Wayne Siegel

Match I
for percussion and interactive computer (15')
1996

Match (1996) for percussion and computer was commissioned with support from the Danish State Art Foundation and premiered in Copenhagen by Thomas Sandberg in December 1996. The work is written for MIDI-vibe, drums and computer. The piece conisists of five sections, changes between sections occurring either very gradually, one section growing into the next, or quite suddenly without warning. The timbral space as well as the roles of the performer and the computer vary from section to section. It was my intention to create a work for percussionist and computer that had a very musical "feel" to it from the standpoint of the performer. I wanted the computer to react musically to whatever the percussionist played, including small changes of tempo, slight mistakes and even more extensive deviation from the score - call it interpretive freedom - introduced by the performer.

The piece is interactive, in that the computer follows the player and creates rhtymic and melodic material according to various sets of rules programmed by the composer. The software was created using the MAX programming environment. Although the player's part is fixed, I did not use fixed sequences in the computer part as a predetermined response. Instead a different set of compositional rules or algorithms is used for each section, creating a sort of "intelligent" accompaniment to the performer. The computer takes all of its cues from the performer without the intervention of a computer operator. Although there is a certain element of chance involved, the sets of rules are fairly well defined, so that the melodic and rhythmic character of the work will be easily recognizable from performance to performance. On the other hand, the computer is able to react to unforseeen situations and respond accordingly. For example, if the player decides to stop playing in the first and second sections, the computer will stop as well, wait for the player to begin again and continue from there. In other sections, the computer might react differently if the player stops, for example by filling in with a solo created using the compositional rules in the program until the player joins in again.

Available on CD: http://www.dacapo-records.dk/recording-match.aspx