

Yongwoo Lee

The Music of Earth

for string quartet

2023

PROGRAM NOTE

This music draws inspiration from Leonard Bernstein's book *The Unanswered Question*. Bernstein explores 20th-century music within the context of tonality and humanity's existence on Earth. He delves into two main subjects: Stravinsky's polyphonic approach and Schoenberg's serialism. His conclusion regarding both compositional techniques is that they ultimately retain tonal context.

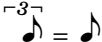
In the final part of the book, Bernstein poses the question of what future music will entail. In response, I cautiously propose minimalism, freeform, and microtonality as contemporary music history following the paths of polyphony and serialism. My point is that we cannot escape the concept of tonality as inhabitants of Earth. Within this context, this piece narrates history through its three movements (1st to 3rd). The structure, musical texture, and intervals I've utilized have been influenced by observed historical developments.


Ultimately, the microtones attempted by the second violin and viola in the 3rd movement aim to present each tonic of polyphony introduced in the 1st movement and converge into the natural C note. Various aspects characterize the sounds that need to be tuned away from these microtones. Whether due to players' instincts or instruments' inherent tendencies to revert to the tuned tone, even if the second violin or viola excels at producing distinct notes, the first violin or cello might deviate from its tuning and mirror the distinct notes of the other instruments. This ultimately signifies a return to the nature of sound governed by the rules derived from natural harmonics.


Therefore, I titled the work *The Music of Earth*, drawing inspiration from Bernstein's reference to *The Poetry of Earth* by John Keats in a similar context.

1. Polyphonic Serialism —————> 2. Minimal Free Form —————> 3. Microtonality

EXPLANATION

 Metric modulation: just changing in pulse rate

 White noise (on the bridge)

 Overpressure bowing

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1. Polyphonic Serialism

Passionately, play with whole body ♩ = 112

This musical score system consists of four staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature. It features a melodic line with dynamic markings *p* < *f* > *p*, *mf*, *p sub.*, and *ppp*, along with a glissando marking. The second staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb) and a 4/4 time signature, with dynamics *p* < *f* > *p*, *p sub.*, and *ppp*. The third staff is in bass clef with a key signature of three flats (Bb, Eb, and Ab) and a 4/4 time signature, with dynamics *p* < *f* > *p sub.* < *f* > *p sub.* and *ppp*. The bottom staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature, with dynamics *fp* and *mf* > *p*. A double bar line with repeat dots is located below the first system.

8

This musical score system continues from the first, starting at measure 8. It consists of four staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature, with dynamics *p*, *pp*, *pp*, and *ppp*, and a G.P. (Grave) marking. The second staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb) and a 4/4 time signature, with dynamics *p* < *f* > *mp*, *pppp*, *ppp*, and *Bb:*, and a rubato marking. The third staff is in bass clef with a key signature of three flats (Bb, Eb, and Ab) and a 4/4 time signature, with dynamics *p* < *f* > *mp*, *pp*, and *mf*, and a rubato marking. The bottom staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature, with dynamics *p* < *f* > *mp* > *ppp*, *pp*, and a G.P. marking.

17

pp *mp* *ppp* *p*

p *f* *mp* *pp* *p* *f* *p* *f* *ppp* *p*

Ab: *ppp* *f* *pp* *p* *f* *ppp*

p *f* *mp*

25

rit.

(D:ii, Em) (db:v, Abm)

Molto adagio ♩ = 60

(a: 10) (Bb: I)

Pressing forward, sadly ♩ = 150

ppp *ppp* *pppp* *mp* *ii*

ppp *pp* *pppp* *f* *mp* *ii* *pizz.* *IV*

p *mp* *pppp* *mp* *ii*

ppp *p* *pppp* *mp*

33

(f: ii) (E: I) (Ab:)

f *fp* *mp* *p* *pp* *mp* *expr* *iii* *V* *mf*

arco *f* *mp* *fp* *mf* *pp* *mp* *expr* *mf*

pizz. *f* *mp* *fp* *mf* *pp* *mp* *expr* *mf*

V *p* *I* *f* *p* *mf* *IV* *pp* *I* *V* *mf*

mp *f* *fp* *mf* *pp* *I* *mf*

==

.....Slightly calm ♩ = 90

P9 A: Pressing forward ♩ = 120

(sul pont.)

