

Les Chants de l'Atlantide (2007)

Three pieces for violin and piano

Commissioned by Musique Nouvelle en Liberté.

Premiered on March 20, 2007 at the Maison de Radio France, Paris (France), by Nicolas Dautricourt (violin) and Fernando Rossano (piano).

I. Beyond Heracles' columns

« A sunny morning on a calm sea. Far in the distance we see the island of Atlantis and its three circular enclosures. Little by little the island approaches... »

The melody, written in the Indian « Shri » mode that gradually becomes the « Atlantis » mode, is heard above calm, luminous waves of sound from the piano. The strange and sinuous melody seems to come from the island, Elsewhere and Far Away. As Atlantis rises up before the travellers' eyes the second theme is heard, bursting from the piano in a great *fortissimo*. Then all becalmed in the sparkling waters, as reminiscences of the strange threnody are heard.

II. Poseidon's Temple

« Night has fallen over the immense edifice. Massive and overwhelming, it is supported by barbarous cyclopean columns. Its ceiling is ivory and its walls are covered in orichalcum . In the centre of the temple stands a great gilt statue of the God. »

Powerful, compact *pianissimo* chords emerge from the darkness. The movement is underpinned by a low B flat played on the piano, which sounds like the enormous bell of an ancient cathedral. The ritual melody, played by the violin, rises to as *forte* and then returns to a quieter level. Far-away rattles and gongs arise from the piano.

III. The Judgement of the ten kings

« Darkness has fallen in the temple, and the sacrificial fire has gone out. The ten kings, dressed in dark blue robes, sit in the cinders. Then, in the gloom, they pass judgement. »

This rapid movement contains three different motifs : a violin *ostinato*, like a magical psalm, a singing motif ; and an incantatory theme which acts as a refrain for this *rondo* and variations. The polyrhythms build up to a final frenzy as the ten kings enter into a trance, communicate with the terrible gods, and pronounce their judgements.

I dedicated this composition to the architect Léon Krier. It bears witness to our friendship and to my admiration for his beautiful Atlantis.

Guillaume Connesson