I sleep, therefore I am
For Trio

Anton Lindström

Program Notes

I sleep, therefore I am, is based on four dreams that I have had at different times throughout my life. It attemps to showcase each of these dreams in four seperate movements, in a fashion similar to how I would describe the dreams if I were to talk to someone about them.

The name comes from the idea of "I think, therefore I am" of René Descartes; the idea that: we cannot doubt our existance whilst we doubt our existance; and the very idea that we can doubt the experiences of our own mind proves, atleast on an individual level, the existence of our own minds. To me, one of the most characteristic properties of a dream is the lack of doubt in the moment. No matter how absurd the setting or experience, in the moment I accept it as reality. Once awake however, questioning the contents of a dream and wondering how I could believe in what was happening in the dream and not question it in the moment is the standard reaction. This entire rabbit hole regarding the thought of the reality of dreams, is my dream world as real as the dream world; *after all, according to this idea, my thoughts are real despite only existing in my mind, in the same way that dreams only exist in my mind*, has been a constant thought throughout the entire composition process.

Machine World
Machine World is a recurring nightmare I had as a child and the main dream that led to me building this piece on this concept. The dream consists of me and other people, sometimes people I knew, sometimes complete strangers, sometimes few, sometimes entire masses of people, walking outside. Whilst walking the ground would gradually open up and we would fall down into the earth into an underground machine landscape. We would all land on a conveyor belt drawing us towards a large machine like mouth/grinder. As we got drawn closer and closer to it, the panic amongst the people would increase and then right before I finally got drawn into the mouth, I would wake up.

Neon Mountain
This dream consisted of a bright, pink, mountainous landscape. The sky was pink, the air was filled with bubbles and everything was bright like neon lights. These mountains had various shapes and sizes but one common feature between them was that the tendency to have escalators running up to the peak of the mountain and then various slides down and around the mountain. These slides would sometimes go straight down to the bottom but other times swirl around the mountains, in and out of tunnels, up and down; almost like a rollercoaster! Despite this luminous and bright landscape, it was almost completely void of people or life. Only containing me and a few people I know, having it all to ourselves - like the worlds largest and best playground!

Void
My entire time in this dream was spend in a complete and utter nothing. Not like an empty room, but just a complete emptyness. I don't remember it perfectly, but I'm not sure if I was even there myself and could see my body or hands, or if it was only this complete void. The only thing that existed were faint distant noises. Short bells and longer drone like textures. If I focused I could make out shapes and movements in the nothingness, in the same way that one can see subtle movements or shapes with their eyes closed. However, these movements were not entities or beings, but I would describe them as; imagine the variance in color and texture on a complete blue sky on a summer day. And then picture these variances and shifts as differences in a complete nothingness and the way you percieve it. *I think one of the most fascinating things about dreams are these experiences and things you discover that are more or less impossible to picture or describe in the real world.*

Shadow Dance
The most recent of the four dreams in terms of when I had it, Shadow Dance was another one of the main motivations behind writing this piece. In this dream I was much more of a spectator than a participant. What I saw in the dream was an uneven lightsource, not a fire, but the same sort of wavyness and life as one. Around this light were tall, slender shadowy figures. I couldn't make out any depth or texture of these figures, they were more like silhouettes, eerily dancing around this light. This was all accompanied by a subtle cacophony of wild, almost animal-like noises that would shift in and out of focus. I don't know whether these shadowy figures knew I was there, or if they even bothered to acknowledge me if they did. I'm not even sure if these silhouttes were in any way sentient, or if it was merely shadows of something non-sentient, similar to how you can mistake the trees for people when walking in a forest at night.

Performance Notes

General

The piece is split into four movements. These can be performed in any order and in any number. My suggested order is:
1. Machine World
2. Neon Mountain
3. Void
4. Shadow Dance
However this order may be changed around freely at the discretion of the performer.

All performers read from the score

Each movement should be played as attaca as possible after finishing the previous one, only having enough time between each one for a page turn and to find the new tempo.

Unless specified, everything should be played with an as steady pulse as possible.

