

Aurél Holló: Viola Express
for solo viola and percussion
(2011)

While composing music, I often visualize the musical storyline. In the case of *Viola Express*, it was a set of pictures rolling like a film, making me feel like I am on a journey. The music follows a discursive pattern sometimes, then it slows down (occasionally to a standstill) and speeds up swiftly at other times. In the final movement, it keeps grinding for minutes continually. It is these associations and the vivid viola part that the title *Viola Express* refers to.

My imaginary train travels through exotic lands. I was trying to capture the sounds, colours and scents of India and Indonesia and rephrase them in my musical language: The troling on an oriental scale of four different pitches in the first movement, then the theme of the second movement which is in fact the adapted version of a lullaby sung by a Balinese girl and, finally, the accompaniment in the third movement which recalls gamelan playing techniques – all these are reflections of impressions that have haunted me for years and apparently still do so.

The viola plays a solo role almost throughout the piece. Yet playing to an interlocking accompaniment demands high rhythmic discipline and utmost concentration from the soloist who can enjoy a little more freedom of interpretation only in the slow movement.

Viola Express was written for violist Rivka Golani and the Amadinda Percussion Group on commission from the Empress Theatre Society, Canada, in the spring of 2011.

Aurél Holló