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ICMC 2011 Review: Concert 10, 4th August 2011

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By Miriam Akkermann

Scheduled as an evening concert, No. 10 took place at St. Paul's Hall, a former church built in the 18th century. I mention this because the venue did a great job of creating a light but focussed atmosphere, especially for the works that appeared on the first part of the concert (after changing the program schedule), which all presented smooth, pensive sounds.

Joao Pedro Oliveira's *Entre o Ar e a Perfeição* for flute, piano and electronics opened the evening. Flo Menezes' diffusion techniques underlined the included gestures, but at the same time integrated the tape, flute (Richard Craig) and piano (Sebastian Berweck) to a common sound representation.

In his work *21st Red Line* for 20-string Koto, Ai Kamachi extended the traditional Japanese instrument with a laser string, so Yumi Kurosawa could include the control of live electronics in her performance on the Koto. The visual programming by Saturo Higa underlined the phrase-wise seeming improvisation, but also gave contrast to the subtle sound and appearance of the Koto.

Thin, quiet sounds emerged from the electromagnetically prepared piano (played by Sebastian Berweck) in Per Bloland's work *Of Dust and Sand,* which sometimes seemed to be even too quiet despite the sounds of the alto saxophone (Eleri Ann Evans) when creating an almost-static but increasingly dense cloud of vibrating frequencies.

Performed by Se-Lien Chuang on bass recorder, Evans on saxophone, Heather Roche on clarinet, and Andreas Weixler on laptop, *Momentum Huddersfield* (by Chuang and Weixler) incorporated sensitive improvisation and live electronics into an initially static, then cumulating sound, which was contrasted by real-time visuals. The spatialisation was especially notable, enhancing the acoustic impression of the venue from that of a concert hall back to a church.

After the interval three very different works followed. In contrast to the more sound-focussed works of part one, the following pieces concentrated on conceptual ideas including ironic surprises and interaction of the audience.

In *Oli's Dream,* Jaroslaw Kapuściński reacts on the video that was produced in collaboration with Camille Norton. Virtual protagonist Oli manifests via the onscreen emergence and dissolving of letters from Norton's poem. These events are also closely watched and responded to by the pianist, opening a further, more emotional dimension besides the illustration of sounds to the video.

An unconventional start had Mike Solomon's *Norman (age 1)* in presenting a basically white browser window with three links for the three movements of the work, with the cursor starting the files, and projected on the screen behind the soloist (Roche). The clarinetist accurately followed the score that slowly started to transform

in movement 1, and culminated in movement 3, jumping between outspread fragments, including graphics and sound descriptions that were guided by a computer generated, laser-pointer-like red dot. Not only was the ironic visualization of the composition enjoyable; so was the clarinetist's performance.

The last piece was Dan Weymouth's *Unexpected Things*. Starting like a conventional piece for tape, violin (Darragh Morgan), and piano (Sebastian Berweck), it increasingly varied from this. With a "start" sign, the pianist indicated the audience to begin their participation of slide whistling, encouraging them and also stopping and thanking them. The performance ended with the recorder-playing pianist leaving the room followed by the imitating violin. Especially successful was the integration of the audience's interaction in the middle of the piece, which underlines the remarkable overall impression.

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