl, and Kenneth Fuchs.
Mischievously and playful (same tempo)

[104]  [107]  [113]  [116]

Soli  a2  Soli  a2
Dark but with a groove (same tempo)

fff mf sfz sfz sfz sfz sfz sfz sfz sfz

With hard mallet

To Snare Drum.
Again, Slow and Sinister \( q = 52 \)

Again, Slow and Sinister \( q = 52 \)
Move to off-stage position. Better get moving (quietly please!)
Leave pedal down, let ring
Let sustain as long as possible
Leave pedal down, let ring