

Immutable Dreams

Kati Agócs

b. 1975

- I. “I feel the air of other planets...”
- II. Microconcerto [in Memoriam György Ligeti]
- III. Husks

Immutable Dreams was commissioned by The Jerome Foundation for New York’s Da Capo Chamber Players, and premiered on a “Second Viennese Roots and Shoots” program which also included music by Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, and my teacher, Milton Babbitt. The work’s instrumentation has its roots in Schoenberg’s *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912). The “Pierrot” grouping has an enormous range of expressive and timbral possibilities: It can be symphonic or intimate, elegant or raw, and the work’s three movements showcase different manifestations of this. The first movement (“I feel the air of other planets....”) takes its name from the first line of the poem by Stephan George that Schoenberg set for soprano as part of his Second String Quartet (1908). With a sustained, breathless quality, the movement acts as an anacrusis (or upbeat) and captures a sense of being “on the cusp”. Microconcerto [in memoriam György Ligeti] is a miniature piano concerto which treats the violin, cello, flute, and clarinet as an “orchestra” behind the solo piano, supporting and highlighting it (and occasionally rising to the fore). The third and final movement, “Husks”, layers ostinati which build in a continuous arc. The figures, which begin as fragments, are layered cyclically to create a sense of vulnerability and fragility - - something that could break apart at any time. They gradually accumulate greater weight and resonance, growing into something much larger over the course of the movement. “Husks” was written in memory of one of my oldest friends. The title *Immutable Dreams* recalls our last conversation, in which we imagined that our youthful dreams, because they were shared, would live on and persist even when we are gone.

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