JUDITH SHATIN

Penelope's Song

Amplified Soprano Saxophone & 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 and 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. This version, for amplified soprano sax and electronics, was commissioned by Susan Fancher. The piece was originally composed for amplified viola, and I have also composed versions for flute, as well as clarinet, violin, and cello. Susan Fancher recorded *Penelope's Song* on her album *In Two Worlds* on the Innova label.

Artist Kathy Aoki and animator Marco Marquez created a compelling companion video available to accompany performance if desired. —JS

Performance Notes

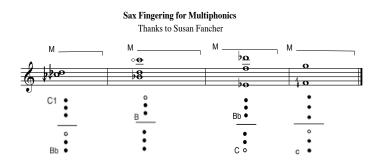
For electronic soundtrack and video, please contact asst@judithshatin.com.

The saxophone should be lightly amplified and mixed with the stereo electronics for playback. A monitor may be necessary in addition to the 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 in the first and third section, there is more flexibility in the middle section.

World Premiere Susan Fancher Weatherspoon Museum Shake It Up Festival Greensboro, NC 10/25/07

Duration: 9:02



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