



Tom STRINI

Sigmund:

Good Luck With The

Snopek

seeks help with launch

Rock and jazz sideman, keyboard player, singer, multi-instrumentalist and composer Sigmund Snopek is at it again.

He has composed a huge oratorio, "Cosm 23," based on a book-length poem by Cynthia d'Este. The project, years in the making, was commissioned by no one.

Snopek invited me over a while back to hear a synthesized version that he played into his computer from his MIDI keyboard one orchestral part at a time. He coaxed the orchestrations out of the computer, added bits of keyboard work and sang the choral and solo parts himself. It was quite a performance.



Snopek

a performance.

I'm one of 10 auditors Snopek invited to one-on-one salons. He is seeking endorsement letters to help get him in the door with potential donors and orchestras.

"When I have the letters, I'll go shopping," he said. "I think it will sell itself."

He estimates the cost of copying, publishing and mounting the piece — for a large orchestra with two harps, two pianos and two sets of timpani, a chorus of 150 and some electronic effects — at \$250,000.

That figure includes some compensation for the hundreds of hours he's put into it and a scholarship donation for voice students at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, his alma mater.

"I write the music, and then I find the commission," he said.

I won't be writing private letters of recommendation for Snopek or anyone else, but I will state publicly that I admire this musician and his singular combination of artistic idealism and hard-headed entrepreneurship.

Snopek dedicated "Cosm 23" to the late Gaylord Nelson (and, he added, "to whoever pays the commission"). Nelson was an ecologically minded Wisconsin governor and U.S. senator and an important activist for the environment. Nelson spearheaded Earth Day.

He's a good fit for "Cosm 23." D'Este's lofty, yet economical text is a paean to the Earth.

Surprisingly poetic comments from astronauts, uttered and recorded as they viewed our planet from above, supplement d'Este's words. "Cosm 23" is a natural centerpiece for an Earth Day concert.

The idiom is solidly tonal, with some episodes of Minimalist technique. The spirit is heroic. In the segments I heard, Snopek built smartly to convincing climaxes. The orchestral colors are vivid, even in synthesized simulation. Snopek knows how to put a piece together. People will like "Cosm 23."

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