A staff with two lines generally indicates movement between two different points, typically register if nothing else is specified, notated graphically.
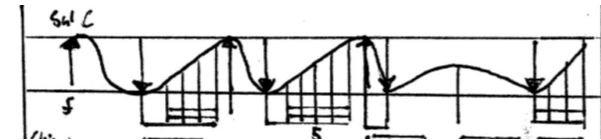
A "wiggly line" on a single line staff indicates a continuous action. This action can be both stable or unstable depending on the specified technique.
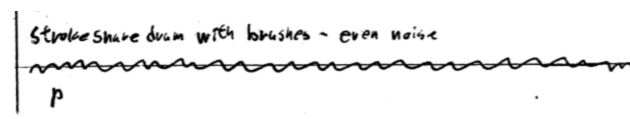
An arrow indicates gradual change over time from one technique to the other. These changes should always be performed as even as possible.
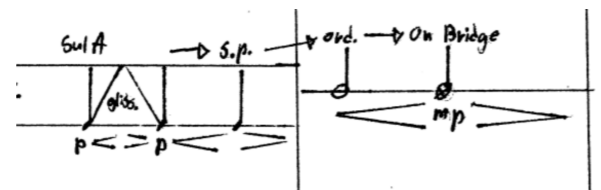
lr = let ring

Movement Specific

Machine World
The tutti graphic in the last system should not be interpreted literally, rather it should be seen as a graphic of how that section should be perceived. Starting out simpler to follow, with longer clear lines and by the end being wild and uncontrolled. At the very end of this section, it should be the loudest moment in the entire piece.

The entire system should be played as a large crescendo, and last long enough that the idea of increasing panic and density comes through clearly.

The end of the tutti system welcomes all manners of techniques, sounds and percussion instruments. Vocal sounds or other means of displaying panic and/or chaos are also welcome!

Neon Mountain
The "mountain-like" phrases should be played as together as possible. The changes do not only have to be pitch but can include darkest to brightest timbre, slowest to fastest of a technique such as a tremolo, or any other parameter at the discretion of the performer.
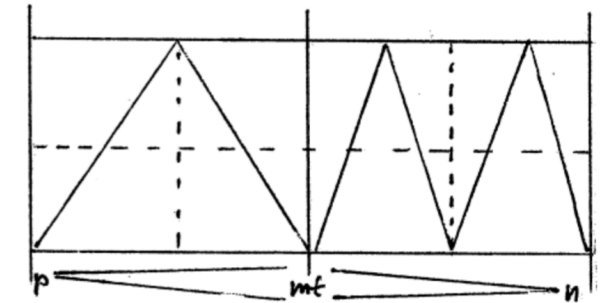
These sections also welcome all types of techniques, sounds and percussion instruments.

Void
Void has only one system with one large area for each musician with a timeline indicating when each action is to be performed. These action can either be one time occurences or continuous until the specified end time.
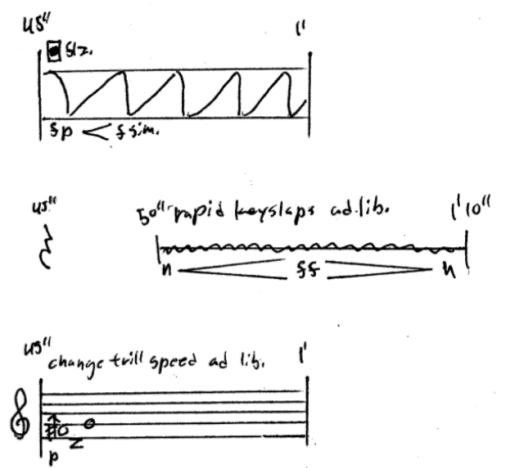
When multiple actions in the same instrument should happen simultaneously, the performer chooses one of them. Doing this means that certain paths can close and other paths open up. The next time a multiple choice action, the performer may of course choose any of those paths again.

Due to the nature of this movement, having some sort of clock is recommended.

