

Annunciation

Omar Daniel

for String Quartet and Live Electronics

I Raffaello (2'33")
II da Vinci (2'44")
III Fra Angelico (2'23")
IV Botticelli (2'18")
V Caravaggio (2'15")
VI Fra Lippi (2'08")

for the Penderecki String Quartet
and
David Jaeger

commissioned by CBC radio

Annunciation is based on six paintings from the Italian Renaissance. Each painting depicts the event known as the Annunciation: the angel Gabriel descends to earth and announces to Mary that she is to bear Jesus.

I: *Annunciation* (1502-03). Oil on canvas. Sanzio Raffaello ('Raphael'); 1483 (Urbino)-1520 (Rome).

II: *Annunciation* (1472-75). Tempera on wood. Leonardo da Vinci; 1452 (Vinci)-1519 (Amboise)

III: *Annunciation* (1433-34). Alterpiece; tempera on wood. Fra Angelico; 1400 (Vicchio nell Mugello)-1455 (Rome).

IV: *Annunciation* (1489-90). Tempera on panel. Sandro Botticelli; 1445 (Florence)-1510 (Florence).

V: *Annunciation* (1608-09). Oil on canvas. Caravaggio; 1571 (Caravaggio)-1610 (Porto Ercole).

VI: *Annunciation With Two Kneeling Donors* (1440). Oil on panel. Fra Filippo Lippi; 1406 (Florence)-1469 (Spoleto).

My *Annunciation* is a reflection on the six artist's depiction of the scene. I was interested in the way the artists contrasted one another, in spite of the fact that they all painted essentially the same thing. For instance, the dark, heavy tone of the Caravaggio canvas is quite different in mood than the cool geometry of the Fra Angelico; the bold colour and excitement of the Botticelli is very different than the static resignation of Fra Lippi's panel. As well, the way I have sequenced the paintings creates an illusion that Gabriel moves closer and closer to Mary, finally offering her the Madonna lily in the sixth and final panel by Fra Lippi. As such, an internal dramatic structure is present.

This work may be performed three different ways:

- 1) As a concert work for string quartet and live electronics.
- 2) As 1), but with the addition of projections of the six paintings. The particular painting that refers to the movement is displayed during the performance of the work. A CD-rom containing digital copies of the paintings is included at the back of this score.
- 3) As 1), but with the addition of dancers, or 'posers'. Two dancers would strike poses identical to Gabriel and Mary in the paintings. The dancers proceed from one pose to another smoothly during the last 10-20 seconds of each of the movements.

Performance Notes and Technical Data

Annunciation was designed to be performed using a Lexicon PCM81 Digital Effects Processor. However, the attached technical notes give algorithmic information that may be used to construct patches on other hardware or software processors.

The four members of the string quartet are miked individually, and assigned independent console inputs. The instrument signals are passed to the PCM81 according to the score (usually via Aux send/return), and then amplified into the concert hall via a stereo speaker array. The signal passed through to the speakers must be 100% wet, and balanced carefully with the un-processed acoustic sound. A fifth person controls the electronics and playback.