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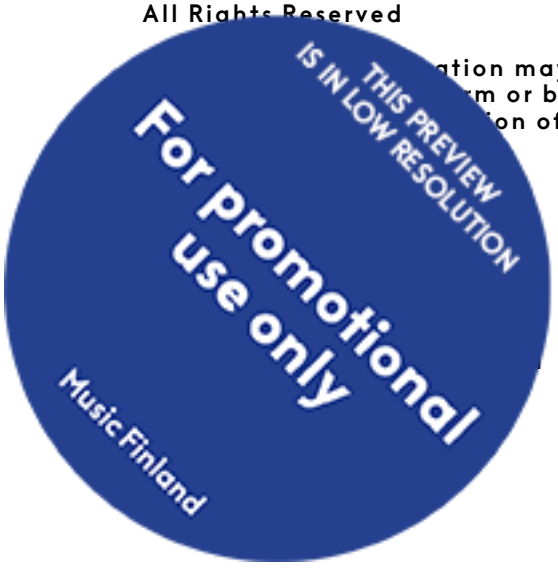
Kaikujen vaellus

for kantele and live-electronics

2017

Music Finland



Kaikujen vaellus was commissioned by Eva Alkula. The commission fee was supported by the Madetoja foundation. The premiere was on 11.11.2017, Camerata hall, Music Centre, Helsinki, in the 30th anniversary concert of the kantele class of the Sibelius Academy.

Kaikujen vaellus (in Finnish, *The wandering of echoes*) is a trip through a few exotic spaces. Microtonal harmonies, strangely behaving echoes and Doppler effects are important elements in this work. This is my first time composing for kantele – and I like a lot the way it fits together with the electronics. The timbre of the kantele also works well with my microtonal harmonies: although the partials are not precisely tuned, they do bring the desired effect.

The kantele is a Finnish traditional stringed instrument. It is set horizontally on a table and played while standing. It is diatonic, with a harp-like system of levers that tighten or loosen the strings in order to raise or lower them by a semitone. *Kaikujen vaellus* can also be performed with minimal changes on a harp or any similar instrument.

Explanation of symbols

 - fermata, short duration

 - fermata, medium duration

 - fermata, long duration

Scordatura is used: all e, a and b strings are tuned 50 cents flat. Each change of tuning is shown afterwards in the key signature, starting from the first staff system after the change.

 - 150 cents flat

 - 50 cents flat

 - 25 cents sharp (used only in the electronics)

p/down using the tuning lever(s)

The live electronics were programmed in the Max software, version 6.1.9. They are activated by the performer using a MIDI pedal, for example a Behringer FCB1010. The main pedal activates each preset in turn. There is also a "panic pedal", for returning to either the previous preset or the one before it, and a reset pedal for returning all the way to preset 0. A simple MIDI sustain pedal or any foot device that sends MIDI messages can also be used. The presets can also be selected using the keyboard of the computer running the electronics.

The presets are marked in the score with numbers inside squares.

Preset 1 turns sound on. It also provides confirmation that MIDI messages from the pedal are received.

Preset 2 triggers an accompanying figure from samples of three notes played on the kantele. The first measure produces the illusion that the electronics continue repeating those very same notes.

Presets 3 to 14 produce echoes with various fixed-tempo rhythms. Sometimes the performer is instructed to pick the tempo from the rhythm of the echoes, in fact using the echoes as a click.

Presets 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14 trigger canons of the live music that are notated in the electronics part. They are either higher or lower in both pitch and tempo compared to the live input, in a similar way to a Doppler effect. In order to stay synchronized with the electronics, it is crucial that the performer follows the tempo given by the echos i.e. the "click".

Presets 15 to 17 trigger samples. As in preset 2, the performer should be synchronized with the samples.

Presets 3 to 14 should be activated before the first note of the measure, since the electronics are triggered by the first played note. Presets 2, 15, 16 and 17 trigger samples and should be activated on the beat.

All necessary files can be downloaded at **https://tinyurl.com/wanderingofechoes.**

The main patch is Kaikujen vaellus ELECTRONICS 03.maxpat.

For more info, please contact Sebastian Dumitrescu at portoseb@gmail.com.

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