

Dieter Mack 2008

P U L S A R

For Church Organ (at least three manuals) and Percussion

PULSAR (2008)
Mack

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For Church Organ (at least three manuals and with mechanic technology) & Percussion

Dedicated to Zsigmond Szathmary & Olaf Tzschope

Remarks

After a long time – almost 13 years – I came across the church organ again, and here in combination with percussion instruments which has certainly to do with my close friends to whom the piece is dedicated.

In “Pulsar” the “interpersonal” or “social” aspects of playing together – usually the focus of most of my pieces - are of less importance, although there are some sections that still ask for a close interaction. The extreme difference in character of both instruments almost impedes a too “tricky” interaction, not to speak about the mechanic and spacial circumstances in a church. Although pitched percussion instruments could be an ideal combination with certain organ stops, I mainly used non-pitched instruments(except the Crotales that have unharmonic high pitches. Slight differences may even add to the sharp character that is intended in most sections in the composition where they are used), because both instruments are difficult to be retuned spontaneously.

Therefore the focus in this composition is on various types of energetic pulsating, thus referring to the more utopian title of that phenomenon in our cosmic infinity. Various reasons have brought me back to this everlasting idea, the fact that I am interested to use the church organ like a “living organism”.

Percussion Instruments

1 Gran Cassa, 1 big Tamtam, 3 wooden TomToms, 5 African bowls (hardened halves of pumpkins) floating on water , 5 Chinese Tamtams (no opera gongs! These small Tamtams have a 2 – 3 cm bowed rim of 90 degrees and are completely flat), 1 octave of Crotales (sounding 2 octaves higher); 2 low woodblocks, 1 low bell without mallet inside. Mallets are not indicated and therefore up to the players' decision, in concordance with the notated dynamics and sound.

Explanations:

1. As in the beginning, there is no clear pitched sound; the crossed notes indicate the air sound and its changes with the slight manipulation of the respective stop.
2. As for example in bar 4, 75% indicates that the stop is not fully pulled but only about 75%. This might be different from instrument to instrument. It is always intended that a certain “distorted” sound may be achieved, mainly through a micro-tonal change in pitch. Certain free adjustments may always be accepted. In case stops are pulled normally and another one is not at the same time and on the same manual, it has always to do with micro-intervals in order to create “beats” and “modulated distortions”.
3. Dynamic adjustments are possible whenever they are needed. Note, that in case of unison writing, an utmost degree of melting together is always intended. Especially the organist may adapt his registration accordingly.
4. Change of registration/stops is always possible. There are hardly two organs with the same stops. Nevertheless I write a precise registration to give the player a most precise picture of my intentions.
5. Notation of stop changes: If a “ + ” or a “ - ” is written in the box, then it always refers to the current registration. A new registration is always written completely without “ - ” or “ + ”.
6. The Chinese Tamtams are notated with a “x” between the five lines, while the bowls are notated with normal note heads and on the five lines.

Registration

I refer to the Marcussen organ in the concert hall of the University of Music, Lübeck, nevertheless changes are always possible, and the player is asked to find convenient combinations in regard of the respective available instrument.

Please note also that the organ player's assistant has important and functional things to do that go beyond usual registration work. He/she has to push and to pull certain stops very carefully, in order to achieve the microtonal or distorted results (see in the score). There must be enough practice before a performance, recalling that every mechanical organ may be different.

Pedal

Prinzpal 16', Oktave 8', Oktave 4', Mixtur 5-6fach, Posaune 16', Trompete 8'

Untersatz 32', Subbass, 16', Gemshorn 8', Flöte 4', Clarine 4'

I - Hauptwerk (main manual)

Prinzpal 16', Oktave 8', Oktave 4', Quinte 2 2/3', Oktave 2', Mixtur 5-6fach, Scharff 3-4fach, Flute Harmonique 8', Rohrgedackt 8', Koppelflöte 4', Cornet 5fach, Trompete 16', Trompete 8'

II - Positiv

Prinzpal 8', Quintadena 8', Oktave 4', Scharff 4-5fach, Cromorne 8', Vox Humana 8', Tremulant Gedackt 8', Blockflöte 4', Quinte 2 2/3', Gemshorn 2', Terz 1 3/5', Quinte 1 1/3'

III - Schwellwerk

Viola da Gamba 8', Voix Celeste 8', Prestant 4', Fourniture 4fach, Bombarde 16', Trompette Harmonique 8', Hautbois 8', Clairon 4',

Bourdon 16', Rohrflöte 8', Flute traversière 4', Nasard 2 2/3', Oktavin 2', Tierce 1 3/5', Sifflet 1', Tremulant