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Composition Portfolio

Jonah Elrod

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COMPOSITION PORTFOLIO:

1. A SPOTLESS MOON
2. DAYDREAM
3. MINDFULNESS
4. STRATOSPHERE

by

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BACHELOR OF MUSIC
MUSIC EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
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THESIS

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COMPOSITION PORTFOLIO:

1. A SPOTLESS MOON
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B.M., Music Education, University of Arizona, 2003
M.Mu., Music, University of New Mexico, 2013

ABSTRACT

Composition Portfolio is a collection of four music compositions that were written during my time spent at the University of New Mexico.

A Spotless Moon is for B-flat clarinet, cello, piano, and percussion. The piece uses a pitch structure based on the (01267) pitch-class set along with added color tones to otherwise exposed tritones and open perfect fifths. It features the use of specific gestures and perceiving them in different ways and combinations. The gestures include dynamic swells, exploring rough/noisy articulations, and types of both regular and irregular tremolos.

Daydream is a large work for wind ensemble that focuses on non-metrical placement of musical gestures and lines. It was originally conceived as a multitrack recording of multiple melodic lines, then transcribed for a large ensemble.

Mindfulness, for orchestra, explores instrumental timbres through aleatory performance of indicated pitches and rhythm. Musical gestures and events are controlled by a conductor who cues when each new event is to occur. The pitch material frequently uses all twelve pitch-classes simultaneously, as well as the use of quarter-tones in the strings.

Stratosphere, for fixed media, SATB, and strings, is written in graphic notation with performers relying on cues from the ensemble and a conductor for
the piece to move forward through time. The text is an anonymous poem called
_Amergin_, published in The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse, published in
1917. The piece includes five layers for string instruments. The piece may be
performed by any number of string players on any type of stringed instrument.
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A Spotless Moon

for

B-flat clarinet, cello, piano, and percussion

Jonah L. Elrod

2013
Instrumentation:
  B-flat Clarinet
  Cello
  Piano
Percussion:
  Suspended Cymbal
  Large Tam-tam
  Bass Drum
  Vibraphone

Duration:
  ~ 9 minutes
B♭ Clarinet:

Δ = blow air through instrument, no pitch. Use a fingering that closes most of the holes.

富有 = flutter tongue, while blowing air.

Piano:

= with a metal object (coin), scrape along the lowest string possible.

Cello:

= arco tailpiece

= relative bow pressure

= mute C string with left hand

= higher harmonic possible
\( j = 60 \)
93
Choose figure:
as before

fl. (mmmmmm)

Vc.

Perc.

Pno

Pno
Jonah L. Elrod

Daydream

for
Wind Ensemble and Percussion

2011
Daydream

Piccolo
Flute 1
Flute 2 (doubles Alto Flute)
Oboe
English Horn
Eb Clarinet
Bb Clarinet 1 (two players)
Bb Clarinet 2 (two players)
Bb Clarinet 3 (two players)
Bb Bass Clarinet
Bassoon 1
Bassoon 2
Contrabassoon
F Horn 1
F Horn 2
F Horn 3
F Horn 4
Bb Trumpet 1
Bb Trumpet 2
Bb Trumpet 3
Trombone 1
Trombone 2
Trombone 3
Bass Trombone
Euphonium 1
Euphonium 2
Tuba
Timpani
Percussion 1 (Crotales, Orch. Bells)
Percussion 2 (Vibraphone, Snare Drum)
Percussion 3 (Marimba, 5 Tenor Drums [small to large])
Percussion 4 (Tam-tams [small and medium], Bass Drum)

Score is in C.
Octave transpositions apply in the usual way:

- Piccolo sounds one octave higher than written.
- Contrabassoon sounds one octave lower than written.
- Crotales and Orchestra Bells sound two octaves higher than written.
Jonah L. Elrod

Mindfulness

for orchestra

2011
Organization and Tempo

Each measure is approximately five seconds in length, however, ultimately the length of each measure is entirely up to the conductor. The conductor is to give a firm and obvious gesture as to when each new measure begins. There are cues marked for the conductor showing where certain musical events happen before a measure has ended. These are marked with a downward arrow and a vertical dotted line pointing to the area of the ensemble that requires the cue.

Most open note heads are followed by a bold horizontal line. This means that the note is to be sustained until the horizontal line ends. When the line ends inside of a measure, the performer should observe how far into the measure the horizontal line goes, and then the sustained pitch relative to where in the total five seconds of that measure they deem that horizontal line to end. Wind players may breathe as necessary, as long as it is unsynchronized with the other performers.

Many musical passages are contained within a box, followed by a bold horizontal line. The passage inside of the box is to be repeated at a general tempo of quarter note equals 60-80 beats per minute, until the bold horizontal line ends. The horizontal organization of the pitches to be performed are a suggestion as to their ordering. The pitches are then to be performed in any ordering the performer chooses. They are never to be performed in the same manner twice.

Musical passages without any boxes or bold horizontal lines are to be performed at the performer’s discretion at a relative tempo of quarter note equals 60-80 beats per minute. The rhythms notated are a general guide as to how “quick” the passage should sound at a tempo of 60-80.

In the absence of rests, the performers are given breath markings with fermatas. The duration of each fermata is relative to how much longer the measure has until it is finished.

Noodling

Noodling is indicated by an infinity sign on top of a box. The pitches inside of the box indicate the range of the pitches that are to be performed, including quarter tones. The pitches should be performed in any ordering, in any rhythm, at a variable speed, and unsynchronized with the other performers. The rhythms performed should vary and not be consistent throughout the passage or the ensemble, however, a generally high amount of rhythmic activity is necessary for the desired sound.

This noodling effect is very similar to that asked of by John Corigliano in the first movement of his Symphony No. 2 (2000).

