

Denniss, G: Echo's of the Hunt

Originally the third movement of the Sonata for Horn and Piano (1994), "Echoes of the Hunt" was revised in 2013 and is now a stand-alone piece, the other two movements from the Sonata having been withdrawn.

As the title suggests, the work refers to the historical antecedents of the Horn in its central role in the hunt, a popular starting point for many composers over the centuries.

The piece falls into 4 main sections. The introductory Allegro misterioso section sets a sombre mood, with chromatic figures on the horn anticipating the main themes used later on. The piano accompanies with percussive bi-tonal chords, found throughout the piece.

The second section announces the hunting theme, following tradition by using compound time, but changing the metre by switching between 6/8 and 9/8. The horn plays angular figures peppered with special effects such as trills, hand stopping and glissandi.

By contrast, the third section consists of a cantabile horn melody juxtaposed over ricocheting piano chords. The music here can be seen as a lament for all the dead animals who have lost their lives unnecessarily in pursuit of this pastime.

Then, putting sentimentality aside, the main hunting theme is resumed in the final section for an exuberant coda.