

Bordone (2012)

For Violin and Laptop (Max Patch: Drone Machine)

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VIOLIN	Wait	Simple	More	More	Most	Same	Simpler	Simplest	Fade Out
LAPTOP	Simple	More	More	Most	Same	Simpler	Simplest	Fade Out	Wait

Key

Wait = No sound; listen

Simple = Few sounds, including more consonance; quiet; slow rate of change

More = More sounds, including more dissonance/noise; getting louder; faster rate of change

Most = Most sounds, including most dissonance/noise; loudest; fastest rate of change

Same = Keep doing what you were just doing

Simplest = Least sounds, including most consonance; quietest; slowest rate of change

Fade Out = Fewer sounds, including less dissonance/noise; getting quieter, slower rate of change until silent

Instructions

Performers continually improvise. The original Drone Machine's source files center around G and D; therefore, the violinist may improvise with and against G collections (G Mixolydian, G Dorian, G Pentatonic, and so forth). Noisier, non-pitched sounds such as tapping on the instrument, over-bowing, etc, are also possible. The laptop player may add and remove drones, change the pitch/playback speed of the drones, filter the sounds, and add and remove noises (white noise, electronics samples, etc). If other source files are used, the violinist and laptop player should explore them using the Drone Machine, seeking salient spectral, harmonic, melodic, rhythmic, and timbral features to improvise with and against. In the case of noisier and less pitch-focused source files, the concept of "consonance" and "dissonance" in the key should be taken to mean "that which blends" and "that which contrasts," respectively.

The total length depends on performance circumstances. For a concert or recital presentation, 7 to 10 minutes is recommended. For an ambient/installation setting, much longer improvisations are possible. Performers may freely shape the proportional lengths of each section.

How to Use the Drone Machine

To run the Drone Machine, you need Max or Max Runtime (free). These may be downloaded from Cycling74: <http://cycling74.com>. You also need sound files supplied by the composer. Save the patch and all the sound files to the same search path (same folder on your computer).

1. When you open the patch, it should open in presentation mode with a graphical surface that looks like a synthesizer. If not, switch to presentation mode by pressing the easel icon at the bottom of the screen.
2. In the upper right of the patch in presentation mode is the On/Off button for the sound. Turn this on; it should turn red.
3. Turn up the master volume by dragging the fader with the mouse. (And make sure the volume on your computer is turned up.)
4. Click the on/off boxes by the drones across the top to start playing the sound files. Turn up the volume faders to hear the drones.
5. To turn on the white noise, turn up its volume fader.
6. To hear the electronic noise samples, click the on/off box. Turn up the volume fader to hear it.
7. To play the synth sounds, turn up the volume on the triangle and sawtooth waves. Then click on the keyboard to play different notes.
8. To filter the drones and white noise, click and drag on the filter graph.
9. To alter the playback speed on the drones, click and drag up or down on the number box for playback speed.

To make playing the Drone Machine easier, plug in a MIDI controller with individual knobs or faders to control the different volume levels and the filter graph. The Akai MPK Mini works well.