

AMERICAN COMPOSERS FORUM BOSTON

Presents

SONIC CIRCUITS VIII INTERNATIONAL ELECTRONIC MUSIC FESTIVAL

Friday, April 27, 2001 and Saturday, April 28, 2001

Program Notes

NOISES - AMNON WOLMAN

"*Noises*, was commissioned by Amos Hetz for the Room Dances Festival in Israel November 1999, and was premiered by Osnat Arbel, Eyal Levinson and myself. It was one of the most uplifting moments of my life." Amnon Wolman

SECOND THOUGHTS - DENNIS MILLER

Second Thoughts is intended for performance on videotape. The work is in three sections, the first two of which dominate the form. The opening section explores the inside of a virtual object and depicts many of the surfaces and textures found therein. The second section moves into 3D space and presents different perspectives of the initial object, as well as adding a number of new elements that derive their form from the elements in the opening. The short, third section is a recap of the first and adds several minor variations to it. The music, also composed by this author, contributes an emotive element as well as an added layer of continuity to the piece.

Like previous works by this author, all visual elements were scripted using the POVray scene description language; no special effects or plug-ins of any type were used. The musical material derives from both synthetic and acoustic sound sources.

Improvisation - JORRIT DIJKSTRA

In his solo project Dutch saxophonist Jorrit Dijkstra processes his saxophone sounds with electronic devices to create live improvised soundscapes. With a loop machine and a delay he layers rhythms, melodies and sounds into drones, beats, chords, polyrhythms and sometimes chaos. An analog filter bank, a modular synthesizer and a pitch shifter are used to add new colors to his already broad spectrum of saxophone sounds. Besides the alto sax he uses a Lyricon, the first analog electronic wind instrument made by Bill Bernardi in the seventies. Because all the sampling and processing occurs live, the listener is witness of a highly improvised event, where the electronics behave like another player. Jorrit's background in jazz and improvised music makes the balance between the processed sounds and his clear and lyrical saxophone playing even stronger. Jorrit's solo work shows influences from the music of Steve Lacy, György Ligeti, Conlon Nancarrow, Aphex Twin, and other new developments in ambient, minimalist, noise and drum & bass music.

FLIGHT - EZRA SIMS

Flight is the only piece of mine to take its impulse from specific sights the flickering flight of marsh harriers over the edges of Edgartown Great Pond, and of gulls circling in updrafts of summer air, rising to great heights as they travel on them out of sight. It took its impulse from them, only it makes no effort to imitate them.

For over 35 years, I've been writing a microtonal music using a 72-note division of the octave. At any one moment in a piece a phrase, a section, a whole movement there is an established key of 18 or 24 notes, asymmetrically arranged, that derive their validity and their varying function from their position in the harmonic/overtone series of the current fundamental. On the larger level, the overall form of the piece derives from the harmonic relations of these keys. This is, of course, the same process as occurs in Classical Tonal music, but with more pitches and without Tonal music's dependence on the triad.

Flight, unusually, tends to change key more often, in a sort of chaconne form, changing every measure in the outer parts (in some sections, every other measure) but sometimes settling, in the inner sections, into one key for a relatively extended amount of time. Thus, the scales function much as do the chords in a traditional chaconne, with the added device of settling into one or the other when appropriate.

Flight was written for the Dutch flautist, Hanneke Provily, and was premiered by her at the Teyler Stichting, Haarlem, in May, 1989. Her performance can be heard on CRI 643, *The Microtonal Music of Ezra Sims*.

The electronic part uses David Raynas RTMPIO software and the dedicated synthesizer built for it. When I bought it, in 1988, it was the only accurate microtonal device I could find, having a maximum error of 0.0000164545 Hz. Everything else that claimed microtonality and could be afforded by mere human beings was gross in comparison and so far as I hear, these days, still tends to be.

Hanneke threatens, some day, to do it on a recital to be called "My Twelve Favorite Flute Pieces Named *Flight*."

FADES, DISSOLVES, FIZZLES - CHARLES DODGE

Fades, Dissolves, Fizzles is a work for tape alone in five parts. Each part comprises a sequence of three contrasting musical passages - I call them "Chords", "Tinkles", and "Gamelan". The three always succeed one another in the same order and each is elaborated from one part to the next. There is a ritualistic aspect to the work, particularly in the way that each passage begins the same way and includes much of the same music from one appearance in the piece to the next. The music of all three passages derives its characteristics - its tuning, timing and timbre - directly from the harmonic series.

Fades, Dissolves, Fizzles was commissioned by the Groupe de Musique Experimentale de Bourges (France) for performance at the Synthese '96 Festival. It lasts around fourteen minutes. The work shows the influence of a number of composers I greatly admire, including Jean-Claude Risset and Conlon Nancarrow.

THE BEATIFICATION OF THE FACSIMILE TONE - RON KUIVILA

Beatification of the facsimile tone is a 'tuned space' possessing a kind of melodic reverberation. Within it, the smallest incidental and environmental sounds elicit sustained responses but repeated sounds quickly wear out their welcome and are ignored. A single sine tone is processed through three comb filters tuned in the ratios 7/8, 1/1, and 3/2. (The actual pitches are a concert D and A together with a C one quarter tone flat.) The pitch of the sine tone slowly wanders, creating crescendoing beating patterns whenever it crosses a harmonic of C, D or A. Two other sine tones slowly rise and fall at different pitches derived from the set of pitches to which the comb filters respond. Whenever the instantaneous level and rate of change of their waveforms are within prescribed limits, they trade places. This creates modulation patterns similar to those heard from FAX tones and modems, but with the odd property of being in tune. Yet another sine tone appears and disappears making a simple, irregular rhythmic articulation. Emerging out of this texture and nine statements drawn from the International Personality Profile that one could attribute to a computer. Technology aspires to banality. At the moment of its disappearance, a FAX tone signals you are connected. I imagine this piece as a kind of elegy to physicality.

