

The Preludes and Songs for Orpheo

A Musical Narration in 8 Parts

Music by *Garrett List*

Text by *Garrett List* and *Francoise Walot*

Performance Notes

The primary difficulty of playing this music is to resolve the stylistic contradictions inherent in the two kinds of writing that are found in the score. The first style is classical written music the second is oral tradition lead sheet writing That is, the music that calls for a kind of dancing feel are not written out completely, only a skeleton or suggestion is given. The musician must therefore invent the rest by ear. This has become common practice for studio musicians, specialising in recording all kinds of music, but classical performers are rarely confronted with this sort of procedure. I have chosen this kind of writing because I have feel that dance rhythms worked best when they were "played" rather than "read. It is, therefore, in the rhythm section that this contradiction is the most evident.

General Notes on Rhythm and Style

"Orpheo's Life"

It is important to say that in "Orpheo's Life" when the musician is confronted with instructions like "light bossa nova" or "hard swing" it is not my intent to try to create an authentic or pure musical reference. These are merely musical perfumes that should appear and disappear like a cloud passing in the sky.

The Complaint

The orchestration of the two lines is free. The music should be played as an improvised game with people starting and stopping at will to change the orchestral colour, taking care to not let any silences appear. But if, by accident, silences do appear, don't be alarmed just keep on going and try to remedy the situation. It's important to be solid for the singer.

"The Contest Song"

"The Contest Song" a real investment of some kind savage energy would be welcomed in the improvised section.

"The Love Song"

The soloing of "The Love Song" should be warm but energetic and for "In the Underworld" exuberant and joyful.

The rhythm section

The Trap Set parts call for both styles of interpretation. In the Trap Set parts themselves it is quite clear when these moments appear because the only sounds notated are the bass drum, the snare drum and/or the hi hat.

The Percussion parts in general do not call for this kind of playing except for the dancing rhythm of the last part "In the Underworld". But it is possible to imagine a sensitive percussionist that could "join in" in the music that calls for a rhythm section kind of function.

The Clavier parts also needs this kind of flexible interpretation. In fact, the clavier is the instrument that ties the 2 kinds of music together. There are moments when the part gives lead sheet type chord indications with written material. Here the player is invited to improvise or read as he/she wishes or finds necessary. For instance, the player may find it more important to play the written part for orchestral clarity or may find it more important and interesting to improvise. In most instances it will be clear to the player what kind of interpretation is to be applied.

I chose the word "clavier" because a synthesizer and a piano should be used. My indications for the synth sounds are very general and in most cases simple and clear enough (as in "bell sound" or "warm strings") The exception being "large sound" by which I mean a large deep pad with a lot of harmonics such as the old D-50 "Fantasia" All commercial synths have some kind of sound that will do the trick.

The piano must find its way into the music. This should make most of the "clavierists" happy because many of you aren't into the joys of synth playing. I prefer leaving these kind of choices to the player but have put in the indications because some players do not want to make these kind of decisions and causes, like time, for instance, which are exterior to the music, may intervene.

The Guitarist is also called upon to play in this fashion. Probably less extreme in the demands but the parts for guitar nevertheless must be viewed in the same way, Especially "In the Underworld" where the guitar becomes a rhythm instrument. In the first bars of Orpheo's Life the guitar has written music with changes he/she could either read or improvise as is asked the pianist in other cases.