

Listening Guide

La Création de Monde by Darius Milhaud

Description

Musical styles collide to portray an African creation myth in this quirky mix of classical and jazz idioms. The obscure and unusual are juxtaposed and layered creating an intriguing mysterious sonic world. Quick mood changes will transport you from 1600s Italy to 1920s Harlem in the matter of moments.

Listening Guide

Composition Date: 1923

Orchestration: flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, piano, percussion, violin, saxophone, cello, double bass

Duration: 16 minutes 30 seconds

La Création de Monde includes an overture followed by five sections that are played without breaks:

Overture - I. The Chaos before Creation – II. The Slowly Lifting Darkness – III. Man and Woman Created - IV. The Desire of Man and Woman – V. Coda—The Man and Woman Kiss

Overture

Description	Time
The saxophone opens this movement, wailing over a steady chant in the strings.	16:01
The trumpets interject changing the ensemble colour	16:19
The trombone interrupts the saxophone melody with a series of upward glissando.	17:16

The full ensemble ascends in rhythmic unison to a strong climax.	17:26-17:41
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The climax decays to the opening atmosphere led by the saxophone.	17:41
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This movement concludes quietly, with the saxophone playing in the low register accompanied by low murmurs in the strings.	18:54-19:44
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The Chaos Before Creation

Description	Time
A groove is established by the piano and percussion creating a jazzy mood.	19:44
Solo bass plays a swing melody repeated by the trombone, saxophone, and trumpet.	19:48-20:22
This melody is passed throughout the orchestra with a colourful accompaniment gradually increasing in dynamic.	20:23
The Chaos Before Creation concludes quietly with a falling line performed by the flute and clarinet leading to the next movement.	21:18-21:24

The Slowly Lifting Darkness

Description	Time
A soft pulsing rhythm is established at the opening.	21:24
The clarinets perform a simple melody propelled by the pulsing accompaniment.	21:31
The saxophone theme from the opening of the piece returns performed by the flute.	21:59
The oboe plays a sultry jazz influenced melody relaxing the character of this movement.	22:50
The trumpet attempts to take over the oboe melody.	23:52
The saxophone attempts to take over the oboe melody with a faster lively melody.	23:59
Soft flutters in the flutes set the tone for the following movement.	24:17

Man and Woman Created

Description	Time
A jaunty dance performed by the violins opens this section. This opening is characterized by offbeat accents and a fluttering accompaniment in the trumpets.	24:27
The saxophone completely changes the character of the dance to a ragtime swing. Aggressive off beat attacks played by the percussion push the syncopated saxophone rhythm forward.	24:45

The opening jolly melody returns played the clarinets.	24:52
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The saxophone swing melody aggressively takes over again.	25:07
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A sultry jazz solo played by the oboe is answered by the first violins.	24:31
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This movement ends with a slow and quiet ascending scale performed by the saxophone, as if floating into the next movement.	26:22
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The Desire of Man and Woman

Description	Time
The clarinet plays a jazzy improvisatory melody with the ensemble providing rhythmic drive.	26:28
The oboe enters, changing the jazz mood that the clarinet establishes to be more somber with a long lyrical melody accompanied by a steady chant, like in the overture.	27:31
The piccolo and trumpet continue the oboe melody creating a bright and proud character.	28:15
A ragtime cacophony is led by the trumpet and accompanied by dissonant accents in the winds. Wild drum fills create organized chaos.	29:16
The chaos gradually gets slower and instruments fade away leaving the saxophone and trumpet to reflect on past themes.	30:12-30:25

Coda—The Man and Woman Kiss

Description	Time
Melodies from the previous sections are revisited. The music continues to slow and become quieter.	30:25
The piece ends with a fluttering swing melody performed by the flute, leading to the saxophone which plays the final statement.	31:36-32:03

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