

Program Notes

Dream Transmission of Phoenix

Dream Transmission of Phoenix is a composition born out of a year-long residency with the brass quintet, and aims to reimagine the traditional sound of the brass quintet through the introduction of innovative extended techniques and playing methods, developed through collaborative efforts.

This included incorporating unconventional elements such as aluminum foil, which allowed for a wide range of buzzing and noise textures expanding the sonic possibilities of the quintet and adding a sense of intrigue to the composition. Combined with many other extended techniques, such as pedal notes, harmonic glissandi, and a variety of mutes contribute to the transformation of the ensemble's sound, offering listeners a fresh perspective on the expressive capabilities of the brass quintet.

The piece is also influenced by Japanese traditional music, specifically the Sho, an instrument used in Gagaku, the Japanese court orchestra. The Sho is a free reed mouth organ known for its ethereal harmonies, which were transcribed to form the harmonic material of the piece, and the haunting quality of the melodies associated with Gagaku are emulated through the use of stopped notes and subtle microtonal fluctuations in the horn melodies. In this way the Brass Ensemble becomes a sort of imagined emulation of the instrument, while also expanding and subverting it at other points. The Sho is traditionally known as the voice of the phoenix, and in this way the Brass Quintet imagines its dream, arriving from some distant unknown place.