

Cauda Pavonis

CHELSEA KOMSCHLIES



You are waking up from a procedure which you did not survive.

The walls of the chamber are crystal, of myriad colors which have no names.

Your skin is gone, replaced by the sweet scent of fermentation.











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2020



INSTRUMENTATION:

Flute doubling piccolo

Oboe doubling English horn

Clarinet in Bb

2 Violins

Viola

Cello

Double Bass

Percussion 1:

Mark tree, 2 tuned gongs (G4, A4), 4 timpani (32", 29", 26", 23"), splash cymbal, vibraphone (2 bows), suspended cymbal

Percussion 2:

Chinese bell tree, crotales (2 bows + mallets), tam-tam, steel drum, marimba



DURATION: approx. 7 min.

ABOUT: Cauda Pavonis (Tail of the Peacock) is the alchemical stage that represents the end of putrefaction and the beginning of fermentation, in which an array of iridescent colors appear out of the darkness in the imaginary laboratory flask. This symbol of rebirth after death is also connected to the liminal state between sleeping and waking, and the "eyes" of the peacock's tail represent spiritual sight and visions.

The Creation of Cauda Pavonis was supported by The National Orchestral Institute + Festival.

If printing a short program note, please use the text on the previous page rather than the text above. You may use both if printing a longer note.

Text on previous page by the composer. Artwork: photo by Matthew Rader (Unsplash, public domain) processed in the Deep Dream Generator. Please contact for projectable image(s) if desired: chelsea@komschlies.com

PERFORMANCE INFO:

QUARTER TONES:

 ϕ quarter-tone flat ϕ three quarter-tones flat

‡ quarter-tone sharp # three quarter-tones sharp

ANAMORPHIC EFFECTS:

Anamorphosis in sculptural art refers to a type of illusion in which an image can only be seen from a particular vantage point, otherwise the component parts of the work seem to be jumbled chaos. Examples include the 3D sculptures by artists such as Michael Murphy or Bernard Pras. Or think of constellations of stars; from our viewpoint they seem like collections of dots on a flat plane when in reality the stars that make each constellation exist at hugely varying distances from us.

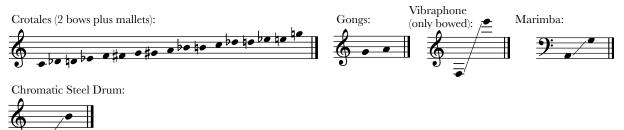
This work contains several examples of anamorphic illusion in which all of the instruments together create a joint illusion. For example, B begins with some tiny squeaks from the woodwinds and violins; these together should sound like the little squeaks of one rusty swingset or hinge rather than individual tone colors. Make sure the woodwinds are a true pianississimo because instruments lose their individual tone colors at very soft dynamics. Measures 18-21 at first glance might look like random noise, but it's a carefully sculpted moment of rising overlapping "overtones" such as might be produced by a large metal object being scraped or bowed. You might think of it as an exploded orchestration of the bowed suspended cymbal that happens here. The inspiration for this moment was a sort of cross between bowed suspended cymbal and bowed waterphone (many video demonstrations of the waterphone online). Likewise think of m. 26 as falling overlapping overtones, or a falling waterphone.

The rhythms in these moments can be quite complex, but if the result just sounds like noisy chaos, something is wrong. It will take careful listening and balancing and precise rhythmic placement on everyone's part in order for the fused illusion to come through.

A different type of fused illusion happens at m. 7-9 and 22-23. This is meant to sound like one combined megainstrument "speaking." The lower voices are asked to imitate speech like contour, and the upper voices, marked much quieter (they should disappear into the sound of the lower instruments) are dyads of actual speech formants.

In general, think of the orchestration in this piece as extending the timbre of some instrument in the ensemble or creating a new hybrid timbre, and balance accordingly.

PERCUSSION INFO:



If the above pitches of gongs are not available, other pitches may be used. Likewise if this particular steel drum is not available, another chromatic drum can be substituted, or the range altered (it is better to substitute a lower range than a higher one). The steel drum is not used as a melody instrument but as a way to enrich the timbre and overtones of the other instruments and should be played very softly in an almost muffled way. There should be just enough volume to enrich the overall timbre of the ensemble but not enough to alert the listener to the fact that a steel drum is playing.

Each percussionist will need two bows.

Four timpani are needed (32", 29", 26", 23").

LICENSING FAQ'S:

Do I need to obtain the composer's permission to perform this work? No, but please tell me about your performances: chelsea@komschlies.com

Do I have to pay to perform this work?

Performances must be licensed by ASCAP, but this doesn't mean that the performers have to pay a fee. Legally, the license and fees involved are the automatically the responsibility of the venue. Most of my performances take place on university campuses, which have their own special licenses. Sometimes negotiations are worked out in which a presenter's or performing ensemble's ASCAP license will cover the performance. If you are performing the work outside the U.S., there will be a licensing arrangement made between ASCAP and your country's Performing Rights Organization.

How do I report the performance?

As soon as you have a concert program (a digital file, either the original pdf or word processing document or a picture of the printed program), performances are reported to ASCAP using this form: https://www.ascap.com/help/registering-your-music/performancenotification. Alternatively, you can send the concert program file/photo to the composer and she will report it (this is even better so I can keep track of my performances).

If I'm not responsible for the license, why do I have to be the one to report the performance? I am owed royalties by ASCAP for each public performance, and this is one of the main ways I make a living as a composer. Unfortunately, I am only paid for performances that are reported, even if the performance was properly licensed. There's no harm in multiple people reporting the performance, so don't assume the venue will properly report it (they often don't!). If the performance takes place on a campus, you *must* report because even though technically the university is required to send in all concert programs for the year (though there are no consequences for them if they don't), ASCAP doesn't go through those programs to find out which composers need to be paid.

What happens if an unlicensed performance takes place?

As soon as the performance is reported, they will bill the venue for the licensing fee retroactively.



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