

Lid of fade, metallic soot, to oscillate me, daffodil — part II
for harpsichord solo and live generated electronics

marko ciciliani 2002

"Lid of fade, metallic soot, to oscillate me, daffodil"
part II
for harpsichord solo and live generated algorithmic electronics

by Marko Ciciliani
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"Lid of fade, metallic soot, to oscillate me, daffodil" is a generative composition. This means that the score does not provide a notation of the piece as it has to be played but it describes the compositional process for the piece to be worked out by the interpreter. There are uncountable possibilities to put this piece together and as the performer goes through the process of realising the piece, he or she can make choices that lead to a unique and individual version of the piece. This -- at least this is my hope as the composer -- makes up to the significant amount of extra work, that the interpreter has to deal with, before the piece finds its form as a traditional score.

This process is realised by the live electronics in real time. A program written in SuperCollider2 generates a unique version of the piece every time it is started. The rough form and development always remain the same. In general, the played part and the electronic part are running parallel without being synchronized. There is only one point in the piece where the player has to cue with the electronics. That moment is described in the score.

The electronics are stereo. Preferable, one speaker should be placed under the harpsichord while the other one is behind the audience. Instead of a normal left right situation, the electronics are conceived as being either in the front or in the back of the listener.

On page 1 the melodic and tonal material is displayed on top of the page. The following steps are describing the compositional steps, that are making use of that material in various ways.

melodic material

tone system

1 The clusters are indicating pitch areas from which 2 or 3 pitches (according to the roman numeral above in a square) have to be chosen according to the note material. Use the notes that you chose for a pitch area for all following identical pitch areas for an entire line. Select other notes in the other 2 lines. Arrange upper and lower manual independantly.

♩ = 90

8' lute register

tune f down to e

etc.

scales ad lib. leading to melodic material

take out 8'

1

only the sounds of keys

pluck strings behind bridge with plectrum

2

put in 8'

scales ad lib. leading to conclusion of melodic material

Continue the melody according to the following rules:

The first time, start to play the given melodic material at any point, the second, third and fourth time continue the melodic material at the point where it stopped the last time. Apply to the melodic excerpt one of the three palindromic number chains, every time a different one. Only the long fourth number chain has to be applied after the third pass. With the fourth pass, all pitches of the higher manual should be replaced by any plucked strings.

1-1-2-1-2-3-1-2-3-4-2-3-4-3-4-4;

1-1-2-1-2-3-1-2-3-4-1-2-3-4-5-2-3-4-5-3-4-5-4-5-5;

1-1-2-1-2-3-1-2-3-4-1-2-3-4-5-1-2-3-4-5-6-2-3-4-5-6-3-4-5-6-4-5-6-5-6-6;

1-1-2-1-2-3-1-2-3-4-1-2-3-4-5-1-2-3-4-5-6-1-2-3-4-5-6-7-2-3-4-5-6-7-3-4-5-6-7-4-5-6-7-5-6-7-7

The order of the numbers refers to the order of the pitches of the melodic material. Each number of the number chain indicates how often each pitch has to be repeated. For example 1, 1, 2, 1, 2, 3 etc. would mean that the first, the second and the fourth note would have to be played once, the third and fifth twice, the sixth three times. The repeating notes have to be played on both manuals alternatingly, no matter whether any register is active in the lower manual. All notes have the same length which are six-tuplets. The manual in which the last note of a repetition lands is the one where the melody is continued. Always add a quarter rest in the end.

The following example shows the second palindromic number chain starting with the 10th note of the melodic material:

After first pass continue immediately with "1", after second pass continue immediately with "2".
After third pass continue immediately with "3", using the next note from the melodic material as the initial note to unfold the chords from.

right hand:
4-part chords unfolding from first note upwards, shrinking from bottom to top.

right hand:
3-part chords unfolding from first note upwards, shrinking from bottom to top.

left hand and right hand:
identical 5-part chord unfolding from first note downwards, shrinking from top to bottom.

left hand and right hand:
identical 5-part chord unfolding from first note downwards, shrinking from top to bottom.

left hand: 5-part chord unfolding from first note downwards, shrinking from top to bottom.

left hand: 5-part chord unfolding from first note downwards, shrinking from top to bottom.

