

# *Steve Antosca*

## *traces of spirit whispers*

*for piano and computer processed audio and text*

*vii - empty infinity ~ boundless country*

*World Premiere  
Kennedy Center  
Washington, DC  
September 5, 2003*

*Laurie Hudicek, piano*

Steve Antosca  
*traces of spirit whispers*  
vii. *empty infinity ~ boundless country*  
*for piano and computer processed audio*

PROGRAM NOTES

*traces of spirit whispers* is a set of seven pieces for piano, computer processed piano samples and voice. The text for the compositions is extracted from the Taoist manuscripts *The Secret of the Golden Flower* and *Hui Ming Ching - The Book of Consciousness and Life*, ancient manuals on the art of meditation.

*The Secret of the Golden Flower* is the secret of the powers of growth latent in the human spirit. In Taoism, the desire is to preserve, in a transfigured form, the idea of the person, through the traces left by experience. The light which, with life, returns to itself, is symbolized by the *Golden Flower*. *traces of spirit whispers* suggests these transfigurations through extended piano techniques, computer processed piano samples and possessed and evocative transformations and traces of spoken word. Over the course of the seven pieces, the text transforms from indiscernible speech and haunting whispers into distinct speech, then disintegrates into traces and whispers.

For *traces of spirit whispers*, piano samples of prepared piano, bowed piano and extended piano techniques were recorded, then transformed through computer processing. Text for the piece was recorded, computer processed, then organized into a flowing narrative and combined with the piano audio.

The piano samples for *traces of spirit whispers* were performed by Laurie Hudicek. The text for *empty infinity ~ boundless country* was read by Charles Williams.

*empty infinity ~ boundless country*

Without beginning, without end,  
Without past, without future.  
A halo of light surrounds the world.  
We forget one another, quiet and pure, altogether powerful and empty.  
The emptiness is irradiated by the light of the heart and of heaven.  
The water of the sea is smooth and mirrors the moon in its surface.  
The clouds disappear in blue space; the mountains shine clear.  
Consciousness reverts to contemplation; the moon disk rests alone.

Kindle light in the blessed country ever close at hand,  
And there hidden, let thy true self always dwell.

The boundless country.



Time: 1:30, 1:31, 1:40, 1:46, 1:47, 1:49, 1:53, 2:00

Audio: left front, right front, left rear, right rear

AUDIO CUE #20-"surrounds"  
 AUDIO CUE #21 "...rounds"  
 AUDIO CUE #22 "a halo of light surrounds"  
 AUDIO CUE #23 "the world"  
 AUDIO CUE #24 steady A#/B gong

Piano: *ff*, *pp*, *subp*, *p*, *pp*, *ff*, *f*

Time: 2:00, 2:01, 2:05, 2:08, 2:14, 2:24, 2:26, 2:36

Audio: left front, right front, left rear, right rear

AUDIO CUE #25 "seed/water/spirit/fire"  
 AUDIO CUE #26 "we forget one another"  
 AUDIO CUE #27 "quiet and pure"  
 AUDIO CUE #28 "all together"  
 AUDIO CUE #29 "powerful"

Piano: *mf*, *p*, *subp*, *pp*, *ff*, *mf*, *pp*, *mf*, *pp*, *p*, *f*, *percussive piano strike*, *loco ff*

play with recorded gong sounds

Time: 2:36, 2:42, 2:43, 3:03

Audio: left front, right front, left rear, right rear

AUDIO CUE #30 "breath"  
 AUDIO CUE #31 "heaven"

Piano: *pp*, *mf*, *p*, *f*, *mf*, *ff*, *fff*, *play in any order*, *tres rapid*, *repeat and vary pattern and accent*, *play cluster from set*, *ff*

*palm sweeps*  
*percussive piano strike*  
*sweep palms and tips of fingers gently across strings, left and right hand together*  
*sempre pp*

Time: 3:05, 3:07, 3:10, 3:16, 3:22, 3:33, 3:38, 3:42, 3:44, 3:45

Audio: AUDIO CUE #32 "emp - ty - ness", AUDIO CUE #33 "nessssssss", AUDIO CUE #34 "breath", AUDIO CUE #35 "smooth", AUDIO CUE #36 "and mirrors", AUDIO CUE #37 "and mirrors", AUDIO CUE #38 "moon"

Piano: *gliss. across strings with fingernail*, *slowly*, *ff*, *mf*, *ff*, *mf*, *mf*, *pp*, *f*

silently depress keys

\* glisses are executed with no pedal, after silently depressing keys. immediately after sweeping strings, raise dampers and hold until after silently depressing next chord.

Time: 3:50, 4:03, 4:09, 4:17, 4:21, 4:24, 4:32

Audio: AUDIO CUE #39 "surface", AUDIO CUE #40 "breath", AUDIO CUE #41 "the clouds disappear", AUDIO CUE #42 "blue space", AUDIO CUE #43 "breath", AUDIO CUE #44 "spirit, energy", AUDIO CUE #45 "water"

Piano: *slowly*, *pp*, *ff*, *loco*, *ff*, *ff*, *p*, *mf*, *f*, *mf*, *f*, *ff*

silently depress keys

Time: 4:33, 4:38, 4:52

Audio: AUDIO CUE #46 "the mountains shine clear", AUDIO CUE #47 "conciuousness reverts to contemplation"

Piano: *delicately*, *expressively*, *p*, *pp*, *mp*, *p*, *mf*, *pp*, *f*

silently depress keys

