

Program Note for *Opus: Testing Project*

Tao Te Ching, Chapter 22, Verse 1

Setting for Electronics and Soprano by Vasilis Mouskouris

The book of *Tao Te Ching* is chiefly based on the principle of contrasting entities which instead of violently trying to outfight one another, these entities are complementary existing as a peaceful and coherent unit, so that the seed of one is contained in the other in a perpetual sequence.

The lines that I have set from Chapter 22 demonstrate sharp contrasts suggesting spiritual depths.

My piece experiments with stressing these contrasting elements, such as word-painting through the melodic contours and expressive gestures conveyed through body movement. Electronics add to the drama of the piece with the ever changing sound layers underpinning the contrasts.

Body movements, as a ceremonial act reinforcing the verbal content, begin and end with the same posture implying the spiritual cycle; start from purity due to sheer unawareness; end to purity due to inner knowledge. The closing Chimes mark the point of peace and *virtue* ('Te') gained *on the Way* ('Tao').

TAO-TE-CHING - Chapter Twenty-two, first verse

English version taken from the suggested source by Opus: Testing

If you want to become whole, let yourself be partial.
If you want to become straight, let yourself be crooked.
If you want to become full, let yourself be empty.
If you want to be reborn, let yourself die.
If you want to be given everything, give everything up.