

Margarita Anguísque



by

Elma Miller

Score and parts were engraved using the software “Score”

Margarita Anguisque

(Latin: The Snake and the Pearl)

Programme note

The ancient Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh fills twelve long cuneiform tablets with tales of his fantastic exploits and travels. In his quest of immortality Gilgamesh receives instructions: he must attach stones to his feet, sink to the bottom of the sea and from there pluck the “*Flower of Eternal Life*” i.e. a pearl. If he eats it, his youth would be restored.



Gilgamesh finds and plucks the flower but decides to take his precious cargo home and share it with the elders of his city. On his way, he tires and takes a nap. While he sleeps, the snake comes up from a water hole and eats the *pearl* himself and thereby achieves immortality - for whenever a snake feels itself ageing, it sloughs off its ancient skin and re-emerges young and vigorous again. The moral of the story is that *how can Man, who cannot even conquer Sleep, hope to conquer Death?*

The snake (Anguis) and the pearl (Margarita) together were regarded in ancient Dilmun as symbols of freedom from sickness, old age and death. Beneath the floors of houses built millennia ago, archaeologists have discovered nestled among the coiled skeletons of snakes, a single bead.

Margarita Anguisque depicts the story in a programmatic fashion: introducing the snake by means of its characteristic rattle (either in the percussion or inside the piano). Typical sounds of the Near East are reflected in the oboe and clarinet lilting melodies. The sea-bed is a low A struck repeatedly inside the piano. Colour and exotic flavour are added by the percussion with stringent, shimmering chords of unique orchestral combinations. All are underpinned with a constant piano presence symbolizing Gilgamesh on his quest. In the end the snake has the last word.

In 1999, for a Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra performance, I had the entire score and parts re-engraved into the computer using the software Score.

Elma Miller, 1999

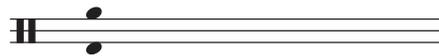
Burlington, Ontario

The illustration is from a Failaka seal from Dilmun, suggesting man's fight for immortality with the snake.

INSTRUMENTATION:

Flute
 Oboe
 Clarinet
 Bassoon
 French Horn

Percussion 1

small tam-tam  

large sizzle cymbal  

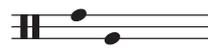
5 temple blocks  

3 wood blocks  

Percussion 2

medium suspended cymbal  

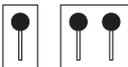
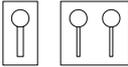
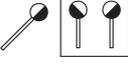
small sizzle cymbal  

2 timbales  

cabaca 

Piano
 Violin
 Viola

NOTATION:

	left hand		snare drum stick
	1 small hard stick		blow through instrument without playing a note
	hard sticks		circular motion
	soft sticks		highest note possible
	medium soft sticks		play inside the piano
	brushes		notes in brackets indicate an approx. pitch area
			rests in brackets indicate an approx. duration

Score in C

Margarita Anguisque

dedicated to A. A. Pilt

ELMA MILLER

Flute $\text{♩} = 72$
Oboe
Clar.
Bssn.
Horn
Percussion 1
Percussion 2
Piano
Violin
Viola

sfz *fff* *mp* *ppp* *p*
sfz *fff* *mp* *ppp*
sfz *fff* *mp* *pp* *mp*
sfz *fff*
sfz *fff* *mp*
mp *ff* *L. sizz mp* *3*
S. sizz mp *f* *f*
sfz *f* *ff* ** Strike string with beater and sweep slowly up the string*
sfz *fff* *mf* *Grad. trem. sul pont.*
sfz *fff* *mf* *Grad. trem. sul pont.*

Blow through instrument without playing a note
Blow through instrument without playing a note

8

Flute

Oboe

Clar.

Bssn.

Horn

Percussion 1

Percussion 2

Piano

Violin

Viola

8va

f *f* *mp*

f *mp* *mf* *pp*

mf *f* *sf*

f *mp* *f* *pp*

f *mf* l.v.

f

f *ord.*

p *f* *p*

p *mf*

14 **A tempo**

Flute *mf* *p* *gliss.*

Oboe *f* *mp* *mp*

Clar. *mf* *f* *p* *mf* *tr* *mp*

Bssn. *f* *p*

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

Percussion 1 *mf* (along the rim)

Percussion 2 *mf*

Piano **A tempo** *mf* *f*

Violin *mf* *trem.* *mp* *mf*

Viola *sfz* *f* *pp* *mf* *3* *3* *3*