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An Anthology of Three Works

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Author
Spitsbergen, Joshua Philip

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

An Anthology of Three Works

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
Requirements for the degree Master of Arts

in

Music

by

Joshua Philip Spitsbergen

Committee in charge:

Professor Lei Liang, Chair
Professor Susan Narucki
Professor Chinary Ung

2011
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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2011
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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

An Anthology of Three Works

by

Joshua Philip Spitsbergen
Master of Arts in Music
University of California, San Diego, 2011
Professor Lei Liang, Chair

The following Master’s Thesis represents two years of study in Composition at the University of California, San Diego's Department of Music. The three works: Three Dances of Five Creatures, A Study and Reflection Upon the Present State of Existence of Which I Breathe In and Out and In, and Then I Knew 'Twas the Wind that Blew depict a few of the sonic spaces I explored. The pieces included are in chronological order. The first was composed for my second jury, and explores free dance form and narrative. The second engages phrasing, repetition and gradual expansion: meditation in time. The third investigates sonic density, and sound transformation.

My efforts in composition during the program have focused on the exploration of extended techniques, globalized contrast, gradual sound transformation, and both traditional and non-traditional sound worlds.
Joshua Spitsbergen

Three Dances of Five Creatures

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Duration: c. 13 minutes

Score in C

Instrumentation:
Flute
Oboe
Clarinet in Bb and Bass Clarinet
Percussion:
I. Bass Drum
II. Cymbal
III. Roto-toms
IV. Snare Drum
V. Orchestral bells
VI. Tubular Bells
Piano and Celesta
Harp
Violin
Viola
Cello

General Notes:
All glissandos that are played together in the strings should match, producing a uniformity of gesture where possible. An exception to this occurs at m. 21 when the “roaring of the lion” is first sounded, because the cello gliss contains more pitches than the other strings. Therefore, the speed of the gliss may vary, but the duration should not. The Pianist plays the Celesta in Movement III. The speed of trills should match amongst the woodwind instruments. All trills sound a half step apart, unless otherwise indicated.

Movements are not meant to be played attacca, although they could be.

Piano Notes:
When dampening the strings, the pitch should clearly sound. Resonance in the piano is an important part of the First Movement, and that is why the pedal should be held down for lengthy periods of time. The piano may need to be amplified to project some of the resonance phenomena that will occur.

Percussion Notes:
The roto-toms can tune to the specified pitch, or they can be tuned to a low, medium and high pitch. In the second and third movements, let the vibraphone and bells ring (do not dampen).

Notes for parts requiring use of the voice:
Throughout the course of this piece, players are called upon to sing. Singing should be in a manner that is comfortable to the player. I am not looking for classically trained voices, but the presence of such is not to be denied.

Phrases can be sung in a comfortable octave. Further on this note, the voices should be amplified so the various whispered parts can be heard.

The dynamics of whispering:
The Sforzando dynamic demands as much of a distorted whisper as possible. Like screaming, but doing so in a whisper.
Symbols:

Dampen the strings of the piano by placing your finger inside the piano on top of the string as close to the tuning pegs as possible, so that as much of the pitch content as possible is preserved (not fully muted)

slap harp in general area that encompasses these notes, while simultaneously slapping the wood of the harp.

Fingernail scratch up the specified string on the harp.  Fingernail scrape up and down rapidly

This note-head simply refers to a vocal production that is not necessarily pitch-based. Instructions are written in parenthesis above, indicating what is to be done (ie. spoken, whispered etc...).

fingernail gliss is also abbreviated f.g.

Whispered harshly: placement on the staff indicates timbre of whispering, from high to low

Diagram of setup:
I. The Lion and the Dragon

The Dance of Power

Joshua Spitsbergen

Ferociously

(Shooted, in a very terrified manner)
II. Dance of the Little Toadstool and His Lover the Lilypad

The Dance of Love

\( \text{Majestically} \)

\( \text{Fl.} \)

\( \text{Ob.} \)

\( \text{B. Cl.} \)

\( \text{Pno.} \)

\( \text{Hp.} \)

\( \text{Vln.} \)

\( \text{Vla.} \)

