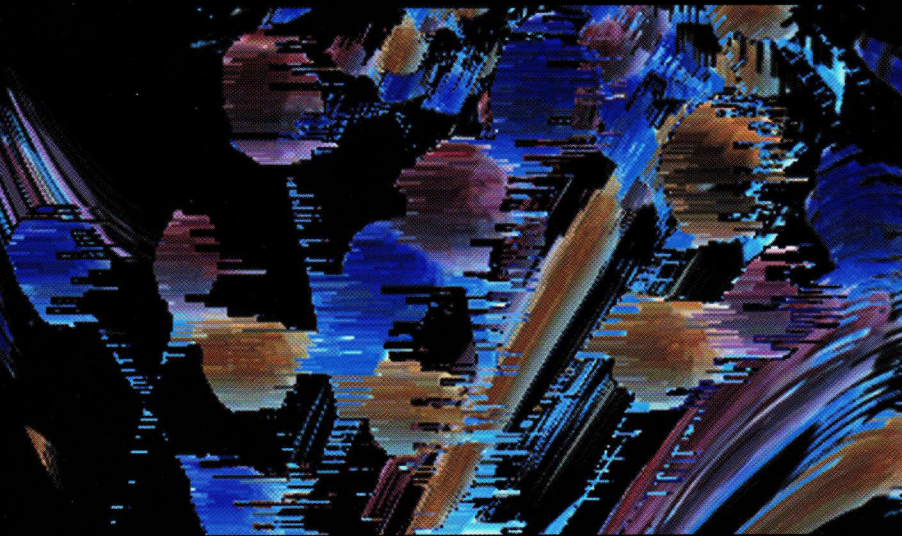


FIRST REFLECTIONS



MUSIC FOR PERCUSSION
BY J.B. SMITH



Whole>Sum Productions

Slap Shift¹

While living in Illinois in the early 80's I studied conga drumming with Robert "Tigger" Benford. His instruction and notation system provided me with a means to improve my rhythm skills and, more importantly, apply that training to the other instruments I was studying. In wanting to impart the same training to my college students, I've written several pieces that utilize hand-drumming techniques.

Composed in 1989, *Slap Shift*, is written for six players each with a single conga drum. The four varying sections are connected by metric modulation and pattern shifting. With each drum producing three different tones (bass, open, and slap), the intermixed parts create three distinctive melodic lines. Typical of many of my pieces, the melodic lines are created through a process of additive evolution: each part starts with a simple pattern which is gradually expanded upon to create more complex, melodically intricate lines. The final section is based on a samba pattern taught to me by Tigger.

Choice¹

Written in 1989, *Choice* is a tonal work with a free, somber introduction, driving rhythmic section and soft conclusion. It was originally written as an accompaniment for solo dancer.

Many young dancers are encouraged to pursue professional careers. In their pursuits, hard work occasionally borders on abuse by their instructors. Bones, muscles and tendons are pushed to their limits. The title *Choice* refers to one dancer's struggle to decide if the pain of training was worthy of the desired goals. The work was premiered by Michelle Villaça and the composer on March 27, 1989 in the Music Theatre at the Arizona State University School of Music

It's Destiny...Gasp!²

M. B. Hanrahan, lyrics

Jessica Karraker, voice

Sonja Branch, Glen Ormiston, Stephen Ridley,
Arnoldo Ruiz, Mark Timko, Steve Turner, Paul Welter,
Scott Werner, percussion

M. B. Hanrahan was a student of mine while I was the percussion instructor at Humboldt State University. She is a multi-talented artist having worked extensively as a sculptor, poet, singer, and radio personality. During a visit to Arizona in the Spring of 1988 I gave her a recording of an electronic piece I was developing. Within a day she returned with lyrics and proceeded to record the vocal track in my first Tempe studio. In the summer of 1993 I adapted the piece for live performance. It was premiered on March 26, 1994 in Tempe, Arizona as part of the Institute for Studies in the Arts "New Music from the Desert" program.

Ringin' Webs of Metal Threads¹

Ringin' Webs of Metal Threads is a duo for two vibraphones written in 1996. The opening is lyrical and flowing. The second part uses interlocking two and four note chords to create a vibrant fabric of overlapping melodic lines. Inspired by the pantonal writing style of Peter Garland and Indonesian Gamelan music, layers of melody are created by streams of widely voices chords.

Trio Passacaglia¹

A repeating bass line provides the foundation for a progressively expanding melodic activity. It was written as a serious, although sarcastic, work with a few unexpected musical twists and turns. *Trio*

Invitation stands.
Driven to a foreign land and dropped from
the sky,
through a hole in your open hand.

Remembering when carrying on in school
I was driving the line on company time
I didn't have a clue,
Innocent my friend (especially when I could
do it again).
No match from memories,
and stares that catch me unawares.
So casually we seek the ultimate rush--I
want to relax!

Suddenly...gasp!
At the door in a flash the clue.

There's nothing for me to do,
nothing for me to do.

Invitations land, dropped from the sky
again,
my sight's aligned at long last.
It's Destiny, Gasp!

There's nothing for you to do.
Nothing for you to do.

Play it to my heart
and act as if convinced it's all you ever ever
ever wanted to do.
Full moon says she's ready now to drip all
over you.
In a flash the clue.
I'm convinced, it's true.
all you ever ever ever wanted to do.
Ever wanted to do.
Ever wanted to do.

Passacaglia was originally written as a wind trio for three of my colleagues at Arizona State University: Robert Spring, clarinet; Trygve Peterson, flute; and Sam Pilafian, tuba. Because I am unaware of an concertizing group with that instrumentation I decided to arrange the work for percussion in 1996.

