

This fifth Naxos release of the music of the Franco-Lebanese composer Bechara El-Khoury features three concertos two of which, for wind instruments, are inspired by specific associations with the natural world of the composer's native Lebanon. The *First Violin Concerto* contains allusions to Alban Berg, its outer movements divided by a virtuoso cadenza for the soloist. The composer describes his powerful *Horn Concerto* as 'mountains at night ... reaching up into the sky and melting into mist and space', and the *Clarinet Concerto* as 'impressions and recollections in which poetic colours link together and disappear, like an autumnal cloud'.



**Bechara
EL-KHOURY**
(b. 1957)



**Violin Concerto No. 1, Op. 62,
'Aux frontières de nulle part'
(On the Borders of Nowhere)
(1999–2002)*** 22:17

- 1 I. Misterioso – Lirico – Drammatico – 11:07
- 2 II. Cadenza, violin solo – 4:56
- 3 III. Drammatico – Poetico – Presto con fuoco 6:14

**Horn Concerto, Op. 74,
'The Dark Mountain'
(2007–2008)†** 25:15

- 4 I. Misterioso energico 9:14
- 5 II. Poetico 7:17
- 6 III. Drammatico energico 8:39

**Clarinet Concerto, Op. 78,
'Autumn Pictures'
(2009–2010)‡** 25:31

- 7 I. Cantabile 10:53
- 8 II. Poetico 5:34
- 9 III. Energico 9:04

**WORLD PREMIÈRE
LIVE RECORDINGS**

**Sarah Nemtanu, Violin* • David Guerrier, Horn†
Patrick Messina, Clarinet‡**

**Orchestre National de France*† • Orchestre de Chambre de Paris‡
Kurt Masur* • Jean-Claude Casadesus† • Olari Elts‡**

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Bechara EL-KHOURY

Violin Concerto No. 1 'On the Borders of Nowhere' Horn Concerto 'The Dark Mountain' Clarinet Concerto 'Autumn Pictures'

**Sarah Nemtanu, Violin
David Guerrier, Horn
Patrick Messina, Clarinet**

**Orchestre National de France • Orchestre de Chambre de Paris
Kurt Masur • Jean-Claude Casadesus • Olari Elts**

WORLD PREMIÈRE LIVE RECORDINGS

Bechara El-Khoury (b. 1957) Violin Concerto No. 1 • Horn Concerto • Clarinet Concerto

Bechara El-Khoury's work is, first and foremost, the expression of a humanist poet whose voice is both lyrical and dramatic – he is, after all, a writer as well as a composer, having published several volumes of poetry as a young man in Lebanon. Often inspired by nature, his music is conducive to meditation, recollection, dreaming, and his work titles are more likely to conjure a particular atmosphere than to suggest any programmatic content. While some make direct reference to natural phenomena, such as the recent orchestral work *Orages* (Storms, 2013), others have dreamlike resonances (*Harmonies crépusculaires*, *Colline de l'étrange*, *Le Vin des nuages*, *Les Fleuves engloûtis* – Twilight harmonies, Hill of Strangeness, Wine of the Clouds, The Rivers Engulfed). Two concertos, *The Dark Mountain* and *Autumn Pictures*, have more specific associations with the natural world of his native Lebanon.

These poetic visions are, however, always connected to both the contemplative solitude and dramatic trajectory of the human condition. Hence the fact that he has often drawn inspiration from current affairs and historical events – the First Lebanon War (*Le Liban en flammes* – Lebanon in Flames, *Requiem*, *Symphonie*), 9/11 (*New York Tears and Hope*) and the holocaust (*War Concerto*), for example – expressing through music his feelings about such tragedies of humanity.

The three concertos on this album are stylistically related in both their overall expressive conception and some of the materials they use. As always with this composer, poetic sentiment comes before the architectural concept. The result is a predilection for a narrative form of rhapsodic nature which is more concerned with the movements of subjective consciousness than with a predetermined geometric construction.

