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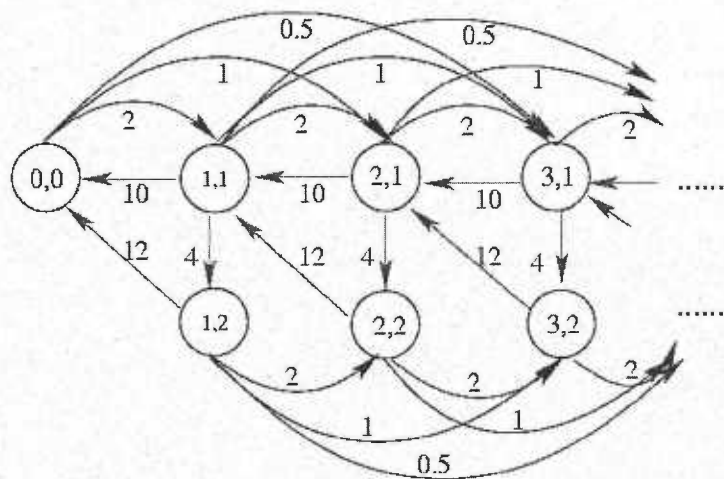
K. Michael Fox

Undergraduate Composition Recital

Sunday, December 9, 2012

5 : 00 pm

Music Building Recital Hall



Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
Bachelor of Arts in Music, Composition
Studio of Dr. Jonathan Middleton

Rhapsodie

K. Michael Fox

*Alek Gayton, Claves
Davis Hill, Celesta
Candice Jones, Contrabass
Kaelynn Jones, Bb Clarinet
Lauren McKinley, Vibraphone
Michelle McNaughton, Flute
K. Michael Fox, Conductor*

Cascade

K. Michael Fox, Melodica/Digital Processing

Film Scores

Someplace Beautiful (2011) [excerpt]

Director: Gaelen Sayres

Black and Blue (2012) [excerpt]

Director: Shay Smith

Eighty Eight

for Computer Realized Sound

The Plains Between Two Naturally Formed Boundaries

*EWU Guitar Ensemble
K. Michael Fox, Conductor*

Rhapsodie

Rhapsodie is an algorithmic composition based upon a portion of the human genome. The main theme, repeated and reinterpreted throughout the work, constitutes a sequence of notes derived from the algorithmic processing of a gene sequence into a rhythmic and melodic structure. The algorithm used is part of MusicAlgorithms.ewu.edu and translates patterns and data within the gene sequence into corresponding musical material. Thematically, Rhapsodie is an introspective look at how perspectives surrounding a particular issue may shift continuously in a pattern closer to that of revolving than evolving.

Cascade

Cascade is a semi-structured improvisational framework that merges acoustic instrumental performance with electronic processing. The first of three important structural elements is the mobile-form score based upon gestures pulled from the harmonic series (open to embellishment and ornamentation). Additionally, a system of digitally-realized frequency modulation is applied to the dry melodic signal. The modulation is based on tones of a specific chord, parsed sequentially as mini-movements within the macro-organization of the piece. The final structural element is a series of additional signal processing modules which provide improvisational coloration to the melodic signal.

Despite being presented and originally conceived of as a piece for the melodica, I have taken to describing the piece as a semi-structured improvisational framework to emphasize that the instrumentation is flexible. The system may just as easily be applied using an input signal from any other acoustic instrument, digital instrument, or even pre-recorded sound or musical work (à la Musique concrète). These factors ensure a system which guarantees the inclusion of components that shape the fundamental character of the piece (the specific chord tones, structure, and processing components), while leaving other aspects guided, yet flexible; thus promoting more varied and personal interpretations by any performer.

Eighty Eight

This piece is based upon Edvard Munch's expressionist painting "The Scream" and related themes. The structural components at work rely on granular synthesis (imagined by physicist Dennis Gabor and first implemented by Iannis Xenakis) for sound generation, whereby many hundreds of sound samples, or grains, of 5 to 50 milliseconds in length are pulled from a source recording and played back amidst one another. The interaction of these individual grains may be likened to particles in physical matter, smearing together into a perceptually solid texture. Analogously, each sound particle is like a droplet of water in the company of countless others, grouping together to appear as a flowing river (Barry Truax).

The prevailing model for structuring the placement of these particles in space (stereoscopically) is a stochastic cloud. Particles within this piece are deliberately modeled as cells within a petri dish - they form colonies that grow from a central point, mutate, and die. Each one of these colonies has a unique DNA-like structure of parameters determining its sound that are identical among the grains within it - save those that mutate to another form.

Plains

This piece is a commission for the Guitar Ensemble of EWU. Beyond aesthetic concerns, a practical goal of the piece was to tier the difficulty of the parts to promote more accessibility. By tiering the difficulty of the parts in this way, it is possible for performers or students of any skill level to perform the piece comfortably. This work also represents my roots as a guitarist and serves as an example of a non-technologically augmented composition - a facet of my compositional personality which I consider distinct yet equally important to my partially or exclusively technologically based works.