Four Sonic Somethings

Shadoman

Banjoboe

This tune features elements of nondeterminism within the framework of a repeated two-bar rhythm pattern. The rhythm pattern is repeated three times in its “straight” form. Then a nondeterministic variant of it is repeated 5 times. The main part of the tune consists of three subparts. In the first subpart, a banjo and an oboe randomly walk to the beat playing at random volumes. In the second subpart, another banjo and another oboe join in augment the sound. The third subpart is similar to the first subpart. The tune then unwinds in order to obtain an ending that is symmetric to the beginning. In short, there is some “light nondeterminism” in the midst of a steady steeldrumms pattern.

A Bit of “Two Pages”

Philip Glass compositions are often generated by means of “processes” of addition and subtraction. His early work Two Pages is a nice example of this. The bit of Two Pages modelled here features the subtractive process. The Clay transformation “drop” which simply drops the last note of the note sequence generated by a symbol serves nicely to implement the subtractive process. In Two Pages, Glass repeats a 5 note motive a number of times, then he repeats the motive without the last note, then he repeats the motive without the last two notes. After more subtractions he then starts to add notes back. The overall effect is one of hypnotic repetitions from which dynamic metrics emerge.

After “Piano Phases”

Steve Reich is famous for a form of minimalism which involves phasing. This is sometimes accomplished by mechanical means, and sometimes by adding a beat to a motive. “Piano Phases” is a classic example of the latter technique. For the piece presented here I wrote a 10 note sequence to serve as the “raw material” for this study in phasing. I repeated this sequence 11 times while repeating its “slower clone” – the sequence with a rest added at the end – 10 times. I played the phase twice, once with two pianos an octave apart, and once with a clarinet and a tuba an octave apart.

Variations on a Repeated Asymmetric Arc

I lay down an asymmetric arc in 8 tones. I provide several variations on the arc. I play with these variations in a number of ways without ever abandoning the theme – until the end.