

The Sydney Morning Herald

Entertainment

AustraLYSIS concert combines text with algorithms

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AustraLYSIS

★★★★½

Conservatorium Recital Hall East, November 9

Reviewed by Peter McCallum

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This was a concert of new musical possibilities, using text, metaphor, live performance and computer algorithms, the latter written in some cases while the piece was being composed and in some cases live on stage before our very eyes.

In *Weaving the Rugs*, by Roger Dean computer algorithms generated a piano sound, using traditional tuning, and then bell sounds, using microtones. at the same time, trumpeter Phil Slater improvised a solo that blended with the changed tuning systems, producing subtly nuanced shades.

The next piece was Iannis Xenakis' 1957 piece for electronic tape, *Diamorphoses*. Using much more primitive, pre-digital technology, Xenakis contrasts focused foreground sonic gestures against a sweeping distant background, as though travelling through vast space.

Bird Migrants, by Hazel Smith and Roger Dean, added computer-generated images that fragmented the lines of a poem by Smith, *The Great Egret*. The poem was inspired by the

wedding of a couple who were divided by a river.

The fragmentation reorganised poetic metaphors through re juxtaposition, fracturing some meanings and creating others. This idea was explored in greater detail in *Metaphorics 2*, for voice and live coded sound, where text cut and pasted from the internet created surprising meanings and juxtapositions against a complex sonic background.

In *Replicant 2* by Greg White, saxophonist Sandy Evans played phrases with implacable intensity which were picked up and transformed by computer around a 3D space to create subtly unified textures.

In David Worrall and Udo Rink's *Corpo Real* delicate bursts of sound-generated visual efflorescence on a screen using an image language not unlike computer screen savers, but far more sophisticated.

Serial Meantimes by Andrew Milne and Roger Dean created a fascinating complex interaction of regular and irregular sonic patterns of textural virtuosity, while *Here and There* by Francis Dhomont created a magisterial procession of sonic shapes in three-dimensional sound.

The program ended with an affectionate tribute to jazz trumpeter Kenny Wheeler, by Slater and Dean with electronic backup. It started with a historic track by Wheeler, which mutated into a live solo by Slater, with Dean as piano accompanist.

It is a brave new world that hath such music in it.

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