sumtone

:

michael edwards

anonymous obvious
(aka several instrumental structures to annoy ludi)

for 4-channel tape

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st1.1.31

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anonymous obvious (aka several instrumental structures to annoy ludi) is based around a prototype of an instrumental composition algorithm that I am in the process of developing called *slippery chicken*. Using instrumental samples, the algorithm at the time of composition generated short structures that were surprisingly convincing as small but complete pieces. The structures were also rather anonymous, however; that is, they sounded to me like a generic form of contemporary classical music, one that lacked my own musical characteristics. Hence the 'anonymous' part of the title. Hence the algorithm continued to be developed.

Arriving at the subtitle: *anonymous obvious* was created during the summer of 2000 whilst I was in residence at the Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie (ZKM) in Karlsruhe, Germany, as made possible by an artist's stipend from the ZKM | Institute für Musik and Akustik, the director at that time begin Johannes Goebel. The composer Ludger Brümmer (Ludi) was also at work there, and, being old friends, we had many conversations, some of which were even about music, in particular, the sorry state of electroacoustic (tape) music within the already marginalised field of contemporary classical music. Disappointment was expressed over the domination of this field in continental Europe by mainly instrumental composers, leaving little room for the specialists and therefore the development of structural paradigms of a purely electroacoustic nature. And there was I, one of the supposed specialists, working on instrumental composition algorithms that I was then using in a tape piece. Of course, rather than hide this fact, I decided to flaunt it, much to Ludi's chagrin. So much for the subtitle.

In my defence, I must say that these obviously and self-consciously instrumental structures represent what may be called ideal or even impossible ensembles, and that is what makes them so appealing to me. They are ideal in that every sound, no matter how quiet (the tremolo bowing of a violin tailpiece for instance) or loud (a cymbal crash) is heard in perfect consort, something that would be impossible when performed live, despite the closest attention paid to discrete amplification. These structures are also not alone, as many of the sounds are more purely electroacoustic in their nature: granulated, splintered, transposed, filtered, delayed, hurried, deep-fried, burned sounds from samples of many and varying types: from the purely instrumental (bass and contrabass clarinet, violin, horn, prepared piano, various percussion instruments) to the purely ambient (café noise, a catholic mass, mountain air...).

As with all of my pieces which involve computer pre-processed sound, the signal processing was performed with algorithms I have developed using the Common Lisp Music (CLM) software by Bill Schottstaedt of CCRMA, Stanford University.

This document comprises a computer analysis of my 4-channel tape piece *anonymous obvious (aka several instrumental structures to annoy ludi)*. It is offered as an aid to performing: in preparing the diffusion of electroacoustic music it is often useful to have such a visual representation to "know where the loud bits come."

The score was created using the *Sono* software written by Oyvind Hammer of NoTAM (http://www.notam.uio.no). The output of the program was edited and recombined to allow the creation of the score in its present format.