El-Khoury's *First Violin Concerto*, *'Aux frontières de nulle part'* (On the Borders of Nowhere, 1999–2002) was commissioned by the Lebanese Ministry of Culture and the Ninth Summit of the International Organisation of La Francophonie (IOF). It comprises three linked movements, the second of which, unusually, is a virtuosic cadenza for the soloist. The work as a whole is unified by a motif based on a symmetrical ascending-second figure (a major second framed by two

minor seconds) – the initial intervallic structure of Messiaen's second mode of limited transposition.

The static, mysterious introduction, highly polarised, and coloured by harmonic touches that bring together subtle orchestral alliances, features the famous fifths heard at the opening of Berg's *Violin Concerto* (*To the memory of an angel*), a deliberate allusion intended as a tribute to a work and a composer greatly admired by El-Khoury. As the music becomes a little more animated, the main theme is heard for the first time, a broad and lyrical violin phrase accompanied by iambic (short-long) rhythms on the strings. The orchestra introduces a sudden dynamic contrast, and the music takes on a dramatic air: horn glissandi prompt a response from the trumpets, with turbulence in the strings, clashing percussion and crackling rhythms in the brass, the woodwind at times providing additional touches of colour. As the violin returns, at a slower tempo now, the main theme makes a brief return in a short, poetic transition. After a new, rapid episode, the soloist introduces the second subject, based on the unifying motif. A calmer atmosphere follows before a mysterious passage of minor arpeggios shaded by otherworldly harmonies on celesta. A dreamy lyricism prevails in the conclusion.

The cadenza has the dual function of turning the spotlight on the soloist and developing the materials employed in the first movement, the main theme in particular. Virtually all the figures are rendered unrecognisable by being fragmented, with fleetingly oriental accents and an allusion to the Bergian fifths.

Three different but characteristic forms of expression are contrasted with one another in the finale: one very fast piece of writing in continuous semi-quaver movements, based on the unifying motif and its various metamorphoses; huge roars of long notes from the brass, in which the same motif, in augmentation, can again often be heard; and lyrical outbursts in a more expansive tempo, mainly from strings and horns.

Speaking about his *Horn Concerto*, *'The Dark Mountain'* (2007–2008, a Radio France commission), the composer described it as "a succession of fleeting images from several long walks in the high mountains of Lebanon during my

childhood, Green or snowcapped mountains, arid, dark, sombre and silent mountains. But above all, mountains at night, in my adult imagination, where these magical places across the planet dominate the world, reaching up into the sky and melting into mist and space..." A sober and powerful work, this concerto combines a force that symbolizes nature with delicate poetic touches that bear witness to the fragile presence of mankind.

The first movement begins with disquieting string tremolos, while the horn introduces a main theme dominated by perfect and augmented fourths. A mysterious episode (for strings, harp, piano and celesta) establishes itself momentarily before the tremolos return, sustaining a secondary theme on the brass in parallel harmonies. Then, on the horn, we hear calmer, gentler music surreptitiously accompanied by the insistent iambic rhythms of the strings. A sudden dramatic orchestral contrast gives way to a free development of the various different materials, punctuated by lyrical outbursts. The agitated music reaches a climax before the cadenza, whose effects of space, silence and echoes clearly recall the mountains that inspired the work. Finally, a tranquil epilogue begins in the brass, serene and majestic.

The strange and mysterious second movement could almost be condensed into a single melodic line, a kind of solitary stroll for the horn, based on materials derived from the main theme, while the orchestra provides the harmonic framework.

The finale, a dramatic one moment, lyrical the next, harks back to the forceful expressive contrasts of the first movement. It opens with massive chords within which an ascending semi-quaver motif is briefly heard on the violins. A short chromatic motif for the horn with a glissando ending signals the return of the concerto's first theme, above a light, repeated-chord accompaniment in the strings. The initial massive chords resurface for a few moments before a long, lyrical episode for the soloist, sustained by a string ostinato. The violins' semi-quaver motif is then crowned by the horn's chromatic figure with glissando, leading into a passage full of delicate touches – woodwind arpeggios with piano, celesta and harp accompaniment – which opens up into a long orchestral development, before an emphatic and essentially rhythmic coda brings the work to an end.

