

Re-conceptualizing Performance with 'Active' Notation

Common Music Notation (CMN) remains a necessary symbolic language for composers to communicate their intentions to performers. Improvisation, the addition and interaction of digital media, and the use of open-form non-linear structuring, challenge soloists and small ensembles to find solutions to the organization of notated material and the ubiquitous 'page-turn'. Digital score processing and high-resolution display formats appear to bring ever closer the possibility of dispensing altogether with paper-based scores in performance situations.

This paper describes a re-conceptualization of the conditions surrounding performance with composed and notated scores. A composition for soloist is discussed in which an 'active' CMN score is digitally rendered in a time-based visual and audio format. The composition exploits a number of active components: generative algorithms to initiate open-form structural organization of notated material with embedded electroacoustic sounds; the initiation of live recording, processing and playback of the soloist; the playful animation and transformation of graphic elements contained within a CMN score. Such components offer novel visual and audio stimuli to a performance practice lying between interpretation and improvisation and the construction of a more fluid continuum between what the composer writes and what the performer plays.

Continuum with Blues (hommage à György Ligeti) for electric guitar with 'active' digital media has been written for the American guitarist Alan Thomas. This is a prelude and companion piece to a large-scale 'recital' and DVD composition for classical guitar and 'active' digital media based on the open-form graphic novel *Facts of Life* by Pippo Lionni.

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