

Electroacoustic Composition 6

Circular Rhythms and Natural Patterns (2007) 8'28"

Acousmatic Movement of Continuous Sound

Realised in the composer's home studio during 2007 from the soundworld of a clarinet, *Circular Rhythms and Natural Patterns* is a single-movement acousmatic composition of continuous sound that initially served as a prepared sonic canvas for its larger electroacoustic sibling *When a Snake Eats its Own Tail*.

Often whilst composing, one builds a collection of independent short sketches, either in score or sonic format as general guides for form and to explore the pragmatic potential of preconceived methodologies and processes. These musical and textural 'glimpses' can often be highly intuitive and instinctive and the composer had realised that many valuable fragments were being wasted and could (should) be utilised in other ways.

In order to quickly (and instinctively) assess the compatibility of sound and texture within the concrete parts for *When a Snake Eats its Own Tail*, it was decided to utilise the three main sonic categories employed by acousmatic composers as the primary structural components within this work:

1. The Loop (rhythm and repetition)
2. The Drone (resonance and atmosphere)
3. The Melodic Fragment (front line material)

These categories can provide an instantly accessible and complimentary texture for exploring the potential soundworld, structure and atmosphere of a work within the studio environment and offer an ideal way for preparing the sonic palette.

Two melodic fragments were stretched and transposed into the long drones that overlap and underpin the entire movement. This essentially placed most of the 'linear moving material' into the range of the bass frequencies, which is an unusual approach that proved difficult to control during production and live diffusion, but created a distinctive soundworld of 'ground-bass', pacing (the drones have natural peaks and troughs) and atmosphere for this piece.

Inspired by African orature and their cyclic tales of nature, and influenced by the soundworld and structure of traditional east African Bagandan music, this piece uses asymmetric internal units of repetition within symmetrical rhythmic cycles.

Natural growth patterns such as the Fibonacci sequence and Golden ratio were used to establish proportional relationships and to control the distribution and pacing of loops: their expansion and diminution. These included growth abnormality permutations in frogs and insects. This sonic texture of *Circular Rhythms and Natural Patterns* was then composed alongside, above and around the existing ground-bass drones.

Whilst this acousmatic piece shares the same soundworld as its larger electroacoustic sibling and even some of the same sounds, *Circular Rhythms and Natural Patterns* developed its own distinctive musical character. Further composition independent from its original source emphasised this individuality.

Circular Rhythms and Natural Patterns is a single source, single movement, acousmatic composition composed from a structuralist aesthetic reminiscent of post-war Musique Concrète. As the title suggests, the work deals with circular rhythms and natural patterns, allowing gesture to expand into phrase and phrase into form through consistent development and balanced proportional dissipation. It is a warm bed of continuous sound, natural growth and diminution: drones and varied repetition, and an ideal acousmatic companion to its larger electroacoustic sibling: *When a Snake Eats its Own Tail*.

Concrete Audio and Diffusion:

The acousmatic studio master was conceived for multiple stereo-pair analogue diffusion (surround sound), with additional summated (central) mono and sub-bass (LFE) files.

The work was remixed and remastered during 2013.

Acknowledgement:

Thanks go to Nicholas Cox for recording the primary sound material from which this piece was composed.

Contact:

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