The result of the analysis is an oscillogram (time vs. amplitude: the narrow, black-only track) and a sonogram (time vs. frequency: the wider track with varying shades of grey). Each channel is represented separately with one minute per page. In the sonogram, the darker the shading, the stronger the amplitude of the signal in the indicated frequency area.
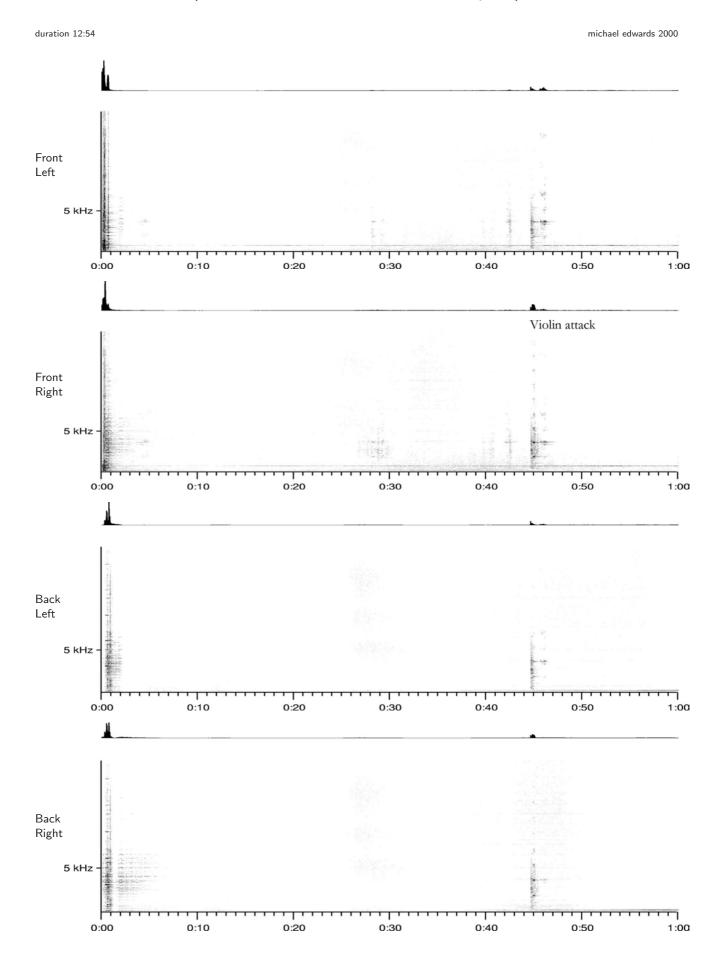
anonymous obvious (aka several instrumental structures to annoy ludi) was created at the Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie (ZKM), Karlsruhe, Germany, with the support of a grant from ZKM | Institute für Musik und Akustik, director Johannes Goebel.
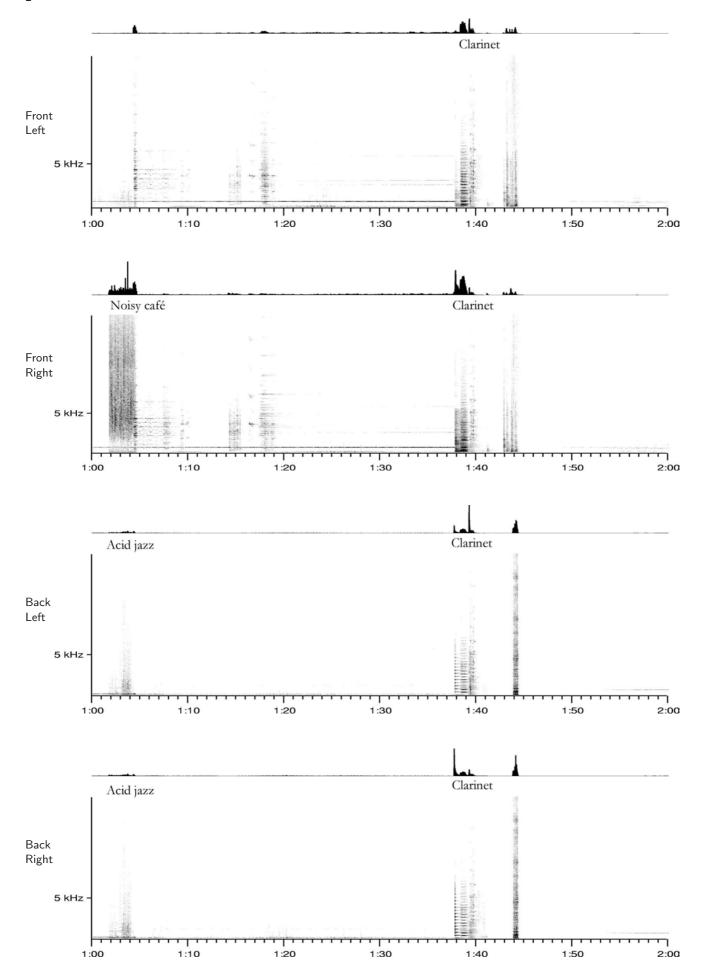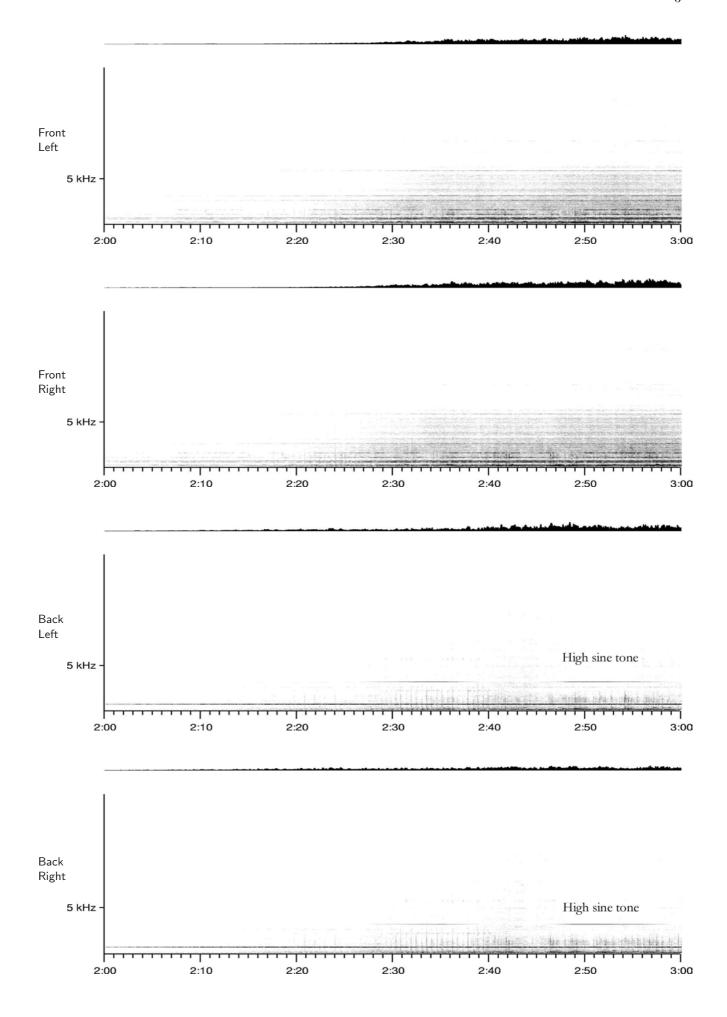
Michael Edwards, 8th January 2001