Shadow Dance
Figures inside of a box followed by a large arrow means to repeat that box for as long as the line after the arrow extends. The seconds listed after a box are the approximate duration before the next action in another instrument should be performed. In this example, the cello should start repeating their box approximately 5-7" after the percussionist started with theirs.
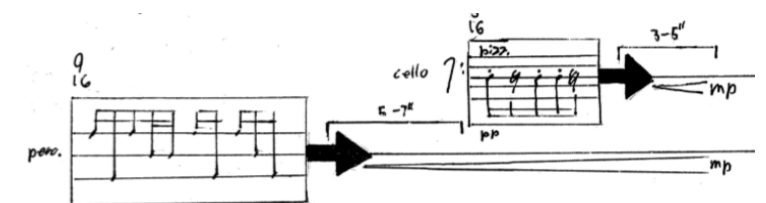
It is very important that throughout all of these sections, all musicians have the same clear pulse/tempo, they should always groove!

Instrument Specific

Flute
"Air" type effects means a tone with no pitch, only the blowing of air through the instrument. Unless specified, it refers to semi-stable, even sound. Changes in the pitch or timbre of the noise can be done either with the keys or purely with the embouchure.
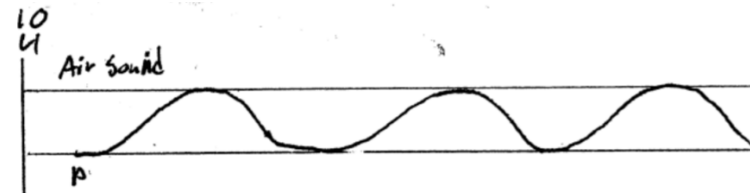
Neon Mountain and Shadow Dance may both be performed on a bass flute. In this case, they should be read as a transposing score with the sounding result being on octave lower than written.
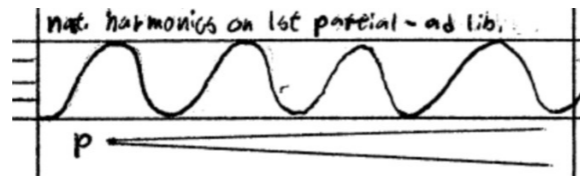
Cello
"Mute strings" refers to putting light pressure over the strings with the left hand to ensure no pitch will be produced when playing on them.
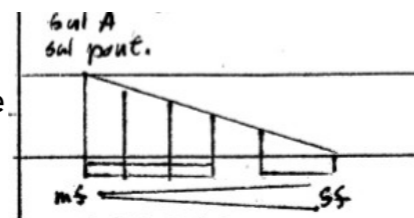

SP = Sul pont
RH = Right Hand

Harmonics on 1st partial means harmonics on the octave of the open strings as indicated by the figure.

On 2 line staves, notated rhythms refers to the rhythm of bowing whilst the left hand should move according to the indicated graphic.

Percussion
Instruments required:
2 Wood blocks (WB), with big difference in register
Snare Drum (SD), tuned low with medium decay
China Cymbal, 16" or more
Bass drum with pedal, (Kick) 18" or more with short-medium decay
3 congas
Singing bowl in G or as close as possible
Small handheld bell

Beaters:
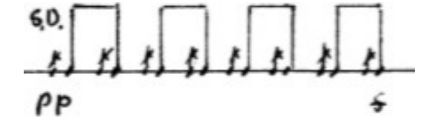Regular drumsticks
Very soft mallets
Brushes
"Singing bowl stick"
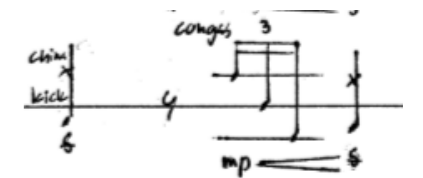Small metal rod or triangle beater
Bow

On a single line staff, kick is below the staff, snare is on the staff and china is above the staff.

Congas are always written on a staff with 3 lines.

Unless specified, congas, woodblocks, snare and china should be played with regular drum sticks.

Depending on the acoustic environment of the performance, slightly softer mallets than regular drum sticks, such as hard felt mallets, may be used as the primary beaters for the congas.