\( \text{Vc.} \)
Bursting with emotion

In (played and spoken)
III. The Pterippus

The Dance of the Celestial

Floaty, like soaring across the clouds.
(begin humming along with played notes)
A Study and Reflection
Upon the Present State
of Existence,
of Which I Breathe In
and Out and In

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Exhale into flute:

Whistle tone:

Program note:

This piece was shaped and formed around the concept and phenomenon of the breath and breathing. Breathing is a primary life function that sustains and fuels our bodies. When will our supply of breath run out, and what will happen when it does? This piece for me represents a journey and a study of how I breathe, and how my rate of breathing is affected by the events, circumstances and contexts I find myself in. My primary goal of this piece, is that it serve as a reminder of how precious a gift this life is. May each one of us be thankful for all that can so easily be taken for granted around us, and appreciate the life we live today. Shortly after I began writing this piece I found out I was going to be a father, which for a moment took my breath away!
A Study and Reflection Upon the Present State of Existence,
of Which I Breathe In and Out and In

Joshua Spitsbergen
37 | \( \text{mp} \) \( \text{sfz} \) \( \text{p} \) \( \text{mp} \) \( \text{f} \) \( \text{f} \) \( \text{f} \) \( \text{f} \) \( \text{f} \)

41 | \( \text{mf} \) \( \text{f} \) \( \text{p} \) \( \text{mp} \) \( \text{f} \) \( \text{f} \) \( \text{f} \) \( \text{f} \) \( \text{f} \) \( \text{f} \)

"phew" sound into flute, like wind

44 | \( \text{mf} \) \( \text{p} \) \( \text{mf} \) \( \text{f} \) \( \text{f} \) \( \text{f} \) \( \text{f} \) \( \text{f} \) \( \text{f} \) \( \text{f} \)

47 | \( \text{up} \) \( \text{p} \) \( \text{mf} \) \( \text{f} \) \( \text{up} \) \( \text{mf} \) \( \text{f} \)
Then I Knew 'Twas the Wind that Blew
Score: in C

Duration: c.7 minutes

Instrumentation:
I) Alto Saxophone
II) Marimba
III) Guitar with nylon strings

General Notes:
The opening of the piece is meant to feel very free, but connected and flowing. The performers need to keep each sound and technique called for as related and connected as possible over the course of the first eight bars. The seconds (time) asked for last longer than the rhythmic values specified. A solution to this is to cycle through or repeat the bar in an improvisatory manner. Circled numbers represent (on a scale from 1 to 9) the level of activity (the speed of bowing to manifest sound, or the activity of the mallet shaft to produce sound. They appear in the score as the following:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

* Arabic numerals that appear in the guitar, are strictly a means of designating bow speed. They range on a scale from 1-9 as well.

Listening to the other players is of extreme importance in establishing a cohesive sense of balance in the first four bars.

Percussion Notes:
Percussionist needs:
-2 woodblocks (more is preferable, with contrasting shapes and sizes)
-4 mallets (of his or her choosing)
-2 bows (preferably violin bows)

Saxophone Notes:
Air notes- are sounds that are made by blowing through the saxophone without producing pitch

Guitar Notes:
A violin bow is needed, and called upon extensively over the course of the piece
A fairly large writing pen is also needed to be placed under the strings during the prepared guitar section
Symbols:
Arrows indicate direction the shaft of the mallets are used to sound notes in:
up and down (vertical): \( \downarrow \uparrow \)
side to side (horizontal): \( \leftrightarrow \)

Key clicks:

Slap tongue (also string slap for guitar):

Key release is abbreviated k.r. It is where all off the keys are released on the saxophone, except for the one called for.

let vibrate is abbreviated l.v.
sul ponticello is abbreviated s.p.
sul tasto is abbreviated s.t.

Differences in Fermatas:
Hold until sound fades \( \overline{\text{Hold}} \)
Extend sound for the length of time specified \( \text{Extend} \)
Then I Knew 'Twas the Wind that Blew

Joshua Spinberger
Alto Sax.

Mar.

Gtr.

begin muttering into the sax while playing key clicks.

release all keys

muttering stops

hold down all previous keys sampled (key sampled)
Alto Sax.

Mar.

Gtr.

Alto Sax.

Mar.

Gtr.

Alto Sax.

Mar.

Gtr.

Alto Sax.

Mar.

Gtr.

Alto Sax.

Mar.

Gtr.