

Full Notes on Composition: co-de-re: a rhapsody of sound

co-de-re: A Rhapsody of Sound, was created in response to a compositional challenge posed by one of my friends. This work is a combination of both vernacular and avant-garde concepts, and represents a symbiosis between two seemingly opposing styles.

At a cursory glance, the material is modelled after a traditional sonata form. The music first begins with a vamp created by the drum set, electric bass and piano. Following a brief transitory passage, the exposition section is expounded with two principal subjects that are introduced. The first is introduced by the piano in a quasi-soloistic manner, while the second Broadway-inspired subject is presented after a brief modulatory bridge. Multiple jazz idioms, such as the use of extended harmonies, blue notes and brushes, are prominently employed.

The development is an experimentation of musical decomposition, which occurs in three phases. The first establishes the primary chord structures, aka the first four chords of the first subject, by extending it substantially. This is accompanied with a combined repetition of the first subject and the established riff, with randomised removal of notes. The second phase removes the melodic identity of these two materials by isolating the constituent pitches and linearising. These pitches are fixed to each instrument, and are manipulated like streams of sound masses. The third phase removes harmonic, rhythmic and timbral identity. Harmonic identity is degraded through the superimposition of these sound masses, which creates a tonally complex and dense sound. Rhythmic identity is disrupted in the polyrhythms and modular repetitions employed. Further timbral degradation is achieved through the gradual blur between sounds, culminating in a distorted electronic interpolation.

The recapitulation reestablishes the flow of the music, with the re-introduction and re-development of the second subject through similar means in the exposition. This is then followed by a brief coda section which then reintroduces the material in the opening bars of the work.