56

p *ppp* *mp* *ord.* *f* *3* *3* *3*

sul pont. *p* *ppp* *mp* *ord.* *mf* *più mf*

sul pont. *p* *ppp* *mp* *ord.* *mf* *più mf*

sul pont. *p* *ppp* *mp* *ord.* *mf* *più mf*

accel.

P10 Bb:

mf \rightarrow f \rightarrow p \rightarrow più p \rightarrow fp \rightarrow mp \rightarrow f expr \rightarrow mp

V

p \rightarrow più p \rightarrow p \rightarrow mf \rightarrow p

I vi V

Firmly $\text{♩} = 60$ Like it's growing $\text{♩} = 112$ Più mosso Bubblingly $\text{♩} = 140$

rubato

ff \rightarrow p \rightarrow fff \rightarrow mp \rightarrow fff \rightarrow pp

rubato

ff \rightarrow p \rightarrow fff \rightarrow mp \rightarrow fff \rightarrow pp

R4 Ab:

ff \rightarrow p \rightarrow fff \rightarrow mp \rightarrow fff \rightarrow pp

G.P.

G.P.

G.P.

G.P.

rit. Vivace $\text{♩} = 176$ Calmly $\text{♩} = 60$ Bubblingly $\text{♩} = 140$

P7

ppp \rightarrow pp \rightarrow p \rightarrow p

pizz. G.P.

pizz. G.P.

pizz. G.P.

pizz. G.P.

ppp \rightarrow pp \rightarrow p

89

RI3

P0

sul pont. arco

pp

p

pizz.

sul pont. arco

pp

p

sul pont. arco

pp

p

sul pont. arco

pp

p

pizz.

p

97

R0

R0

P6

I6 arco

P0

arco

ppp

mp

pizz.

p

arco

ppp

mp

pizz.

p

arco

ppp

mp

pizz.

p

105

P0

R4

white noise (on bridge)

pizz.

p

white noise (on bridge)

arco

ppppp

white noise (on bridge)

arco

ppppp

white noise (on bridge)

arco

ppppp

white noise (on bridge)

arco

ppppp

white noise (on bridge)

arco

ppppp

==

[illegible]

40

vib. gliss. molto vib. nat.

mf *mfexpr* *f*

mf *mp* *mfexpr* *f*

mp *mf* *mp* *f*

mf *mfexpr*

47

mp *fexpr*

p *mf-p* *mp* *mp < fp*

p *mf-p* *mp* *mp < fp*

p *mp* *mf* *p*

53

accel. rit.

mf *mfexpr* *f* *mp*

mp *mf* *f* *mp*

mp *f* *mp* *f*

mf *mp* *mf* *p*

Più mosso ♩ = 102 accel.....

58

f *p* *pp*

f *p* *pp*

f *p* *mf* *mf*

p *mp* *mf*

..... Vigorous ♩ = 102 Meno mosso ♩ = 90 Slowly ♩ = 60 rit..... B Allegro ♩ = 116

63

pp *ppp* *f sub.* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*

pp *f sub.* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

ppp *f sub.* *p* *pp* *pp* *pp* *mp*

ppp *f sub.* *p* *pp* *pp* *pp* *p*

Più mosso ♩ = 120

68

mp *mf* *mf* *mf*

mp *mf* *mf* *mf*

mp *mf* *mf* *mf*

mp *mf*

74 vib. A tempo ($\text{♩} = 120$)

p *mp* *gliss.* *mf*

80 $\text{rit.} \dots \text{Vigorous}$ ($\text{♩} = 120$) Play 3 times

mf *fp* *f* *mf* *fp* *f*

86 Play 5 times

mp *f* *mf* *f* *mp* *ff* *più ff*

[illegible]

