

About the *Pachamama Symphony*

To enter an original piece for wind band by breath alone is in itself a first appeal to the listener's attention. For it is by inhalation alone that Denis Levaillant's *Pachamama Symphony* (2014-15) begins. From this breath of life, the sound is born, disorganized, or organized. Quite quickly, the sound universe developed by the composer offers a noticeable tension that attracts subtle attention. Thus the telluric function of the Mother Earth (*Pachamama*) is presented. After this invitation/*overture* comes *Tarqueada*. From chaos is born the iridescent primordial sound, irresistible in its reprises by a play of chorus between instrumental sections (woodwinds or saxophones). From what seems to be a rhythm of origins, an exuberant vegetal vision is born where the foot of Man strikes Mother Earth, and the people of the air inhabit luxuriant foliage. The folkloric Bolivian *Mohoceñada*, a well-known Carnival-time theme, seems to introduce the idea of the human community. From the opening dance, the circle of Men takes form. Diverse, unique humankind, which the references to jazz, entirely present in a chorus of saxophones, invite to understand as the uniqueness of the being and its need of the collective. All this brings us back to the dance circle even though the storm of sound, with a page written for a multitude of differed entries, says the unique. From the Men's dance, the diversity of the world is also born. From the chaos and stridencies, the individual song is reborn. *Sicuris* begins with gripping sound effects, the probable evocation of everything that flees to assemble better, or the free interpretation of the endless discussions of Indian musicians calling to one another and challenging each other before entering into the traditional song. A new *canción* theme is born in a low register then stands out in an echo phenomenon. The *fugato* form and harmonic treatment, imbued with Baroque music, is underscored by a trumpet in the upper register - a harmonic treatment that makes one the whole. A sound carpet of ritual drums marks the opening bars of *Suris*. Very quickly, as in numerous reprises in the whole work, one idea chases another. Here, it is a calming universe, a starry night on the borderline of an aquatic world in which the listener bathes. The keyboard percussion underscores this fluid, liquid sensation. From organized, the sound deconstructs and streams. Finally, a flute in G introduces *Kantus*. An initiatory chant, its two-beat structure could quickly become repetitive. A 'copy and paste' lacking in imagination would be an easy pitfall that Denis Levaillant manages to avoid in grand style. The structure of the phrase goes from an exposition over three bars to four, five, and then six bars, to which the listener adheres smoothly. Can we perceive a feminine figure in this theme? The percussion section breaks this ritual dance, a masculine form that dictates the march of time. And the couple thus formed, man/woman runs through the harmonic space in a heady, irresistible trance over a rhythmic ostinato close to the Cuban bolero. It is Mankind in its entirety that is marching, singing, and proclaiming its optimism: calm, order, peace, hope. Because music is nothing but the expression of a soul, Denis Levaillant sweeps us along in his creativity. His culture and musical knowledge do not lack references and subtle mixtures: ethnic singing, Baroque music from Bolivian Catholic missions, jazz treatment, or even an undisguised homage to Maurice Ravel in the finale. However, it all remains Denis Levaillant. The use of highly original but demanding instrumentation and the instrumental combinations create colors that have been little explored up until now. Not without a dash of humor and infinite tenderness, accessible to all publics, here contemporary music is superbly defended and honors the band. May Denis Levaillant have many more surprises of this kind in store for us.

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