Lowest tone possible

The brass are indicated to perform their lowest tones possible on their instruments by a downward arrow inside of a box. This includes the lowest possible pedal tones. A breathy, lip-flapping type of sound is encouraged, but generally a definite pitch should be heard overall.
Instrumentation

2 Flutes
2 Oboes
2 Bb Clarinets
2 Bassoons
4 F Horns
2 Bb Trumpets
2 Tenor Trombones
1 Bass Trombone
1 Tuba
3 Percussion
8 First Violin
8 Second Violin
8 Viola
8 Cello
4 Double Bass

Percussion

1 Vibraphone
   Orchestra Bells
   Crotales
   Brake Drum
   Triangle
   Snare Drum

2 Marimba
   Crotales
   Brake Drum
   Sleigh Bells
   3 Tenor Drums (small, medium, large)
   Bass Drum

3 Bass Drum
   3 Tam-tams (small, medium, large)
   2 Suspended Cymbals (medium, large)
   Woodblock
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fl. 1</th>
<th>Fl. 2</th>
<th>Cl. 1</th>
<th>Cl. 2</th>
<th>Tbn. 1</th>
<th>Tbn. 2</th>
<th>B. Tbn.</th>
<th>Vib.</th>
<th>B. D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**pp**

**mp**

**p**

**legato,**

**flexible tempo**

**w**

---

**gradually shift higher**

---

**œ**

---

**˙**

---

**w**

---
continue noodling with the given pitches in any order or sequence.

(crescendo with) the given pitches in any order or sequence.

(gradually shift higher)

continue noodling with the given pitches in any order or sequence.

continue noodling with the given pitches in any order or sequence.

continue noodling with the given pitches in any order or sequence.

(gradually shift higher)

continue noodling with the given pitches in any order or sequence.

(continue with) the given pitches in any order or sequence.

(continue with) the given pitches in any order or sequence.

continue noodling with the given pitches in any order or sequence.

continue noodling with the given pitches in any order or sequence.

continue noodling with the given pitches in any order or sequence.

continue noodling with the given pitches in any order or sequence.

(continue with) the given pitches in any order or sequence.

(continue with) the given pitches in any order or sequence.

continue noodling with the given pitches in any order or sequence.

continue noodling with the given pitches in any order or sequence.

continue noodling with the given pitches in any order or sequence.

continue noodling with the given pitches in any order or sequence.

continue noodling with the given pitches in any order or sequence.

continue noodling with the given pitches in any order or sequence.

continue noodling with the given pitches in any order or sequence.

(continue with) the given pitches in any order or sequence.
Gradually and chromatically descend in pitch, unsynchronized with other performers.

Noodle, generally medium to long sustained note lengths, between the lowest 3-5 pitches possible on the instrument.

Change notes unsynchronized with other performers.
* Gradually and chromatically descend in pitch, unsynchronized with other performers.

** Gradually and chromatically ascend in pitch, unsynchronized with other performers.
STRATOSPHERE:

Amergin

Jonah L. Elrod
2013
Amegin
Performance Notes

The text is from an anonymous poem titled "Amegin" and published in The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse, 1917.

Instrumentation:

   Tape

   Eight vocal soloists: SSAATTBB

   Five layers for strings

- This piece can be performed by any number of string players.
- The minimum amount of players necessary for performance is five, one per layer. Each layer is indicated by a Roman numeral in the score.
- All five instruments could be of different types, they all could be the same, or any combination of instruments.
- Any instrument type can play any layer. For instance, all double basses do not have to play the same layer. Different combinations of instrument types are encouraged to play the same layer. The solo at the beginning of the piece can be performed on any instrument type (does not have to be the highest instrument).
- The tape part is a fixed media performance available from the composer. It is a stereo performance that requires two speakers located on stage preferably above and behind the live performers. They should be placed in such a way that stereo panning of the tape part can be heard appropriately. The tape part requires one person off stage to start the tape once the conductor cues for the tape to start on the first page of the score.
- The vocal parts are written for eight voices, SSAATTBB, which may be arranged in any order on stage.
- The arrangement of the ensemble on stage is dependent on the amount and types of string players.
- Entrances must be cued by the conductor. The relative length of musical passages is to be controlled by the conductor.
- The performers begin boxed passages together, however the rest of the passage should be completely unsynchronized.
- Perform decrescendos to *niente* once a new entrance has begun without guidance from the conductor.
- Not all performers must end a passage at exactly the same time.

**Regarding notation for the strings:**

- Four vertical lines with an arch passing through them indicates arpeggiating on all four strings behind the bridge. Perform this at any tempo with irregular rhythm unsynchronized with the other performers.

- A single vertical line with an arch passing through it indicates bowing one string behind the bridge. Which string, unless indicated by a Roman numeral (sul IV), is left up to the performer.

**Boxes**

- Boxes contain a variety of different techniques inside. These are to be performed unsynchronized with the other performers.

- The initial ordering of the techniques should be observed, but once the box is repeated, they may be performed in any ordering the performer chooses.

* C.I. means col legno.
* S.P. means sul ponticello.
Regarding notation for the vocalists:

Text boxes
- The ordering of the text boxes is up to each performer.
- The breath marks after each text box can be any length.
- When the boxes change from spoken text to whispering, the performers are encouraged to change as often as possible.

Spoken text
- Spoken text should sound like a normal speaking voice.
- Avoid rhythmic accent and a sense of beat or pulse. The pitch contour should sound natural, like a normal speaking voice.
- The repetition should not have the same duration as the previous phrase.

Whispered text
- Whispered text should be performed forcefully so that it can be clearly heard.

Hum any pitch
- Hum any pitch and then rest/breathe for a different length of time on each repetition.
- Choose a new pitch to hum for each repetition. Preferably, choose a different pitch from the other performers.