Musical score for measures 111-118. The score is written for four staves (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/8. Measure 111 starts with a treble clef staff playing a melodic line with a *fp* (fortissimo piano) dynamic, followed by a *f* (fortissimo) dynamic. The bass clef staff plays a rhythmic accompaniment. Measure 112 continues the melodic line. Measure 113 has a *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic. Measure 114 has a *f* (fortissimo) dynamic. Measure 115 has a *f* (fortissimo) dynamic. Measure 116 has a *f* (fortissimo) dynamic. Measure 117 has a *f* (fortissimo) dynamic. Measure 118 has a *f* (fortissimo) dynamic. A tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 144$ is present above the staff in measure 115.

Musical score for measures 119-124. The score is written for four staves (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/8. Measure 119 starts with a treble clef staff playing a melodic line with a *p* (piano) dynamic, followed by a *mp* (mezzo-piano) dynamic. The bass clef staff plays a rhythmic accompaniment. Measure 120 continues the melodic line. Measure 121 has a *mp* (mezzo-piano) dynamic. Measure 122 has a *mp* (mezzo-piano) dynamic. Measure 123 has a *mp* (mezzo-piano) dynamic. Measure 124 has a *mp* (mezzo-piano) dynamic. A tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 144$ is present above the staff in measure 119.

Musical score for measures 125-132. The score is written for four staves (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/8. Measure 125 starts with a treble clef staff playing a melodic line with a *f* (fortissimo) dynamic, followed by a *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic. The bass clef staff plays a rhythmic accompaniment. Measure 126 continues the melodic line. Measure 127 has a *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic. Measure 128 has a *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic. Measure 129 has a *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic. Measure 130 has a *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic. Measure 131 has a *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic. Measure 132 has a *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic. A tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 144$ is present above the staff in measure 125.

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3. Microtonality

Adagio $\text{♩} = 40$

accel molto rit.

Peacefully $\text{♩} = 60$ ($\text{♩} = 120$)

28

mf p pizz. arco mp pp

mf arco mp ppp

mf arco pp

pp mf pp

33

mf mf sf pp mp

mf mp

mf p pizz. arco

sf p pizz. arco

39

over pressure bowing

B Peacefully = 60 (♩ = 120)

until measure 57, all notes nat.

until measure 57, all notes nat.

over pressure bowing

over pressure bowing

over pressure bowing

over pressure bowing

mp f f < ff p pp

mp f f < ff p

mp p f f < ff p

mp f f < ff p pp

61a tempo (♩ = 140)

Violin I: *mp*, *mf*, *mf*, *gliss.*
 Violin II: *mp*, *mf*, *pizz.*, *arco*
 Viola: *p*, *f*, *mf*, *arco*
 Cello/Double Bass: *mp*, *mf*, *mf*, *col legno*

67 rit..... a tempo (♩ = 140) Slowly ♩ = 90

Violin I: *mp*, *mf*, *mp*, *f*, *mf*, *mp*, *p*
 Violin II: *mf*, *p*, *mf*, *pp*, *mf*, *mp*, *p*
 Viola: *col legno*, *mp*, *p*, *f*, *mf*, *mp*, *p*
 Cello/Double Bass: *p*, *pp*, *mf*, *mp*, *p*

75 rit..... Dark, serioso ♩ = 40

non vib.
sul tasto

*) concert B-flat
(no microtone)
non vib.
sul tasto

*) concert A-flat
(no microtone)
non vib.
sul tasto

non vib.
sul tasto

Violin I: *pp*, *pp*, *vib.*
 Violin II: *pp*, *vib.*
 Viola: *pp*, *vib.*
 Cello/Double Bass: *pp*, *pp*, *vib.*

80

ppp

**) 1/4 sharp*

ppp

**) 1/4 flat*

ppp



84

ppp

**) tutti: unison C nat.*

**) tutti: unison C nat.*

hold the tension until the end

hold the tension until the end

hold the tension until the end

hold the tension until the end