To Create Something and Bring it to the World. Who Needs What We Create?

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A Reflection on Entro by Stefan Pöntinen

Entro is an electronic piece of music created with synthesizers and music-processing software on a computer. The sound world consists of electronic sounds and effects, and sampled sounds from musical instruments.

As a listener, I perceive a structure consisting of four parts that partly overlap each other.

Initially, an acoustic illusion is established, that we are located in a large room. The first part consists of scratch sounds – sounds that can be associated with filing and sawing. Something is being created here – or somebody is preparing to create something.

In the next part, a new sound comes in, a sound that can be associated with the buzzing of a mosquito, something that interrupts and annoys. For a short moment the reverberation disappears, and as a listener I get the illusion of the mosquito landing in my ear – a disturbing element. When the spatial impression comes back the mosquito sound is changed and instead brings to mind the sound of a bow: a tremolo played *sul ponticello*, an effect produced by a string musician, in fast movements, rubbing his bow back and forth close to the bridge of the instrument. This sound – which can be perceived as the buzz of a mosquito or a tremolo – recurs as a disturbing element, something that contrasts with the ongoing working noise. The acoustic change is repeated. It can be associated with the sound world that exists outside the protective room – street sounds – an outside world that asserts itself.

In the third part, new sounds come in. I associate them with a bell that is hit, a cymbal that is set in motion with a bow. These elements grow stronger and take over from the earlier sounds, perhaps illustrating the music that exists inside the composer growing increasingly stronger.

For a short time, there is a sound that gives an underwater association. What is happening? Is this the composer's desire to experiment with sounds, or does this illustrate an anxiety of going under, of not being able to find the orientation in one's artistry, not being able to orient oneself in the surrounding world? At the end of this part, the different sound elements from the piece are alternated: bell sounds, bow on a cymbal, the mosquito tremolo, with the scratch sounds from the introduction included but only implied.

In the last part, the piece opens with a long, round sound, something I, as a listener, can rest in. A sound that finishes with a new sound illusion associated with rippling water and birdsong. Here, the acoustic illusion is changed to something I experience as an outdoor environment, a take that can be interpreted as the composer now ready to take his piece out into the world.

In Entro, the beauty in the sounds in which I can rest is surrounded by disturbing sounds that are recurring, something I rather want to escape from, but which at the same time sharpen my attention.

I can offer the interpretation of a meta-perspective. The work can be heard as a programmatical sound poem about a composer creating a piece and bringing it out into the world. The composer's meta text is illustrated with the assertion "*I need you*" and the question "*Do you need me?*" A question that all artists ask their environment when they carry their work from the study or the studio and bring it out into the world. The audience can be small or large – sometimes it is enough with only one single human being – but the audience is needed for the work to be completed. Somebody needs to receive what has developed within the creator.

Disturbing sounds are present in Entro – the outside world pushes on, and may not be interested in what is created, or is critical, judging, rejecting. The expectation is mixed with risk-taking, the basic prerequisite of artistic entrepreneurship. Then, how beautiful it is, in the last part of Entro, to be able to rest in the warm, round sound, the water sounds and the birdsong. Here exists a world that receives.

About the Composer

Stefan Pöntinen is a Swedish composer, performance artist, violinist, and violin teacher, born 1967 in Danderyd, Sweden. He studied violin at The College of Music at Lund University, Sweden, with the Hungarian-born violinist Endre Wolf, and later composition at Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris, where his teacher was the composer Yoshihisa Taïra. In Paris, he also studied composition with Eugen Kurtz. He has been awarded work grants from The Swedish Art Grants Comity, the Society of Swedish Composers and the Helge Ax:son Jonssons Foundation, among others. Pöntinen has created music for various chamber constellations and orchestras but has also worked in close connection with the multi-art scene, with visual artists, theatre, and dance. His music has been performed throughout Europe, India, the USA and South America.