

dichotomies. What seems clear is that the flute was tracked by the system (likely pitch and amplitude) and these were simplistically mapped to the deformation of the female body in the video. However, since the projection failed partway through the performance, it is difficult to say how, or if the composer developed the interaction further.

### *Shall I compare Thee to a Summer's Day?*

For live laptop orchestra by Lee Cheng had the most intriguing opening of any piece I witnessed at ICMC 2018. As the lights were dimmed, 16 performers with tablets completely surrounded the audience quickly and quietly. Then the lights were turned off. What followed was a frenzy of 16 people tapping their devices in Morse code and the flickering of the devices' flash lights in response, recreating the Shakespearian sonnet in sound and visuals as words were projected on stage. There seemed to be a gaming element to the way the performers were interacting with their screens. A very tense and focused performance was the result. Unfortunately, the Morse code with the flickering lights, the gamifications of performers restoring the sonnet line by line wore thin as no new elements were added or developed throughout the piece.

Soundfiles were triggered at some points to underscore the tapping and to keep the audience's interest. This however felt more like a gimmick than an earnest attempt to develop this intriguing concept.

### **Concert 6**

**Tuesday, Aug 7, 4:30 p.m.**

**Chamber Hall, Daegu Concert House**

*Reviewed by Peter Hulén*

The program for this afternoon's general concert was a mix of pieces for a variety of solo performers with electronics, and fixed media pieces. The opening piece was ㄱㄴㅇ (Flow) for soprano, acoustic guitar and electronics by Alexander Sigman. The electronics were projected through the use of transducers attached to the acoustic guitar, played by Woojae Kim. Computer-generated voice rendering of the text — from the 1600 John Dowland lute song “Flow My Tears,” translated into Japanese through a digital algorithm — seemed to be actuated by means of playing or taps on the guitar. The soprano, Jooyoung Bang, sang the simple melodic material, similarly translated, in a plain-voice style. Various elements of the composition were well integrated, and the overall effect was balanced and contemplative. The piece featured a

number of notable techniques for the guitar, including pitch-bending by means of scordatura (the pegs turned by the soprano as she sang!), sul ponticello bowing, and striking of the strings with a wooden beater.

The second piece was *Up in algid skies* for haegeum, a traditional Korean two-string fiddle, and electronics by Sam Yulsman. The haegeum part, performed by Jeonghyeon Joo, was somewhat soft, but the electronics were subtle and well-balanced, their rumbly, knocking gestures and longer middle- and higher-frequency drones never intruding or getting in the way of the instrumental performance. The electronics were conceived as a reference to the intonarumori of the Italian Futurists, mediated through the nonghyun vibrato technique of the haegeum. The haegeum part, in turn, featured rather modernistic techniques and gestures. This created a somewhat brooding, thoughtful dialogue between a form of Korean traditional music and a form of nascent Modernist thought and expression.

The two pieces for live performance and electronics were followed by a fixed-media piece: *Metascape III: The Inner*

*Soundscape of Guzheng* for audio fixed media by Yu-Chung Tseng. M. Tseng's work represents the successful creation of an abstract, composed soundscape, as opposed to one recorded live reflecting a specific time and place. This was a very active, dynamic piece, gesturally and spatially thought through, and composed with clear artistic intent. Spatialized sonic layers of varying frequency, duration, and character were carefully constructed from processed samples of the guzheng, a traditional Chinese plucked zither.

At this point, the program not only returned to live performance, but also moved to a piece that included a visual element: *The verse of autumnal wind* for solo flute and Digital Imaging with Processed Sound DIPS by Hongshuo Fan. The flute part, played by Youkyung Kim, moved from long tones to a complex, pointillistic texture, and back again, and was processed into long, multi-frequency simultaneities that moved into a modernistic texture swirling into continuous sound, and back again to complex simultaneities. The sound of the flute was processed into live video: broken blocks with wavy colors and rotations, to geometric swirls of white light, fragmenting and becoming more complex.

