Gonçalo Gato

The Life is Ours

for Symphonic Wind Band
Preface

This work is based on Portuguese folk music. The folk material is used in various ways: either almost literally or supplying building blocks for musical invention and elaboration. This invention and elaboration can be rhythmic (the initial wood blocks intervention, for instance), melodic (the initial low-brass melody, for instance), textural (between rehearsal marks A and C but also between F and I) or timbral (between rehearsal marks C and E). The folk material and its creative possibilities - symbolising human essence and freedom - is subsequently overshadowed and supplanted by a very strict march, which connotes oppressive and doctrinaire tendencies in the world. The aftermath is a kind of soulless mechanical atmosphere, a metaphor for a world where human expression and potential can’t flourish.

July, 2013

Performance notes / Notes pour l’execution:

- The score is written in C.
- Full instrumentation is featured on the first page of the score. Each staff represents one player.
- The dynamic marking ‘n’ stands for niente, meaning silence.
- Accidentals last one bar and affect only the octave on which they appear.
- At rehearsal mark C, a heterophony (rather like a textural sonority) is created which later undergoes a perceptual change in its audition. At D the pre-existing sonority on the woodwinds starts to be heard as part of a new timbre. It becomes the partials of an approximate harmonic series, the brass supplying some lower partials; trombones making use of their easy access to quarter-tones. One can say that the folk material goes through a change in its character and is now heard as part of a sound amalgam. This amalgamation continues on the woodwind section, but this time it becomes also rhythmic. The movement of voices, together with careful choices of harmonies according to integer-ratios (harmonic series-like proportions) creates a great amount of blending and a very chromatic harmonic context for the folk material. 

Percussion instruments:

- Timpani
- Triangle
- Suspended Cymbal
- Crash Cymbals
- Tam-tam
- Whip
- Wood Blocks
- Tambourine
- Snare Drum
- Tenor Drum
- Bass Drum
- Crotales
- Tubular Bells
- Glockenspiel
- Vibraphone
- Xylophone
- Marimba