

JUDITH SHATIN

Penelope's Song

Amplified Cello & Electronics



Program Note

Penelope's Song is a tribute to Penelope, Queen of Ithaca and wife of Odysseus. It was inspired by Homer's *Odyssey*, which tells of the travails of Odysseus, with ten years at war in Troy, and, due to the sea-god Poseidon's wrath, another ten. Scant attention is paid to Penelope, left waiting all this time with greedy suitors attempting to woo her to become king. To stave them off she said she would take no suitor until she finished weaving a shroud for her husband's father, Laertes. But she unraveled at night what she wove by day, so she made no progress. *Penelope's Song* traces the weaving, Penelope's ruminations and the nightly unraveling, culminating in explosive ripping.

I created the electronics from recordings of Charlottesville weaver Jan Russell working on her wooden looms. I processed them and wove a sonic fabric with the acoustic and digital elements as warp and weft. Originally scored for amplified viola, I created this version for Maxine Neuman. I have also composed versions for amplified clarinet, flute, soprano saxophone, violin and viola.

Artist Kathy Aoki and animator Marco Marquez created a compelling companion video available to accompany performance of *Penelope's Song* if desired. —JS

Performance Notes

For electronic soundtrack and video, please contact asst@judithshatin.com.

The flute should be lightly amplified and mixed with the electronics in order for both to inhabit the same sonic atmosphere. If the venue is small enough, this may not be required, though it is always desirable. A monitor may be necessary in addition to stereo speakers depending on the venue.

The electronics were notated to give guideposts, rather than giving exact detail. While the rhythmic sections of the electronics and instrumental part synchronize tightly, there is more flexibility in the middle section.

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| World Premiere Maxine Neuman Cutting Edge Series Symphony Space New York, New York |
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Duration: 9:02

Penelope's Song

Judith Shatin

Strong ♩ = 120

:08.5

Cello

Electronics

Weaving sounds

f Denser weaving sounds

Pattern continues

Cue 1

:20

Texture Thickens

pattern continues

:28.5

:34

f

f

p

mf

l.h. pizz

arco

:41

Dancing

mp

pattern continues

:55.5

mf

mp

f

mp

p

f

1:05

mf

f

ff

Spinning rattle added

1:14

ff *f* *f*

1:31.5

Gradually change to sul pont

mf *p* *mp*

Light spinning sound

cresc. *f*

Pattern continues

1:48

ord *p* *mf* *Spiccato*

pattern continues

ord. *cresc.* *f*

2:00

Texture begins to thicken

2:04

mf *f* *ff* *sul pont.*

ord. *sul pont.* *ord.*

f *ff* *f*

2:14

ff

Pattern continues to chords

Weaving sounds gradually fade; Pitches remain

f *mf*

Wait for 3 chords Start after 4th

2:37

f *p* *f*

Defiant Start after 4th chord

Stoic *rit.*

Pattern continues, Eighth notes gradually fade.

p

3:02

In Tempo

mf *f* *mf* *p*

Pattern continues

a piacere

Rubato a piacere to end of section

mf *f* *mp* *mf* *p* *mp*

Gradually turns to quiet spinning sounds

Freely Dreaming (Rhythm approximate) *sul pont. Behind the Bridge*

mf *mp* *pp* **Cue 2** *p < mp* *f > mp*

Cue 1 ends at 3:56. Pitched Noise

4:13 *ord* *Wistful* 4:36 *Distant*

p *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

wind sounds Low Hum

5:10

p *pp* *mp*

Gong-like sounds

4 \downarrow $\frac{b}{1/4}$ 4 \uparrow $\frac{3}{4}$ Repeat ad lib accel, then rit. $\frac{1}{4} +/-$

overvibrate little finger pressure

5:27 5:41 *Yearning*

p *pp* *p* *mf* *mp*

Gong-like sounds Humming Sounds

Repeat a piacere accel to pont. rit to ord

mf *mp* *mf* *mp* *p*

Increasing noise

Repeat a piacere, changing register ad lib.

mf *mf*

Cue 2 ends at 6:50 **Cue 3** **Bobbin Rattle**

Singing Recitative Style

II

7:08 *In Tempo* *Increasingly dramatic* 7:20

f *mf* *p*

III

7:26

Musical score for 7:26. The top staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat and a 2/4 time signature. It features a melodic line with slurs and accents, starting with a *mf* dynamic. The bottom staff shows a rhythmic accompaniment with a repeating eighth-note pattern.

7:32

Spirited

Musical score for 7:32. The top staff continues the melodic line with a *f* dynamic. The bottom staff includes a 'ratchet sound' effect, indicated by a wavy line and a downward-pointing arrow.

7:40

Lightly

Musical score for 7:40. The top staff features a melodic line with a *mf* dynamic. The bottom staff continues with the rhythmic accompaniment.

7:48

7:53

Musical score for 7:48 and 7:53. The top staff shows a melodic line with dynamics *mp*, *f*, and *mp*. The bottom staff has a 'pattern continues' label with a downward arrow pointing to a sustained bass line.

7:60

Musical score for 7:60. The top staff features a melodic line with dynamics *f*, *mf*, and *f*. The bottom staff has a 'pattern continues' label with a downward arrow pointing to a sustained bass line.

Musical score for 7:60 continuation. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 6/4 time signature. It features a melodic line with dynamics *mf*, *f*, and *mf*. The bottom staff is in bass clef with a sustained bass line.

8:15

Determined

Musical score for 8:15. The top staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat and a 6/4 time signature. It features a melodic line with dynamics *f* and *ff*. The bottom staff shows a rhythmic accompaniment.

8:32

8:38

To sul pont.

sul pont.

ord.

sul pont.

8:48

ord. >

Triumphant

To sul pont.

sul pont.

ord.

To sul pont.

Wild!

sul pont.

9:02

cresc. possibile al fine