Autumn Pictures, a clarinet concerto written between 2009 and 2010 and jointly commissioned by Musique

nouvelle en Liberté-Ville de Paris and Buffet Crampon, is, according to the composer, "imagined rather than descriptive music, despite its title, which has more to do with images, products of my imagination and memories. Impressions and recollections in which poetic colours link together and disappear, like an autumnal cloud, in a journey through time, towards far-distant spaces... A piece that evokes, at one particular moment, the sky of the East..."

The soloist opens the concerto with a theme built on a four-note motif, varied melodically four times, which sets up a strong rhythmic identity, with a different time signature in each bar (4/4, 5/4, 6/4, 7/4). This theme undergoes five successive variations, three entrusted to the soloist, the others to the orchestra (brass then tutti). A brief focus on the note of E, with an ornamented clarinet line, leads into a modal and ethereal secondary theme for violins.

The first motif, initially developed by the orchestra, is picked up by the soloist and takes a folk-like turn, with its accents, tonal polarizations and imaginative, improvisatory rhythms, harmonically supported by string tremolos. After a clarinet glissando has broken the tension, a more restrained passage ensues, in which a new idea is heard on trumpet, then strings, and finally on the solo clarinet.

A nine-note mass of sound gradually builds up in the strings, introducing the concluding section, sombre in nature and brimming with emotion. Subdued autumnal colours flow from the wistful harmonies and a melancholy counter-melody played by the oboe.

The central movement is a meditative interlude whose poetic nature is not without the occasional lyrical outburst. Above static orchestral harmonies, the clarinet's melodic line is minimalist and fragmented, using elements of the first movement's thematic material.

A finale full of rhythmic jubilation and instrumental exuberance reverts to the folk character glimpsed in the opening movement. The main theme is derived from that of the first movement, with its changes in time signature and prevalence of fourths and fifths. Acting as a refrain, it gives the finale a rondo-like structure. A lyrical interlude allows a *sicilienne* for solo violin, doubled by celesta, to emerge, while the following *Presto* is based on a whirling semi-quaver motif – the symmetrically constructed figure used in the Violin Concerto. The first theme makes a brief reappearance, this time with a Bartókian accent. A new section sets up rapid

exchanges between the soloist and some of the different instrumental families within the orchestra. The music slows again just before the return of the refrain, this time with a more polyrhythmic accompaniment from woodwind and strings. After the cadenza, and somewhat unexpectedly in such a joyful movement, we hear a short dramatic episode

(featuring a trumpet theme and lyrical writing for strings and the clarinet), before the tempo resumes its breathtaking pace for the conclusion of the work.

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Translation by *Susannah Howe*

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THIS RECORDING IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF MY MOTHER
Bechara El-Khoury

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Bechara El-Khoury

Bechara El-Khoury was born in Beirut in 1957 and started his musical studies in Lebanon, moving in 1979 to Paris for study with Pierre-Petit, then Director of the École Normale de Musique. The televised gala concert of his works on 9th December 1983 at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris with the Orchestre Colonne conducted by Pierre Dervaux, to mark the centenary of the Lebanese-American philosopher and poet Khalil Gibran, proved ground-breaking in El-Khoury's career. In 1987 he took French nationality.

Bechara El-Khoury spent his earlier years during the terrible war in Lebanon. In memory of this dark period he composed a musical trilogy (*Symphonic Poem No. 1 'Lebanon in Flames'*, the *Requiem 'Aux martyrs libanais de la guerre'* [Naxos 8.557691] and the *Symphony 'The Ruins of Beirut'* [Naxos 8.557043]). His works have been played by leading orchestras, including the London Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestre National de France, the Orchestre de Paris, the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the NDR Sinfonieorchester Hamburg, the Konzerthausorchester Berlin, and the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, among others, with conductors including Pierre Dervaux, Daniel Harding, Martyn Brabbins, Kurt Masur, Jean-Claude Casadesus, Daniele Gatti, and Paavo Järvi.

