

Constellations (2007)

Two pieces for viola and piano

Premiered on September 15, 2007 at La Roche-Posay (France), by Lise Berthaud (viola) and Jérôme Ducros (piano).

Contemplating the heavenly vault on a lovely, cloudless summer night has always plunged me into a state of hypnotic fascination. These viola pieces grew out of that feeling, and from a desire to express through music the almost mystical calm and sense of wonder that comes from when looking up at the magical twinkling sky.

I. Constellation of the Boreal Crown

The crown in question belonged to Ariadne, daughter of King Minos of Crete, who received it from Theseus for her wedding. In Celtic mythology, it belonged to Caer, daughter of the fairy king. The Boreal Crown is said to be a place where the souls of kings, poets and musicians seek refuge after their deaths. The piece, a serene and luminous arch, unfurls in a long ascension to glittering high notes followed by a descent into darkness, with the viola's endless melody superimposed on faraway reminiscences of Gregorian chant.

II. Constellation of the Southern Crown

This movement is an airy *scherzo* in which the bright revolutions of the stars are portrayed by a swirling viola theme and by a weightless, immaterial piano part. This dance of life becomes wilder in the *coda*, where a final variation of the theme transforms it into an incantatory motif. The Southern Crown is in Sagittarius, and is very near us, in the southern hemisphere.

Guillaume Connesson