

was a three part chef's meal with preparation, cooking, eating and cleaning up. *Crazy kitchen!* had a familiar feel and a fast pace bringing us in only four minutes very distinct sounds and a detailed and clear story of the meal.

The last piece on the concert was Brian Lee Topp's **...to travel the distance of a changing feeling...** The piece used Robert Pritchard's technology for responsive user body suit (RUBS), a tactile interface worn by the performers that allowed them to process audio output in real time, simultaneously triggering and manipulating audio samples by controlling fabric strip potentiometers sewn onto the suit. As per the program notes, the suit allows for discrete and continuous audio changes being generated through two different motions of contact; touch and stroking. The collaboration between Sarah Wasik, dancer and Margaret Lancaster, flute and movement, was choreographed by Emmalena Fredriksson and made the piece compelling and entertaining.

Concert No 10

Wednesday, July 19, 2019, 1.30 p.m.

Sheen Center, Loreto Theater

Reviewed by Juan Parra Cancino

As it is tradition at ICMC concerts, there is a delicate balance between complexity, fragility and excessiveness that programmers, performers and audience are invited to negotiate. This particular instantiation was a good example of it from the get go, when it was announced that two of the pieces in the program, Stylianos Dimou's *Machine Learning* for baritone saxophone and Paulo Brito's *...nothing but a string of songs* for piano, had been cancelled. In turn, two pieces from previous concerts (Devin Maxwell's *Cloudseeding 9 - Wind Harmonics* and Fred Szymanski's *Horn Volley*) were given a second chance to overcome some technical difficulties.

The concert opened with **Spring Breeze Sweeps beyond Yumen Pass** by Yang Wanjun, with the collaboration of Lichuan Wang (composition) and Jinhao Han (live coding), a multimedia piece that presented three different layers of performative activity: Electronic sounds (which after reading the program notes seem to consist

mostly of Sheng samples pre-recorded from performer Yong Xu), a video track and the dancer Fei Wei.

The sum of this elements was a mix of traditional instrumental music and performance, and traditional sonorities deployed with technological assistance, but which remained all too constrained by the traditional aesthetics. The acoustic space, environmental sounds and instrumental sounds, remained somewhat underdeveloped throughout the piece, with all layers remaining in the same acoustic plane. The dancer-performer, who was very good, enhanced the problematic aspects of this piece by remaining “unchallenged” in her traditional role.

Jason Bolte’s *Ambient-P*, an acousmatic work, proposed a commentary to ‘tradition’ more in line to what is expected at a Computer Music conference concert. With a sound world evocative of experimental “generative music” soundscapes, focusing on amplitude and spatialization creates a contrast that gives a body to the structure of the piece. The pitch material remained somewhat static, which, reading the program notes, might be a natural

thing given that the whole material derived from a limited set of initial sounds.

Steve Wanna’s *Edge of Sound* for cello and electronics, worked beautifully as an étude of the cello as a resonant object, playing with a sense fragility of the material represented by extreme amplification, using amplification as facilitator and transformer.

The following piece, Meifen Shih’s *The Death Gaze of a Whale* for double bass and electronics, took a very different approach to the presented solo string instrument and electronics setting. The opening, an interesting contrast between a very low-registered soundtrack, and the double bass used on the high register gave way to a development that felt somewhat stiff. The instrumental writing was not utilizing any of the potentials of the solo virtuoso idioms of the second half of the 20th century, and thus the electronic part remained very much in a separate plane. Towards the end, this contrast was blended and balanced into a more integrated mix by letting the electronic soundtrack recapitulate the bass material.

The first 'replay' piece, Devin Maxwell's *Cloudseeding 9*, was built on an interesting contrast between noise and pseudo random tones. Particularly interesting was how the development of the pitch material was infused in a quasi-instrumental articulation fashion, while the noise ostinato prevailed as a crude reference. The ending had a very well crafted, humorous 'tone', how refreshing!

Fred Szymanski's *Horn Volley*, an acousmatic composition, was up next, the second 'replay' work from another concert. There was an interesting contrast between the two distinct sound worlds of this work, both very densely crafted and presented as rich entities. The third act, the collision of the two sound worlds, was very effective as a resolution for materials that could have remained and presented as independent soundscapes.

The final piece of the concert, Aldo Lombera's *LUCID*, revisited the mixed media setting of cello and electronics with the addition of a (live?) video component. My first impression was that the integration between instrumental and electronic material

felt as if the cello was triggering some kind physical model of another instrument. There was also an evident, yet not banal interdependence between the electronic part and the video.

Throughout the piece, this initial interdependence gave space to a more independent development, where the electronic sounds preserved both spatial and gestural independence from the instrumental and video components. Given the initial blending, it served as an interesting invitation to keep discovering the points of connection between the "augmented cello" and the environmental electronic sounds. The ending/coda, a very conventionally 'musical' crafted one, worked perfectly given the careful integration of all three components.

Concert No 12

Wednesday, June 19, 2019, 8-10pm

Sheen Center, Loreto Theater

Reviewed by Kivanç Tatar

The twelfth concert at the International Computer Music Conference ICMC took place at the Loreto Theatre, using a 2D ambisonics