Electronics as a Transcendent Medium

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Within the world of contemporary classical music, there has been a growing interest in the use of advanced technology to produce electro-acoustic and multi-media works. This has provided an endless realm of creative possibilities and new arenas for artists to express their ideas.

My project is a contemporary classical electro-acoustic chamber piece entitled Dreams and Disasters: Natural or Not. It is a multi-media work scored for vocal quartet (SAIB), string trio, percussion, and electronics, and includes projected text and theater/audience participation. Its theme is multi-faceted in nature: investigating the complex realities of dreams/nightmares, and their counterpart in a modern world. Issues of reality/illusion, conflict, refuge, displacement/identity, and the integration (or not) of positive and negative aspects of technology are explored. Through research, the original theme has developed further, investigating technology as a bridge, a peacemaker. What universal components can it contain – in an effort to balance the universal problems it can create? This project provides no definitive answers, but rather a platform for discussion and interaction.

The use of phonemes and various languages implies a universality, while the use of generated and manipulated sounds (from programs such as MAX/MSP, Logic Pro, Amadeus, and SuperCollider) provide a different kind of commonality. Their complete uniqueness and newness expands a sound vocabulary for the whole world. Analyzed human voice samples aid in the creation of generated sound. Recorded sounds (usually human) are manipulated and re-invented. Live acoustic instruments and voices play together with electronics. Acoustic instruments dictate the electronic sound to be generated in live time, while conversely, electronics lead instruments in improvisatory sections. Throughout the piece, there are links provided between man and technology, establishing an independent dance between the two. Voices have been recorded from people of different races, countries, and genders, in an attempt to employ technology as a transcendent medium for all.

I believe by using technology in a creative way, artists can help to rewrite a system for its use that is more holistic, user-friendly, and socially interactive...an aid for better communication and understanding among people. Perhaps through its use in the arts, technology can truly interact with our own deeper nature as human beings.

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