As with most pieces of electroacoustic music, though the mix represented on tape aims to be suitable, if not ideal, for all performance spaces, the playback levels and equalization will need to be adjusted to some degree before and/or during the performance. The following remarks should help in realising the aims of the piece:
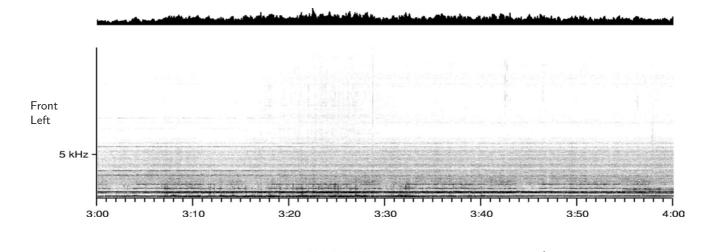
1   The opening attack is one of the loudest points in the piece. The continuous noise sound that follows is very much quieter in comparison but it should be present enough to diffuse throughout the whole performance space without seeming at all distant.

2   The attack of the "swirling breaking glass" section starting around 4:52 represents a sudden jump to maximum volume, with the high frequencies of this sound coming clearly through in the mix. Probably due to the density of the mix however, this sound seems to be particularly prone to masking in certain acoustic spaces so the equalisation should be carefully adjusted before the performance to make sure that it shines without being painfully loud.

3   Although relatively quiet in comparison with the loud section before it, the held mid/bass sound in the section from around 9:30 up until the "lo-fi string quartet" should be deceptively loud (deceptive in that the volume should be quite high but the effect is rather calm and quiet). This section is very (but necessarily) long relative to its musical content and so the levels need to be kept up until just before the interruption of the string quartet. Although a slight fade-out is in the mix, it should never become really quiet; above all, the attack at the beginning of the string quartet should be loud enough to be shocking.

4   The "lo-fi" (low-fidelity, as opposed to hi-fidelity) string quartet section beginning at around 11:51 should be as quiet as possible but audible becoming almost inaudible (again, there is a long, slight fade-out). It is supposed to sound like a recording of a string quartet played over a cheap, tinny radio (the quartet is mine though, not a quotation) so if an acousmonium-type diffusion system (i.e. with very many speakers) is used, effective use of the cheapest, nastiest loudspeakers could be made here.

anonymous obvious
(aka several instrumental structures to annoy ludi)

