ERIC LINDSAY

ICARUS

for sinfonietta ensemble

(14'30")
PROGRAM NOTE

Discussions about music, as with those about life, often circle around the idea of *goal-directed* motion. In these conversations, many of the metaphors we use to describe directionality can apply across contexts—stasis vs. transition, cycles of repetition vs. developing variation, drive vs. aimlessness, and so on. Similarly, many of us tend to attribute these labels to our perception of a piece’s *agency*, anthropomorphizing musical gestures as though they were characters on a journey.

My objective in *Icarus* was to reflect on the symbiosis between the transitions we undergo in and outside of the listening experience. (As a personal aside, this piece was written at a time when the clearly delineated goals of academia gave way to the uncertain ones that dictate what comes next in life.) Like the mercurial transitions that connect the primary and secondary theme areas in late-Romantic sonatas, what was once the obvious end-goal now becomes one of several alternative, often-conflicting possibilities, conjuring a state of unrest and instability. Making decisions in a world of increasing opportunities is the spice of life... yes, except for that moment where competing internal dichotomies seem to keep life from moving forward. I sometimes liken this juncture to Icarus’ leap from the tower high above the cliffs of Crete, where Icarus fashioned his own fall by disastrously letting an opposing agent—hubris—distract him from the goal of flight.

The language of this piece is itself a reflection of these tensions, born of an effort to rally notions of personal fulfillment, voice, style, substance and intuition together into a showcase and distillation of all I’ve ever learned. This state is reflected, too, in the musical gestures themselves, where repeated sections (or "ritornelli") are pushed and pulled by various ingredients within the material fighting for greater prominence. With each structural repetition, the goal of a passage is colored by the implications of alternatingly prominent rhythmic, metric and/or harmonic characteristics. The end result is a collection of earnest, opposing ambitions—blazing forward while always threatening to rip the whole apart at the seams.
INSTRUMENTATION

Flute (doubling Piccolo)
Oboe (doubling English Horn)
B♭ Clarinet (doubling Bass Clarinet)
Tenor Saxophone
Bassoon (doubling Contrabassoon)

Horn in F (with mute)
C Trumpet (with harmonic, straight and bucket mute)
Trombone (with harmonic, straight and bucket mute)

Drum set
2 Percussion:
   Player 1: agogo bells*, cabasa, cowbell*, 2 temple blocks (the two lowest)*, water gong, vibraphone, xylophone
   Player 2: agogo bells*, caxixi, cowbell*, conga, 2 temple blocks (the two lowest)*, 32" timpano,
      2 medium suspended cymbals (one upturned on timpano head, one mounted on stand), sizzle cymbal,
      woodblock*

* Mounted on rack
= Shared between Player 1 and 2

Harp
Piano

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass

Score is in C. Piccolo and Xylophone sound 8va higher than written. Double Bass and Contrabassoon sound 8vb lower than written.
This score is in C.

Icarus
(2013)
Eric Lindsay
(b. 1980)

Flute/Piccolo
Oboe/English Horn
Clarinet in B♭/Bass Clarinet
Tenor Sax.
Bassoon/Contrabassoon
Horn in F
Trumpet in C
Trombone
Drum Set
Percussion 1
Percussion 2
Harp
Piano
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Double Bass

2 3 4 5 6

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This time, exaggerate standard deviation of pedaling at first, decreasing pitch range as you go.
Icarus
Drum time continues to project a 4/4 swing feel, emphasizing four-bar phrases independently of the clarinet and double bass phrasing.

Obsessively against the beat

(f) to mute

Straight mute to Straight mute

Obsessively against the beat

(f) to mute

Straight mute to Straight mute
Drum time continues to project the same 4/4 swing feel as before, emphasizing four-bar phrases independently of the rest of the ensemble's phrasing/meter.
Icarus
Icarus
Icarus

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