

Joshua FINEBERG

VEILS

Tibetan Buddhists regard the world as a veil, or a series of veils, obscuring ‘reality’ from view. This is similar to how I see the piano. It is not the notes (or not only the notes) which draw me to the piano; rather, for me, the real magic of the piano is its resonance. The shock that is delivered by the hammers, when notes are struck, produces a continuous vibration. Small impacts can color this vibration, pushing it in one direction or another. Large shocks, on the other hand, are capable of completely eradicating the previous color, or leaving only the faintest trace of what had been. Very delicate interventions can even shift the evolution of the resonance without being truly perceptible as independent events. All of this activity which is normally thought of as ‘the music’ can be seen as a sort of veil, hiding the real music whose heart is in the underlying resonance (color). The interaction between the punctuated surface and the continuous undercurrent, make up the form and movement of the piece

*In writing **Veils**, I was inspired by this conceptual similarity to look into the actual sounds of Tibetan religious music, its bells, choruses and trumpets. Most particularly I analyzed the pacing and dramatic arcs of these rituals – in addition to looking at the actual sounds. These rites, without being obviously teleological, still create a sense of forward motion. And though they lack a clear formal arch, one still feels both climax and catharsis. In **Veils**, although much of what is actually heard can be traced in one way or another to these ethnographic sources, they cannot be directly heard that way. The sounds and structure of those sources have been transmuted into my own musical language; however, they still form a sort of ‘reality’ that can be felt, if not seen, behind the veil of the piece.*

***Veils** was written for the pianist Robert Levin and was commissioned by the Fromm Music Foundation of Harvard University for Thomas Forrest Kelly’s Harvard course on musical premiers “First Nights.” It was premiered in Sanders Theatre in Cambridge Massachusetts by Robert Levin on December 13, 2001.*

METRIC NOTATION

In this score the quarter-note is the basic rhythmic unit.

*Time signatures such as 2, 3, 4, etc... indicate bars of 2, 3, 4, etc... quarter-notes.
1/2, 1/3, 3/4, etc... are fractions of quarter notes, i.e. beats equal to one eighth-note, one triplet eighth-note, three sixteenth-notes, etc...*

examples:

1/2 + 2 is a bar containing three beats of different durations, i.e. eighth - quarter -

quarter

3 + 2/3 is a bar containing four beats of different durations, i.e. quarter - quarter -

quarter - triplet quarter

PROPORTIONAL AND DYNAMIC NOTATION

The rhythmic placement of proportionally notated rhythms (grace notes, accelerando and rallentando beams) is specified by the placement of dotted lines indicating the figures placement relative to the beats it traverses. The placement of these notes relative to these dotted lines (before the beat, after the beat, or on the beat) must be respected.

The chords with multiple dynamics generally have an indication for each note, occasionally two adjacent notes with the same dynamic share a slightly enlarged indication; this should be clear in the context. The color of these chords is greatly altered by their dynamics and these must be respected as much as possible. Even if some of the precise details are neglected, the relative volume of the various notes of the chords must be preserved. When possible, the general line of progression from chord to chord has been shown with crescendos or decrescendos, to assist the performer. Full size dynamics refer to all notes in a given line.