The processed sound and video were very well coordinated through use of the DIPS plugins for Max/MSP. The Chinese lingual tones of the sad, longing poem of Autumn by Li Bai referenced in the title were used as the basis for the flute part. The flute, the digital processing of sound and video, and the visual elements themselves were structured into a formally coherent and artistically unified whole.

The program then returned to fixed media with *Rituals* for fixed audio media by Chin Ting Chan. This sound collage drew on many different types of sampled sources, processed with Max/MSP. The resulting variety of sounds was extensive. The piece moved between realistic and surreal soundscapes. It became very active, yet still remained subtle. Dynamics were achieved by a terracing of activity rather than relying on mere changes in overall amplitude. The formal and dramaturgical arc of the piece was carefully planned and well executed, which sustains Mr. Chan's well-earned international reputation.

Next came the piece *Te* for piano and live electronics by Seunghyuk Lim. The piano, played by Hye-sung Yoon, opened with widely spaced, forceful, rapping gestures interspersed with quiet midrange

simultaneities and other shorter gestures. All piano material was processed; the piano part itself was sparse enough to allow clarity between its gestures and the processed electronics. The work was well balanced in that way. The piece was also formally coherent as midrange gestures become complex and tremulant, finally returning to the beginning material.

The program alternated to another fixed media piece with *Distant Objects Come into Operation* for fixed audio media by Larry Gaab. This piece featured a variety of interesting sounds accumulating into sound masses and dissipating into singular events without ever becoming either too busy or stopping momentum altogether. It was a well-crafted pace, with whizzing, swishing, and juddering pitch and timbral glissandi moving between foreground and far subtler background positions.

The piece that followed was *Trefoil Knots* (総角) for cello and electronics by Jacob Sudol. The term *agemaki* in the title is ambiguous, since it has many different associations and connotations within Japanese language and culture, not least in *The Tale of the Genji*, which the composer mentions in the program notes. Mr. Sudol's stated intent with the piece was to

reflect on the complexity of relationships within the referenced work. The cello part, performed by Seung Won Jung, began with sul ponticello harmonics in single- and double-stops before the electronics began in the form of transpositions into subtle, droning masses of sound. The piece was never loud. There followed sliding harmonics, and a slow, rising melody on intervals of the harmonic series. These were echoed in canon by the electronics, growing in layers as the rising figure repeated and quickened. The layers then faded, and the cello returned to single harmonics with subtle processing. Overall, the piece was harmonically lush and formally sound.

Again, a piece with live performance was followed by one for fixed media: *Atlas of Uncertainty* for audio fixed media by Massimo Avantaggiato. The source material for this piece ranged on a continuum between concrete and synthesized sounds. According to the composer, these included kitchen noises, treated bell textures, electronic whip sounds, chimes, Tibetan bowls, whooshes, and granular accumulations, to name a few. It featured long ringing clusters and buzzing backgrounds punctuated by multiple noisy, juddering events. It was a

short, but interesting and effective piece.

The final piece on the concert was *As the Flames Grow Higher* for flute and electronics by Patrick Reed. This was a programmatic piece depicting scenes from a camping trip: the sounds and sensations of a campfire and its afterglow. According to composer, the flute part, played here by Youkyung Kim, creates a narrative supported by the electronics. The latter began with very subtle, bell-like gestures and flutters behind trilling, modernistic melodic passages by the flute, with some flutertongue. The flute part was either transposed in advance for fixed media, or live-processed at the lower octave. The electronics faded to the subtlest background, as the flute continued. There was a long-breathed melody with some pitch bending, and a breathy tone over cricket-like sounds. Transposition of the flute to a lower major sixth created a texture of fixed planning, and melodic material was repeated with transposition at other intervals. Subtle, fire-like sounds were included — burning, crickling sounds and quiet rumbles. The electronics were ever-subtle, growing slightly at the end to create a formal climax. The concert was nicely rounded out with this piece — a fine, evocative musical narrative.