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From Ictus to Raptus

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From Ictus to Raptus

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Multidisciplinary Studies
of Bard College

by
Andrea Abel

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

May 2023

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A SENIOR PROJECT IN MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

**FROM
LECTUS**

**SOUND-TEXT
VISUAL
ART
MOVEMENT
DESIGN**

**POETRY
ELECTRONIC
& ACOUSTIC
MUSIC**

TO

BY REA ABEL

RAPTUS

APRIL 29TH AT 4PM IN THE OLD GYM

A SENIOR PROJECT IN
MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

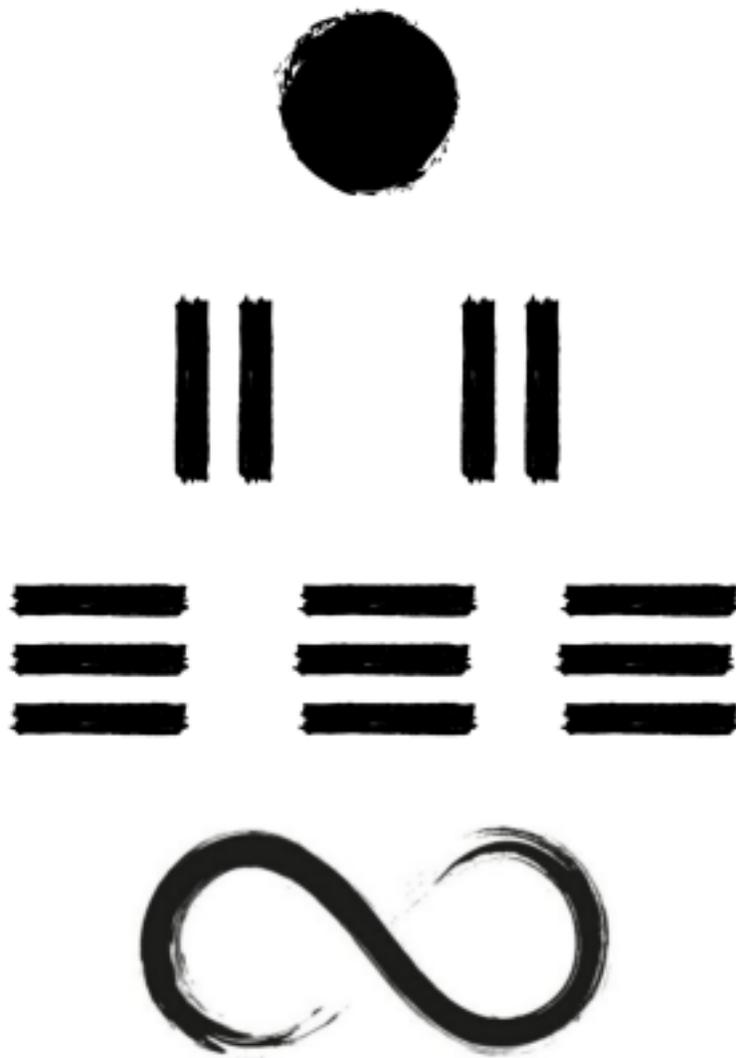
FROM **TO** **RAPTUS**
ICTUS

APRIL 29TH AT 4PM
IN THE OLD GYM

SOUND-TEXT
VISUAL ART
POETRY MOVEMENT
ELECTRONIC DESIGN
& ACOUSTIC
MUSIC

BY REA ABEL

Andrea Abel



FROM ICTUS TO RAPTUS

A Senior Project in Multidisciplinary
Studies

*'The Tao gives birth to one
One gives birth to two
Two gives birth to three
Three gives birth to ten thousand things
Ten thousand things with yin at their back
Yang in their embrace
And breath between for harmony
What the world hates
To be orphaned widowed or destitute
Kings use for their titles
Thus some gain by losing
Others lose by gaining
What others teach
I teach too
Tyrants never choose their death
This becomes my teacher'
- TaoTeChing, Lao-Tzu
Translated by Red Pine*

Advisors:

Michael Ives - poetry

Matthew Sargent - electronic music

Daaimah Mubashshir - theater & performance

FROM ICTUS TO RAPTUS

From Ictus to Raptus is a story about the emergence of sound. This performance is only a human attempt to capture the Event from which all existence emerges (Ictus), and an attempt to interpret and rejoice in the resulting complexity of the world, by tracing multiplicity back to singularity and reuniting it with its origin (Raptus).

