

Les Chants de l'Agartha (2008)

Two pieces for cello and piano

*Premiered on September 12, 2008 at La Roche-Posay (France), by Jérôme Pernoo (cello) and Jérôme Ducros (piano).
Dedicated to Jérôme Pernoo and Jérôme Ducros.*

I. Beneath the Mongolian desert

« The path, carved into the rock, plunged into the bowels of the earth. Little by little the darkness gave way to a strange light. Then the entire subterranean city appeared, radiant and ancient : the mysterious kingdom of Agartha. »

A single lengthy and lyrical theme is heard throughout the movement. It begins in the cello's low register, with an undulating piano accompaniment, and continues to rise, becoming more and more radiant, until the appearance of the City. The movement ends as the piano plunges back down into dark chasms. A kind of musical journey to the center of the earth...

II. The library of Lost Knowledge

« The shelves, sculpted in alarming forms, stretched as far as the eye could see. Books from antediluvian civilisations, books containing ancient wisdom and the History before History seemed to have been abandoned for millennia... the mythical library of Agartha reached out to us. »

This movement serves as an *intermezzo*. A jumpy theme is interrupted several times by mysterious chords. These « musical monoliths », which first appear to be unconnected to the musical discourse, gradually take over and seem to sap the vitality of the opening motif. An icy, moon-like coda ends this chiaroscuro *intermezzo*.

III. Dance for the King of the World

« The Throne stood in the city's main square, which resembled a gigantic ancient forum. The King of the World sat there, surrounded by his fearsome counsellors. A savage dance unfolded before him, the dancers gradually pulling the crowd into a collective trance. »

The final movement is a devilish bacchanalia built on two themes. The first is a short, authoritative motif which presents an implacable front from the movement's outset. A heady, almost folk-like second theme appears later. It returns in the cello's highest register and then in a swirl of sound from the piano. The rhythms become wild and dislocated as collective trance comes to an end.

Guillaume Connesson