Raphael Mak

Sonata

for flute and piano Op. 9 Sonata for Flute and Piano, in B minor, is composed from May to September 2008. It follows the traditional fast-slow-fast layout of a sonata. The piece is based on the Chinese pentatonic scale (do-re-mi-so-la), with other details such as chord progression influenced by new age music ensembles like Secret Garden. The piece is loosely related to the places on Hong Kong Island which I ran or hiked during the summer of 2008.

The first movement is related to Bowen Road, which is a popular jogging venue in Hong Kong. It starts with a slow introduction, after which the piano introduces the melody which is a lively dance is quadruple compound meter, representing the motion of running. The melody is then played by the flute. The secondary theme is calmer in character, and reveals the scenic aspects of the subject. In the development section, the music explores through different keys, and is reminiscent of a storm. The primary theme returns (recapitulation), and the secondary theme is now darker and heavier in character. A flute cadenza is then followed by a brief coda on the piano.

The second movement is in tertiary form, and starts with a solo flute excerpt. The main theme in E minor enters, accompanied by arpeggios on the piano. The middle section is in C major, with a smooth and broad theme, later modulating to C sharp minor. After a brief return of the introduction, the main theme is heard again, with the repeated figures on the piano in the middle section brought along. The coda consists of a flute solo followed by the deep tones of the piano, and the lines of the two instruments gradually rise together, quietly ending the movement in the highest registers of the flute. The movement is related to Jardine's Lookout, a mountain on Hong Kong Island, and the music tries to evoke the scenery of the hills and the city as viewed from the mountain.

The third movement is a lively dance in duple meter, and is largely based on traditional Chinese processional music during festivals such as the Lunar New Year. The movement is in rondo form. The main theme is reminiscent of traditional music with drums and cymbals. The first episode is merry in character, like a folk song celebrating the harvest. The second episode is calm and flowing, like being in a Chinese garden. The sonata ends amidst noisy sounds of processional music.

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