la forma
dei miei genitori

Theresa Wong
2012
La forma dei miei genitori
(the shape of my parents)

This piece is built around the interval of a fourth. Remarkably, this very basic interval does not appear anywhere in the overtone series and yet it is present and vital in practically every culture's music. However, if we invert the interval, a magical connection happens. For example, in the key of C, the F above is the fourth. If we invert this and put the F below the C, we have an interval of a fifth. If we take the F another octave down, we have an interval of a twelfth, and suddenly C is the second overtone in the overtone series of F. So although F (the fourth), does not appear in the natural harmonic world of C, it is actually it's generator, because C is born out of the overtone series of F. In his book, Harmonic Experience, W.A. Mathieu writes, "...when you sing F you create C....That is the work of the Musical Mother. Hello, Mother. You who dare to sing F in the C world become the embodiment of the creative and the sacred." What you will hear in this piece is the delicate ringing of tones not actually played on the piano, but brought to life by the vibrational resonance of their acoustic 'mothers'. Perhaps it is no coincidence that in Indian sargam (the equivalent of Western solfège or do-re-mi), the fourth is called ma. I dedicate this piece to dear friends and mothers-to-be, Kanoko Nishi, Regina Schaffer, Emily Packard, Naya Buric and Noa Charuvi. I would also like to thank Regina, Kanoko and New Keys for bringing this piece into being.

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Notes on the piece

For Pianos:

• This piece can be performed with 4 or more players. The ensemble can determine which parts to multiply in the case of more than 4 players.

• The RH is to silently press down the keys of the indicated chords as to lift the dampers from those strings. Use the RH thumb to play two notes in the chord clusters.

• The LH staccato notes can be single, double or triple 'pulses'.

• Repeat the LH staccato notes every 2-3 seconds, giving enough space to allow the RH sympathetic pitches to be heard, but repeating often enough so that the sympathetic clusters get renewed often.

• Dynamic of LH notes are mf - f. Performers can vary the dynamic to give the overall sound some contour, but staccato notes shall be struck loudly enough so that the sympathetic strings get sounded as clearly as possible.

• Timings do not have to be precise. Chord changes can happen ~ 5-10 seconds before or after the indicated time.

• The numbers in the measures simply indicate the different chords so that players can be aware of the harmonic shifts as the piece progresses.

For Voice:

• The singer is to be seated in the audience with no special attention given that he/she is performing.

• Hum the melody softly, listening and tuning into the 'baby' ringing notes, as to weave the melody into the resonance, rather than singing over it.

• Give space between the phrases.
la forma dei miei genitori

for Kanoko Nishi, Regina Schaffer, Emily Packard, Naya Buric and Noa Charuvi

Theresa Wong

Recall the shape of your parents and what you were dreaming in your mother's womb
la forma dei miei genitori

Hum, seated in the audience

Theresa Wong