ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: UNFOLDING: FOR MIXED ENSEMBLE

Juan Martín Gendelman, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2007

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A growing interest in the theatrical side of musical performance has been the genesis of this dissertation. Although intended as a piece that should make sense musically (in a concert situation, that is) Unfolding was created as a multi-disciplinary work, where I have explored some of the ways in which a musical piece is perceived when put together with elements that belong to other artistic fields. Within the scope of this dissertation, those fields included Dance, the Visual Arts (represented by the live video,) Architecture, and Theatre (acknowledging here that, even though Theatre never played an active role in the development of the piece, different kinds of theatrical resources stand out when Unfolding is performed).

Some concepts were carefully treated throughout the creation process. The idea of considering Dancers and Musicians simply as Performers, and thus trying to make less obvious the division naturally imposed by their roles in the piece, was present at all times. Also, both composer and choreographer worked closely from the very beginning
of the project, in an attempt to achieve a balanced influence from each field over one another. Architecture was also very important from the beginning as both acoustical and visual characteristics of the hall (Dance Theatre at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center) shaped the piece. The video, on the other hand, was treated in a more complimentary manner. Its creation took place only after music and choreography had their final appearance.

Formally, the piece was originally conceived as a main development that starts after a Prelude and evolves through sections I, III, and V, being interrupted twice, in II, and IV. In reality, however, the mentioned development does not happen in a classical fashion. Instead, musical gestures and ideas unfold (hence the title) throughout I and III, reaching its highest point of tension shortly before the second appearance of the trumpet at the end of V.

Instrumentation was also planned early, trying to force different performance situations between dancers and musicians through the use of a different number of instruments on each section. Consequently, the piece starts with a solo that soon becomes a duet (in the Prelude), followed with a trio that becomes a quartet (in I, considering the percussion as only one part), continues as a quartet throughout III, and grows up to a septet (in V) and eventually an octet when the trumpet appears. At the same time, the solo of II and the duet of IV, which is compositionally an extension of II, interrupt the growing nature of the group. The abrupt appearances of the trumpet in II, and III, and its final emergence at the end of the piece, are treated as means of formal unity.

Because of the artistic nature of this project, its final conclusion may have many readings. As a composer, however, I have been taught by this experience that when
dealing with a multi-disciplinary work, the earlier the creators (composer and choreographer, in this case) start working together, the stronger and more organic the connections between the disciplines will be in the piece.
UNFOLDING: FOR MIXED ENSEMBLE

by

JUAN MARTIN GENDELMAN

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Maryland, College Park in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts 2007

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Professor Thomas Delio
Professor Robert Gibson
Professor James Ross
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Several people have been instrumental in allowing this project to be completed. I would like to express gratitude to Tzveta Kassabova, in first place, for sharing this creative journey with me. I would also like to thank dancers Sarah Anne Austin, Lillian, Cho, Yoko Feinman, and Sarah Levitt; as well as musicians Sarah Schramm, Evan R. Solomon, Justin Bland, Lee Hinkle, Scott Crawford, Sally Sarles, Benjamin Meeker, and Colin Chatfield; and conductor Shy-Luen Chen. Their enthusiasm and dedication was amazing and played a key role in the success of this project. Paul Jackson and Mustapha Amego were very important for the visual aspects of this work.

I want to acknowledge my advisor, Professor Lawrence Moss, and Professor Meriam Rosen, who were not only supportive, but also encouraged each and every idea we proposed; to Professor Thomas Delio for offering his sincere and objective feedback every time I needed it; and to Professor Robert Gibson for his unconditional support on the practical side of this project.

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juan martín gendelman

unfolding

for mixed ensemble, dancers, and live video

_________________________ 2007 __________________
a Note about the premiere

Unfolding was composed between the month of October of 2006 and the month of February of 2007 as part of the dissertation project for the doctoral degree. Its premiere, which also included choreography, costumes, and live video, took place at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center's Dance Theatre, in the University of Maryland, College Park (United States), on March 29, 2007, and was immediately followed by three more performances.

Tzveta Kassabova created the choreography and the costumes. The live video was realized by Mustapha Amego.

Performers included dancers Sarah Levitt; Lillian Cho; Sarah Anne Austin; and Yoko Feinman; and musicians Sarah Schramm (flute/alto flute); Evan Solomon (B♭clarinet / bass clarinet); Justin Bland (trumpet); Lee Hinckle (percussion); Scott Crawford (percussion); Sally Sarles (viola); Benjamin Meeker (violoncello); Colin Chatsfield (contrabass).

The premiere was conducted by Shy-Luen Chen.

The duration of this piece, in its original version, was about 40 minutes.