TECHOIRAMA (obsessive/compulsive) - RON KUIVILA

As the title suggests, this pair of studies intertwine the expansion and contraction of time structure (the concept of irama) with the perfect regularity of electronic pulse. Both are based on a pattern of controlled acceleration (shamelessly appropriated from Jim Tenney's *Spectral Canon for Conlon Nancarrow*) where a fixed duration is systematically subdivided in a logarithmic fashion. In this system, the duration of the first two events ([1,2]) is equal to that of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th ([2,3,4]) events. This relation continues to arbitrarily fine subdivisions:

$$[1,2] = [2,3,4] = [3,4,5,6] = [4,5,6,7,8] = [5,6,7,8,9,10] \dots$$

The precise length of a duration n is:

$$(4/\log(2)) * \log(n+2/n+1) \text{ seconds.}$$

Subdivisions assemble into a steady structural duration (4 seconds in

these pieces), but it is impossible to count the interrelation of the subdivisions themselves.. These two studies explore the 'feel' of these subdivisions through the interaction of a performer with a computer generated audio track.

(obsessive)

In obsessive, a click track subdivides four seconds into 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128 and 512 pulses while a snare drum tries to keep up. The pattern of sub-division is:

pulse track 2 4 8 16 32 64 128 256

snare drum - 2 4 8 16 8 4 2

(/)

Following obsessive, there is a long glissando/deceleration that replays all of the subdivisions in order of increasing duration. These are routed through a set of filters to create the sound of a series of glottal stops.

(compulsive)

In compulsive, the process of acceleration through subdivision recurs, but it is slowed down by irregularly expanding time interval being subdivided. The performer plays the table with three distinct gestures loosely inspired by Mark Tansey's triptych, *A Short History of Modernist Painting*.

...UN SER CON UNAS ALAS ENORMES... - ILEANA PEREZ-VELAZQUEZ

...Un ser con unas alas enormes... which translates as *... a being with enormous wings...*, was inspired by the 17th *Freeman Etude* for violin by John Cage. Within the hectic gestures that are a major part of this etude are passages reminiscent of Cuban rhythms. An important idea for Cage is that human beings can be better themselves by overcoming their limitations. This piece translates that spirit; humans improve through the use of their imagination. The title is also related to the literary work by Gabriel Garcia Marquez: "un hombre muy viejo con unas alas muy grandes". The tape part, as my departure of style, is fragmentary, and contains processed excerpts from the *Freeman Etude*. The piece also includes some concepts of silence that are present in non-Western music. The use of silence as a conscious part of the piece yet again reflects back to Cage.

the gift of gab - ARUN CHANDRA

An experiment in writing misleading sequences: an attempt at addressing the ability of language to invoke and belittle.

The technique: three experiments.

Wavefold: Having stipulated a waveform, extract portions of it, let each portion be the period of a new waveform, let these new waveforms be added together, up to twenty at a time: the resulting sound is the tatters of the old.

Wavethread: let each extracted portion of a waveform be linearly transformed into another portion, let these transformations occur up to twenty at a time: the resulting sound is the weave of the old.

Swallow your tongue: preserve the sequence of peaks and valleys in the voice part, but reverse the sequence of amplitudes that occur between peaks and between valleys: though your understanding of the text moves forward in time, it is the result of thousands of reversals.

BORDER FENCE - RICHARD LERMAN

Earlier versions of *Border Fences* have been performed in California, Germany, Poland and Arizona--some of these outdoors using actual fences. This version explores 'Borderlands' issues using smaller amplified instruments, a compass, a rose branch, a passport and computer floppy disk. The performance is accompanied with recordings from the border fences at Gringo Pass and Nacos, AZ. Also used is a tape delay using two Walkman Cassette recorders I have worked with since 1983.

CHANGING STATES 6 - RICHARD LERMAN

Since 1986, I have written many pieces for self-built metal microphones which are played using small jeweler's propane torches. The notation for these pieces uses gestures which instruct the performer how to move the torch over the microphone objects. How the torches linger on or move across the metal releases sound through the loudspeakers. Changing States takes its name from a physical change occurring in some of the metal as it cools which is heard through the high gain amplification. A duo version has been performed with Shakuhachi (Aki Nakamura), with percussion (Rich O'Donnell) and with bass (Curtis Bahn).

TIMAEUS II - NEIL LEONARD

Timaeus II is a modal improvisation for saxophone and live electronics. Plato uses Timaeus' explanation to show how human perceptions, the body and the soul are linked to larger universal structures. *Timaeus* is the title piece of Leonard's new solo CD of music for saxophone and computer. For more information visit neillleonard.com.

TIMAEUS I - NEIL LEONARD

Timaeus I is a study in automated improvisation using George Russells Lydian Chromatic Concept. The tuning of the scale expands and contracts in real-time to create glissando effects. Microtonal clusters gradually expand to form more familiar chord voicings.