

Howie Kenty
Coruscation and Dissolution (13:52)

Notes:

Can we change our own perspective such that what was initially displeasing becomes beautiful?

Coruscation and Dissolution explores the tension between consonance and dissonance, harsh and shimmering textures, differing frequencies of event occurrences, and varying dynamic levels through juxtaposition and layering of elements. Very much an aural environment, it moves from crescendos of chaos to valleys of sparse, consonant, simple tones, expanding and contracting in and out of complex timbres, tonally disparate textures, and slowly shifting dynamic levels. It finally reconciles some of the diverse elements in a way that is both slightly discordant and strangely compelling, suffused with frequency-modulated oscillators and mirrored ambiances sighing mournfully and transforming as they decay into extended silences.

Coruscation and Dissolution was constructed from a wide range of elements using a few key processing and manipulation techniques to connect them. Sound sources included a simple three-oscillator analog-modeling synthesizer, scratchy and droning violin recordings, white noise, crashing and exploding sound effects, handbell samples, my own piano improvisations processed through MAX/MSP, and audio generated using CSound 'buzz' command files. Processing and manipulation techniques included FM synthesis, playback speed (pitch/time) alterations, acoustic mirroring (convolution using sound sources as impulse waves with one another), random pitch shifting implemented via realtime LFO, reversing, ring modulation, delay and reverb spacialization, spectral accumulation and exaggeration, equalization, and high frequency excitation. Almost invariably, these techniques were used in repeated serial and/or parallel procedures, fed back into each other through tools like impulse convolution, and processed with light layers of controlled random pitch shifting and spacialization, resulting in nicely blended yet interesting and dynamic textures. These processes allowed me to create a wide gradient of sounds that could be fused together fairly seamlessly or made to fit incongruously as appropriate.

[Note that this piece is also available in octophonic format.]

Howie Kenty, 2009