

REF Report and Summary

John Croft, *...che notturno canta insonne*

Author: John Croft

Output Title: ...che notturno canta insonne

Brief description: Composition for orchestra

Type of Output: Composition

Venue: Glasgow City Halls

Media of output: Recording m4a file and PDF of score (items 1-2)

Contextual information: Programme of premiere, review (items 3-4)

Index of information available for assessment on this site

Output

	Item/Link	Description	Additional information
1	Full version of recording	m4a (running length 18mins 13sec)	Copy of the recording element of the output, which was broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on 30 May 2015. Made available by author.
2	Score	PDF (25 pages)	Copy of the score element of the output, made available by author.

Contextual information

	Item/Link	Description	Additional information
3	Premiere programme	PDF (7 pages)	Evidence of dissemination/significance
4	Review	PDF (2 pages)	Evidence of dissemination/significance. Publicly available at Tectonics review – classical meets abstract sound-art in fruitful festival collision Experimental music The Guardian

Copy of 300-word statement

In conducting this research, I wanted to create a new orchestral work based on transformations of the harmonic series, exploiting microtonal de-tunings of orchestral instruments to obtain the pitches required.

During the research process, I created evolving harmonic structures using IRCAM Open Music, based on continuous expansions of the harmonic series (such that the frequency of partial $n = n^k f_0$, where f_0 is the same fundamental throughout the piece, and k is an increasing co-efficient of expansion). Non-integer partials were introduced whenever the intervals in the resulting spectrum became too wide, allowing continued expansion. These were rounded to quarter-tone resolution, and the pitches scored by means of tuning nearly half the orchestra down a quarter-tone. This allowed for more subtle harmonic movements and inflexions. These harmonic movements and inflexions were complemented by the coalescence of the metal percussion and harp into cadences, echoing the arpeggiated accompaniment of the nineteenth-century nocturne. Rapid runs in the strings were achieved by interpolation between two subsets of the same spectrum, with hocketing patterns used to achieve the quartertones. Other aspects of the piece were freely composed, drawing on the harmonic process provided by Open Music in order to give a sense of continuous expansion.

The research findings demonstrated that a continuous background harmonic process can provide a plausible large-scale harmonic template, in the absence of tonality, for otherwise free orchestral composition. They also showed that de-tuning nearly half the orchestra is a very effective way to achieve a full range of quartertones.

The composition was first performed by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Ilan Volkov, at the 2015 Tectonics in the Grand Hall of Glasgow City Halls on 2 May 2015. A broadcast on BBC Radio 3 with composer interview followed on 30 May 2015.

URL: <https://figshare.com/s/b0878cc6f7b550b93943>