

Sielunmaisema

2019

for cello and string orchestra

Commissioned by the festival "Permainų muzika" for the Klaipėda's Chamber Orchestra

Dedicated to cellist Mindaugas Bačkus who was a true collaborator in the creation of this piece

Part I was composed during my residency at the MacDowell Colony, parts II-IV were composed while in residence at Copland House, Cortland Manor, New York as a recipient of the Aaron Copland Award.

Sielunmaisema translated from Finnish means a "soul-landscape, a particular place that a person carries deep in the heart and returns to often in memory." It can be described as a landscape that "hits you in the center of your chest, the one you that immediately feels like home." According to the linguist Viktorija Daujotytė "a perceived landscape becomes a soul-landscape or an image and language of consciousness. Landscape is a language formed by a specific place and its people, it is primal poetry preserving the oldest intertwining between nature and language."

Soul-landscape is related to questions of identity and place which resonate with two parallel cultural identities that I carry within - my native Lithuanian and later acquired American. My physical home keeps changing and the only thing that remains is music. In this case, the piece itself becomes an ideal soul-landscape reflecting a native environment as seen through the prism of four seasons.

How many summers does one need to live through to capture the very essence of it? Memory is inherently participating in the creation of a soul-landscape and there is nostalgia for the past as well as for the changing landscape due to global warming. What is remembered and deeply engraved in our mind often doesn't correspond with reality any longer. Only memories hold those freezing cold winters with -30 C temperatures or a gradual transition from summer to autumn.

Movements of the piece: Winter, Spring, Summer and Autumn.

Approximate Duration 32-34 min.

String orchestra

Minimum size:

6 Violins I
6 Violins II
4 Violas
4 Violoncellos
1 Contrabass

Premiere on September 20th, 2019 at the festival "Permainų muzika" in Klaipėda, Lithuania. Performers: Mindaugas Bačkus (cello) and Klaipėda Chamber Orchestra, conductor Hartmut Rohde.