In the Beginning II
(Song of Endless light + Sextet)

David Rosenboom

1979

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In the Beginning

(1978-1981)

David Rosenboom

General Notes on the Series of Works

The macro-title, *In the Beginning*, refers to a series of works created from 1978 through 1981. These works were written for a variety of large and small instrumental ensembles, computer-aided electronic music instruments, film/video, and synthetic speech. The last of these is, in turn, also a series of pieces, titled, *Future Travel*, documented by an LP record (Street Records) and more recently a CD (New World Records) released under the same name. All of the works focus, among other things, on the development of a unique harmonic, rhythmic and melodic language. This language takes inspiration from research on a model of proportional structures in music and on an evolving, topologically modeled theory of musical "shape" perception. There is programmatic content in the works, which relates to human beings' propensity to attempt to double themselves in both religion and technology and which develops a scenario for the evolution of human consciousness toward the birth of a macroscopic Earth-organism to which all individual entities contribute.

The *In the Beginning* system of proportions emphasizes sets of irreducible ratios with inversional symmetry and exploits both harmonic (linear) and sub-harmonic (non-linear) relations. These are used to construct cycles of growth and decay, resulting from the natural reinforcement of proportions with each other, moving toward maximum resonance and away from it. Thus, a sense of natural phasing occurs, though all movement takes place through proportional modulation by quantum steps. Additionally, stochastic methods are used to implement smooth transitions from areas where the probability is high that one or more sets of proportions will be predominant in the musical material to areas where others take over.

Many of the horizontal (ex. melodic) forms result from the use of a limited set of prototype shapes or contours. These are applied to the other musical materials (ex. pitch, rhythm, timbre) currently predominant in the space of proportions. Each section of music has its own unique shape determinants and modulation schemes. The contours themselves resulted from physiological analyses of human expressive gestures carried out in preparation for the works.

The compositions mirror nature in the creation of singularities, particles, or differentiated units of perception. They do this by making use of the idea of resonance as a key to creation within an initially smooth medium, like undifferentiated space or the undisturbed surface of a calm lake. Resonance represents the force of drawing together in patterned relationships, which outline natural ontological evolution. The harmonic and rhythmic space is the medium; the composer and performers provide the initiating force; the system of proportions articulates growth when interactions produce reinforcement and decay when they produce collisions.

Recordings for the entire *In the Beginning* series are now documented on CDs (New World Records).

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In the Beginning II (Song of Endless Light + Sextet)

David Rosenboom

Toronto 1979

The title, *In the Beginning*, refers to a rhythmic and harmonic construction for percussion, sustaining pitch, and melodic instruments. This construction is treated as a master structure from which numerous subset realizations can be created to serve the orchestrational demands of specific groups of performers.

The master structure is based on a system of proportions that emphasizes irreducible ratios (e.g. 2/11, 3/10, etc.). It exploits both harmonic and sub-harmonic relationships. The ratios are applied to all musical parameters toward which compositional attention is directed in a given realization. The relationships are used to construct cycles of growth and decay resulting from natural reinforcement of proportions moving toward maximum resonance and away from it. Thus, a sense of natural phasing occurs, though all movement takes place through proportional modulation by quantum steps. There are no strictly gradual or continuous processes, though movement from a rhythmic pattern of 11's to a pattern of 10's might give such an illusion.

Each of the seven sections in *In the Beginning II* following the *Song of Endless Light* introduction emphasizes a particular set of harmonic and rhythmic proportions. The selection of proportions helps characterize each section. Particular feelings are ascribed to various sets of ratios found in the harmonies, rhythms, and other musical materials. Stochastic techniques are then employed to gradually transform the tendencies for particular ratios to appear in one section into those of the next. In this way the qualities of sections evolve one into another.

In the Beginning II was commissioned by, written for, and premiered by the Array ensemble in Toronto in 1979 with assistance from the Ontario Arts Council. The first version was subtitled *(Quartet)*, because it was written for trombone, viola, cello, and percussion. The non-percussion, harmonic voices also articulate a "structural quartet," in which four voices sound at any one time. This required the viola and cello to play difficult double-stops. In 1982 it was discovered that arranging the material for trombone, four cellos, and percussion was particularly effective, and on April 17th, 1982 this arrangement was presented in a concert at Mills College featuring four extraordinary Bay Area cellists, Bonnie Hampton, Amy Radunskya, Judyaba, and Joan Jeanrenaud, along with trombone virtuoso, Toyoji (Peter) Tomita, and renowned percussionist, William Winant. This is the version presented here, now subtitled *(Song of Endless Light + Sextet)*, and is the one most often played.