duration 12:54

michael edwards 2000

Front
Left

5 kHz

0:00   0:10   0:20   0:30   0:40   0:50   1:00

Violin attack

Front
Right

5 kHz

0:00   0:10   0:20   0:30   0:40   0:50   1:00

Back
Left

5 kHz

0:00   0:10   0:20   0:30   0:40   0:50   1:00

Back
Right

5 kHz

0:00   0:10   0:20   0:30   0:40   0:50   1:00

st1.1.31

Front
Left

5 kHz

Clarinet

1:00   1:10   1:20   1:30   1:40   1:50   2:00

Front
Right

5 kHz

Noisy café

Clarinet

1:00   1:10   1:20   1:30   1:40   1:50   2:00

Back
Left

5 kHz

Acid jazz

Clarinet

1:00   1:10   1:20   1:30   1:40   1:50   2:00

Back
Right

5 kHz

Acid jazz

Clarinet

1:00   1:10   1:20   1:30   1:40   1:50   2:00

Front
Left

5 kHz

2:00   2:10   2:20   2:30   2:40   2:50   3:00

Front
Right

5 kHz

2:00   2:10   2:20   2:30   2:40   2:50   3:00

Back
Left

5 kHz

High sine tone

2:00   2:10   2:20   2:30   2:40   2:50   3:00

Back
Right

5 kHz

High sine tone

2:00   2:10   2:20   2:30   2:40   2:50   3:00

4

Front
Left

5 kHz

3:00   3:10   3:20   3:30   3:40   3:50   4:00

Front
Right

5 kHz

3:00   3:10   3:20   3:30   3:40   3:50   4:00

Back
Left

5 kHz   High sine tone

3:00   3:10   3:20   3:30   3:40   3:50   4:00

Back
Right

5 kHz   High sine tone

3:00   3:10   3:20   3:30   3:40   3:50   4:00

st1.1.31

Front
Left

"Swirling breaking glass"

5 kHz

4:00   4:10   4:20   4:30   4:40   4:50   5:00

Front
Right

"Swirling breaking glass"

5 kHz

4:00   4:10   4:20   4:30   4:40   4:50   5:00

Back
Left

"Swirling breaking glass"

5 kHz

4:00   4:10   4:20   4:30   4:40   4:50   5:00

Back
Right

"Swirling breaking glass"

5 kHz

4:00   4:10   4:20   4:30   4:40   4:50   5:00

Front
Left

Front
Right

Back
Left

Back
Right

Front
Left

5 kHz

6:00   6:10   6:20   6:30   6:40   6:50   7:00

Front
Right

5 kHz

6:00   6:10   6:20   6:30   6:40   6:50   7:00

Back
Left

5 kHz

6:00   6:10   6:20   6:30   6:40   6:50   7:00

Back
Right

5 kHz

6:00   6:10   6:20   6:30   6:40   6:50   7:00

st1.1.31

8

Front
Left

5 kHz —

7:00   7:10   7:20   7:30   7:40   7:50   8:00

Ensemble   "Splices"

Loud
sawtooth
wave

Front
Right

5 kHz —

7:00   7:10   7:20   7:30   7:40   7:50   8:00

Ensemble   "Splices"

Back
Left

5 kHz —

7:00   7:10   7:20   7:30   7:40   7:50   8:00

Ensemble   "Splices"

Back
Right

5 kHz —

7:00   7:10   7:20   7:30   7:40   7:50   8:00

Ensemble   "Splices"

st1.1.31

Front
Left

5 kHz

8:00　8:10　8:20　8:30　8:40　8:50　9:00

Front
Right

5 kHz

8:00　8:10　8:20　8:30　8:40　8:50　9:00

Back
Left

5 kHz

8:00　8:10　8:20　8:30　8:40　8:50　9:00

Back
Right

5 kHz

8:00　8:10　8:20　8:30　8:40　8:50　9:00

st1.1.31

Front
Left

5 kHz

Front
Right

5 kHz

Back
Left

5 kHz

Back
Right

5 kHz

Front
Left

5 kHz

10:00 10:10 10:20 10:30 10:40 10:50 11:00

Front
Right

5 kHz

10:00 10:10 10:20 10:30 10:40 10:50 11:00

Back
Left

5 kHz

10:00 10:10 10:20 10:30 10:40 10:50 11:00

Back
Right

5 kHz

10:00 10:10 10:20 10:30 10:40 10:50 11:00

st1.1.31

12

Front
Left

5 kHz –

11:00   11:10   11:20   11:30   11:40   11:50   12:00

Front
Right

5 kHz –

11:00   11:10   11:20   11:30   11:40   11:50   12:00

Back
Left

5 kHz –

"lo-fi"
string
quartet

11:00   11:10   11:20   11:30   11:40   11:50   12:00

Back
Right

5 kHz –

11:00   11:10   11:20   11:30   11:40   11:50   12:00

st1.1.31

Front
Left

5 kHz –

12:00   12:10   12:20   12:30   12:40   12:50   13:00

"Full ensemble"

Front
Right

5 kHz –

12:00   12:10   12:20   12:30   12:40   12:50   13:00

"Full ensemble"

Back
Left

5 kHz –

12:00   12:10   12:20   12:30   12:40   12:50   13:00

"Full ensemble"

Back
Right

5 kHz –

12:00   12:10   12:20   12:30   12:40   12:50   13:00

st1.1.31