

bidirectional, complex action-response events derive the interactivity. Towards the end, the complexity that is previously sustained by the rich communication behaviors between sonic creatures slows down; and the coordination between sonic creatures resulted in a blended sonic space.

The twelfth concert at ICMC/NYCEMF 2019 revealed four of the trends in the area: artistic research through the sonic material, the anthropomorphism of sound, narratives in fictional sonic worlds, and reactivity and interactivity of sonic gestures from the perspective of agent behaviors. These trends highlighted ongoing global discourse in computer music.

### **Concert No. 14**

**Thursday, June 20, 2019, 1.30 p.m.**

**Hebrew Union College**

*Reviewed by Jonathan Pitkin*

The first concert on Thursday took place at Hebrew Union College. It consisted of a mixture of fixed media and electroacoustic works, several of which had an important visual element.

The first piece to be heard (and seen) was Juan Parra Cancino's *TNchain\_JI\*JP\_NY19*. This featured trumpeter Jonathan Impett, whose contribution was relayed over a live video link from the Orpheus Institute in Ghent, Belgium. Impett's playing was subjected to live electronic manipulation by the composer, who had taken to the stage to operate various hardware controllers. This set-up made possible some interesting effects which could not have been achieved had the performer been present in the same room: the (delayed) live trumpet sound was often pushed to the very edge of audibility, and the viewer was invited to match up the sight of Impett playing material they were yet to hear with the sound of extensively transformed versions of other phrases he had already played. The whole piece had a restless energy to it, never staying still for long.

A change of tone followed with Rodney Waschka's *A Portrait of Larry Austin*, a tribute and, since its completion predated Austin's death last December, an unintended eulogy to a pioneering figure in ICMA history and computer music more generally.

This fixed media work had at its center a recitation of dates, names and achievements which mapped out Austin's life and career, lending it a ritual quality. The recitation faded in and out of intelligibility, as a result of various processing techniques. Meanwhile, synthesized elements, including some which alluded to Austin's own works, evolved slowly or else pushed into the foreground in more active, articulated clusters.

Erich Bargainier's *Light Shards* brought a live performer to the stage for the first time, namely Esther Lamneck, whose tárogató improvisations were processed by the composer in real time. Lamneck's playing was quite contained to begin with, with distinct pitches only occasionally allowed to emerge from a blur of key clicks and restless fingerwork, before building gradually to an extrovert finale. The carrying power and rich, saxophone-like sonority of the tárogató provided a foundation from which an increasingly imposing soundscape was created, making some striking use of delays and spatialization.

Tate Carson's *And the water receded*

was a "sonification" of Hurricane Katrina for percussionist Patti Cudd and electronics, performed against the visual backdrop of an accelerated mapping of the storm's progress. The effect was tense and ominous, with pitched material played by Cudd being sustained by gritty, uneven-sounding swells and faint pulsations in the electronics; these themselves were then blended with further live acoustic events, such as glassy timbres from a bowed vibraphone. Rapid volleys of vibraphone and crotales strikes sounded almost as if they were being blown about chaotically in the wind. The texture suddenly dissipated into drier, more isolated sounds as the storm died out.

According to its program note, the audio material of Dave O. Mahony's *Radio Click Suite* was triggered, projected and modulated by brainwave signals communicated directly by the composer himself via an Interaxon interface to a Eurorack modular synthesizer. Since neither the composer nor his equipment were present on this occasion, we listened to what was presumably a recording of one particular 'performance' (each, of course, being unique),

characterized by its busyness and restless variety. The sonic character of the Eurorack modules, unapologetically machine-like and perhaps more familiar from various pop genres than from art music, contrasted interestingly with the rest of the program.

Peter Hulen's *Wobbly* was notable for the performative, visually arresting way in which the composer could be seen to control the electronic sound with an iPad. Hulen used this as a wireless controller linked to his laptop: the effect of changes in the device's height, tilt and rotation were immediately audible, for example in how they affected the spatial placement of the sound. This also created an intriguing juxtaposition between the sight of a ubiquitous piece of modern consumer digital technology and a sound-world which could perhaps be described as 'retro', due to its reliance on familiar-sounding waveforms. Synthesized pitches assembled themselves into fast-moving, angular melodies which meandered relentlessly and unpredictably in the background throughout.

Esther Lamneck returned to the stage for Jean Pichardo's *Azul de mañana*, an intensely autobiographical piece which drew upon the composer's state of mind following the death of his mother. Here, the sound of Lamneck's tárogató – again, her part appeared to be at least partly improvised – was combined with both a tape element and a film, on which were brought together enigmatic images of woods, fire, and intertwined snake and human forms. Pichardo constructed a dark, immersive soundscape of slow-building sustains, against which Lamneck's playing encompassed a wide variety of characters and effects, ranging from flurries of tremolos to keening, full-throated melodic gestures.

Michael Pounds's fixed-media piece *Steelwork* was an autobiographical statement of a very different kind. Taking as its source material recordings of a lap steel guitar which had belonged to the composer's father, it unfolded into a kind of whimsical reminiscence of the instrument being played to him as a very young child. The piece was characterized by a balance between transparency and sophistication in

its construction, and by near-constant bends and slides between pitches: these were playfully combined into textures of often exceptional delicacy, their varied inflections coming to sound almost like baby talk. What sounded like echoes of particular pieces of music which Pounds might have remembered hearing from the instrument also appeared to surface intermittently.

The concert concluded with Chris Corrigan's *Is Fada an Lá*, a piece for soprano saxophone (Enzo Filippetti), harp (Seunghee Han) and electronics based around a traditional Irish lament. The lament's melody was presented simply at the outset, and its words were subsequently heard in a recitation which formed the core of the piece's electronic component. Corrigan's desire to explore the importance of ornamentation in traditional performances of these kinds of songs was reflected in the prominence of trills and tremolos in the saxophone part; these, as well as ostinato patterns and pedal effects from the harp, were expanded by the electronics to atmospheric effect.

### **Concert No. 16**

**Thursday, June 20, 2019, 8.00 p.m.**

**Sheen Center, Loreto Theater**

*Reviewed by Jonathan Pitkin*

On Thursday evening, ICMC delegates returned to the Loreto Theater to hear a substantial program which mainly comprised works for solo instrumentalists and electronics.

The concert began with Anna Rubin's *A Small Impromptu God of the Partial*, a piece which required the performer, cellist Madeleine Shapiro, to alternate between two bows: a traditional one, and a second with beads attached, so as to allow noisier material to be introduced alongside the more conventional playing. The electronics part included whispering, laughter and streams of indistinguishable vocal syllables as well as material derived from the cello part; the composer's intention was for this to subtly inflect the soloist's performance. This led to a noticeable variety in the way the two parts interacted: in some passages the electronics sustained and modulated selected cello pitches; in others the two seemed to follow their own courses, like parallel streams. The 'partials' of the