



HEXTET: PROGRAM NOTES

Hextet was conceived with two different kinds of concepts. It is a piece that summons up images of witches, zombies, and other dark world creatures, as is revealed in the names of the three movements: I: Tarantella, II: Zombies, III: Walpurgisnacht. Throughout the movements are all kinds of scary effects made out of collisions of ragged dissonances, overlapping glissandi, and harmonic surprises. Although it is a sextet, with pairs of violins, violas, and violoncellos, the format of the piece occupies that middle ground between chamber and orchestral music.

Hextet also refers to the hexachord which is the basis of the tonality:



This pair of augmented triads is both stable and unstable, depending on how it is used in the piece. In the opening chords, it is stable and that stability is reinforced by the doubling of the “G” which forms a fifth in the cello. This perfect interval focuses what would be, ordinarily an ambiguous harmonic entity. Naturally, doubling any of the six notes would shift the stability accordingly.

Although each movement has its own unique pitch thematic material, the third movement reprises material from the earlier movements to create further development and deconstruction. I make the distinction between these two procedures in that in development the fragments retain the character of the whole, while in deconstruction those identities are obscured or obliterated. The piece was conceived around Halloween, 2016 while I was recovering from injuries from a hit-and-run bicycle accident.