After the major works *Les Fleuves engloutis* (The Rivers Engulfed) and *New York, Tears and Hope*, dedicated to the victims of 11th September, 2001 [Naxos 8.570134], recent notable compositions are *Unfinished Journey* for violin and string orchestra (2009) and *War Concerto (Concerto No. 2)* for violin and orchestra (2010) written for the violinist Daniel Hope, the *Symphonic Poem No. 6, 'Espaces-Fragmentations'* (2011), a commission from Radio France, first performed by Daniele Gatti and the Orchestre National de France, as well as two commissions from the Orchestre de Paris, *Poème Nocturne* for flute and orchestra (2009) and the richly orchestrated *Orages* (2013) first performed under the direction of Paavo Järvi.



Photo: Yann Arthus-Bertrand

Sarah Nemtanu

Sarah Nemtanu completed her course of study with Gérard Poulet at the Paris Conservatoire at the age of sixteen and in 2002 was appointed principal first violin in the Orchestre National de France. In 2009 she was the real violinist in Radu Mihaileanu's film *Le Concert*. She has performed as a soloist in many concerts with the Orchestre National de France, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra. She has collaborated in many concerts with conductors including Kurt Masur, Bernard Haitink, Sir Colin Davis and Riccardo Muti.



David Guerrier

Born in 1984, David Guerrier studied the trumpet and French horn at the Lyon Conservatoire. As a trumpet-player he won first prize at the 2000 Paris Maurice André International Competition and at the ARD International Music Competition in Munich in 2003. He has appeared with orchestras in France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Slovakia, Portugal and Mexico. He served as Principal Horn in the Orchestre National de France from 2004 to 2009 and in the Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg from 2009 to 2010.



Photo: Gilles Svierec

Patrick Messina

In 2003 Patrick Messina became Principal Clarinet of the Orchestre National de France under Kurt Masur. As soloist Patrick Messina has performed with Riccardo Muti, Yehudi Menuhin, Daniele Gatti and Trevor Pinnock. He was recently invited as guest Principal Clarinetist with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Bernard Haitink. He maintains an active interest in chamber music. 2012 saw the release of his recording of Mozart's *Clarinet Concerto* and *Clarinet Quintet* with Riccardo Muti and the Orchestre National de France and the Philharmonia Quartett, Berlin.



Photo: Sasha Citsov

Kurt Masur

From 1970 to 1996 Kurt Masur was Kapellmeister of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra. He was also Music Director of the New York Philharmonic between 1991 and 2002 and Principal Conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra from 2000 to 2007. In September 2002 he became Music Director of the Orchestre National de France, continuing, after completing his contract, as Honorary Music Director. His achievements have brought honours from leading figures in German life and politics, among them the Presidents Johannes Rau and Horst Köhler.



Photo: YgoPonte@com

Jean-Claude Casadesu

Jean-Claude Casadesu studied orchestral conducting with Pierre Dervaux and Pierre Boulez. He was appointed music director of the Théâtre du Châtelet in 1965, and in 1969 became resident conductor at the Opéra de Paris and the Opéra-Comique. He was Associate Conductor of the Orchestre des Pays de la Loire until 1976, when he founded the Orchestre National de Lille. Under his direction the orchestra has profited from his wide repertoire, dynamism and artistic integrity, demonstrated on four continents and in thirty countries. His international career has taken him to Moscow, St Petersburg, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Montréal, London, Tokyo, Seoul, Taipei, Singapore and elsewhere. He is also very active in opera (Festivals of Aix-en-Provence and Orange, Opéra de Lille) and is an enthusiastic champion of contemporary music.



