

Markus Brönnimann: El canto quiere ser luz (2020)

My trio for harp, bass clarinet and cello, *El canto quiere ser luz*, was largely composed in spring 2020, during the lockdown caused by the coronavirus. Its title 'The song wants to be light', taken from a poem by the Spanish author Federico García Lorca, suggests an atmosphere of mystery. The theme it evokes, 'song', 'light', 'moon', and the highly coloured sonority of the words 'phosphorus' and 'opal frontiers', stay in the memory without having an exact meaning. Even if my piece is not a musical setting of this work of poetry, which I discovered only when the work was almost complete, there is a sort of intimate, deep link between them, which explains the choice of title. Yet when I was composing, my approach was guided less by poetic images than by the idea of what is possible when one brings these three instruments - more to the point, these three soloists - on stage so as to hear them together.

At the start, the three instruments explore their possible sonorities and constellations. Once the piece begins to find its rhythm, intense exchanges are set up: the instruments are constantly changing roles, each trying to predominate. Motifs pass from one instruments to another, running through the whole piece under different lighting. The climax of the piece leads to a monologue for bass clarinet. But after multiple arguments it is the cello that has the last word. Its solo rises stepwise until its song becomes light.

The piece begins with one note, an F sharp. Other notes are gradually added until all twelve notes of the chromatic scale are being used, with none obviously predominating. My aim was to write a piece in one go, to create a fabric made of several lines passing right through the piece, mingling, changing without ever being broken.

The premiere originally planned for this piece fell victim to the coronavirus pandemic. The three musicians therefore had to perform it for the first time for the recording which Kammerata Luxembourg made of this trio (CD Toccata Next 0011).

El canto quiere ser luz, commissioned by Kammerata Luxembourg, is dedicated to the composer Marcel Reuter.