DAVID MASLANKA

Recitation Book

FOR

SAXOPHONE QUARTET

MASLANKA PRESS
NEW YORK
Recitation Book
for Saxophone Quartet
(2006)

Contents:

1 Broken Heart: Meditation on the chorale melody “Der du bist drei in einigkeit” (You who are three in one) (4’30”)

4 Prelude/Chorale: Meditation on the chorale melody “Jesu meine Freude” (Jesus my joy) (4’30)

7 Ecco moriro dunque (Look! My Death is Near!) - Gesualdo di Venosa, 1596 (1’30”)

8 Meditation on the Gregorian Chant “O Salutaris Hostia” (O Salvation’s Victim) (4’)

10 Fanfare/Variations on the chorale melody “Durch Adams Fall” (Through Adam’s fall) (10’)

Program note

I have loved Italian madrigals since my student days, and “Recitation Book” for Saxophone Quartet feels something like a madrigal collection, but with a grand finale. My approach to composing is vocal, and the singing quality of saxophones is one of their fine strengths. The movements in this piece are relatively brief and intimate songs.

Much of my recent music draws its inspiration from the distant past. An old melody pushes open a door in my mind and a parallel world or dream makes its way out. Each piece in this set found its inspiration in that way.

The title “Recitation Book” implies a set of lessons. I don’t want to say explicitly what each “lesson” means, but the titles of the pieces circle around the theme of death, which for me implies the passing of the old, and the coming of the new.

I have not only quoted a number of old melodies in “Recitation Book,” but two whole brief pieces as well. This first is J.S. Bach’s four-part chorale “Jesu, meine Freude;” and the second is an arrangement for the four saxophones of the five-voiced madrigal “Ecco moriro dunque” by Gesualdo di Venosa.

My acquaintance with the Masato Kumoi Saxophone Quartet began several years ago when I received a CD in the mail. When recordings come unbidden I am generally prepared for something less than I want to hear. But this rendition of “Mountain Roads” (my first composition for saxophone quartet) was the finest performance of the piece that I had ever heard. Since then the Kumoi Quartet has performed the piece many times, and they have promoted it widely among players in Japan. In 2004, Masato Kumoi commissioned me to write another quartet especially for his group, and you will hear the first performance of “Recitation Book” tonight. In May of 2005, Masato Kumoi recorded a solo CD (Simple Songs, Cafua Records), and included my “Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano.” This is a wonderful performance, and I am deeply indebted to him for his brilliant play, and the depth of his musical insight. I look forward to many more years of our collaboration.

—David Maslanka
Broken Heart: Meditation on the chorale melody “Der du bist drei in Einigkeit” (You who are three in one)
Broken Heart: Meditation on the chorale melody “Der du bist drei in Einigkeit” (You who are three in one)
Broken Heart: Meditation on the chorale melody “Der du bist drei in Einigkeit” (You who are three in one)
Prelude/Chorale: Meditation on “Jesu meine Freude” (Jesus my joy)
Prelude/Chorale: Meditation on "Jesu meine Freude" (Jesus my joy)
Prelude/Chorale: Meditation on "Jesu meine Freude" (Jesus my joy)
Ecco morirò dunque (Look! My death is near!)

Gesualdo di Venosa, 1596

\( \text{\textit{Ecco morirò dunque}} \)

\( \text{\textit{(Look! My death is near!}}} \)
Meditation on “O Salutaris Hostia” (O Salvation’s Victim) - Gregorian Chant

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{Tenor} & : \quad \text{ca. 108 - smoothly} \\
\text{S.} & : \\
\text{T.} & : \\
\text{B.} & : \\
\end{align*} \]

brief pause - go right on

slowing...

\text{Meditation on “O Salutaris Hostia” (O Salvation’s Victim) - Gregorian Chant}
Meditation on “O Salutaris Hostia” (O Salvation’s Victim) - Gregorian Chant
Fanfare/Variations on “Durch Adams Fall” (Through Adam’s Fall)
Fanfare/Variations on "Durch Adams Fall" (Through Adam's Fall)
in tempo (same tempo)

Fanfare/Variations on "Durch Adams Fall" (Through Adam's Fall)
Fanfare/Variations on “Durch Adams Fall” (Through Adam’s Fall)
Fanfare/Variations on “Durch Adams Fall” (Through Adam’s Fall)
Fanfare/Variations on “Durch Adams Fall” (Through Adam’s Fall)
Fanfare/Varianions on “Durch Adams Fall” (Through Adam’s Fall)
Fanfare/Variations on “Durch Adams Fall” (Through Adam’s Fall)
Fanfare/Variations on “Durch Adam’s Fall” (Through Adam’s Fall)
Fanfare/Variations on “Durch Adams Fall” (Through Adam’s Fall)
Fanfare/Variations on "Durch Adams Fall" (Through Adam's Fall)
Fanfare/Variations on “Durch Adams Fall” (Through Adam’s Fall)
Fanfare/Variations on "Durch Adams Fall" (Through Adam’s Fall)
Fanfare/Variations on “Durch Adams Fall” (Through Adam’s Fall)

Missoula, MT 2/22/06