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Title

Revolutions

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Author

Adams, Sturdivant

Publication Date

2020

STURDIVANT ADAMS
REVOLUTIONS

Performance notes

Korg MS-20 Synthesizer*
Celesta
Piano**
5-octave Marimba (soft mallets)

Harp 1
Harp 2

Contrabass 1
Contrabass 2
Contrabass 3

FS = the frequency modulation rate of the MS-20 synthesizer.

The dial should be set to about 2.7 at the start of the piece, which yields a tremolo equal to the eighth note pulse at 142 BPM.

O.B. = over-bow
S.P. = sul ponticello
ord. = ordinary

*For a pdf of the exact settings used on the MS-20, contact the composer. The synth should be run through a delay unit at a light to moderate setting to create an approx. 2" tail to the sound.

**Piano damper pedal should be engaged until where marked in bar 174.

Composer's Note

Revolutions is about an obsession with a fundamentally simple idea - that of chromatic harmonic movement downwards. When I was working to shape this piece's material, I suspected that, inherent to this simple concept of continual small movements is the idea of making physical revolutions around something. Much as one may become lost yet also feel a sense of familiarity or even *deja-vu* through such endless harmonic movement, the same goes for the idea of movement through revolutions. We revolve around the sun every year, for example, yet when we reach the same place as we were the previous year, it is familiar yet fundamentally not quite the same place because of everything that's happened since the last time we were "there". In the same spirit, *Revolutions* repeats itself structurally in many ways, yet much harmonic material is not recapitulated; instead new harmonic material is filtered through familiar structural gestures.

At its core, the piece's harmonic structure is a widening of the scope of chromatic bass movement from an initially very small, quick, micro-scale of movement to a broad and larger scale of such movement. The first half of the piece brings variations on a two-chord progression - flavors of a suspended chord followed by a major triad at the tonic - which chromatically descends forever. Half way through the form, a rising melodic contrabass signals the switch to upwards movement. Now, the harmony is in a constant state of both movement upwards by minor thirds, and a larger scale movement downwards in the bass. In other words, after every fourth modulation up by a minor third, the progression starts again a half step lower, creating a similar sense of simultaneous never-ending chromatic movement now both downwards and upwards.

The instrumentation of *Revolutions* was chosen as a sort of homage to my musical upbringing in both contrabass and piano, as well as a recent exploration of analog synthesis. For this piece, the MS-20 synth is treated like a bridge between percussion and wind instruments, the latter of which do not appear in this piece. The synth is treated as a fixed instrument rather than a generator of sound design; the settings of the dials remain unchanged aside from the frequency modulation rate (similar to the rotor rate of a vibraphone) throughout the piece, allowing it to serve in its role as a kind of middle ground between a vibraphone and a flute.

Dedicated to the late American composer Steven Stucky.

Sturdivant Adams
January 2020

REVOLUTIONS

STURDIVANT ADAMS

Fluente ♩ = 142

MS-20 Synthesizer FS 2.7 *mp*

Celesta *mp*

Marimba *soft mallets*

Piano *mp*
damper on
Ped.

Harp 1 *mp*

Harp 2

Contrabass 1 *p*

Contrabass 2 *p*

Contrabass 3

2 6

MS-20

Cel.

Pno.

Hp. 1

Hp. 2

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

Cb. 3

p
Leo.

mp

arp.
mp

mp — *p*

pp — *p*

mp — *p*

11

MS-20

Cel.

Pno.

Hp. 1

Hp. 2

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

Cb. 3

mp

p

S.P.
mfp

mp

mf — *p*

16

MS-20

Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Hp. 1

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

Cb. 3

p

mp

pp

mp

p

gliss.

pizz.

mp

20

MS-20

Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

Cb. 3

p

mp

p

p

p

gliss.

p

p

Mar. *p*

Pno.

Hp. 1 *p*

Cb. 1 *p*

Cb. 2 *p*

Cb. 3



Mar. *mf*

Pno. *mf*

Hp. 1 *mf*

Hp. 2 *mf* *p*

Cb. 1 *mf* *O.B. S.P.* *gliss.*

Cb. 2 *mf*

Cb. 3 *arco* *mf*

43

Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Hp. 1

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

Cb. 3

p

cresc.

ord.

46

Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Hp. 1

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

Cb. 3

p

fluttering, quasi-trill

Cel. *f*

Mar. *f*

Pno. *f*

Hp. 1 *f*

Hp. 2 *f*

Cb. 1 *f* *slow to fast tremolo* *S.P.* *gliss.* *fast to slow*

Cb. 2 *f*

Cb. 3

51

Cel. *mp*

Mar. *p*

Pno. *p*

Hp. 1 *mp*

Hp. 2 *mp*

Cb. 1 *mp* → *ord.*

Cb. 2 *mp*

Cb. 3

FS 2.9

64 11

MS-20

Cel.

Hp. 1

Hp. 2

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

p *mp* *p* *pp*

pp *p* *<p* *<p* *p* *mp*



FS 3.2

69

MS-20

Cel.

