Opus 3, Episode 3: Transfigured Night

Using Expressive Counting to Rehearse Transitions

Step 1

A transition has a starting point and what could be called a goal point or arrival. The first step is agreeing on all the musical characteristics of those two points.

Step 2

Count out loud and expressively together as a group from the start of the transition through a few measures of the arrival point. Use your voice to include all the musical characteristics of the phrase as if you are playing your instrument (dynamics, pulse and tempo energy, colors and timbre, and anything else unique to the phrase).

Step 3

Explore different interpretations of the feel of the transition and try different ideas with the expressive counting.

Step 4

Agree upon a solution. This is not set in stone, and will change and evolve organically as you perform and change as musicians, but is good common ground as a communal starting point.

Step 5

Now that everyone is phrasing together, count expressively a few more times to really feel how the ensemble is moving together.

Step 6

Next, starting together, count silently through the transition, communicating with your group members with the same visual cues you would use while performing with instruments. Pay very close attention that you are ending together with a cue and an active and open awareness.

Step 7

Once the previous step has been accomplished successfully, perform the transition with your instruments.

Step 8

Rinse and repeat from step 2 until the group is satisfied with how the transition is sounding.

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