Matthew Shlomowitz

Graveyard Slot
(with guest appearance)

Written for Ensemble Nikel

Composed: 2019
Duration: 20 minutes
Graveyard Slot (with guest appearance)

Quartet for alto saxophone, electric guitar, percussion and synthesizer/sampler

Matthew Shlomowitz

Programme note

The work is imagined as a fantastical telethon, taking place in the middle of the night. A telethon (a portmanteau of ‘television’ and ‘marathon’) is a televised fundraising event that lasts many hours or even days to raise money for a worthy cause. Telethons typically feature variety show style entertainment, with musical acts, comedians and sketches. The quality is often uneven. The ‘graveyard slot’ is the period between 2am and 6am, where television audience is small and therefore content is considered less important.

Graveyard Slot (with guest appearance) was written for Ensemble Nikel.
Performance notes

Stage layout

Transposition

Alto saxophone is written in transposition
Electric guitar sounds one octave lower than written
Glockenspiel sounds two octaves higher than written

Quarter-tone notation

The following accidentals are used to notate quartertones in ascending order:

Electric guitar

Whammy bar
Effects
- Distortion
- Chorus
- Tremolo
- Sustain

Beyond specific effects being specified at certain points, feel free to make your own creative sound choices to enliven the work as you see fit.
Percussion

The part involves a combination of acoustic and electronic instruments.

Acoustic instruments

Glockenspiel
Wind chimes
Tambourine
Four-piece drum kit

- hi-hat, ride, crash, splash and small splash cymbals
- kick, snare, high tom and floor tom

MIDI pads

9 MIDI percussion sounds are used, but only 8 pads are required.

All sounds should have a highly artificial quality, contrasting with the acoustic kit. Feel free to make your own sound choices, but here are some suggestions.

Swoosh lateral brush stroke on snare with light reverb and delay
Maracas a single shake with soft echo
Hi-hat 1 and 2 each hi-hat should have a different pitch, sonority and envelope, e.g. hi-hat 1: higher pitch, industrial sonority, thud attack; hi-hat 2: lower pitch, bright, crisp
Kick, snare, high tom and low tom electro drum-machine sounds of your choice. The cross-stick (or rim shot) snare should have a short but pronounced ricochet delay.
Keyboards

Two electronic keyboards are required.

88-key synthesizer

- Touch sensitive
- Sustain pedal
- Pitch wheel

The table below provides the four sound settings for the synthesiser. The sound description details the sonority and envelope of each sound. An indicative sound setting from the digital audio workstation Logic Pro X is provided. Note: the pitchbend range for sound 1 is set at ±1-octave, whereas sound 2 is set at ±1-tone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name and description</th>
<th>e.g. Logic Pro X sound</th>
<th>pitchbend range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Synth Brass</td>
<td>Analog Horns</td>
<td>± 1 octave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plucked Synth</td>
<td>Micro Pulse</td>
<td>± 1 tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angelic Voices</td>
<td>Dream Voice</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mellotron Flute</td>
<td>Mellotron Flute</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25-key sampler

For all samples, depressing a key triggers the sample assigned to that key. The sample continues whether the key remains depressed or not. The sample continues to its end unless the same key is played after the sample has reached its end, in which case the sample begins again. Each time a key is depressed, it always cues the beginning of the sample.

Four recordings are used:

1. Applause 1
2. Applause 2
3. Passione
4. Laughter

Applause 1 is assigned to a number of keys with different speaker placements, and some versions have reverb added and others have a delay effect added.
The *Passione* recording, is assigned to three keys with different speaker placements. The recording was bought on a music library with a licence for use. The name of the singer was not listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>note</th>
<th>sample</th>
<th>speaker placement</th>
<th>duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C4 (middle C)</td>
<td>Applause 1</td>
<td>Centre (left and right)</td>
<td>12&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C#4</td>
<td>Applause 2</td>
<td>Centre</td>
<td>8&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>Laughter</td>
<td>Centre</td>
<td>6&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D#4</td>
<td>Passione</td>
<td>Centre</td>
<td>1'45&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4</td>
<td>Passione</td>
<td>Left only</td>
<td>1'45&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4</td>
<td>Passione</td>
<td>Right only</td>
<td>1'45&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F#4</td>
<td>Applause 1, with reverb</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>14&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G4</td>
<td>Applause 2, with delay</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>14&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G#4</td>
<td>Applause 1, with reverb</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>14&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>Applause 2, with delay</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>14&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A#4</td>
<td>Applause 1, with reverb</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>14&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>Applause 2, with delay</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>14&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>Applause 1, with reverb</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>14&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C#5</td>
<td>Applause 2, with delay</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>14&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D5</td>
<td>Applause 1, with reverb</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>14&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D#5</td>
<td>Applause 2, with delay</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>14&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E5</td>
<td>Applause 1, with reverb</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>14&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F5</td>
<td>Applause 2, with delay</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>14&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F#5</td>
<td>Applause 1, with reverb</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>14&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G5</td>
<td>Applause 2, with delay</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>14&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G#5</td>
<td>Applause 1, with reverb</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>14&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5</td>
<td>Applause 2, with delay</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>14&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A#5</td>
<td>Applause 1, with reverb</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>14&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5</td>
<td>Applause 2, with delay</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>14&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C6</td>
<td>Applause 1, with reverb</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>14&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The work is imagined as a telethon featuring a number of acts, albeit one taking place in the middle of the night with strange performances. The passage from m1-10, which reoccurs throughout the piece, is imagined as the type of musical refrain that precedes the next round of a TV game show, which here serves to signal the beginning of the next act.
As if hearing super-energetic
music from a great distance

whammy gradually  pitching up

whammy gradually  back down

(chord slowly fading)
Notes may be played down an octave
1 Single stroke across wind chimes from high to low.
Indicates dive bomb with whammy bar, always returning to neutral position after each dive.
The group functions here as a backing band to an invisible singer. In general, the group doesn’t need to be strictly synchronised with the rhythmically hazy vocal recording, however after the long vocal note diminuendos from around m228, the next phrase should begin on the downbeat of m231 (the inhale of breath providing a cue).
Pushing forward $J = 176$

A Sax

E Gtr

DK ac

Samp

Synth

19

A Sax

E Gtr

DK ac

Synth

263
The section from m348 to the end of m391 is imagined as one part in the variety show. I imagine it like this: during m348-365, an amateur comedian enters the stage, telling their jokes between m366-386, then exiting the stage.

\*Snare: slash through notehead: rimshot; cross notehead: rim click
Pushing forward
†Excite wind chimes at irregular intervals and different speeds to produce constant sound, but with variety.
Percussion and synth entry is barely heard, becoming audible as applause samples complete.

Dark, moody, languid

\textit{p}

acoustic kit