OF MUSIC AND TECHNOLOGY: A CREATIVE COMBINATION

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Of particular interest in the realm of music composition is the use of advanced technology combined with classical acoustic instrumentation in a concert setting. Furthermore, it is a fascinating combination that brings both obstacles and opportunities to the composer of such music. Nevertheless, pragmatism aside, the final construct of this mixed media is but a doorway into a limitless realm of artistic expression and creative possibilities. It is this realm to which my creative energies were dedicated this fall semester.

Bringing a simple idea into a tangible, yet abstract, realization in the form of a musical performance is a process that is divided into three stages: 1) pre-composition 2) composition 3) rehearsal and performance.

The pre-compositional stage involved several sketches and designs as to the instrumentation, sound sources, particular musical gestures and potential patch designs. I decided to use the string quartet (the epitome of classical chamber music), a clarinet, the drum kit (an icon in the world of modern popular music) and the Yamaha Disklavier (the representational bridge of the modern and classical world of music). This stage of the process involved the necessary brainstorming to set a foundation for the character and stylistic choices for the piece. As one can see, the instrumentation provided a treasure trove of sonic and stylistic characteristics that would further enable the creative process. Involved in this part of the process were the beginning developments of "patches" through Max/MSP. Max/MSP is a popularly used electronic music software in the realm of technological music composition. It allows the music to be created, controlled and manipulated through means of MIDI capable instruments in addition to real time processing of sound signals sent into the computer. The capabilities within Max/MSP allowed me to create some of the initial sounds that would work within the context of the piece.

As the pre-compositional stage progressed it was necessary to begin the exercise notating the ideas on paper to give a better sense of duration and defining traits of particular musical ideas. Thus began the compositional stage of the process. This stage is where the ideas become generated into complete musical thoughts. This was done through standard practice notation and unconventional notation. At some points in the piece the instrumentalists are asked to do specific things that are outside the means of standard notation. For example, the compositional stage brought about a section where the strings are directed to play three pitches in any duration, articulation, velocity, or technique. Although certain parameters were set