Concertante Diversion³

Performed by the Spring 1999 Arizona State University Symphonic Band percussion section: Casey Farina, Steve Sehman, Chris Reidy, Ryan Watson, Gabe Lugo, and Michael Richau

Concertante Diversion grew out of a single melodic idea that provided the structural foundation for the piece. From the melody, a phrase length was established, a harmonic scheme was implied and counter melodies were derived. Several complimentary voices were created which offered a musical "block of stone" from which the piece was carved. The core phrase is then repeated nine times. Each iteration emphasizes different voices, rhythmic phrasings and instrumental groups. The piece progressively introduces all of the ideas in different guises and culminates with the entire family of ideas being played simultaneously at the end.

A second version of the work was arranged for percussionists and tape that allowed for the piece to be presented on chamber music concerts. The original version was premiered on February 23, 1999 at Gammage Auditorium in Tempe, Arizona, with the composer conducting. Version 2 with tape was premiered on February 19, 1999 in Katzin Concert Hall at the Arizona State University School of Music.

Boundary Waters¹

A free, chromatic opening leads into a rhythmic, tonal passage that then degenerates into a polymetric cloud. Out of the cloud comes a familiar quotation that leads into a slow, melodic chorale. A festive coda closes the work. Originally written as accompaniment for solo dancer in 1982. The premier was performed by marimbist Jeff Stitely and dancer/choreographer Della Ranslem in the Spring of 1983 at the University of Illinois. Ms. Ranslem was tragically killed in a hit and run pedestrian accident in Tuscaloosa, Alabama in 1989. *Boundary Waters* is offered in her memory.

Conga Mix¹

Conga Mix was written in 1988 and was originally conceived as a conga trio but was adapted to be performed as a solo with the other two parts recorded onto tape. Three varied sections are connected by metric modulation and pattern shifting. Each section features one of the players as a soloist. As with *Slap Shift*, multiple lines of activity converge into a composite whole that creates melodic lines of the different conga tones.

First Reflection¹

First Reflection is structured as a theme with variations. It begins with a slow introduction of the melodic material that is followed by several rhythmic versions of the tune.

I'm the first to admit that my compositional abilities are limited to a few structural techniques: canon, theme and variations and through composition. Although these techniques can be found in music centuries old, their use with modern modal-tonal-chromatic harmonies and percussion instruments have yet to be exhausted.

First Reflection was premiered by Julia Harrell on September 29, 1988 at the University of North Texas.

In Light of Three¹

Robert Spring, clarinet

In Light of Three was written in 1988 shortly after I moved to Arizona. In a small way, the piece reflects on my thirty years of life to that point with a combination of lyric classical qualities with an altered pop sound.

In Light of Three was originally written as an instrumental trio featuring the flute. Needing material for my first tour with Robert Spring in 1989 I adapted it for clarinet, MIDI percussion keyboard and a prerecorded tape of the bass and drum parts. With the advent of interactive electronics I assembled a computer program which allowed me to start each of the three electronic entrances with a footswitch.

—J. B. Smith

Dr. J. B. Smith is presently an Associate Professor of Music and the Coordinator of Percussion Studies at Arizona State University. He has performed and recorded with Ensemble 21, The Daniel Lentz Group, Summit Brass and the Phoenix Symphony. He has recorded for Summit, Fontec, Rhizome Sketch, Leo, Koch and Canyon Records. He is also an Artist-in-Residence for ASU's Institute for Studies in the Arts.

He received his Bachelor of Music Education degree from Baylor University where he studied with Dr. Larry Vanlandingham, his Master of Music in Percussion Performance and Literature degree from the University of Illinois where he studied with Prof. Thomas Siwe and his Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of North Texas where he studied with Dr. Robert Schietroma. He has written articles for *The Instrumentalist*, *Percussive Notes* and *The Canadian Band Journal*, and served as president of the Arizona chapter of the Percussive Arts Society. Dr. Smith is also active as a composer, with numerous works published by Whole>Sum Productions.

Dr. Smith uses Pearl Drums, Zildjian Cymbals, Mike Balter Mallets and Grover Pro Percussion.



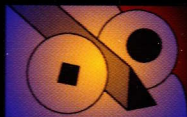
1 Performed and recorded by J. B. Smith at Whole>Sum Productions Underground Audio, Tempe Arizona.

2 Recorded by Clarke Riggsby in March, 1994 in the Music Theatre at the Arizona State University School of Music. Conducted by the composer.

3 Recorded by Mark Breen on March 28, 1999 in Katzin Concert Hall at the Arizona State University School of Music. All compositions mixed and mastered at the Arizona State University Institute for Studies in the Arts Audio Lab by J. B. Smith.

All works published by Whole>Sum Productions/BMI

Cover Image, *Water Strokes* by J.B. Smith, Graphic Design by Kenneth Decore



Copyright 1999
Whole>Sum Productions
All Rights Reserved
Made in USA

1. *Slap Shift* for 6 conga drummers 5:02
2. *Choice* for solo marimba 6:34
3. *It's Destiny... Gasp!*
for voice and percussion ensemble 3:56
4. *Ringin' Webs of Metal Threads*
for 2 vibraphones 6:45
5. *Trio Passacaglia*
for vibraphone, marimba and bass marimba 6:16
6. *Concertante Diversion*
for 6 percussionists and tape 11:50
7. *Boundary Waters* for solo marimba 5:30
8. *Conga Mix* for 3 conga drummers 3:18
9. *First Reflection* for solo marimba 6:15
- 10-11. *In Light of Three*
for clarinet, marimba/vibes and tape 6:43

TOTAL 62:31

STEREO

DDD

CD WS03

