University of Sydney
DECO 2010 – Sound Design and Sonification
Assignment 2 "Creative Multi-Dimensional Sound Composition"
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Ether Noise

The Inspiration

My initial inspiration and early research references Japanese musician, Kensuke Fujii. Most of the 'raw' sounds from my work have been sourced from his website on the World Wide Web at http://kkf.jp. His work looks at the fusion and musical quality of computer and internet sounds combined with contemporary or classical music. Although some of these 'raw' sounds teetered at high frequencies and created some annoyance over long periods, I thought with proper sonification – an ambient "soundscape" may be achieved. This has been the underlying inspiration and concept for my creative composition. The following outlines all the samples used in my composition:

SAMPLES

- PowerBook Connecting to the Internet Wirelessly
- Internet Connected to PowerBook
- Windows Start-Up sound
- Medical Equipment "Heart Monitor" Sound
- Notorious B.I.G. Midi "Big Poppa" - Drums
- The Ohio Players Midi "Love Rollercoaster" – Bass
- Text To Sound Converter (Generated) – Mylo "Destroy Rock N Roll" lyrics

The Concept

The structure of the composition focuses on subtlety of rhythm and beat; at times, deliberate focus is made on 'white noise' – "Ether Noise". The sonified internet and computer sounds have subtle characteristics which I thought were surprisingly lyrical and I wanted to highlight this throughout the work. I achieved this by working on parts; the underlying 'white noises' – the start (up) sequence – the beat – the manipulated data. The parts I largely assembled using Ableton Live; the overall composition was pieced together and normalized/rendered in Pro Tools. The transition and overall cohesion of the piece is achieved by layering of isolated elements (medical sounds, text to sound) and adding additional 'white noise'. I was inspired by the internet, computer sounds and the beautiful and rhythmic qualities I discovered in both.

The Generative Sound Process

The PowerBook and Internet sounds represent the foundation of the composition. I increased or decreased the tempo in order to highlight the repetitive beat. The sounds are largely continuous and sparingly duplicated (further highlighting the natural untouched rhythmic characteristics). I compressed the sound of the internet connection to create a 'denser' and faster rhythmic sound. I applied the Audio Effect>Auto Filter>"Default" to the sample (Ableton Live) and drew the volume levels in when the composition was layered.
(This sound is featured at the beginning of the track).

Using ProTools I used 'time expansion' on the connected to PowerBook sample, I wanted to create 'white noise' and create the mood and formal 'base' line for the composition. I added 'Dverb' filter (ProTools) in order to drop out some high frequencies that were remaining after the expansion and create a fuller, more spatial sound. It is what I call "Skipping-Ethernet" and it is like the sound of a record player on vinyl before the record starts.

The "Skipping –Ethernet" sample was modified further to create another sound. The area of greatest interest (or change in sound) was selected, clipped and a delay was added (ProTools). After the levels were adjusted, namely the gain and channels, a 'fog horn'-like sound was achieved. I wanted to highlight the surreal quality of the auditory 'space', reference distance and a beacon and complement the spatialization of the beat.

I manipulated the Windows Start Up sound in three ways at the beginning of the track. The sound is meant to represent the 'connection to the internet' and represent 'outside' of connected space – louder, busier. I used delay, pan and beat repeating filters, drew left and right channels, and cut the track up. As the track progresses, it is envisioned that one journeys into the 'connection'.

The climactic or 'resolution' space of the piece directly explores the rhythmic content of the composition. I chose to sample some midi drum and bass lines because I have no formal musical education and required some 'sophistication' as to not deter the listener!
I transposed two midi beats separately into Ableton Live software and then layered the two tracks and applied filters and adjusted levels. I hoped to achieve spatialization with sounds that panned in the left and right channel and decayed in interesting ways. I wanted to add a dynamic element – the exploration of size and dimension - to the composition and reference a conventional beat. The sound choice reflects the 'computer' context and is meant to represent digital data streaming along the fibre optic cables of the internet – not unlike electrical impulses.

Therefore the drum line uses presets (Ableton Live) Impulse> Electronic> "Artefact Pitches Brew" – I used an Auto Pan, Beat Repeat and Erosion Filter to create 'DRUM'. Each component of the midi (of each there were 8) – I adjusted the decay and pan according to what complemented the Bass Line. Although I reference this sequence as DRUM because it is what it was originally as a MIDI – the final result sounds like a BASS guitar and synthesized snare drum.

The ‘Bass’ Line is the ‘highlight’ component of this ‘resolution’ space and represents the intermittent responses that may flow back down the line. I also wanted to create a syncopated beat that would add inflection and greater interest. This BASS line increases the size of the sound. The BASS line uses preset MidiEFFECT>Arpeggiator>”Housier than Thou” – I then used the Impulse>Electronic>”Artefact Long” (Ableton Live).

I manipulated data using a text to sound converter – the data derived from text. I chose the song by Mylo, “Destroy Rock N Roll” for its content and appropriated message. The lyrics are delivered in tonal repetition, consistent, not unlike the internet beat and this could be replicated by the sound converter. I then applied the Reverb>”Long Tail” filters (Ableton Live) to suggest distance, spatiality and distort some content so it would be subtle and complement the beat. The sample is representative of the communication that is occurring along the optic cables of the internet.