

Journey into the inner self

By Peter Jacobi
H-T Reviewer

Was it peaceful, ominous, mysterious, sinister?

It was all.

Was it ceremony, ritual, dreaming, awakening?

It was all.

The all is called *dreaming the dark down slowly*. It's the musical work of Joseph Klein, an IU composition major whose creativity has been heard to good advantage before.

This time his collaborator was Emily B. Stuart, who has choreographed movement for his music and given him words, lulling, lulling, lovely words like: "Sleep I want to, to sleep very deep to sleep softly where deep are the shadows that asleep me keep."

The performing collaborators for Friday evening's presentation of *dreaming the dark down slowly* were Jan Harrington and his Contemporary Vocal Ensemble. They attracted an overflow crowd to the soaring entrance hall of the IU Art Museum, a crowd that responded enthusiastically to this piece of theater and dance and music.

Review

Klein wastes no time establishing mood. He expresses himself succinctly, giving the listener a penetrating journey into the mind. In 20 minutes one gets total immersion into the plight of The Sleepless One, the Everyman, the any and all of us as we hover in life between the state of being awake and of sleeping, as we dream in comfort and in terror, as we move toward death.

The composition is a continuity of six sections: Lullaby, Awakening, Dream, Reawakening, Processional, and Lullaby once again. The music can soothe. It can also disturb, turning at times into an indeterminate chant very much like the eerie outburst that concludes Pendrecki's *The Devils*.

Klein enhances voices electronically. He underscores with minimal percussion instruments and with a chorus of water being dripped by human hands into bowls.

Stuart's words would seem to have inspired the music, and perhaps they did. But verbal and musical sounds unite, blend, merge. And

with those stylized movements asked of the chorus and the soloists, one gains the feeling of a Magritte painting come to life.

Matthew Pass sang and moaned and shouted and hissed passionately as The Sleepless One. Melissa Fathman intoned her contributing evocations appropriately. And all who hummed and groaned and warbled — the members of the Contemporary Vocal Ensemble — added to the atmosphere. Harrington made it sound good.

The Art Museum is a splendid spot for such an event. The front hall is both spacious and intimate. And the echoes merely added to the effectiveness of Klein's seamless sounds.

What an interesting creation.

Was it well done, provocative, evocative, involving?

Indeed, it was.