

anna berg



earthward, ever circling

2023

for string trio

duration: 12'

Commissioned by Guro Kleven Hagen, Eivind Ringstad and Amalie Stalheim  
with financial support by Det norske komponistfond

# anna berg: earthward, ever circling (2023)

Earthward, Ever Circling (2023) was commissioned by Guro Kleven Hagen (violin), Eivind Ringstad (viola) and Amalie Stalheim (cello), with financial support by The Norwegian Composer's Fund (Det Norske Komponistfond). The piece was composed by Anna Berg in Oslo and Paris from August 2022 to January 2023.

All performances of the piece shall be reported to performing rights organisation TONO (Norwegian collection society) either directly when performed in Norway, or indirectly through the performing rights organisation belonging to the country where the piece is being performed (Le Sacem, STIM, CODA, etc.).



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## *Programnote (norsk)*

"De levende trenger lys, de døde trenger musikk". Sitatet er fra et vietnamesisk buddhistisk begravelserituale, der ulike former for musikk benyttes for forberede den nylig avdødes sjel til reinkarnasjon. Begravelsermusikken er en viktig del av vietnamesisk kulturarv og tradisjonsrikdom som er i ferd med å forsvinne. I forarbeidet til *Earthward, Ever Circling (2023)*, ble jeg opptatt av hvordan begravelsermusikken i denne tradisjonen blir brukt som kommunikasjonsmiddel mellom levende og døde, mellom nåtiden og evigheten. I stykket kommer dette til syne ved at tonene og frasene beveger seg gjennom ulike registrer; de strekker seg ned mot det jordlige, og opp mot det guddommelige og evige. Hele tiden veksles det mellom disse stadiene. Lik sjelens mulige bevegelser til sitt neste liv, har bevegelsene i musikken ulik hastighet og tyngde, noe svirrer mer hektisk og sjelvende, mens annet er mer statisk, avventende.

Det var flere av vestens tenkere og forfattere som hengav seg til ideen om reinkarnasjon, deriblant Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832). I hans dikt "Gesang der Geister über den Wassern", skriver han om hvordan menneskets sjel likner vann; kommer fra himmelen, til himmelen stiger den, og igjen returnerer det til jorden, i en evig, alternerende bevegelse. Jeg fant en engelsk oversettelse av diktet gjort av den amerikanske forfatteren Adam Sedia (f. 1984), der siste del av strofen lyder "earthward, ever circling", som er bakgrunnen for tittelen.

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## *Program note (English)*

"The living need light, the dead need music". The quote is from a Vietnamese Buddhist funeral ritual, where different forms of music are used to prepare the soul of the newly deceased for reincarnation. Funeral music is an important part of Vietnamese cultural heritage and tradition, that along with many rites across the world is about to disappear. The string trio *Earthward, Ever Circling* (2023) is the first piece in a series where I'm interested in how funeral music is used as a means of communication between living and dead, between the present and eternity. In the piece, this is reflected in the way the phrases move through different registers. They reach down towards the earthly and up towards the divine and eternal. The music constantly alternates between these stages. Like the soul's possible movements to its next life, the different elements in the music have different speed and weight, some parts swirling more hectically, while others parts are more static, waiting.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) is one of the Western thinkers who embraced the idea of reincarnation. In his poem "Gesang der Geister über den Wassern", he writes about how the human soul resembles water; coming from heaven, to heaven it rises, and again it returns to earth, in an eternal, alternating movement. I discovered an English translation of the poem done by the American writer Adam Sedia (b. 1984), where the last verse reads "earthward, ever circling", which is the background for the title of this piece.

for string trio

# earthward, ever circling

anna berg

♩ = 68

violin

viola

cello

sul tasto

flautando

flautando \*)

*p* *mp* *mf* *p*

flautando \*)

sim.

*mp* *p* *mf* *p* *p*

flautando

sim.

*p* *mp* *p* *mf* *p* *p*

6

vln.

vla.

vc.

*mf* *p* *p* *mf* *p*

*mf* *p* *mf* *p*

*mf* *p* *p* *p* *mf* *p*

8va

3

10

vln.

vla.

vc.

