Christopher Stark

DEPOSITION

after Pietro Lorenzetti

for Cello, Piano, and Electronics

(2013)
PROGRAM NOTE

*Deposition* was inspired by Pietro Lorenzetti’s frescoes in the Lower Church of the Papal Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi. The frescoes, which were painted in the early-fourteenth century, depict scenes of the Passion, and they are well-known examples of the early use of naturalism in Italian art—which Pietro and his younger brother Ambrogio were instrumental in introducing. In the fall of 2012 I visited the Lower Church, and I was particularly struck by the deposition scene. The hauntingly moving expression on Mary’s face, the simple and bleak—gristly even—portrayal of the removal of Christ from the cross, and the disorienting use of early perspective techniques, immediately conjured up musical associations for me. The cello’s material is built around a long falling chromatic line derived from the lamento bass, and the piano’s material is derived from an eight-note melody created using the letters of Lorenzetti’s last name—both of these materials are presented at the conclusion of the composition. The electronics are intended to add an element of ‘otherworldliness’ to the piece as a representation of the mythological and supernatural weight of the subject matter. The electronic material is generated through recording and playing back the cello and piano material at different speed and pitch ratios in an attempt to position it in relief to the ‘worldly’ live performers. The piece is ten minutes in duration, and it is affectionately dedicated to Gjertrud Schnackenberg, with whom I first viewed the frescoes.

PERFORMANCE NOTES

- The volume of the electronics should always match the volume of the live performers.
- There is no tempo for most of the piece, but rather approximate timings of events; therefore, variability as it pertains to individual expressive rhythm is highly encouraged.

ELECTRONIC REQUIREMENTS

1 Laptop with Max/MSP
1 Mixer with 2 Inputs (from the Laptop) and 2 Outputs (to the Speakers)
2 Powered Speakers
Cables and Power

PREMIERE PERFORMANCE

Elizabeth Lyon, cello & Xak Bjerken, piano
Barnes Hall, Cornell University
20 October 2013

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to Gjertrud Schnackenberg

DEPOSITION

after frescoes by Pietro Lorenzetti in the Lower Church of the Papal Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi
for Cello, Piano, and Electronics

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Senza misura, delicatissimo, dolente

≈ 7.5"

Cello

pp

Piano

pp sempre

Electronics

≈ 7.5"

*accidentals carry through staves, but not across systems*
*The piano part should be rhythmically 180 degrees out of phase with the piano playback throughout this section.*
senza vib., sul tasto flautando

norm. (con vib. poco a poco)

cresc. poco a poco

match rhythm of piano in playback
Larghetto semplice $\mathop{\text{d}} = 63$

\begin{align*}
\text{L} & \text{O} \quad \text{R} \\
\text{E} & \quad \text{N} \\
\text{Z} & \quad \text{E} \\
\text{T} & \quad \text{T} \quad \text{I} \\
\text{S} & \quad \text{O} \\
\text{C} & \quad \text{E} \\
\text{S} & \quad \text{T} \\
\end{align*}

abrupt

\begin{align*}
f^2 & \quad \text{mute} \\
p & \quad \text{una corda} \\
\end{align*}