After "3" go back to "X" for the last time and after that directly to "4"

voice (spoken): "a" "a" "b" "a" "b" "c" "a" "b" "c" "d" "b" "c" "d" "c" "d" "d"

plucked string (betw. tuning pin and nut): \tilde{a}

harpsich. (inside)3: bow long note in lower middle register

keep repeating until bowed note is finished

3

rhythmic values

finger action

harpsich.

Assemble rhythms with the material given above according to the following rules:
 Start with any rhythmic value and number it as value 1. From this value on a rhythm is going to be compiled in phrases following a palindrome-like structure. There are four differently sized phrase structures to be used, made of the following numbers of notes:

- 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1,
- 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1,
- 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1,
- 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 6 - 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1.

While the phrase size is increasing, always start with the same value, extending the phrase by one value according to the value succession in the given material. Once the phrase sizes start to decrease, first omit value 1, then value 2 etc..
 Apply the generated rhythms to a cycling – melodically ascending/descending – 5 tone pitch progression. The first pitch has to be either the highest or the lowest of the 5 notes. That one is played only once and is suspended, while the rest of the rhythm is played on the other 4 notes. All of those four notes have to be part of the range that is being bowed at the same time inside the harpsichord. Therefore their pitches won't resound properly. The suspended first note must not be part of the bowed notes is should therefore decay without interference.
 Hold a fermata after every palindromic rhythm ended. In every palindromic rhythm the suspended note should be adifferent one, changing between being underneath and above the other notes. The latter should always stay the same. Every new palindromic rhythm is supposed to start with the rhythmic value that the previous palindromic rhythm ended with.

The example on the left started with the 6th note and forms a 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 structured palindromic rhythm.

In the very last cycle the rhythm should be applied to a lineary ascending melody instead of the cycling motion. It should be set so that the very last note of the melody is the note g⁶ (highest note of the 8 register). During the time of the ascending melody the bowed cluster should gradually be narrowed to one single note.

with constant subtle accelerandos and ritardandos around main tempo (only inside the instrument)

inside harpsichord

lower keyboard (8' with coupler)

start cycling melody (with palindromic rhythm).....

start ascending melody (with palindromic rhythm).....

reduce range to a single tone

keep accelerating until presto poss.

scales ad lib.

4 Arrange like #1. Keep repeating (tempo taken from the end of #3) until the chords start to be played from SuperCollider, then interrupt wherever you are and seamlessly move on to the next section.
 *) first chord can be omitted when coming from #3.

8"

harpsich.

8' (w/coupler)

3 4 5 4 4 4 3 6 3 4

scales ad lib.

harpsich.

3 4 5 4 4 4 6 4 3 6 6 6

scales ad lib.

5 In this section SuperCollider is generating chains of repetitions of chords. These chains are arranged in three different ways:

- starting slow, accelerating to a maximum speed and after that slowing down again,
- starting fast, slowing down to a low point and after that accelerating again, or
- repeating in a regular pulse.

The chains are entering in an overlapping manner. Here the task of the harpsichordist is as follows:

Whenever a chain of chords is playing, play a 5-part chord of your choice between every two chords played by SuperCollider (8' with coupler). In other words always repeat chords in the offbeat of SC, following with all accelerations and ritardandos as generated by the computer. If a chain is getting to its end and a new one has already started, switch to the new one as the reference point of the emulation at any point during the overlap. Change the 5-part chord that you are playing as you turn your attention to the new chain. The transitions from the emulation of one chain to the other always have to happen very smoothly and homogeniously without a pause.

The chains with changing tempos are occurring more often than the regular ones. The first time when a regular chain resounds is a cue that there are only 5 more chains to come. The very last one of the five is again going to be a regular pulse.