The singing bowl and small bell should be played with their appropriate beaters. In the case of the singing bowl, it should be made to resonate, not struck.

Other percussion instruments and/or beaters may be added freely to use during the graphical sections of Machine World and Neon Mountain.

Machine World

♩ ≈ 60

System 1

10/4 ... 4/4

Flute — Air Sound ... p ... *sim.* ... 5/4 ... add more overtones ord. ... *Air Sound* ... p <   > p ... pp

Cello — Sul C mute strings ... p ... *sim.* ... n ... Sul A → s.p. → ord. → On Bridge ... gliss. ... p <   > p ... mp

Perc. — Stroke Snare drum with brushes - even noise ... p ... *sim.* ... n

System 2

Very stable air sound non vib.

Flute — mp ... n

Cello — Sul C mute strings ... mp ... n

perc. — China w/bow ... p < ﬀ > n

tutti

Sounds should lack clear/defined pitches. (avoid playing clear scales/melodies as much as possible)

p ... mf ... n ... <ﬀ> <ﬀﬀ> < mp >

System 3

Rubato no pulse — Change playing techniques based on name of mountain (ad. lib. on unnamed mountains)

tutti

tremolo mountain ... mt. glissando ... The harsh spikes ... The very high mountain ... the three towers

p ... mp ... p < mf > pp < ﬀ > mf < ﬀﬀﬀ > p < ... < ﬀ > p < ﬀ > p < ﬀ > p >

System 4

A tempo (♩=60)

Flute+Cello — Smooth hill ... The Varying mountains ... pink hill
ﬀ ... p ... ﬀ ... p < ﬀ > p < ﬀ > p > n

10/4 Very stable air sound non vib.
Flute — pp < mf > n
Cello — Sul C mute strings ... pp < mf > n

perc. — Stroke Snare drum with brushes - even noise ... mf ... p < ﬀ > n

Void

Flute

45″ — Slz. — sp < ss sim. — 1′

1′35″ keyslaps only. "legato" gestures — sss — n — 2′

Slow wide vibrato (about one quarter tone in each direction) much fundamental - little to no overtones
10″ — 40″ — much fundamental - little to no overtones — p < mp — n

45″ — 50″ rapid keyslaps ad.lib. — n ss n — 1′10″

1′20″ non vib. — 1′20″ — pp

1′35″ bend end of each note down as much as possible. ad lib. note duration and rhythm. — mp — n — 2′

45″ change trill speed ad lib. — p — 1′

1′35″ air only, dark uneven noise — ss — n — 2′

0′ — 1′ — 2′

Cello

20″ pizz. trans pent. — mf — n — 30″

45″ Change strings ad lib. mute strings overpressure sul tasto — p — 1′

1′05″ 1 bow on bridge — mp — 1′40″

1′ Play nat. harmonics on 1st partial as legato as possible — pp < mp > pp — 1′30″

20″ rapidly tapping body of cello with RH fingers — pp dynamics ad lib. — 40″

45″ Change bow position and pressure ad lib. — mp — 55″ max overpressure

1′ Sul C mute strings — ord. — mf — p — mf — 1′30″

1′35″ — p — f — 1′45″

1′50″ on bridge — sp — n — 2′

45″ rub strings with palms of hands from bridge to nut — pp — sss — 1′05″

1′15″ Sul C mute strings — x

0′ — 1′ — 2′

Perc.

singing bowl — n — s — l.r. — 30″

40″ bell as bell rings out, spin arm around in big wide motion l.r. — mf — 1′

1′10″ rub drumstick against snare drum 1′30″ — fast — slow — s > p < ss > pp > ppp

1′35″ soft mallets — 1′40″ — 1′45″ — 1′50″ — sp — mf — n

2′ kick — ss

bell sim. — x — ss

1′10″ bell — 1′20″ — 1′30″ no movement of bell — mf — p — pp

Low W.B. — 1′38″ — p — mf

40″ congas with fingers tap rapidly ad lib. — pp — mp — 55″

1′10″ Singing Bowl l.r. — n — s — 1′20″

Shadow Dance