

Dreaming of the Dawn (2004) for stereo CD.

Duration 14:30

The title, *Dreaming of the Dawn* comes from a short poem by Emily Dickinson. The work uses heavily treated instrumental recordings (mainly woodwind) and has at its heart, a kind of 'orchestral' feel (partly due to the way in which the sounds were 'orchestrated'). During the process of making the material, the poem was always present, along with its bleak and somewhat contradictory undertones. It took a long time to find the sound that was going to represent the work (first heard after a 10 second introduction).

Many ideas were 'in the air' as the work was mixed, including the continued search for formal cohesion, not just through highly obvious repetition and demarcation of phrases, but through consistency of working method and (although this might not be heard) constraint within the sound material.

Dreams - are well - but Waking's better,
If One Wake at Morn -
If One wake at Midnight - better -
Dreaming - of the Dawn -

Sweeter - the Surmising Robins -
Never Gladdened Tree -
Than a Solid Dawn - confronting -
Leading to no Day - (Emily Dickinson, c. 1862)

The work begins in a reflective mood with a short passage using woodwind sounds. The 'signature' theme then appears (a pitch shifted sound with plenty of high-frequency artifacts). A thorough development begins after about one minute using a tumbling rhythm. The structural analogy (if there is one) is that of a journey in a 'stick shift' car. We are getting from A to B but what is perhaps more interesting is the continual use of the clutch, gear lever, brake and accelerator in propelling us forward, never at quite the same speed.

The opening wind passage recurs and is immediately answered, sending us off into another development of the 'signature' material this time somewhat more relaxed. A high-frequency splintered sound leads directly to a 'comedy moment' (a ludicrous chord, often heard in horror films) but this is short-lived and we quickly enter another development passage, this time culminating with high-energy pulse. The opening returns and suggests a programmatic rendition of the Dickinson text with its bird-like imitations, but it's all preparation for the final statement of the 'signature'.

Dreaming of the Dawn was commissioned by the Groupe de Recherches Musicales in 2003, mixed in Studio116A, GRM-Maison Radio France, Paris, January 2004 and premiered on 14th March in Salle Olivier Messiaen, Maison Radio France. It was awarded first prize in the Musica Viva electroacoustic composition competition in 2004.