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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

Portfolio of Compositions

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Master
of Arts

in

Music

by

Stephen de Filippo

Committee in charge:

Professor Roger Reynolds, Chair
Professor Wilfrido Terrezas
Professor Chinary Ung

2020

The Thesis of Stephen de Filippo is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

University of California San Diego

2020

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LIST OF SUPPLEMENTAL FILES

File 1: PORTFOLIO OF COMPOSITIONS.pdf

File 2: PORTFOLIO OF PAPERS.pdf

File 3: TIMBRE ETUDE.wav

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Portfolio of Compositions

by

Stephen de Filippo

Master of Arts in Music

University of California San Diego, 2020

Professor Roger Reynolds, Chair

The following portfolio consists of three works composed between 2018 and 2019. The first work “Casuarina-salvaged Dreaming” is written for eight performers and electronics. This work was premiered by the graduate students of UC San Diego’s Department of Music, and conducted by Steve Schick. The work is presented in a semi-flexible time-banned system whereby the conductor can assert some agency in the duration of the composition. The electronics utilise sound sources that are localised within the Southwest of Australia, and these samples are drawn randomly from different categorised pools with differing durations, and cast across the 4 channels of the concert hall. Then, the ensemble reacts, replicates, and maneuvers around these electronics.

The second work, entitled “a moment exposed”, is written for small chamber

ensemble of clarinet, piano, violin, violoncello, and double bass. Through this work I focus on creating an extensive introduction, a dialogue between the clarinet and violin. The two instruments are paired together, performing in a sort of chaotic unity where the two instruments interact and replicate each other's gestures in a raucous opening — acting together, but vocal in insisting on their own instrumental identity. Often, the clarinet sits above the violin's register, with the violin utilising more of its lower register — the 4th string is also tuned lower to ground the violin further. Out of the pair's final explosion emerges the rest of the ensemble. The two low strings are in their upper register, and the piano vamps soft chords — acting as a cloud which sits underneath the interjections of the clarinet and violin.

The third work, “Star Picc”, is for amplified piccolo, vocoder, tape, and a big drum. This work features live processing of the piccolo using pitch shifter. The shifter has 6 independent lines, one for each channel. The speakers are separated with the left channel next to the performer, and the right channel behind the audience — becoming more present in the latter half of the work. The piece explores contemporary performance practice, contrasted against kitsch robotic sounds in the fixed media and electronic pitch bending in its processing.

In addition to the compositions, this thesis' supplementary materials contain two papers and an etude completed during my coursework. The first paper considers how the biography of Iannis Xenakis, could have informed the procedural discrepancies in his work “Achorripsis”. The second paper analyses the intersection of tempo and klangfarbenmelodie, using works by Anton Webern and Dmitri Kourliadinski as case studies. Then, having considered how both composers approach these two musical variables, this present author will propose the creation of a timbre etude. That is, a new work that attempts to explore the relationship between tempo and klangfarbenmelodie to new creative results.