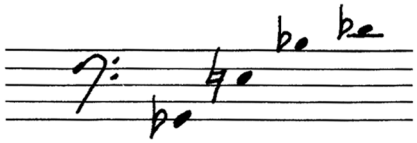
INSTRUCTIONS

The *Song of Endless Light* introduction should be played slowly and in perfect unison. Curved lines describe vocal-like, melismatic pitch glides. These same musical “shapes” or contours appear in different forms, sometimes greatly expanded, in later works of the *In the Beginning* series. They are derived from analyses of forms that commonly appear in the expression of human emotions, in gestures, biological patterns, and artistic works. It is intended that they, too, be articulated precisely, in unison, and perfectly matched to each other.

Rhythmic patterns played on repeated notes of identical pitch are often abbreviated. For example:

These patterns should be played in an articulated style. For the trombone this will demand multiple tonguing. Bowing styles for strings should make a gradual transformation from martelé for slow figures, through détaché for medium to fast figures, and finally to sautillé for very fast figures, always observing the context defined by the dynamics.

The percussionist should use a large, low tam-tam and/or gongs with suitable blending resonance and sustaining power for the introduction. The rest of the piece requires four drums tuned to the following pitches:



Examples of suitable drums are Roto-toms, Chines tom-toms, or other drums with clear pitch and suitable resonance. They should be played with light mallets. The sounds should be sharp, slightly wooden, but resonant and full.

All instruments are of equal importance and should be balanced in sound level.

Performers should make every attempt to play the sustained chords in perfect tuning with minimum beats, though carefully considered and tasteful vibrato may be used for warmth of tone.

Performers may subtly express their discoveries in the emerging harmonic and rhythmic tapestry through dynamics and tone quality.

In the Beginning II

(Song of Endless Light + Sextet)

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Song of Endless Light

Trombone
Violoncello 1
Violoncello 2
Violoncello 3
Violoncello 4
Percussion

mp

Tam-tam

p L.V.

p L.V.

Tbn.
Vc. 1
Vc. 2
Vc. 3
Vc. 4
Perc.

mf *mp*

p L.V.

p L.V.

Tbn.
Vc. 1
Vc. 2
Vc. 3
Vc. 4
Perc.

p L.V.

segue

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♩ ≈ 65

Tbn.

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Vc. 3

Vc. 4

Perc.

Tuned Drums

mp < mf

mf

Tbn.

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Vc. 3

Vc. 4

Perc.

10

Tbn.

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Vc. 3

Vc. 4

Perc.

15

f

f

f

f

f

Tbn.

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Vc. 3

Vc. 4

Perc.

20

25

Tbn.

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Vc. 3

Vc. 4

Perc.

30

Tbn.

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Vc. 3

Vc. 4

Perc.

35

Tbn.

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Vc. 3

Vc. 4

Perc.

40

ff

f

Tbn.
Vc. 1
Vc. 2
Vc. 3
Vc. 4
Perc.

45

Tbn.
Vc. 1
Vc. 2
Vc. 3
Vc. 4
Perc.

Tbn.
Vc. 1
Vc. 2
Vc. 3
Vc. 4
Perc.

Tbn.

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Vc. 3

Vc. 4

Perc.

50

Tbn.

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Vc. 3

Vc. 4

Perc.

Tbn.

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Vc. 3

Vc. 4

Perc.

decresc.

decresc.

decresc.

decresc.

decresc.

55

Tbn.
Vc. 1
Vc. 2
Vc. 3
Vc. 4
Perc.

mp

mf

60

Tbn.

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Vc. 3

Vc. 4

Perc.

f

8va

65

Tbn.
Vc. 1
Vc. 2
Vc. 3
Vc. 4
Perc.

Tbn.
Vc. 1
Vc. 2
Vc. 3
Vc. 4
Perc.

70

Tbn.
Vc. 1
Vc. 2
Vc. 3
Vc. 4
Perc.

Tbn.

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Vc. 3

Vc. 4

Perc.

Tbn.

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Vc. 3

Vc. 4

Perc.

80

Tbn.

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Vc. 3

Vc. 4

Perc.

85

Tbn.
Vc. 1
Vc. 2
Vc. 3
Vc. 4
Perc.

90

Tbn.

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Vc. 3

Vc. 4

Perc.

f

mf

95

Tbn.

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Vc. 3

Vc. 4

Perc.

100

Tbn.

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Vc. 3

Vc. 4

Perc.

105

Tbn.

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Vc. 3

Vc. 4

Perc.

110

Tbn.

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Vc. 3

Vc. 4

Perc.

115

120

Tbn.

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Vc. 3

Vc. 4

Perc.

125

Tbn.
Vc. 1
Vc. 2
Vc. 3
Vc. 4
Perc.

130

Tbn.

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Vc. 3

Vc. 4

Perc.

135

140

Tbn.

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Vc. 3

Vc. 4

Perc.

145

Tbn.

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Vc. 3

Vc. 4

Perc.

decresc.

ppp

pp