Mp3 Jerry Gerber - Time Shadows

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Challenging, sophisticated symphonic music for the virtual orchestra. 6 MP3 Songs ELECTRONIC: Virtual Orchestra, CLASSICAL: Symphony Show all album songs: Time Shadows Songs Details: Composers have long debated the merits of composing at the piano rather than composing at a desk in silence. Schumann and Berlioz both argued that piano technique and the "tyranny of the fingers" are a definite hindrance to composition and abstract thought. Stravinsky, on the other hand, advised us not to despise the fingers, and thought that piano improvisation can give birth to ideas that otherwise might not come to fruition. I tend to take the latter position, which is perhaps why Ive maintained a compelling interest in composing at the computer, using mouse, computer keyboard and MIDI keyboard. What would these earlier composers think of the MIDI sequencer and computer-based sounds? Composers can not only compose and program their ideas, hearing their music with all of its intended timbres, as it is being created, but also can do interpretive editing over every note, chord and phrase utilizing a new kind of musical technique. There are great advantages of being able to hear ones ideas at the moment of creation. Pop and jazz musicians have long understood the inherent unity in the creation and interpretation of music while in the classical world the division of labor between composer and interpreter became clearly distinct. The mastery of instrumental technique and compositional technique, both so very intense and difficult on their own, became separate pursuits; the orchestral composer would labor over a score and would depend on any number of musicians to interpret that score. In my Symphony #6 and Variations I am both composer and interpreter. Electronic music technology is shaping new attitudes and approaches to this issue. The MIDI sequencer gives musicians one more option as to how organize music. If earlier composers were concerned that the "tyranny of the fingers" would somehow corrupt the purity of musical ideas, one could argue that being able to hear ones music at the moment of creation via

the computer might hamper pure composition even further. But this is not necessarily so. Every musician brings a unique musical gift to the process. For some composers, myself included, immediate sonic feedback doesnt constrain composition, rather it is the beginning of being deeply engaged with the compositional/creative process. I also do not see how working directly in sound causes music to lose its inherently abstract nature, or preclude structure from unfolding in a way that is organically and intuitively connected to content. It becomes more a matter of the composers imagination and artistic intent rather than the so-called limitation of getting immediate feedback to ones ideas. Often the composers patience, ability to practice deep listening and commitment to his own expressive goals negates the concern that hearing ones ideas while creating them compromises their musical meaning and clarity. I am fully convinced that if one cannot create good music in such a medium the fault is certainly not with digital audio and music technology. Standard music notation has been evolving for around a thousand years into a complex and symbolic language. Master composers such as Bach, Beethoven, Mahler and Stravinsky embraced written music to create some of the greatest musical works ever composed--works that could not have been created without notation. In the early and middle periods of the last century, composers began to question the relationship between composition and interpretation, and new experiments in both music-making and music notation were frequently found on the concert stage and on recordings. Some of those artistic reactions include chance music, music from scores appearing more like graphic art than music, serial music, and electronic music. In some cases the score became little more than a fetish, often symbolizing music that gave hardly anyone artistic satisfaction or pleasure. Sometimes scores would make use of symbols that either had no real meaning regarding how the music actually sounded in performance or else saddled the interpreter with nearly impossible-to-execute ideas. Did the symbolic representation of music become an end in itself? Creative and sincere musicians of course care most about how music actually works as sound in time, not how it looks on the page. On the other hand, what better way to advance the process of composition itself than to bring another brain function, in this case visual, to the creative process? When composers interpret their own music using computer technology, the role of music notation changes. For example, it becomes unnecessary to fill the page with many of the markings that players require to understand what the composers intentions are. Articulation, dynamics, phrasing, tempiall these are programmed in great detail in the MIDI sequence, but have little value in a written score that is not used by musicians to interpret the music. The MIDI sequencer allows notation to

be a more flexible representation of the sound, by itself less comprehensive, but in conjunction with the MIDI data stream contains those very details and nuances needed to give expression to music, whether the music is initially played or programmed into the computer. There are also the new digital synthesizer timbres that produce complex harmonic and rhythmic "multi-timbres" as a single instrument so that even though standard music notation might be capable of representing these timbres, how important to the development of the musical ideas is it to notate every harmonic and rhythmic pattern of each timbre if it can be recorded and performed from computer memory? As long as the composer understands how the timbres harmonics and rhythmic pulsation are interacting, notation of it is unnecessary for composition and production although there might be other purposes, i.e. educational. Working in this relatively new medium requires flexibility. The idea of a musician playing (yes, composing music is a form of play!) has always been at the core of my love of music. When I was doing my college studies in classical music theory and composition I thought I had a good idea of how I was going to incorporate my education into my own creative work. Little did I know that composing with such well-known objects like the pencil, staff paper, piano and metronome would soon begin to be replaced by a very different set of music-making instruments. Living at a time of intense technological evolution, the arts are unquestionably impacted by this transformation. Nevertheless, the age-old artistic problem for composers remains: What do I want to say and what kind of music must I write? This compact disc is a consequence of trying to answer those questions one more time. Jerry Gerber San Francisco, July 2007

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