Myopic Phantasy

for mobile device trio

(2019)

Mike McFerron

Program Notes

Myopic Phantasy for mobile device trio was written in 2019. The foundation for this work is the opening lines of Edgar Allan Poe's short story, "The Fall of the House of Usher," whose narrator describes a feeling of "insufferable gloom" upon seeing the titular house and its decayed surroundings. The reader understands this description as a prediction of what is to come as the narrator descends to the House of Usher.

Many composers, from Debussy to Philip Glass, have produced music inspired by Poe's famous text, and for good reason. In it, the reader is confronted with quintessential Gothic themes, magnificently rendered: psychosis, metaphysics, human decay (physical and moral), and the strong tether of family. But perhaps the two themes that most elicit dread are isolation and captivity—being alone, captive to a sibling, captive to a house, captive to a sick mind. The terror and horror of this story may be that readers, through the eyes of Poe's narrator, begin to imagine themselves isolated and trapped by their circumstances. It is upon these themes that *Myopic Phantasy* is built.

Performance Notes

Myopic Phantasy requires that the host laptop computer and three mobile devices are connected to the same wi-fi network. Note that this wi-fi network does not need to be connected to the interenet. The TouchOSC app (https://hexler.net/products/touchosc) must be installed on the three mobile devices. Instructions for connecting devices can be found in the Max patch.

This work is a framed improvisation. In each box, or "Set" in the score, players are given available performance options found in their interface. For example, the directive "PC1/PC2" indicates that the player may use either or both of those buttons, but they are not to use the other PC buttons during the Set. The performer and ensemble should determine how these options are interpreted (change quickly, slowly oscillate, etc....) based on the Set in relation to the musical shape of the performance. Set 4C and Set 4D should be considered the climax of the work. The durations of the Sets are all different. Some durations are fixed, while others are left to the descretion of the ensemble (see Player 1 Transition button below).

PC1, PC2, etc...: Performers should only use the PC#(s) that are given for the set, and continue to use those PC#(s) until they are given new direction. PC#(s) are options. Players may choose to use all of the PC options or just a subset of them.

BANK1, BANK2: Like PC#(s), BANK indicators carry through Sets and should not be changed unless noted. BANK 1 should be used in all Sets with the exception of Set 3A, 4C, and 4D.

modEQ: Players use the EQ xy Pad. This option lasts only for the duration of the Set and does not continue to the next Set.

Tempo Adjust: This work is essentially at a tempo of 104 beats per minute. The Tempo Adjust option is used to create rhythmic and visual dissonance that is resolved by the creation of a new groove. Before the end of the Set where Tempo Adjust is indicated, players should return to a 104 bpm tempo.

(BANK2): In Set 3A, the computer will automatically switch players to Bank 2. In Set 3B, the players can choose when to return to Bank 1, but must return to Bank 1 before the end of Set 3B.. Note that in Set 4C and 4D, changing banks is left to the discretion of the players, but players should return to Bank 1 before the end of Set 4E.

Player 1 Transition button: This button progresses the ensemble to the next step. When the button is pushed is left to the discretion of the ensemble. With the exception of those Sets where Player 1 clicks the transition button, the work progresses through the Sets automatically.

Duration: ca. 11 minutes

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	Set 1A	Set 1B	Set 1C	Set 1D	Set 1E
Player 1	Bank1 / PC1 / mod volume slightly *sempre*	PC1/PC2	PC1 / modEQ	PC1/PC2	Transition
Player 2	Bank1 / PC1 / mod volume slightly *sempre*	modEQ	PC1/PC2	PC1 / Tempo Adjust	modEQ
Player 3	Bank1 / PC1 / mod volume slightly *sempre*	PC1/PC2	*(continues)*	PC1/PC3 / modEQ	modEQ

mf ———————— *mp*

	Set 2A	Set 2B	Set 2C	Set 2D	Set 2E
Player 1	PC1/PC2 / Tempo Adjust	modEQ	PC2/PC3/PC4 / modEQ	Tempo Adjust	Transition
Player 2	PC1/PC3 / modEQ	PC1/PC3/PC4 / modEQ	PC1/PC2/PC3	modEQ	modEQ
Player 3	PC1/PC2/PC4 / modEQ	Tempo Adjust	PC2/PC4 / Tempo Adjust	PC1/PC3/PC4	modEQ

mf ———————— *p*

	Set 3A	Set 3B	Set 3C	Set 3D	Set 3E
Player 1	PC1/PC2: [Bank 2] / Tempo Adjus / modEQ	Bank 1 / PC1/PC2/PC3	modEQ	PC2/PC3/PC4/PC5	Transition
Player 2	PC1/PC3: [Bank 2] / Tempo Adjust / modEQ	Bank 1 / PC1/PC2/PC3	modEQ	Tempo Adjust	PC1/PC2/PC3/PC4 / modEQ
Player 3	PC1/PC4: [Bank 2] / Tempo Adjust / modEQ	Bank 1 / PC1/PC2/PC3	Tempo Adjust	PC1/PC2/PC3/PC4 / Tempo Adjust	modEQ

mf ———————— *mp*   ———————— *p*

	Set 4A	Set 4B	Set 4C	Set 4D	Set 4E
Player 1	PC1/PC3/PC5 / Tempo Adjus / modEQ	PC1/PC3 / modEQ	*Improvise using all elements. Create a loud, disjointed, and erratic texture.* Transition	*(continue)* Transition	*slowly create a groove back at original tempo.*
Player 2	PC3/PC4/PC5 / modEQ	Tempo Adjust	*Improvise using all elements. Create a loud, disjointed, and erratic texture.*	*(continue)*	*slowly create a groove back at original tempo.*
Player 3	PC1/PC2/PC4 / modEQ	PC2/PC4/PC5 / modEQ	*Improvise using all elements. Create a loud, disjointed, and erratic texture.*	*(continue)*	*slowly create a groove back at original tempo.*

f ———————— *mp*   ———————— *f*

	Set 5A	Set 5B	Set 5C	Set 5D	Set 5E
Player 1	Bank 1 / PC1/PC4/PC5	PC1/PC4/PC5 / modEQ	*diminish poca a poco* / modEQ	*slowly fade out, then click "Stop"*	*tacet*
Player 2	Bank 1 / PC1/PC2/PC4	PC1/PC5 / modEQ	*diminish poco a poco* / modEQ	modEQ	*slowly fade out, then click "Stop"*
Player 3	Bank 1 / PC1/PC3/PC5	PC3/PC5 / modEQ	*slowly fade out, then click "Stop"*	*tacet*	*tacet*

———————— *p*