Joseph Klein

the road in its unfoldings
meta-passacaglia for wind symphony

(1996-97)

to Eugene Corporon
and the North Texas Wind Symphony

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duration: c.17
Program Notes

the road in its unfoldings was composed between April of 1996 and August of 1997 for Eugene Corronpor and the North Texas Wind Symphony, and first performed by that ensemble at the University of North Texas on February 26, 1998. The work was supported in part by grants from the University of North Texas and the American Music Center.

The road in its unfoldings is essentially a passacaglia in twenty-one variations. Unlike the Baroque model, however, the subject is frequently obscured and distorted (metrically, registrally, etc.), often beyond recognition, although it is presented in its entirety within each and every variation. Though the work is not serial, the subject itself consists of a twelve-tone row derived from the opening four pitches of the second movement of Stravinsky's Symphony of Psalms (C-Eb-B-D), which is presented in inversion as the first four notes of the subject; the remainder of the subject is generated from this opening four-note cell, and is made up entirely of major and minor thirds and sixths. The complete statement of the subject consists of two seven-measure periods of eleven notes each; the second period is related to the first by retrograde-inversion, pivoting around the telosce B-E:

This seven-measure periodic structure is reflected in the twenty-one variations, each of which is either seven, fourteen, twenty-one, or twenty-eight

measures long.

The conceptual model for this work is biologist D’Arcy Wentworth Thompson’s book On Growth and Form (1917), an elegantly presented exploration of the functional relationships between various organic forms through mathematical paradigms and processes (e.g., Cartesian graphs, algebraic formulae).

Though presenting mathematical support for much of the work of Charles Darwin (e.g., The Origin of Species, The Descent of Man), Thompson’s work does not contain the hierarchial implications — nor the contentious religious ramifications — of “evolution” as presented by Darwin; rather, it is an objective analysis of structural phenomena as manifested in a variety of organisms. Analogously, the road in its unfoldings explores the transformation (“evolution”) of the subject from its fragmented, murky origins, coalescing into a direct thematic statement, then becoming increasingly removed from the prototypical structure as it undergoes further development. The title of the present work is derived from the poem “Volunteers” by Alice Falcone (Sexual Math, 1995). Part of a sequence which draws upon genetics and evolution as an integral part of its subject matter. The titular line is part of a series of metaphors for the evolutionary process:

But evolution is a fudge
without finale. News that stays
news. The road in its unfoldings.

The twenty-one variations are linked by a chain of temporal modulations organized palindromically, with the first and final variations serving as introduction and conclusion: the first ten variations are linked in such a way as to produce a gradual, non-linear accelerando (from MM 40 to MM 200), while the final ten variations reverse the process (returning to MM 40 at the conclusion). Each half of the work is also characterized by a gradually ascending ambitus, beginning in the lowest register of the ensemble and concluding in the highest register. Although this process is clearly manifested in the first half, the registral trajectory in the second half follows a less direct path, becoming more erratic as the work progresses. The central variation (XI) acts as a fulcrum in this structure: the sudden and dramatic change in tempo, register, and overall character result in a sense of repose and reflection before the process resumes.

As a way of elucidating this process, there is embedded within the structure a series of relationships between the variations in the first half of the work and those in the second half (as illustrated below). For example, Variation XVIII is simply a reworking of Variation IV with the addition of woodwinds and percussion. The two percussion variations (X and XII) which flank the central variation are structurally identical, the differences being almost exclusively timbral (the former is for ringing metals, the latter for wood and membrane instruments). Elements of Variation VI reappear throughout Variation VII, and again in Variation VIII (which itself is a composite of three variations — VI, IX, and XVIII — representing past, present, and future). Variations are also grouped to form larger structural units: e.g., Variation I through III function as an individual section; transitions between variations differ significantly, some being rather subtle (e.g., between Variations IX and X), others quite abrupt (e.g., between Variations III and IV).

Each variation is also presented as an homage to a different twentieth-century composer, as indicated by the initials which follow. While some of these references may be readily apparent, most are rather subtle, even elusive. In any case, it has not been the composer’s intention to represent the dedicatees through stylistic imitation or overt musical appropriation, but rather to acknowledge significant musical influences.

Variation I: Introduction (Marksy, diffuse)
Variation II: Remote
Variation III: Tranquil, fragile
Variation IV: Fanfare (Bold, intrusive) [brass]
Variation V: Antagonistic
Variation VI: Hoquetus (Wayward / desultory)
Variation VII: Murmuring
Variation VIII: Halting
Variation IX: Urgent
Variation X: Scintillate (percussion)
Variation XI: Luagubrious, deliberate (percussion)
Variation XII: Impulsive (percussion)
Variation XIII: Monacing
Variation XIV: Azantine
Variation XV: Mechanical (fluid)
Variation XVI: Burleska (Sardonic)
Variation XVII: Exubertant
Variation XVIII: Fanfare [Reprise] (Resolute)
Variation XIX: Stretto-Chorale [Plaintive] (woodwinds)
Variation XX: Clamorous / subdued
Variation XXI: Contraction (Austere)
**Instrumentation**

**Percussion:**

1. 5 timpani (I: 32", II: 28", III: 25", IV: 23", V: 20"), 2 cymbals (one low, one high to be placed on strings in Variations I and X)
   - **striking implements:** soft felt, hard felt, soft yarn, wood.

2. marimba, vibraphone, crash cymbals, cowbell, slide whistle, police whistle, newspaper (3 small sheets)
   - **striking implements:** soft yarn (2), med. yarn (2), hard yarn (4), med. rubber (4), hard rubber (4), bow (shared w/ #3).

