

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

Sax Fingering for Multiphonics
Thanks to Susan Fancher

M M M M

C1 •
•
Bb •

•
B •
•

•
Bb •
C •

•
•
c •

PENELOPE'S SONG

STRONG ♩ = 120

JUDITH SHATIN

:00

:08.5

8"
(2 WEAVING CYCLES)

Soprano Sax

CUE 1

Weaving Sounds

Denser weaving sounds

Pattern continues

Electronics

:20

Texture thickens

Pattern continues

28.5

:34

mp

f

mf

p

mf

Pattern continues

:43

DANCING

mp

mf

mp

f

mp

:57

p

f

mf

f

Spinning rattle added

1:07

ff *f* *ff*

1:16

f *ff* *Flz.* *ord.* *ff*

mf *p*

1:32

pp
Light Spinning Sound Pattern continues

cresc. poco a poco

1:48

f *p* *mp*
Pattern continues

cresc. *f*

2:00

2:04

mp *f* *ff* *Fltz.*

TEXTURE BEGINS TO THICKEN

ord. *f* *ff* *Fltz.* *ord.* *f*

2:14

ff *mf*

Pattern continues to chords

Weaving sounds gradually fade; Pitches remain

f *mf*

f

Wait for 4 chords; Start after 4th

2:37

p *f* **DEFIANT**

STOIC *mf* *f* *p* *rit.*

2:52

Pattern continues, Eighth notes gradually fade.

3:02

In tempo

M

mp < f mf > pp

Pattern continues

CANTABILE

Rubato - a piacere to end of section

mp f mp < mf

Gradually turns to quiet spinning sounds

mp > p mp mf p mp pp

Cue 1 ends at 3:56

FREELY DREAMING

Fltz. ord.

4:15 WISTFUL

T TR.

CUE 2

Pitched Noise (Rhythm approximate)

pp < p sf > mf > p

wind sounds

Trill F

mp mf mp mf > p

Low Hum

DISTANT

5:10

mp p > pp

Gong-like sounds

Repeat ad lib accel., then rit.

1/4 +/-

Repeat accel. to fltz. rit. to ord.

mp < p >

Gong-like sounds

pp

5:41 **YEARNING** **SWEET** **YEARNING**

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

Humming Sounds

mf *mp* *mp* *mf*

Increasing noise

Cue 2 ends at 6:50

BIS. *poco vib* *N.V.*

Singing Recitative Style

Cue 3

mf

Bobbin Rattle

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

f *mf* *p*

7:26

mf *f* *mf*

7:32 **SPIRITED**

f

ratchet sound

continues

7:40 **LIGHTLY**

mf

7:48

7:48

mp *f*

Pattern continues

7:58

7:58

mp *f*

mf *f* *sfz*

mf *f*

8:16 DETERMINED

8:16 DETERMINED

ff

8vb

Fltz.

f *ff*

8vb

8:32

8:32

f

8vb

8:38

Flz.

ord.

Musical notation for the first system, featuring a treble clef staff with a complex melodic line and a bass clef staff with a simple accompaniment.

8:48

Flz.

Musical notation for the second system, showing a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a steady accompaniment.

TRIUMPHANT

Musical notation for the third system, marked "TRIUMPHANT", with a treble clef staff featuring a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a rhythmic accompaniment.

WILD!

9:02

cresc. possibile al fine

Musical notation for the fourth system, marked "WILD!", with a treble clef staff showing a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a rhythmic accompaniment.

PERUSAL SCORE, NOT FOR PERFORMANCE