

On Music for the Animated Art Film Lands of Treasure by IC-98

New animated art film Lands of Treasure by artists group IC-98, for which I have composed music, is now on display until March 6th, 2022 at the Serlachius Museum Gösta, Mänttä, Finland.

The short musical motifs I composed were brilliantly recorded in the Finnvox studio, Helsinki by conductor Nils Schweckendiek and the vocal sextet of The Helsinki Chamber Choir: Tove Djupsjöbacka, Veera Kuusirati, Eira Karlson, Susanna Sippola, Martti Anttila and Jussi Linnanmäki.

The musical motifs were divided into four categories: 1) main music 2) solos with accompaniment 3) spectral and more dissonant chord materials, which take the form of both harmonic progression, musical ambience, polyrhythmic textures and declarative chord accents 4) speech choir segments (wind imitations, spoken asemantic syllabic and consonant textures), which create an interface toward sound design.

I composed the finished music from these motifs on a digital audio workstation, utilizing a modular composition technique i.e., by arranging the motifs sequentially, overlapping, stacking, etc. At some points six singers are realistically heard, at others a multiple. The music is quite extensive in duration, inevitably progressing, rugged, sculptural and mostly gloomy. In the beginning there are long episodes that invite the listener to step into the work to experience the space, and to feel the false spectral melodies produced by slowly sung diphthongs, which each listener will experience individually; the overlapping vocal slides create an aurora-borealis-like flickering spectral veil over the sung pitches.

There is no given semantic text in the music, as requested by IC-98. My solution was to have the choir sing with asemantic vowels and slow diphthongs which I composed into the music. The formant slides serve both rhythmic, coloring and mentioned false melody function.

Also, as a byproduct, at certain moments in the music, where I have superimposed the polyrhythmic chord texture sung with different vowels and the consonant utterance speech choir texture, one might imagine listening to a language that may have been, will be, or exists in some other reality.

The soundtrack is in Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound format and the loudspeaker system is installed accordingly. Indeed, the music takes advantage of the placement of its many different elements around the listener and their movement around the listener. For me as a composer, the immersion of sound in this case has been one equal means of expression alongside melody, vocal expression, harmony, rhythm and tone of voice. Many thanks to sound designer Toni Ilo (Finnvox Cinepost) who not only made all the other sounds in the soundtrack and was responsible for the whole, but also realized the spatial dimension of the music in the studio according to my wishes!

Max Savikangas 2021

Composer