

Ecosonics/Ecosonic Improvisation: Performances and Explorations

Aspects of research led by **Stephen Preston** into the creation and development of music as a biological attribute for expressive sonic communication.

Track 1

2fl-cello 1 Intro & 2 Final

Introduction and Final section of an improvisation in four sections with two baroque flutes and cello. Extracts from a performance given for Trinity College of Music, London.

Track 2

2fl Antiphonal i) Akron & ii) Greenwich

Examples of antiphonal duetting with baroque flutes. Performances given at Akron, Ohio and Greenwich, London. These improvisations are modelled analogically on types of avian duetting in which birds exchange sounds in antiphonal sequences that form a unified song. The technique used by the flute players is made up of single finger movements, with only one hole on the instrument closed at any given moment.

Track 3

2fl Countersinging 1 & 2

Examples of matched countersinging with two baroque flutes. Performances given at Akron, Ohio and West Carolina University, North Carolina, USA. Countersinging improvisations are modelled analogically on types of avian song in which one bird attempts to out perform the other by singing a phrase it can't match. The players are using an ecosonic technique based on binary arithmetic, created by Stephen Preston specifically for the baroque flute. Briefly described, three of the six holes of the flute are held in an unchanging or fixed position throughout the improvisation, while the other three holes are closed and opened by three moving fingers. Instead of tonal relationships, the sounds produced by these 'finger rows' are systematized by physical sequence.

Track 4

Explorations i) pulse; ii) intro & loop

In i) the flute and cello explore aspects of periodic and implicit pulse against a metronome beat. In ii) the same players explore the idea for a structure that includes the loop to be used in a performance with ouija board. The aim was to explore the development of an introductory section leading to the loop, and to find out what length intervals between the repeat of the loop would be appropriate for alternating exchanges played by acoustic instruments.

Track 5

Explorations i) bow/tongue/key; ii) ouijaboard loop

Two short sequences from an exploratory session with flute and cello. Ecosonics is concerned with music as communication through the emotional intentionalization of sound, using instruments purely as a sound making objects free of cultural imperatives. Here the two players are exploring both textural sound making and their ability to employ those sounds as musical communication. Thomas Gardner extracted a phrase from this session and used it as a loop for the performance with ouija board heard on the final two examples.

Track 6

2 fl/cello/ouija board 1

2 fl/cello/ouija board 2

Extracts from a performance for the 2007 Wired Up Festival at Trinity College of Music, London. The improvisations with ouija board were set in sections of contrasting both instrumentation and material. Thus some sections were purely acoustic, others with ouija board only, some with the acoustic instruments improvising around prerecorded loops (eg. the flute/cello loop given in the previous two tracks), and culminating in combining acoustic players and ouija board performers manipulating live and prerecordings.

Performers

Stephen Preston & Amara Guitry – baroque flutes

Thomas Gardner – cello/creator of the ouija board

Kirsten Edwards & Peter Coyte – ouija board