Play to the five last chains in the following manner:

1. [regular pulse] both hands (5-part chord) on 8' with coupler (this is as you played also the previous chords).
2. Both hands (5-part chord) on 8'.
3. One hand (5-part cluster-like chord) on 8". Thereby use the other hand to take out the coupler and the 8' register.
4. One hand (3-part chord) on 8", one hand (3-part chord) on 8'. 8' is producing only the percussive sound of the keys, no pitches are played.
5. [regular pulse in tempo = 180] One hand (5-part chord) on 8'. Only a percussive sound results. With the other hand pluck a string at the same time like SC, in other words in between the muted chords played by the other hand. Gradually reduce the number of notes on the lower manual as it is sketched underneath. Keep going as notated after SuperCollider stopped.

$\text{♩} = 90$ $\text{♩} = 72$
 voice (spoken): Ah Dieu Ah "u" "b" loved in vain "u" Ah "u" "b" loved in vain Ah Dieu
 plucked string (betw. tuning pin and nut): 5/4, 4/4, Glissando, 4/4, Glissando
 harpsich. (inside): 5/4, 4/4
 gradually reduce number of notes on the lower keyboard
 Tap on bridge (inside the harpsich.)
 Keep repeating as long as necessary to move from the keyboard to the tail part of the instrument. From this moment on everything will be performed inside the harpsichord.

voice (spoken): "e" "d" "e" "c" "d" "e" "b" "c" "d" "e" "a" "b" "c" "d" "e" "a" "b" "c" "a" "b"
 plucked strings (betw. bridge and end of string): medium high register, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, bow long note in lower middle register
 harpsich. (inside): (tapping)
 Keep repeating until bowed note is finished

plucked strings (betw. bridge and end of string): the lowest 7 strings of the instrument
 harpsich. (inside): (tapping)

6

(♩ = 72)

Compose a palindromic rhythm and apply it to the sounds underneath.
 The rules for assembling the palindromic rhythm are identical with those at #3. The row of rhythmic values is also identical with the one at #3, only doubled in its values. Assemble two rhythms with the 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 structure. That would thus make two rows with the following order of rhythmic values (each number here representing a rhythmic value as they are occurring in the row):
 1, 1, 2, 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 2, 3, 4, 5, 3, 4, 5, 4, 5, 5. Since the first value of the following rhythm should be identical with the last one of the previous rhythm, thesecond rhythm would be made of the values:
 5, 5, 6, 5, 6, 7, 5, 6, 7, 8, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 6, 7, 8, 9, 6, 7, 8, 9, 7, 8, 9, 8, 9, 9.

7

senza tempo (left and right hand independantly from each other)

let marble fall on strings in high register and let it bounce as long as possible

tap (on bridge)

Assemble rhythms with the material given on the left to the following rules (identical with #3):
 Start with any rhythmic value and number it as value 1. From this value on a rhythm is going to be compiled in phrases following a palindrome-like structure. There are four differently sized phrase structures to be used, made of the following numbers of notes:

- 1-2-3-4-3-2-1,
- 1-2-3-4-5-4-3-2-1,
- 1-2-3-4-5-6-5-4-3-2-1,
- 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-6-5-4-3-2-1.

While the phrase size is increasing, always start with the same value, extending the phrase by one value according to the value succession in the given material. Once the phrase sizes start to decrease, first omit value 1, then value 2 etc.. Apply the generated rhythms to the two highest strings that were bowed in the previous line. Differently than there only bow each note very shortly this time.

left and right hand independantly from each other
 l.h.: tempo libero (smooth but not too slow)
 5-part chord plucked

tap (on bridge)

short bow on a string in lower medium register

5-7x

senza tempo

harpisch. (inside) r.h.

bow any string in lower middle register

scratch marble along one of the lowest strings of the harpsichord, moving from the keyboard-end to the tail-end.

r.h.: senza tempo

let marble fall on the lowest strings between the bridge and the end of the strings. While the marble is still bouncing, bow a long note in the lower middle register.

FINE