Olari Elts

The conductor Olari Elts was born in Tallin 1971. His interests lie not only in the classics but in contemporary music and opera. He was Principal Conductor of the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra from 2001 to 2006 and first guest conductor of the Orchestre de Bretagne (2006-2010), the Scottish Chamber Orchestra (2007-2009) and the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra (2011-2012). He is now Principal Guest Conductor of the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra. He appears regularly with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, the SWR Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart, the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse and the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. He has also worked in Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

Orchestre de Chambre de Paris

Since its foundation in 1978, the Paris Chamber Orchestra (formerly the Ensemble Orchestral de Paris), numbering 43 permanent players, has established itself as the leading such ensemble in France. It has collaborated with distinguished musicians, including Jean-Pierre Wallez, Armin Jordan, Jean-Jacques Kantorow, John Nelson (Honorary Music Director), and Joseph Swensen. The orchestra is now directed by the Austrian conductor and violinist Thomas Zehetmair, Principal Conductor and Artistic Consultant, together with Sir Roger Norrington, Principal Guest Conductor, and the French oboist François Leleux, Associate Artist. The orchestra has undertaken tours of Europe, Japan, South America and Russia.

Photo: Jean-Baptiste Millot



Orchestre National de France

The Orchestre National de France was established in 1934, the first permanent symphony orchestra in France. Throughout its long history, rich in concerts, premières, recordings and concert tours, the orchestra has worked with many distinguished musicians. Since 2008 Daniele Gatti has served as Music Director, undertaking a broad spectrum of the major works of French composers such as Debussy, Ravel and Berlioz, without forgetting the great symphonic repertoire of Brahms, Beethoven, Mahler and Tchaikovsky. The success of the orchestra's concert tours abroad is testament to its international prestige. The orchestra is administered by Radio France.

Photo: Christophe Abramovitz



Bechara El-Khoury (né 1957)

Premier Concerto pour violon • Concerto pour cor • Concerto pour clarinette

La création artistique de Bechara El-Khoury est avant tout l'expression d'un poète humaniste chez qui lyrisme et drame coexistent. Poète, le compositeur l'est à coup sûr. Dès sa jeunesse, il publia au Liban plusieurs recueils de poésies.

Souvent inspirée par la nature, sa musique invite à la méditation, à la mémoire ou au rêve. Les titres de ses œuvres évoquent plus une atmosphère qu'un contenu programmatique. Si certains se réfèrent directement aux phénomènes naturels comme ses récents *Orages* pour orchestre (2013), d'autres se rapportent à des images aux résonances oniriques (*Harmonies crépusculaires*, *Colline de l'étrange*, *Le Vin des nuages*, *Les Fleuves engloutis*). Ses concertos *The Dark Mountain* et *Autumn Pictures* se souviennent plus précisément de la nature de son Liban natal.

Mais ces visions poétiques sont toujours reliées à la condition humaine dans sa solitude contemplative et sa trajectoire dramatique. C'est pourquoi l'actualité ou l'Histoire viennent souvent stimuler son inspiration : la première guerre libanaise (*Le Liban en flammes*, *Requiem*, *Symphonie*), le 11/09/01 (*New York Tears and Hope*) ou la Shoah (*War Concerto*) et témoignent des sentiments du compositeur face à ces tragédies de l'humanité.

Les trois concertos présentés ici partagent une parenté stylistique tant dans la conception expressive générale que dans certains matériaux utilisés. Comme toujours chez le compositeur, le sentiment poétique précède la conception architecturale. Il en résulte une prédilection pour une forme narrative d'essence rapsodique qui épouse plus les mouvements de la conscience subjective qu'une construction géométrique préalable.

Le Premier Concerto pour violon *Aux frontières de nulle part* (1999–2002) est une commande du Ministère Libanais de la Culture et du IX^e Sommet de la Francophonie. L'architecture, en trois mouvements enchaînés, présente de manière inhabituelle en seconde position, une *cadenza* virtuose dédiée à l'instrument soliste. Cette œuvre est unifiée par un motif fondé sur une figure ascendante de secondes, à la structure symétrique (deux secondes mineures encadrent une seconde majeure), la structure d'intervalles initiale du deuxième mode à transpositions limitées de Messiaen.