*mf* *p* *f* *mp*

*mp* *f* *mp* *f* *mp*

*mp* *mf* *p* *f* *mp*

\*) all tremolos should be played flautando, light, slow a la punta throughout the whole piece

earthward, ever circling

14

vln. *p* *pp* *ppp*

vla. *p* *pp* *ppp*

vc. *p* *pp* *ppp*

17

vln. *mf* *p* *mf*

ord. flautando

vla. *mf* *p* *mf*

ord. flautando

vc. *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

20

vln. *p* *mp*

flautando 6

vla. *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

ord. flautando

vc. *pp* *mp*

earthward, ever circling

24

ord. flautando

vln. *p* *pp* *mp*

vla. *p* *pp* *mp*

vc. (*mp*) *pp* *mp*

29

flautando ord.

vln. *f* *mp* *p* *mp*

vla. *f* *mp* *p* *mp*

vc. *f* *mp* *flautando 3*

31

vln. *p*

vla. *p* *mp*

vc. ord. *p* *p* *mp*

earthward, ever circling

36

vln. *(p)* *mp*

vla. *(mp)* *p*

vc. *(mp)* *p*

40

vln. *p*

vla. *mp* *p* *pp*

vc. *mp* *(mp)*

45

vln. *p* *mp* *p* *pp*

vla.

vc.



earthward, ever circling

50

vln. *mp* *p* *mf* *p*

vla. *mp* *p* *mf* *p*

vc. *mp* *p* *mf* *p*

*8va*

57

vln. *f* *mp*

vla. *f* *mp*

vc. *f*

flautando

ord.

3

3

6

60

vln. *f* *mf*

vla. *f* *mf*

vc. *mp* *f* *mf*

flautando

ord.

ord.

3

3

earthward, ever circling

ord.

64

Violin (vln.) part: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature. Dynamics: *p*, *mf*, *p*.  
Viola (vla.) part: Bass clef, 3/4 time signature. Dynamics: *(mf)*, *p*.  
Violoncello (vc.) part: Bass clef, 3/4 time signature. Dynamics: *(mf)*, *p*.  
Measures 64-68 show a sequence of notes with dynamic markings and a crescendo hairpin at the end of measure 68.

69

Violin (vln.) part: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature. Dynamics: *mf*, *p*.  
Viola (vla.) part: Bass clef, 3/4 time signature. Dynamics: *mf*, *p*.  
Violoncello (vc.) part: Bass clef, 3/4 time signature. Dynamics: *mf*, *p*.  
Measures 69-74 include a triplet in measure 69 and various dynamic markings. A large watermark 'NB noter' is overlaid on the score.

75

Violin (vln.) part: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Dynamics: *mp*, *f*, *mp*.  
Viola (vla.) part: Bass clef, 4/4 time signature. Dynamics: *mp*, *f*.  
Violoncello (vc.) part: Bass clef, 4/4 time signature. Dynamics: *mp*.  
Measures 75-79 include a triplet in measure 75 and dynamic markings. A large watermark 'NB noter' is overlaid on the score.

earthward, ever circling

81

vln. *(mp)* *mf* *mf* ┌ 3 ┐

vla. *mp* *mf*

vc. *f* *mf* *p*

flautando

ord.

85

vln. flautando *p* *p* *mp*

vla. *p* *mp*

vc. *pp* *p* *mp*

flautando

ord.

3

89

vln. *p*

vla. *mf* *p*

vc. *p*

earthward, ever circling

95

vln. *p* *mp* *p* *p*

vln. *p*

vc. *p*

101

vln.

vln.

vc. *mp* *p*

107

vln. *p*

vln. *p* *mp* *p*

vc. *p* *p*

earthward, ever circling

111

vln. *mp* *mf* *f* *mp*

vla. *p* *mp*

vc. *p* *mp* *f*

accel. -----

116

vln. *mf*

vla. *mf*

vc. *mf* *mf*

----- ♩ = 86 *8va* -----

122

vln. *p* *mf*

vla. *mf* *p* *mf*

vc. *p* *mf*

earthward, ever circling

125

flautando

vln. (mf) p mp p

flautando

vla. (mf) p mp p

flautando

vc. (mf) p mp

129

vln. mp p mf p ord.

flautando

vla. mf p

vc. p

132

(♩ = ♩)

flautando

vln. pp

ord.

flautando

vla. pp

vc.

earthward, ever circling

137

vln. *pp* *p*

vla. *pp* *p*

vc. *pp* *p*

flautando

141

vln. *pp* *ppp* *p* rit. -----

vla. *pp* *ppp* *p*

vc. *pp* *ppp* *p* ord.

♩ = 68

144

vln. *p*

vla. *p* ord.

vc. *p*

*pp*

earthward, ever circling

149 sul pont.

Violin (vln.) part: Starts with a half note G#4, then a triplet of eighth notes (A#4, B4, C5) with a crescendo hairpin, followed by a half note D5. Dynamics: *pp* to *ppp*.

Viola (vla.) part: Starts with a half note G3, then a triplet of eighth notes (A3, B3, C4) with a crescendo hairpin, followed by a half note D4. Dynamics: *pp*.

Violoncello (vc.) part: Starts with a half note G2, then a triplet of eighth notes (A2, B2, C3) with a crescendo hairpin, followed by a half note D3. Dynamics: *pp*.

