

Christine Tivolacci

DMA Recital

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UCSD

Dept

of

Music

CHRISTINE TAVOLACCI, flutes
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Frame (2009) (Catherline Lamb, viola)	Catherine Lamb
scene++ (2010)	Michael Winter
...until... (1981)	Clarence Barlow

---- brief intermission ----

J4 (2005) (Danny Holt, piano)	Stephen L. Mosko
TWO (1987) (Danny Holt, piano)	John Cage
Piker (1998) (Michael Winter, guitar)	Larry Polansky

If someone were to ask me what initially attracted me to the Experimental music tradition, I would most definitely answer with one word: freedom. Undoubtedly, it is the freedom of creative musical expression, of possibility, that has led me to devote nearly a decade of my flute-playing career to the study and performance of this music. However, as I have delved deeper into the study of this music it has become clear that my answer and consequently my real interest in this music is not quite as simple. In the majority of works in the experimental music tradition, there lies a delicate balance between freedom and control. This fascinating balance, while clearly visible in the structure of certain works, can be neatly hidden in others.

Frame, the first piece that I have chosen, approaches this duality (as well as the concept of just intonation) from a deeply personal perspective. The piece is essentially a harmonic journey, one that centers around 'middle C' and travels to several unexpected places, yet returns to its center in a manner resembling one's own lucid thoughts. The intervals in this journey are revealed systematically according to a predetermined structure, but the time spent in each aural location is left to the flutist, providing that each phrase is no longer than the length of a single breath.

TWO (written by John Cage) and **scene ++** (written by Michael Winter) are two works that play with the role of choice in the construction and performance of a musical work. In both of these pieces, sounds are to occur only within specific time brackets. **TWO**, part of a larger subset of instrumental works written late in Cage's life, gives the flutist and pianist the freedom to place their pitch material within a series of time brackets; most of these brackets are somewhat flexible, with the exception of one completely structured bracket occurring towards the end of the piece.

Scene ++, in an effort to musically represent the relationships between additive computer language syntax and philosophical writing, allows the performer to place a sound of their choosing in a series of time brackets. At the end of the piece, one is left with a continuous loop of sound, one that has been meticulously constructed piece by piece. As previously mentioned, the performer is allowed to choose their own sound, and is also allowed to construct the order within which the brackets are filled. However there are a great many underlying parameters within the score that shape the choices that the performer may make. Ultimately, in this piece, choice begins to feel more like an illusion than a reality in the mind of the performer.

...until... contains the clearest dichotomy of freedom and control. Like **Frame**, this piece is a harmonic journey based on a drone, yet they differ greatly due to **...until...**'s meticulously organized structure. The pitch

content, divided into seven cells, must be cycled through using a numeric sequence, and completed entirely in the span of twelve minutes. The numerical and timely constraints within this piece, by description, seem utterly controlling; however, the overall aural impression of the piece is free and somewhat improvisatory; this effect is achieved through Barlow's relinquishing of the rhythmic element to the performer. Thus, one is left with a piece that sounds free but appears on paper to be highly structured.

Finally, the last two works I have chosen, **J4** and **Piker** are two works which approach the balance between chaos and order from a perspective of total compositional freedom. **J4**, the last work written by late composer Stephen L. Mosko, is a series of musical journal entries. These entries were composed at a point in the composer's life where he felt particularly free from the pressure of being a "working composer". Often erratic and uniquely demanding, the journal entries create a new sort of organized chaos for the performer. Similarly, **Piker** is a series of shorter works that revolve around the concept of melodic perception. Shaker melodies, melodic palindromes, and streaming loops are presented in their purest, idealistic form. While the goal of each individual movement is clear, there is a great responsibility on the part of the performer to convey these ideas with integrity and virtuosic conviction.

Indeed, it is the ever-changing perception of the dichotomy between freedom and constraint that I find most intriguing as a performer. The study and performance of these works have shown me that I can unexpectedly feel the most free and expressive when working within a set of unflinching guidelines. Similarly, the most chaotic and open moments in a piece tend to demand the utmost organization of thought to execute them. The delicate balance that exists in these works is one that I find incredibly fascinating, and I look forward to giving it many more years of study and exploration.