Dans son introduction statique et mystérieuse, fortement polarisée, colorée de touches harmoniques aux subtiles alliances de timbres, passent les célèbres quintes ouvrant le *Concerto* « *À la mémoire d'un ange* » de Berg, allusion délibérée en hommage à une œuvre et un compositeur très admirés. La musique s'anime un peu. Commence alors l'exposé du thème principal, une ample phrase lyrique au violon accompagnée par le rythme iambique (brève-longue) des cordes. L'orchestre introduit un brusque contraste dynamique. La musique prend alors un aspect dramatique : glissant des cors, comme des appels auxquels répondent les trompettes, traits rageurs aux cordes, chocs de la percussion ou rythmes crépitants aux cuivres parfois colorés de bois. La rentrée du violon plus lente ramène brièvement le thème principal dans une brève transition poétique. Un nouvel épisode rapide introduit au violon le second thème, fondé sur le motif unificateur. Le discours s'apaise avant un passage mystérieux en arpèges mineurs teintés de célesta, aux harmonies irréelles. L'atmosphère lyrique et rêveuse prédomine dans la conclusion.

La cadence médiane a la double fonction de mettre en valeur le soliste et de développer les matériaux exposés dans la première partie, particulièrement le thème principal. La fragmentation rend presque toutes les figures méconnaissables, avec des accents fugitivement orientalisants et une allusion aux quintes bergiennes.

Trois sortes d'expressions sonores caractéristiques s'opposent dans le final : une musique très rapide, en mouvements perpétuels de doubles-croches, fondée sur le motif unificateur et ses diverses métamorphoses ; des éclats massifs des cuivres en valeurs longues dans lesquels on reconnaît souvent le motif unificateur en augmentation ; des élans lyriques au tempo élargi, principalement aux cordes et cors.

À propos de son *Concerto pour cor et orchestre* « *The Dark Mountain* » composé en 2007–2008, une commande de Radio France, le compositeur a déclaré : « est une succession d'images fugitives de plusieurs longues promenades dans les hautes montagnes libanaises pendant mon enfance. Montagnes enneigées ou vertes, montagnes arides, obscures, sombres et silencieuses. Mais surtout, les

montagnes dans la nuit, dans mon imagination d'adulte, où ces lieux magiques à travers la planète dominent le monde, avoisinent le ciel et se fondent dans le brouillard et l'espace... »

Œuvre puissante et sombre, ce *Concerto* combine la force symbolisant la nature à des touches poétiques délicates témoignant de la fragile présence humaine.

Le premier mouvement débute aux cordes sur des trémolos inquiétants, avec le thème principal exposé au cor, dominé par les quarts justes et augmentées. Un épisode mystérieux (cordes, harpe, piano et célesta) s'installe un instant avant un retour des trémolos supportant un thème secondaire aux cuivres en harmonies parallèles. Suit, au cor, une musique plus calme et plus douce subrepticement accompagnée par le rythme iambique lançant des cordes. Un brusque contraste aux accents dramatiques à l'orchestre, laisse place à un libre développement des divers matériaux, ponctué d'élans lyriques. La musique agitée atteint son point culminant avant la *cadenza*, qui confirme l'inspiration montagnarde, avec ses effets d'espace, de silences et d'échos. L'épilogue apaisé commence aux cuivres de manière sereine et majestueuse.

Le second mouvement, étrange et mystérieux, pourrait presque se résumer à une ligne mélodique, sorte de promenade solitaire du cor, qui travaille des matériaux provenant du thème principal, dans un décor harmonique confié à l'orchestre.