151

Violin (vln.) part: Measure 151: half note G#4. Measure 152: triplet of eighth notes (A#4, B4, C5) with a crescendo hairpin from *p* to *pp*. Measure 153: half note D5. Dynamics: *pp*, *p*, *pp*, *p*.

Viola (vla.) part: Measure 151: half note G3. Measure 152: triplet of eighth notes (A3, B3, C4) with a crescendo hairpin. Measure 153: half note D4. Dynamics: *pp*.

Violoncello (vc.) part: Measure 151: half note G2. Measure 152: triplet of eighth notes (A2, B2, C3) with a crescendo hairpin. Measure 153: half note D3. Dynamics: *ppp*, *p*, *pp*.

154

Violin (vln.) part: Measure 154: half note G4. Measure 155: triplet of eighth notes (A4, B4, C5) with a crescendo hairpin from *mp* to *p*. Measure 156: half note D5. Dynamics: *mp*, *p*.

Viola (vla.) part: Measure 154: half note G3. Measure 155: triplet of eighth notes (A3, B3, C4) with a crescendo hairpin from *p* to *pp*. Measure 156: half note D4. Dynamics: *p*, *pp*.

Violoncello (vc.) part: Measure 154: triplet of eighth notes (A2, B2, C3) with a crescendo hairpin from *mp* to *p*. Measure 155: triplet of eighth notes (A2, B2, C3) with a crescendo hairpin from *mp* to *p*. Measure 156: half note D3. Dynamics: *mp*, *p*, *p*.

Measures 155 and 156 are marked *sul tasto*.



earthward, ever circling

157 sul tasto

vln. *p* *pp*

vla. (*p*) *mp* *p* *pp*

vc. (*p*) *mp* *p* *pp*

162

vln. *p*

vla. *mp* *f*

vc. *p*

166

vln. *mp* *p*

vla. *mp* *p* *pp* *p*

vc. *mp* *p* *p*

earthward, ever circling

172

Violin (vln.) part: Measures 172-176. Starts with a half note G4 (mp), followed by a half note F#4 (p), then a half note G4 (mp). Measure 175 has a whole rest. Measure 176 has a half note G4 (p) and a half note F#4 (mf) with a crescendo hairpin.

Viola (vla.) part: Measures 172-176. Measure 172 has a half note G#3 (mp). Measures 173-175 have whole rests. Measure 176 has a half note G#3 (p) and a half note F#3 (p) with an accent (>).

Violoncello (vc.) part: Measures 172-176. Measure 172 has a half note G3 (mp). Measures 173-175 have whole rests. Measure 176 has a half note G3 (p), a half note F#3 (p), and a half note E3 (mf) with a crescendo hairpin.

177

Violin (vln.) part: Measures 177-180. Measure 177 has a half note G4 (p) and a half note F#4 (pp). Measure 178 has a half note G4 (p) and a half note F#4 (pp). Measure 179 has a half note G4 (mp) and a half note F#4 (mp). Measure 180 has a half note G4 (mp) and a half note F#4 (mp).

Viola (vla.) part: Measures 177-180. Measure 177 has a half note G#3 (p). Measure 178 has a half note G#3 (p) and a half note F#3 (p). Measure 179 has a half note G#3 (mp) and a half note F#3 (mp). Measure 180 has a half note G#3 (mp) and a half note F#3 (f) with a triplet of eighth notes.

Violoncello (vc.) part: Measures 177-180. Measure 177 has a half note G3 (p). Measure 178 has a half note G3 (p) and a half note F#3 (p). Measure 179 has a half note G3 (mp) and a half note F#3 (mp). Measure 180 has a half note G3 (mp) and a half note F#3 (f).

181

Violin (vln.) part: Measures 181-184. Measures 181-184 have whole rests.

Viola (vla.) part: Measures 181-184. Measure 181 has a half note G#3 (p). Measure 182 has a half note G#3 (p) and a half note F#3 (p). Measure 183 has a half note G#3 (p) and a half note F#3 (p). Measure 184 has a half note G#3 (p) and a half note F#3 (p).

Violoncello (vc.) part: Measures 181-184. Measure 181 has a half note G3 (p). Measure 182 has a half note G3 (p) and a half note F#3 (p). Measure 183 has a half note G3 (p) and a half note F#3 (p). Measure 184 has a half note G3 (p) and a half note F#3 (p).

earthward, ever circling

186

vln. *p*

vla. (*p*)

vc. (*p*)

192

vln. *mp*

vla. *mp*

vc. *mp*

198

*rit.* -----

vln. *p* *mp* *p*

vla. (*p*) *mp* *p*

vc. (*p*) *mp* *p*