"The Dao gives birth to One"

/for pre-recorded sounds and projection/

Ictus - It is the first downbeat of all existence, the ultimate One from which all things are emerging and to which all things are returning.

"One gave birth to Two"

/for two percussionists and video animation/

It is the ongoing event of the germinal meiosis, dividing into Yin and Yang. It is the separation from an underlying oneness - the appearance of multiplicity - that initiated the concept of measurement. The conceptual distinction or distance between these two individual entities, One and Two, initiates the idea of time and of periodicity, and thereby, rhythm.

"Two gives birth to Three"

/for jazz trio and live painting/

It is the meeting and emergence of Yin and Yang. Humankind is the breath between - spirit and flesh - standing enclosed by Heaven and Earth. Resembling its source, but unceasingly looking to reunite with it, Humankind does not realize its divine presence and feels alone and dull. Like a measure in music adhering to the continuation of rhythm, pitch and silence, we too are involuntarily participating in the rhythmic cycles of ten thousand emergences and reconciliations, unknowingly searching to reunite through prayer, art, pleasure, body, and soul, while resisting an encounter with our ictus.

"Three gives birth to Ten Thousand Things in the universe"

/abstract language piece for 4 voices/

It is these three - Yin, Yang and Humankind - the two complementary forces of the universe and the consciousness experiencing itself that result in the colloquial chaos we know as the world. It is through knowing how multiplicity began that we can make sense and navigate what is seemingly unintelligible around us. For the Ten Thousand Things that are endlessly being brought to this world, there are Ten Thousand Things pointing to the direction of the Dao. For the approximately 108 billion humans that have ever lived and died, there have been 108 billion people now whose minds and bodies still resemble its creation.

Artist statement

It has been about two years since I began falling asleep at night while listening to the Dao Te Jing. What a remarkable intimacy one can develop with a text when listening to it during the vulnerability of their last waking hours. Whatever weight the days have thrust upon me, this book has served as an altar at which I can lay down my thoughts and observe them from a distance. It is my most sincere aspiration to share this refuge with you.

While at times the Tao, or the way, may seem ludicrous to the western reader ("When a superior man hears of the Tao, / he immediately begins to embody it. / When an average man hears of the Tao, / he half believes it, half doubts it. / When a foolish man hears of the Tao, / he laughs out loud. / If he didn't laugh, / it wouldn't be of the Tao." trans. Stephen Mitchell), it is the beauty and simplicity of these poems that inspired me to investigate the Tao as the true origin of all the chaos and sensory overload that surrounds us. As a result, I

now believe that what appears to be the distancing effect of thought is - if understood correctly - what also leads us to wisdom, and to an acceptance rooted in depth.

While there is no better representation of the Way than the Way itself, it is Its relationship to sound and rhythm that inspired this performance. Through my multidisciplinary studies major, which gave me the opportunity to explore a combination of music, poetry, visual art and movement, I have felt unconstrained by either genre or discipline to convey the continuous emergence of vibrations, sounds, cycles and rhythms from which the world manifests at each and every moment.

In view of the complexity we must navigate each day and every day, perhaps the purpose of retelling our story isn't so much to remind us how it ends, but rather to remind us how it began.

CREDITS

Texts from:

LAO-TZU'S TAO TE CHING - translated by
Red Pine, Rea Abel

I.

Voice - Michael Ives

Movement - Rea Abel

II.

Percussion 1 - Jonathan Collazo

Percussion 2 - Esteban Ganem

Projected visuals - Arnav Shirodkar

III.

Trumpet - Vigilance Brandon

Double Bass - Michael Knox

Drumset - Rodney Clark

Live painting - OGA

IV.

Voice 1 - Michael Knox

Voice 2 - Esteban Ganem

Voice 3 - Alexander Kulick

Voice 4 - Jonathan Collazo

**Poetry, music, electronic sounds, movement
and light design** by Rea Abel

Written and directed by Rea Abel

Special thanks to the Old Gym for hosting this performance and the Bard College electronic music department for the sound equipment.