

John Rea Toronto (Canada), 1944

John Rea split his childhood between an in-depth study of the piano and other artistic disciplines, including singing, trumpet, drawing, sculpture and tap-dancing. As a young adult he joined a group of directed improvisation. This eventually led him to composition, the subject of his doctoral thesis at Princeton University (USA). In 1973, John Rea was asked to take a post at Montreal's McGill University. To this day he has held various posts, including professor of composition, musical theory and orchestration as well as Dean of the Faculty of Music. John Rea will never stop composing. His works - representing extremely varied genres - have been commissioned by ensembles from all over, and have garnered prestigious awards. His music has travelled through Canada, the United States and Europe, unmistakably reflecting his deep interest in the arts and mathematics, for the music of the past, and human complexity. A fascinating universe, abounding with sound illusions, metamorphoses and mirror effects.

Pincer, penser, chanter (2015) For children's choir, recorder, percussions and piano

Presentation notes

When asked what he wishes to transmit to his composition students John Rea responds that he incites them to find the "lively tensions" within the material (sound and instrumental texture), the bare bones (musical structure), the colouration (harmony and texture), and the sought-after result. Although all these aspects are interrelated, the choice of instruments is often one of the first stages in the creative process. Composers carefully select the types of sound that will provide the "basic material" of their work. Several artists in search of new tones do not hesitate to call upon instruments from other countries, as well as asking the performers to modify their technique to produce unusual tonalities.

Pincer, penser, chanter, this «song to orchestrate» allows young people to explore various sound production modes, thanks to certain sections requiring improvisation on invented instruments. One of the sections is completely dedicated to a listing of plucked instruments, in alphabetical order. However one is missing ... it's up to you to find it!

During the performance, it is suggested that the teacher, at will, integrates percussion instruments from those available or those designed for the occasion to illustrate the words, similar to the style in measures 17-23.

Text (free translation)

Pluck, blow, rub to hear the sounds we like.
Pinch, shake, knock: the sounds we sing.
Ring the instruments to create brilliant sounds.
Let's do it, let's do it!
Now they resonate!
Which instruments do we blow?
The trumpet: taratata!
On which instrument rubs the bow?
The violin: tsoin-tsoin, zing-zing!
And which instrument do we shake?
Maracas: tchica-tchica, tchic-tchic-tchic!
Which one is struck by a mallet?
The big drum: bang badaboum!
And what instrument do we pluck?
The autoharp, the banjo, the harpsichord, the dulcimer,
And the epinette, the guitar, the harp, the inanga, the jarana,
And the koto, the lyre, the mandole, the ngombi, the oud, the phin,
Qanun, ruan, sitar, tonkori, ukulele, vihuela.
The wase, the xalam, the yaktaro and the zheng.

Plucked instruments mentioned in measures 68-79:

Autoharp : North American version of the Austrian zither
Banjo : North American version of the West-African lute (ekonting, wase)
Clavecin : Instrument européen à clavier muni d'un dispositif nommé « sautereau »
Dulcimer: American Appalachian, German version of the Scheitholt, zither
Epinette: European keyboard instrument, smaller than the harpsichord
Guitar: Long-handled six-stringed lute-box (kithara, Greek)
Harp: Hooked or triangular shape instrument normally played without a plectrum
Inanga: Rwandan six to eight-stringed zither
Jarana: Large Mexican guitar comparable to the guitarrón
Koto: Long zither on Japanese table in 13 strings
Lyre: Ancient Greek seven or eight-stringed instrument
Mandole: Or mandore, medieval European instrument, lute family
Ngombi: Central African hooked harp
Oud : Short-handled Middle Eastern instrument (al oud, «the wood,» Arabic), ancestor of the medieval lute
Phin: Long-handled three-stringed Thai lute-box, often electronically amplified
Qanun: Table zither from the Middle East (qānūn, "ruler", Arabic)
Ruan : Long-handled four-stringed, Chinese lute, also known as the guitar-lun
Sitar: Long-handled four-stringed Hindustani lute-box with thirteen plain strings and three drone strings
Tonkori: Aboriginal Japanese three or six-stringed zither
Ukulélé: Hawaiian four-stringed guitar
Vihuela: Spanish lute with six double strings, 16th century
Wase: West African three-stringed banjo
Xalam: Or khalam, West African one or five-stringed banjo
Yaktaro: Or ektara, monocord banjo from the Indian subcontinent
Zheng: Or guzheng, Chinese 21-stringed long table zither

Pincer, penser, chanter

[... chanson pour orchestrer ...]

Paroles et musique : John Rea

Allegretto (♩ = c. 108)

The score is for a 4/4 piece in G major. It includes parts for Flute (alto and tenor), a choice instrument (allégée), two voices (soprano and alto), guitar or piano, Orff, and percussion. The flute parts play a melody starting with a quarter rest, followed by eighth notes. The choice instrument plays a similar melody with a dotted quarter note. The guitar/piano part features a strummed chord progression with a 'simile' marking. The Orff part plays a rhythmic accompaniment. The percussion part is marked with a double bar line and a 4/4 time signature.

Flûte à bec (alto)

Flûte à bec (ténor)

[sol, la, si, do, ré]

Instrument au choix version allégée

Voix 1. (haut)

Voix 2. (moyen)

Guitare ou Piano

avec plectre (facultatif)

simile

Orff

Percussion