

Warped Symmetry

I have always found great pleasure in writing for a performer whom I respect and enjoy working with. Sami Junnonen and I have collaborated for several years now, so it's no surprise that his wishes and expectations have played an important role in shaping this piece.

Before I took to writing this, my first solo piece for a non-harmonic instrument, I asked Sami to share his views on the repertoire with me. During our conversations we realized that many modern pieces for solo flute tend to be imbued with an improvisational character, while others rely heavily on extended techniques. This, of course, does not diminish their artistic merit in any way, but Sami and I were after something different. We wanted a piece that would have a clear and immediately perceivable structure, and which would avoid the use of extended techniques altogether. These limitations posed a great challenge, but they also created a solid frame within which I could explore other musical parameters.

The title refers to the asymmetrical composition of the phrases and the ways in which they complement one another. In a piece for solo instrument like this one, the linear (melodic) aspect rises to prominence, so the way in which antecedents and consequents balance each other has an enormous impact on the development of the piece. Sometimes I structure the phrases symmetrically, but at times I cut them short or extend them in order to create contrast. This constant fluctuation between the anticipated and the unpredictable creates a sense of instability that keeps the piece in motion. It is a fast-paced work with very few moments of rest; it therefore calls for endurance and virtuosity on part of the performer. Finally, polyphony is suggested in many passages throughout the piece. This device, which baroque composers were so fond of, proved to be an exciting tool that allowed me to create the illusion of listening to more than a single layer.

Warped Symmetry is dedicated to my dear friend Sami Junnonen.

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