

Senarius

{mp3}SenariusA{/mp3}

Senarius is Latin for existence out of six. It is also a term used to describe a 6x6 harmonic series matrix containing 36 cells. There are 11 individual ratios to either side of a 6x6 square's diagonal and the rest are all duplicates. These individuals are valued for their tonal and numerical purity. The ratios 1/6, 1/5, 1/4, 1/3, 2/5, 1/2, 3/5, 2/3, 3/4, 4/5, and 5/6, which are the eleven individuals, with the addition of some in-between ratio rows of my own contrivance are used in this composition. My contrived ratio rows are introduced, for example, between 2/5 and 3/5. These also include 11 parts in the form of a scaled senarius: 2/5, 21/50, 11/25, 23/50, 12/25, 1/2, 13/25, 27/50, 14/25, 29/50 and 3/5, and still more variations. If you are searching for harmonic reference, they can be found in the algorithm.

My first consideration in applying the Senarius was musical. I meditated at the piano silently, while listening and writing a series of 44 tones with no duration. I was then especially tuned to hearing a movement of 4 ascending tones and wrote them connected in 11 parts. That was one of the most musical times I've felt. This is the kernel melody used in each of the 36 segments for this work. The ratios of the senarius, scaled senarius-like ratios and transpositions of the kernel melody are used to generate variations that produce this melodic composition. The rhythmical composition is divided into 12 time domains using 300 seconds as unit time for senarial division of sounding tones, including silence between segments. I could have used 360 seconds which is more perfect i.e. 60 times 6, but I prefer the imperfection; if only because of my own imperfections. Still I wonder and, awe at the perfection, but I decided never to hear it, at least in this composition, because the world seems not able to set peace in perspective. This, I think also, is part of the message of Dr. Martin Luther King and all other luminaries throughout the ages. Again, we do not live long enough to accomplish a change in the human condition for world peace. I do not discount the idea, a tip of the scale toward peace. If enough people on the planet maintain a constant unified state of mind (Jung, collective unconscious). Of all the religions, I find the philosophy of Buddhism (not a religion) and Zen to be best paths toward this end; and of course without a doubt, in combination with all religions and philosophies existent. Tolerance!

The Senarius algorithm solved what would otherwise be some very tedious operations. Senarial transpositions and attached senarial durations work upon the kernel melody with geometric purity. Writing algorithms has allowed me to join two worlds that are core in my artistic expression.

Drew Lesso

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