

DISSERTATION: Meditation on the Celestial Macrocosm: An Original Composition for Clarinet, Bassoon, Trumpet, Electronics, Organ, Violin, and Viola

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Meditation on the Celestial Macrocosm is a single movement work for clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, electronic sounds, organ, violin, and viola, to be played in a reverberant medieval-style cathedral. The music is designed to interact with the room's acoustics and visual elements.

This composition is based on a narrative of a dream of the apocalyptic end of time in the distant future. In the narrative the soul envisions an interstellar pilgrimage to an apocalyptic supernova heralding the gates of the Divine as they open. In the latter part of the story a surprising retreat from the supernova reveals this vision to be a dream.

The work comprises a continuous twenty-two minutes of material, designed in four large, adjoining sections called crossings. Within each crossing are smaller sections, each representing a stage of the journey. The music is framed by a bell-shaped dynamic arc and a semi-palindromic form, so that the music begins with a solemn whisper, reaches a level of awed grandeur, and ends in the hushed manner of the beginning. Minimal, repetitive motives and rhythms are used to form melodic figures. Other passages are formed by birdsong-like figures arranged in groups. Electronic sounds include sustained gestures, in some cases in coordination with the organ to create unique timbres.

Elements of style include harmony and textures inspired by medieval, modernist, and more recent music. The accompanying document includes a literature review of prior influential

compositions as well as an analysis of my music and a discussion how it will contribute to the further development of the contemporary repertoire.