



Kjell Flem: Ultima Thule

KJELL FLEM: Piano Concerto · Solar Wind for Strings · Ultima Thule per Orchestra

Sergey Ouryaev, piano · St. Petersburg Symphony Orchestra · Alexander Kantorov, conductor · Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra · Terje Boye Hansen, conductor

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Nature is the major source of inspiration for Kjell Flem's works, and nature mysticism is predominant in Solar Wind for Strings and Ultima Thule for Orchestra. Similar references can also be made to parts of his Piano Concerto as in the quiet and introverted episode of the first movement.

Piano concerto

The Piano Concerto is dedicated to the pianist Håkon Austbø who commissioned the work together with the ISCM section in Norway. He premiered the concerto together with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Christian Eggen in 1992 and has also performed it with the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Jin Wang. It is a virtuoso and monumental concerto, intentionally written in a free-tonal style to allow the grand piano to be as resonant as possible against the large orchestra. The use of the French modes also provides possibilities to move freely between moderate and modernistic expressions. Thus, the concerto has become a synthesis of tradition and modernity.

Slow Wind

Solar Wind is a slow choral for strings. It is inspired by Japanese nature and a dream of floating without gravity through space - encircled by the wind of particles radiating from the Sun. The performance of the work should therefore be played tenuto and without accents to create a floating atmosphere.

North

'UltimaThule' is Latin for the Arctic Region and according to the composer it develops through a series of episodes where he explores the large orchestra's abilities to create images of the Arctic landscape. Images that reveal the composers well developed sense of suggestive and exciting effects. The music has a clarity and power that brings forth much of the Arctic atmosphere with its interchange between ferocious and frightening forces of nature and the serenity of vast landscapes.

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