

M. D. OWENSBY

THE VILLAGE ON STILTS

FOR STRING QUARTET

(STRING QUARTET NO.3)

Narrative behind “The Village on Stilts”

The Village on Stilts is based on a transcription of a dream, which weaves its way through each of the three movements:

Movement I: The scene begins at dusk, the dreamer finds himself in a rickety wooden village, standing above an endless black abyss, the buildings supported by wooden poles stretching down beyond the darkness below. There are strange people here, seemingly impoverished, yet sinister and maniacal. They proceed with their lives, oblivious to the threat of the abyss.

The Jig shows a scene in the marketplace, bustling with people moving quickly, shouting over each other, pushing and shoving each other to get to their destinations. There is a drunkard hollering about being saved, but he is generally ignored.

The Habanera introduces an unusual character: a slender young woman with blood red hair. With so much of the scene drab and filled with shades of brown, the bright hair of the woman cannot be ignored by the dreamer, yet she is ignored by the general populace. She is illusive, appearing only for seconds, flashing a grin, and disappearing, as if warning of a violent fate.

The Jazz Ride describes a gang of suspicious characters loitering away from the crowds. They chat rapidly amongst themselves and trade glances at the rest of the village. The villagers then begin to shut themselves away in their homes with great haste, as fear sets in.

Movement II: The night has progressed and the townspeople have shut themselves away in their homes. The dreamer remains outside, wandering, seeking shelter. A lurking fear alerts the dreamer that something is amiss, but it is too late. Slowly, the village on stilts begins to crumble as a monstrous entity begins to rise up from the abyss. Although never explicitly seen, the beast slowly devours the village as the dreamer frantically searches for stable footing. The chaos is over suddenly as the village and the monstrosity disappear altogether without a trace.

Movement III: The dreamer now sits alone on a cliff overlooking the abyss. Peace has been restored and only the last of the dust has yet to settle from where the village on stilts had been. Just below the cliff, there is a whirlpool of bright blues and reds which swirl endlessly, never mixing, and posing no threat. The sun rises on the great abyss.

Score
Duration: 20'

To the Kadath Quartet
String Quartet No. 3 "The Village on Stilts"
I. Jubilant and Gaudy Dances

M. D. Owensby

Introduction, Dusk $\text{♩} = 60$

Con sord.

Violin I
mp
p
pp

Violin II
mp
p
pp

Viola
mp
p
pp

Cello
mp
p
pp

5

Vln. I
pp
Senza sord.

Vln. II
ppp
ppp
Senza sord.

Vla.
ppp
ppp
Senza sord.

Vc.
ppp
ppp
Senza sord.

Dance I: Jig

♩ = 146

A

8

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

f

f

f

f somewhat violently

mf

mf

14

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

B

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

arco

mf somewhat violently

B

Musical score for section B, measures 1-15. Instruments: Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., Vc. Dynamics: *pp*, *mp*, *p*. Features: triplets, a quintuplet in Vln. II.

C Slightly Slower ♩ = 48

Musical score for section C, measures 16-18. Instruments: Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., Vc. Dynamics: *mp*. Features: *poco rit.*, triplets.

Musical score for section C, measures 19-22. Instruments: Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., Vc. Dynamics: *mf*, *f*. Features: triplets, crescendo/decrescendo markings.

mp somewhat shorter, yet still relaxed, without accents

22

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

f

C

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

ff

f

f

28

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

f

II. Chaos and Crumbling

Dark and dragging, but slowly accelerating ♩ = 60
haunting, but very slowly getting louder and more fierce

The musical score is arranged in three systems, each with four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The first system (measures 1-8) shows the Cello and Viola beginning with a *pp* dynamic. The second system (measures 9-11) features Violin I and II with *pp* dynamics and *sul pont.* markings, while the Viola and Cello play *dolce*. The third system (measures 12-15) continues the *dolce* texture for the lower strings, with Violin I and II maintaining their *pp* and *sul pont.* parts.

III. The Cliff and the Red-Blue Maelstrom

Slow ♩ = 52

Violin I: *pp*, *ppp anemic*, *rit.*, *Slower*

Violin II: *pp*, *ppp anemic*, *rit.*, *Slower*

Viola: *con sord.*, *mp*, *non espress. but with vibrato*, *molto*

Cello: *molto*

Faster, but without urgency (♩ = 62)

Vln. I: *pp*, *rit.*, **A** *Steady, somewhat mournfully* ♩ = 48, *pp*

Vln. II: *pp*, *pp*

Vla.: *pp*, *senza sord.*, *pizz.*, *mp*

Vc.: *mf*, *molto espress. and languishing*

13

Vln. I: *pizz.*, *arco*, *mf*

Vln. II: *mf*

Vla.: *arco*, *p*, *mf*

Vc.: *f*