

Program notes for telematic class concert 12/9/14 between classes in UCSD and UCI

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Professor Michael Dessen UCI

ANTHONY:

Mire Ear Ring: for network instrument, 12 hands

Mire Ear Ring is built on the notion of musical instruments that span large distances. While there are four on-stage performers and two off-stage performers, I consider it a work for solo network instrument with 12 hands. The players of this piece each control separate portions of a larger instrument that has connection points within a network, a concept that is not radically different from a piece for piano, 4 hands. However, unlike a piano, the performers of Mire Ear Ring are not all controlling the same musical parameters. Some are playing keyboards, some are controlling live audio processing, and some are mixing audio. The keyboard controls the pitch, the live processing performer controls the timbre, and the live mixer controls the volume and spacial orientation of the sound between two speakers. In this way, one performer could potentially mute or completely alter the intentions of a performer earlier in the chain. The composition of this piece is an improvisational exploration of a new type of instrument that can only exist telematically, where one performer's sound is being sent to another location, altered, and then sent back. Rather than working around the problem of distance in a telematic performance, Mire Ear Ring embraces that distance and makes it an integral part of the instrument itself.

Michele Cheng & Felipe Rossi, keyboards

Anna Okunev & Kirsten Wiest, live electronics

Jordan Watson & Kyle Motl, live mixing

FELIPE/MATT:

Species of Spaces

Species of Spaces is first and foremost an homage to the French writer Georges Perec. My attempt was to create a sort of guidebook to our contemporary everyday life mediated by machines; to generate a framework for our immediate spaces; to investigate how they can interact with our current technological states, fears and aspirations; to attempt a gentle exploration of our surroundings and its fleeting sonic objects; to transmit a placid reminder that we create our own worlds everywhere, all the time, in all the smallest ways; to recall that we create our own personal sense of the world, no longer as a journey having constantly to be remade, not as a race without an end, a challenge having constantly to be met, not as the one pretext for a despairing acquisitiveness, nor as the illusion of a conquest, but as the rediscovery of meaning, the perceiving that the earth is a form of writing, a geography of which we had forgotten that we ourselves are the authors.

Matt Kline & Kyle Motl, double basses

Felipe Rossi, piano

Anna Okunev, violin

Richard Savery, flute & baritone saxophone

Suzanne/Kyle

Spaces Speak

for internet stream and electronics

featuring:

Kyle Motl (UCSD/electronics)

Anna Okunev (UCI/video)

Richard Savery (UCI/electronics)

Suzanne Thorpe (UCSD/electronics)

Jordan Watson (UCI/electronics)

One can identify space as place via objects and embodied systems. A space, according to Yi-Fu Tuan, becomes a place when our experience of a space is total. In regards to virtual space, questions arise, such as: what are the objects that define virtual space as place? and how can we embody that space? One way to embody any space is to experience it sonically. *Spaces Speak* articulates place by mining internet data for peaks and valleys of activity, to map said activity to sonic production in real time. Each player has their campus' data-stream mapped to parameters within their sound system, which in turn creates an instrument driven, in part, by activity on the internet. Likewise, parameters on the graphic display, and the words in the conduction, are also driven by activity from the stream. The words in the conduction are commands derived from the data stream; they are a sample of the language that virtual space is constructed of.

Jordan/Anna

Is this what you want it to sound like?

Jordan Watson - sound processing (UCI)

Anna Okunev - graphics (UCI)

Richard Savery - flute (UCI)

Anthony Caulkins - electric guitar (UCI)

Kyle Motl - electric bass (UCSD)

Suzanne Thorpe - flute (UCSD)

The idea behind this piece was to create a performance space that spans both sites - UCI and UCSD. Because this space cannot really be physically perceived by human beings at this point in our evolution, the work tries to convey this sense of disconnection and longing for structure and unification. At some points during the piece, one might see a player making sound but not hear it. One might also hear a sound and not see who, or what, is making it. The way the speaker system is setup, with two speakers in each space, the sound can travel from one speaker to any other speaker— allowing for the sound to traverse a large circle covering the physical and virtual spaces. , The performers have very little control over what they are playing, as snippets of the sound that is being produced are randomly being recorded and played back in similar or differing iterations. This means that anything the improvisers play, can be reworked and played back to influence how the improvisation might evolve. Acoustic instruments are juxtaposed with electric to accentuate the disconnection between what we associate with musical sounds and what is being controlled by the processing.

The visuals projected onto the wall (UCI) and screen (UCSD) are a graphic score. There are no pitches or rhythms indicated, only patterns and colours that are being manipulated and mixed together to create a

narrative. How the performers interpret the images is up to them. This is the only aspect of the piece that is the same at both ends of our telematic space, and is reflective of the struggle associated with trying to create any sense of unification in this medium. Our performers are faced with the challenge of spontaneous collective composition coupled with sound processing they cannot control and collaborators who are more than 80 miles away. We are trying to find meaning in unfamiliar territories, and just as we think what we see and hear makes sense, it can all change.

RICHARD:

video link:

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/71422421/RichardProgramNotes.mp4>

MICHELE:

Lost, am I

February 21st is International Mother Language Day

"The world is diminished when it loses its human saying, just as when it loses its diversity of plants and beasts."

-Eduardo Galeano

The composition is based on an article titled "The World Shrinks" written by Eduardo Galeano from his novel *Children of the Days - A Calendar of Human History*. The composer, whose families speak Taiwanese, speaks a dialect transmitted orally from one generation to another. The language is losing its connection between sounds and words, with the violent torrent of human history. The piece is for Soprano, Lute, Audio Processing, and Theatrical Ideas.

現存的語言,有聲有字;消逝中的語言,有聲無字或有字無聲;已逝的語言,無字亦無聲。

Composer: Michele Cheng

Soprano: Kirsten Wiest

Lute: Anson Brown

Audio Processing: Jordan Watson