

A portrait of Peter Longworth, a man with short brown hair and a slight smile, wearing a dark blue button-down shirt. He is wearing a watch on his left wrist. The background is dark and out of focus.

Orb processions: a new piece for five trombones

Peter Longworth

ORB PROCESSIONS

for five trombones

PETER LONGWORTH
2016

A dynamic, young quintet of London-based trombonists, Aeris Brass are an ensemble keen to extend the trombone repertoire and I was delighted when they approached me about composing a new work for them. Writing for such a striking ensemble - one alto trombone, two tenor trombones and two bass trombones - was a challenge, of course, but also an enjoyably liberating experience for me as a composer. When composing a piece for string quartet, say, it is all too easy to look over one's shoulder at the masterpieces of the genre by composers such as Mozart,

Bartok and Ravel, but in writing for five trombones, I felt like I was walking in little-explored territory.

In planning a piece for such talented players I was determined to showcase the (oft-unappreciated) versatility of the trombone. The instrument's capacity for loud, powerful playing is widely-known, as is its ability to slide, or glissando between notes, and my piece certainly embraces these things. However, the trombone is also a highly expressive instrument with a tone quality that - to my ear, at least - resembles the human voice in certain registers. Consequently my jazz-tinged piece juxtaposes calm, expansive chorales with livelier and more strongly rhythmic episodes. These faster sec-

tions range from playful and dance-like to chaotic and spiky as I sought to explore the instrument's more virtuosic side. The contrasts of the music's episodes are further heightened through the use of mutes which change the colour of the ensemble's sound throughout the piece.

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I entitled the work, **Orb processions** as the idea of circles is key to the music's identity. The piece is a chaconne - meaning that it is built upon a series of chords which circle round and round - but also takes the form of a rondo, in which a main idea is constantly returned to in juxtaposition with contrasting musical material. The idea of processions meanwhile is of continued interest to me as a composer and this piece is one of many of my works which explores this fascination. There is no overarching extra-musical idea behind the piece, but every so often a scene from a short story by Antonio Tabucchi - in which a king suffering from heartbreak and insomnia summons trumpeters to wake his court in the middle of the night - would come to my mind whilst I was composing, and so I like to think that something of Tabucchi's story found its way into my music.



www.peterlongworthcomposer.com

31

mf *p* *poco* *p*

mf *p*

mf *p*

p *mf*

mf

[H] (2+2+3) (2+2+3)

p *mf* *p* *mf*

mf *p* *mf*

mf *p* *mf*

mf *p*

[I]

f *p*

p *f* *mf* *p*

p *f* *mf* *p*

f *mf* *p*