Le Final, tantôt dramatique tantôt poétique, retrouve les puissantes oppositions expressives du premier mouvement. Il s'ouvre avec des accords massifs où passe brièvement aux violons un motif ascendant de doubles-croches. Un court motif chromatique au cor avec une désinence en glissant, signale le retour du thème initial du concerto, sur un accompagnement léger des cordes, en accords répétés. La musique massive revient brièvement avant un long moment lyrique du soliste, soutenu par un ostinato rythmique des cordes. Le motif en doubles-croches des violons conclu par la figure chromatique avec glissant du cor, précède alors un passage plein de délicatesse, en arpèges aux bois accompagnés par le piano, le célesta et la harpe, qui ouvre à l'orchestre sur un long développement. La véhémence coda est essentiellement rythmique.

Autumn Pictures, Concerto pour clarinette et orchestre composé en 2009–2010, co-commande de Musique nouvelle

en Liberté-Ville de Paris et de Buffet Crampon, « est – selon le compositeur – une musique imaginaire et non pas descriptive en dépit de son titre. Ce sont plutôt des images, fruits de l'imagination et de la mémoire. Des impressions et des souvenirs où les couleurs poétiques s'enchaînent et disparaissent, tel un nuage d'automne, dans un voyage à travers le temps, vers des espaces lointains... Une musique qui évoque, à un certain moment, le ciel de l'Orient... »

Le *Concerto* débute à la clarinette solo, par un thème construit sur un motif de quatre notes, quatre fois varié mélodiquement, qui présente une forte identité rythmique, dans une métrique différente à chaque mesure (4/4, 5/4, 6/4, 7/4). Ce thème connaît cinq variations successives, trois avec le soliste, deux pour l'orchestre (cuivres puis tutti). Une brève polarisation sur *mi*, en figures ornementées à la clarinette, précède un thème secondaire aux violons, modal et très éthéré.

Le motif initial, développé d'abord à l'orchestre, prend ensuite à la clarinette une tournure populaire, avec ses accents, ses polarisations tonales, ses dessins rythmiques pleins de fantaisie et comme improvisés, sur un soutien harmonique joué en trémolos aux cordes. Un glissement de la clarinette marque la fin de cette tension. Un passage plus retenu laisse entendre une nouvelle idée reprise à la trompette, aux cordes puis à la clarinette soliste.

Un agrégat de neuf sons s'échafaude progressivement aux cordes, et ouvre la section conclusive, au caractère grave et d'une grande émotion. Les couleurs automnales, en demi-teintes, décollent ici des harmonies tristes et d'un contre-chant mélancolique du hautbois.

Le mouvement médian est un interlude méditatif, d'une poésie non dépourvue d'élans lyriques. Sur des harmonies statiques de l'orchestre, la clarinette déploie une ligne mélodique minimaliste et fragmentée, utilisant des bribes du matériel thématique du premier mouvement.

Le Final, empli de jubilation rythmique et d'exubérance instrumentale, retrouve le caractère populaire partiellement rencontré dans le mouvement liminaire. Le premier thème est dérivé du thème initial du premier mouvement, avec ses continuel changements métriques et ses quarts et quintes prédominantes. Ce thème récurrent agissant comme un refrain, confère presque à ce mouvement l'aspect formel d'un rondo. Un interlude lyrique laisse émerger un thème de sicilienne au violon solo, doublé par le célesta. Le *Presto* est

fondé sur un motif tournoyant de doubles-croches, le motif de construction symétrique utilisé dans le *Concerto pour violon*. Le thème initial revient brièvement et prend des accents bartokiens. Une nouvelle section propose des échanges rapides entre le soliste et diverses familles de l'orchestre. Un nouveau ralentissement précède le retour du refrain avec un accompagnement plus polyrythmique

aux bois et cordes. Après la *cadenza* instrumentale et de manière inattendue dans ce mouvement joyeux, un court épisode dramatique survient (thème aux trompettes et moment lyrique aux cordes et clarinette) avant que le tempo ébouriffant ne reprenne pour conclure.

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