

Peter Adriaansz

No. 13 Comfort, for Orchestra (2001)

Commissioned by: Holland Festival, with financial support from the Netherlands Fund for the Creation of Music

Info/Program Note:

Comfort, for Orchestra was written in 2001 for the opening concert of the Holland Festival in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, where it was premiered by the Radio Philharmonic Orchestra. The piece is an 'exercise' in strict note-to-note counterpoint on a line which was constructed in such a way that it seems to perpetuate itself infinitely. The title was taken from the 23rd Psalm (thy rod and thy staff shall comfort me) and re-interpreted in the sense of 'judgment brings solace' (instead of the usual shepardly connotations); a theme which recurred frequently throughout my earlier works. In orchestrating *Comfort* I sought to treat the orchestra as one huge instrument - something akin to hammering on the piano with 100 separate hands - and specifically chose an extremely dissonant harmonic language, a dissonance which was further enhanced by the use of the musicians' feet and a battery of very abrasive percussion instruments. The piece then proceeds as one grand build up of sound.

To my great surprise nonetheless, *Comfort* provoked an indescribable riot upon its first performance; a response which virtually outlasted the entire duration of the piece itself. Whether this response was due to a suddenly perceived 'lack of quality' of the piece or due to misgivings about either the title, the use of the musicians' feet or the entry of the alarm-bells, or due to the deconstruction of the orchestra in the manner I chose to orchestrate - or all of the above - is something which still puzzles me to this day. Subsequent performances by other orchestras, in any case proceeded without any further ado.

instrumentation:

Large orchestra

duration:

7'

first performance:

Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra
Jun 6 2001
Concertgebouw, Amsterdam
Cond. Micha Hamel

special features:

large alarm bells for the percussion. Score can be obtained through MCN Amsterdam