SPRINGFEST
EXPERIMENTS IN MUSIC

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Oracle by Robert Morris

Oracle is a sixty-four-minute composition for singers and instrumentalists including percussion. It is the third of my pieces designed to be played out of doors, in a park or in the country, woods, highlands, and the like. It may be also played indoors.

The structure of Oracle is based on the I-Ching, one of the Chinese Classic texts (compiled c. 1150 b.c.) in which sixty-four hexagrams are used to suggest appropriate actions in response to questions posed by the reader. Each hexagram is a collection of six lines that are either broken (- -) or unbroken (---). I use each hexagram to determine the musical features of a corresponding section of the composition; there are therefore 64 sections, each lasting one minute. The order of the hexagrams does not follow the orders given above, but are sequenced so that between two successive hexagrams only one line changes from broken to unbroken or vice versa. This ensures that the music based on the hexagrams flows along smoothly, without great change or abruption.

As in my other outdoor pieces, each section is associated with a basic pitch. Thus there is a sequence of 64 notes that guides the music forward. These notes are overlapped so that, excepting the first and last three sections, each section has not only a basic pitch, but a basic four-note chord

that is articulated in various ways. The structure of the basic pitch sequence permits the chords to represent each of the 29 types of four-note harmonies (available in the equal-tempered system of pitches) exactly once in a given order, then in retrograde.

~ Robert Morris

Performers:

Anahita Abbasi

Rachel Allen

Tommy Babin

Landon Baines

Kyle Adam Blair

TJ Borden

Barbara Byers

Danny Chavarin

Elisabet Curbelo

Fiona Digney

Annie Hui-Hsin Hsieh

Steve Lewis

Ioannis Mitsialis

Eric Moore

Charissa Noble

Jonathan Nussman

Celeste Oram

Stephanie Richards

Felipe Rossi

Jacob Sundstrom

Abbie Weaver

Kiyoe Wellington

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