Hp. 1

Hp. 2

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

p *mp* *p* *mp*

p *mp* *p*

MS-20 *mf*

Cel. *mf*

Mar. *mf*

Hp. 1 *mf*

Hp. 2

Cb. 1 *fp* IV

Cb. 2 *fp* II

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for measures 73-76. MS-20 has a sustained note with a fermata. The Celesta plays a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The Maracas play a rhythmic pattern of triplets in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Harp 1 and Harp 2 play tremolos. Contrabass 1 and 2 play sustained notes with a fermata. The dynamic markings are *mf* for MS-20, Celesta, and Maracas, and *fp* for the Contrabasses. The piece is in 4/4 time.

76

MS-20

Cel.

Mar.

Hp. 1

Hp. 2

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

6

6

3

3

5

5

5

5

7

#p

78

Cel. *p*

Mar. *p*

Hp. 1 *p*

Hp. 2

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

81

Cel. *pp*

Mar. *pp*

Hp. 1

Cb. 1 *pp*

Cb. 2 *pp*

IV

I

84

MS-20

Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Hp. 1

Hp. 2

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

Cb. 3

mf

ff

9

mf

f

5

mf

ff

mf

3

3

slow to fast

mf

mf

ff

O.B.

f

O.B.

ord.

mf

gliss.

mf

gliss.

mf

Cel.

Mar.

Pno. *stacc. e legg.*
mf

Hp. 1

Hp. 2

Cb. 1 *f*



Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Hp. 1

Hp. 2

Cb. 1 *mf*

18 95

Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Hp. 1

Hp. 2

Cb. 1

f

99

Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Hp. 1

Hp. 2

Cb. 1

mf *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

102

Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Hp. 1

Hp. 2

Cb. 1

f



105

Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Hp. 1

Hp. 2

Cb. 1

4:3

4:3

118

MS-20

Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Hp. 1

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

Cb. 3



121

MS-20

Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Hp. 1

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

Cb. 3

125

MS-20

Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Hp. 1

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

Cb. 3

mp

mf

p



127

Cel.

Pno.

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

Cb. 3

mp

mf

pp

follow contrabass line

arp. notes ad lib. in similar manner

arp. ad lib.

cantando molto vib.

129 23

Cel.

Pno. *arp. ad. lib.*

Cb. 1

Cb. 3

132

Cel. *cantabile*

Pno. *mf*

Cb. 1

Cb. 3

mp *mf*

134

Cel.

Pno. *f*

Hp. 2

Cb. 1 *f*

Cb. 3 *f*

24 137

Cel. *f*

Mar. *f*

Pno. *f*

Hp. 1 *f*
play notes in random order ad lib. in rhythm

Hp. 2

Cb. 2 *martellato*
f
martellato

Cb. 3 *f*

139

Cel. *f*

Mar. *f*

Pno. *f*

Hp. 1 *sim.*

Cb. 2 *f*

Cb. 3 *f*

Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Hp. 1

Cb. 2

Cb. 3



Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Hp. 1

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

Cb. 3

Meno mosso ca ♩ = 130

146 FS 2.0

MS-20 *mp*

Cel.

Mar. *f* *p*

Pno. *f* *p*
con ped.

Cb. 1 *pp*

Cb. 2

Cb. 3 *f* *pp*

150

MS-20

Cel.

Mar. *mf*

Pno. *mf*

Cb. 1

Cb. 2 *pp* *f*

Cb. 3 *f*

152

MS-20

Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

Cb. 3

mf

p

mp

pp

p

156

MS-20

Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

Cb. 3

mf

p

f

pp

f

pp

28 159

MS-20

Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

Cb. 3

mp

p

pp

7

163

MS-20

Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

Cb. 3

p

f

3

5

MS-20

Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

Cb. 3

pp

pp



MS-20

Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

Cb. 3

p

pp

pp

pp

p

pp

MS-20

Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Hp. 1

Hp. 2

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

Cb. 3

The musical score is written for eight instruments: MS-20, Celesta (Cel.), Maracas (Mar.), Piano (Pno.), Harp 1 (Hp. 1), Harp 2 (Hp. 2), and three Contrabasses (Cb. 1, Cb. 2, Cb. 3). The music is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The MS-20 part consists of a long, sustained note. The Celesta and Maracas parts feature intricate rhythmic patterns with triplets and quintuplets. The Piano part has a complex texture with multiple voices and dynamic markings. The Harp parts are mostly silent. The Contrabass parts provide a steady, low-frequency accompaniment, with Cb. 1 and Cb. 2 marked *p* (piano).

Tempo primo ca ♩ = 142

32 174

Pno. *ff*
damper off

mp ————— *ff*

Hp. 1 *mf*

Cb. 1 *ord.*
ff ————— *f* ————— *ff*

Cb. 2 *ord.*
ff ————— *f* ————— *ff*

Cb. 3 *ord.*
ff ————— *f* ————— *ff*

176

Cel. *ff*

Mar. *f*

Pno. *f*

Hp. 1 *f*

Cb. 1 *spicc.*
ff

Cb. 2 *spicc.*
ff

Cb. 3 *spicc.*
ff

Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Hp. 1

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

Cb. 3



Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Hp. 1

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

Cb. 3

188

34

Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Hp. 1

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

Cb. 3

ff

192

Cel.

Mar.

Pno.

Hp. 1

Cb. 1

Cb. 2

Cb. 3

Red.

III

III