



Guillaume CONNESSON

Le Rire de Sarai

Guillaume Connesson (b. 1970) studied piano, history of music, choir analysis and direction at the Conservatoire National de Région de Boulogne-Billancourt, as well as orchestration at the Conservatoire National de Paris. He also undertook parallel courses from Marcel Landowski. He is presently professor of orchestration at the Conservatoire National de Région d'Aubervilliers. In 1998, he received the Cardin award of the French Institut of Supernova and in 1999 he received the Nadia and Lili Boulanger award. In 2000 he received the SACEM award, and In 2001 a scholarship from Natexis Foundayion in 2006 he was awarded the Grand Prix Lycéen des Compositeurs. Guillaume Connesson was commissioned for most of his works, including Supernova (Montpellier Philharmonic Orchestra, 1997), Athanor (Choir and National Orchestra of France 2004) or more recently A Glimmer in the Age of Darkness (Royal Scottish National Orchestra, 2005) and Aleph (Miami New World Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Royal Scottish National orchestra).

“Beyond Heracles’ columns *‘It is a bright and warm morning on a calm sea. Far off one beholds the island of Atlantis with its three circular ramparts. On the summit of the island lies its sun soaked acropolis. Little by little the island approaches...’ On the bright and calm air a piano sounds an “Atlántida” version of an Indian “Shri” melody – a sinuous and foreign melody that seemingly comes from the island a mysterious, distant land. When the travellers perceive Atlantis, a majestic theme of, fortissimo chords breaks out from the piano. Then the calm returns amid the shimmering waters and the memories of a strange monotonous chant.*

Poseidon’s temple *‘Night befalls the immense edifice, massive and dominating, supported by the near barbaric Herculean columns, the ceiling is made of ivory and the walls are covered in orichalcum. In the centre stands a great golden statue of the deity.’ Strong and compact strings marked with sinister pianissimo appearances. A deep piano sib, an enormous bell from an ancient cathedral backs the whole movement. The ritual melody from a violin ascends to forte and then descends. Faint bursts of sidewinders and gongs emerge from the piano.*

The judgement of the ten kings *‘Darkness has fallen in the temple and the sacrificial fire has been put out. The ten kings in dark blue robes sit down in the ashes on the floor. Then, absorbed in darkness, they judge.’ One hears three different phrases in this fast movement: a violin ostinato, like a magical psalmody, a sung phrase and finally an incantatory theme that serves as a chorus for the rondo. The polyrhythm leads to a final frenzy; the ten kings in trance begin communicating with the terrible gods and then pronounce their judgements.*

My score is dedicated to the architect Leon Krier, as a testimony of his friendship and admiration for his beautiful Atlantis.”