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Instrumentation

Flute / Alto Flute
B♭ Clarinet / Bass clarinet

B♭ Trumpet

2 Percussionists

Viola
Violoncello
Contrabass

Percussion

Vibraphone
Shakers (2)
Tambourines (2)
Suspended Cymbals (2)
Temple Blocks (set of 5)
2 Bongos
4 Tom toms (small to large)
Bass Drum

With the exception of the contrabass, all instruments sound as written.
Notation

Click random keys as fast as possible, avoiding repeated patterns.

[a.fl. / fl.] Lip pizzicato (should be always accentuated).

[fl. / a. fl. / cl.] Blow through the instrument without producing pitched sounds.

[Tpt.] Improvisation during indicated period. Materials on page 17a may be employed as a starting point in the improvisation, but the performer will be by no means restricted to them.
Unfolding

Prelude
Viola and Vibraphone

I - Out of Nothing
Alto flute, Bass clarinet, Viola, and Percussion

II - Detours
Percussion

III
Flute / Alto flute, Bass clarinet, Viola, Violoncello

IV - More Detours
Contrabass and Percussion

V - Unfolding
Full group

Total duration: about 30 minutes.
Prelude

Viola

Vibraphone
Prelude

Lento ma liberamente ($q = \text{ca. 46-48}$)

Viola

Vibraphone

Un poco piú mosso e con misura ($q = \text{ca. 58}$)

Vla.

Vib.

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* Slurs indicate pedal phrases.

Giusto (\( \text{\textit{c.a. 76}} \))

\( \text{sal ponticello} \)
Out of nothing
* Click random keys as fast as possible, avoiding repeated patterns.
A. Fl.

B. Cl.

Vla.

Cym.

Shkr.

Tamb.

Cym.

Shkr.

Tamb.
[Get ready for II]
* As soon as drums are heard, play a couple more beats, fading out, and stop.
II

Percussion  
(Drums)  
2 Bongos  
4 Tom-toms
**II - Detours**

to I.X.

2 Bongos
4 Tom-toms

Repeat boxed material until dancer's cue.

* Beaming is only intended for easiness of reading. It does not represent accentuation.

** Do not slow down at the beginning of each accelerando. Instead, continue the tempo of the previous beat and speed up from there.
*** From this point on, all notes written as rolls (†), shall be thought of in the context of the first tempo (♩ = 60).
The repetition of this section is *ad libitum*.
III

Alto Flute
Bass Clarinet
Viola
Violoncello
Change to C Flute

poco a poco

mp

crescendo

f

mf

stringendo

p

mf

p

f

p
Repeat from two to four times. Stop as soon as percussionist starts IV.
IV

Percussion

- Tambourine
- Suspended Cymbal
- Temple blocks
- 2 Bongos
- 2 Toms
- Bass Drum

Contrabass
IV - More Detours

Percussion (Tambourine)

Contrabass

Tapping on the body of the instrument

Cb.

Tamb.

Cb.

Tamb.

Cb.

Tamb.

Cb.
(*) After hitting the strings, let them vibrate.

(*) An alternative to battuto, which indicates that the open strings indicated within the box should be strucked by the bow, may be slapping the strings with the hand, letting them vibrate if ties are added after the box.
Improvise for about 10 seconds (based on this idea and switching between col legno battuto and left hand slapping), fading out, while percussionist starts improvisation on tambourine.
* These rhythms are to be performed on tambourine in random order. An alternative instrumentation of this could be the use of wood blocks and two (or more) suspended cymbals, scattered on stage.
V - Unfolding
(to LKM)

Sospeso \( \frac{3}{4} \) 70

pp   |  >mp|  pp   |  pp   |  pp   |  pp   |  pp   |  !ff|  pp   |  p   |  pp   |  p   |  pp   |

mp   | pp   |  >mp|  pp   |  pp   |  pp   |  pp   |  mp|  pp   |  p   |  pp   |  p   |  pp   |

areo  |  pp   |  !ff|  p   |  p   |  p   |  p   |  f|  f   |  f   |  f   |  f   |  f   |


Fl.
Cl.
Tpt.
Vib.
Cym.
Cym.
B. Dr.
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2

Change to C flute

K

Improv.
Fl.
Cl.
Tpt.
Vib.
Perc. 1
Cym.
Perc. 2
B. Dr.
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

Tamb.

mf < f

mp

P sub.

P sub.

P sub.
Stage Setting Plans
Prelude

vla = Viola

P = Percussion (vibraphone)
I

Afl = Alto flute
Bcl = Bass clarinet
vla = Viola
vc = Violoncello
P1; P2 = Percussion
Ctr = Conductor
P = Percussion (Drums)
Tpt = Trumpet (off stage)
fl = Flute
Bcl = Bass clarinet
vla = Viola
vc = Violoncello
Tpt = Trumpet (off stage)
Ctr = Conductor
IV

Cb = Contrabass

P = Percussion
fl = Flute
cl = clarinet
Tpt = Trumpet
vla = Viola
vc = Violoncello
cb = Contrabass
P1; P2 = Percussion
Ctr = Conductor