

***A State of the Nihil*, Nicholas Hender**

Descriptive Comments

This acousmatic work functions as an exploration and investigation of the concept of nothingness, a situation arising from a disparity between conflicting dimensions. Its fundamental materials are developed through composer-designed computer aided algorithms. Granulation, complex expression filtering, tempo oscillation, vocoding and convolution are devices also employed in the realisation of this work. Tempo oscillation involves the use of a complex subsonic wave to continuously vary tempo independently for each voice. There are a great number of autonomous voices, so this tempo oscillation operates to enable an extremely dense rhythmic polyphony that is apparently free from metre, the predictability of regular beats and consistently timed subdivisions. The work also features active tuning and variable timbre. Pitch tuning is altered as a continuous variable while the music is sounding. Partial frequencies are modified as continuous variables too, also while the music is sounding. Pitch tuning and partial frequencies change independently of each other. Close matching between partial frequencies of simultaneously sounding pitches can be considered to produce smoothly blended harmonies with a minimum of roughness, however this possibility has been purposefully avoided. Instead, deliberate mismatching between partial and coinciding pitch frequencies has been applied in an attempt to produce dynamically changeable forms of dissonance. Conceptual annihilation due to dimensional disparity and conflict is paralleled by the tension between unrelated tunings and timbres.