

ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: FIGER: A QUADRAPHONIC ELECTROACOUSTIC COMPOSITION

Steve Youssif Wanna, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2004

Dissertation directed by: Dr. Thomas DeLio

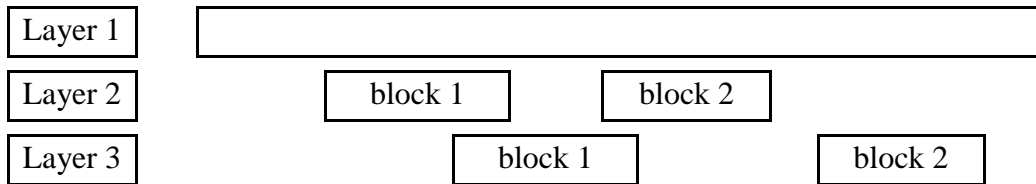
Background

Figer (to congeal, to solidify) is a quadraphonic electroacoustic composition. It was completed in the fall of 2003. Several software programs were used in creating and assembling the piece (C-Sound, Grain Mill, AL/Erwin (grain generator), Sound Forge and Acid Music). The sounds used in the piece are of two general types: synthesized and sampled, both of which were subjected to various processing techniques. The most important of these techniques, and one that formally defines large portions of the piece, is granular synthesis.

Form

The notion of time perception is of great importance in this piece. *Figer* addresses this question in several ways. In one sense, the form of *Figer* is simple. There are three layers of activity (see diagram). Layer 1 is continuous and non-sectional and supplies a backdrop (not necessarily a background) for the other two. The second and third layers overlap and interrupt one another. Each consists of two

blocks of sound. The following, simple diagram illustrates the general form of the piece. The sections are not proportionate (length to duration) in the diagram.



The layers, and blocks within, relate to each other in various ways. Layer 1 is formally continuous. Layer 2 consists of well-defined columns of sound that evolve from soft and mild to loud and abrasive. The layer is, in reality, a whole that is simply cut into two parts (block 1 and block 2). In contrast, the blocks of layer 3 do not constitute a whole. Each is a complete unit and has its own self-contained evolutionary path. Those paths, however, do cross the paths of other units (layers, blocks), influencing them and absorbing some of their essence.

At the heart of *Figer* lies a constant process of presenting materials or ideas and immediately, or, at times, simultaneously, commenting, reflecting on, or reinterpreting that material. All of the layers of this piece deal, both at local and global levels, with the problem of time and its perception relative to the materials, sonic or otherwise, that occupy it and the manner in which they unfold and relate to each other.

FIGER: A QUADRAPHONIC ELECTROACOUSTIC COMPOSITION

by

Steve Youssif Wanna

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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Advisory Committee:

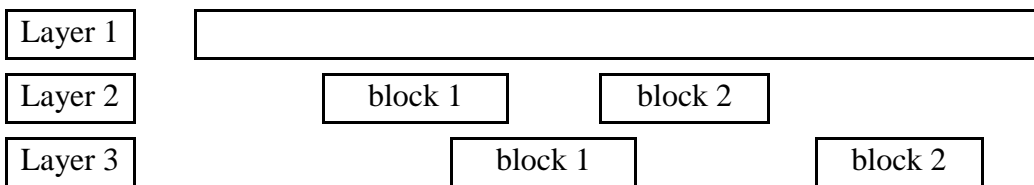
Dr. Thomas DeLio, Chair
Dr. Mark Wilson
Dr. Lawrence Moss
Dr. Robert Gibson
Dr. Meriam Rosen

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Form

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