3. chimes, crotales (2 octaves), 6-tones, tam-tam, autoharp, airhorn, afuche, lottery wheel (small)
   - **striking implements:** chime hammers (2), hard yarn, hard rubber, brass, bow (shared w/ #2).

4. xylophone, glockenspiel (shared with #5), mark tree, 3 suspended cymbals, ratchet (w/ #5), rain stick
   - **striking implements:** soft yarn, hard yarn, hard rubber, hard plastic, wood (SD) sticks, brass, bow.

5. glockenspiel (shared w/ #4), low suspended cymbal (w/ #6), 2-tones, snare drum, vibraslap,
   - **striking implements:** med. yarn, wood (SD) sticks, brushes, heavy (tam-tam) beater, bow.

6. 3 triangles, low suspended cymbal (shared w/ #5), sleigh bells (w/ #5), bass drum
   - **striking implements:** 4 woodblocks, 2 orange woodblocks, flexatone

**Suggested Percussion Setup**
Symbols

- attack/release unnoticeably
- clean break in sound
- flt. g fluttertongue
- multiphonic (ad lib.)
- mordent; inverted mordent
- gradual change from one mode of play to another
- rapid change from one mode of play to another
- slight fluctuations around dynamic level indicated (ad lib.)
- smooth, even portamento/glissando
- erratic, uneven portamento/glissando, following approximate contours of line
- play beamed group as rapidly as possible
- repeat pitch as rapidly as possible (winds: double-tonguing, if possible)
- accelerando (in the duration indicated)
- ritardando (in the duration indicated)
- play material within brackets (rhythms and pitch orderings ad libitum) for the duration of the wavy line
- play material within repeat brackets in the order indicated for the duration of the solid line

- triple subdivision (i.e., equals two eighth-notes)
- brass: half valve
- brass: closed (mute); horn: stopped
- brass: open; harp: harmonic
- trombone: slide positions
  (T = F trigger; ET = E trigger)
- timpani: pedal changes (including indications for lowest and highest pitches)
- percussion: strike on crown (of cymbal)
- percussion: scrape along edge (of tam-tam)
- percussion: swirl (brush) in a circular motion
- piano/percussion: depress pedal for the duration of the line
- piano/percussion: temporarily release pedal to discontinue resonance
- piano/percussion: sudden pedal release
- piano/percussion: gradual pedal release
- piano: strike inside strings with palm of hand (cluster)
- piano/harp: rapid glissando downward/upward on the strings, beginning on the pitch indicated
- harp: half-pedal (resulting in loud buzz)

Notes

Accidentals apply only to the note they immediately precede, with the exception of repeated notes.

Score is in C; all instruments sound as written, with the following exceptions:
- piccolo sounds one octave higher than written;
- contrabassoon sounds one octave lower than written;
- glissenspiel sounds two octaves higher than written;
- crotales sound two octaves higher than written;
- xylophone sounds one octave higher than written;
- celesta sounds two octaves higher than written;
- harp harmonics sound one octave higher than written.

Brass players require the following mutes:
- horns: standard mutes, stop mutes (optionally);
- trumpets: straight, cup, harmon, plunger;
- tenor trombones: straight, harmon;
- bass trombone: straight, cup, harmon (auxiliary straight mute with plunger);
- euphoniums: standard mutes;
- tubas: standard mutes.

Bassoon 2 requires extension to play low A (Variations XII and XIX).
Piano requires medium-sized towel to be placed over strings (Variation XXI); muffled effect is desired.
Variation I: Introduction (Murky, diffuse)

\[ j = 40 \]
Variation III  (Tranquil, fragile)

\( \Rightarrow \frac{1}{4} \Rightarrow (\mathfrak{d} = 48) \)
Variation IV: Fanfare (Bold, intrusive)

\[ \frac{3}{4} \]

\( \text{Cz} \) = \( \text{Cz} \) (\( \frac{3}{2} \) = 64)

- Variation IV: Fanfare (Bold, intrusive)
Variation VI: Hoquetus (Wayward/desultory)

\( \frac{3}{4} \rightarrow \frac{4}{4} \) (\( \text{d} = 80 \))
Variation VII (Murmuring/disruptive)

\( \begin{array}{c}
99 \\
\end{array} \)
Variation IX (Urgent)

\[ \frac{3}{4} \rightarrow (q = 150) \]

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Variation XIII (Menacing)

\( \text{\( \frac{4}{4} \)} \) (\( \text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} \text{, } j = 160 \))
Variation XIV (Austere)

\( \text{Variation XIV (Austere)} \)
Variation XVI: Burleska (Sardonic)

\[ \frac{1}{4} \rightarrow (\text{ } = 100) \]

PC 1.2

FL 1.2

OB 1.2

Eb

BS-C

CL 1.2

CL 3-4

BHN

BCN

CBCL

BN 1.2

CJB

S SAX

ASAX

T SAX

BSAX

TP 1-4

BN 1-4

EN 1-4

EU 1.2

TB 1.2


timpani w/ wood

lottery wheel

trumpets duped (trombone)

vibraphone w/ light metal

snare drum w/ brushes

trumpet

triangles w/light sound

trilobyte w/light sound

D CB + E F G A I

- 38 -
Variation XVII (Exuberant)
Variation XIX: Stretto-Chorale (Plaintive)

$\text{302} \leftarrow \frac{1}{2} \rightarrow \frac{1}{2} (\text{q} = 45)$

PC 1,2

PL 1,2

OB 1,2

CB CL

CL 1,2

CL 2,4

CL 3,4

CL 5,6

B HN

BNS

CB CL

BN 1,2

CBN

S SN

A SN

T SN

B SN

[T.T.]
Variation XX (Clamorous / subdued)