THE LOCATION OF LINES

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A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

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*The Location of Lines* is a nine-minute work for orchestra theoretically and structurally based on the wall murals of Sol LeWitt. The piece follows the standard orchestral arrangement, with three each: flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, trumpets, and trombones; four horns; one tuba; three percussion parts playing various instruments each; harp; piano; timpani; and strings in *divisi* throughout.

Using LeWitt’s work as inspiration, *The Location of Lines* explores ideas of perception, structure, and texture from a sonic perspective with musical elements, such as harmony, rhythm, and melody abstractly sonifying LeWitt’s technique. Taking LeWitt’s 1995 *Wall Drawing 797* as an example, *The Location of Lines* was written with a single initial melodic line that fluctuates across the mid-treble register on a horizontal plane (through time), yet is vertically (or harmonically) self-referencing. Background material in the piece supports the initial line by sustaining pitches for greater durations in various octaves, thereby further blurring harmonic movement of the material in the foreground, expanding the frequency content, establishing invariance relationships, and creating a rather seamless kaleidoscopic shifting of color. Further, this line, as well as the accompaniment, is exchanged and redistributed throughout the ensemble.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INSTRUMENTATION

Ensemble

3 Flutes
3 Oboes
2 Clarinets in B-flat
Bass Clarinet in B-flat
3 Bassoons

4 Horns
3 Trumpets in B-flat
3 Trombones
Tuba

Timpani
Percussion (3 Players)

Player 1
Glockenspiel
Vibraphone

Player 2
Tam-Tam
Suspended cymbal
Player 3

Triangle
Wind chimes
Orchestral chimes
Bass drum

Strings
PERFORMANCE NOTES

If necessary, wind and brass players should breathe when needed. However, re-entrances should not be articulated. Care should be taken that crescendos and decrescendos are smooth and avoid plateauing. There is no singular hierarchical element in the orchestration; each entrance should be smooth and clear, contributing to the collective texture.

**Piano**

The piano sustain pedal (aka damper, loud, or open pedal) is depressed throughout the entire piece and should not be lifted for any reason while playing. While it is not necessary for the pianist to keep the pedal depressed when not playing, the notes should decay completely before lifting. The following symbol is used in the score and part as a reminder about the sustain pedal’s continuity:

(\[\text{ pedal } \rightarrow \])

**Harp**

Harp pedaling is indicated using standard pedal notation in the harp part. In the score, pedal changes are notated but not reiterated. However, in the harp part, the pedal indications are reiterated at every rehearsal letter.

**Percussion**

*Pawing Technique* in the wind chimes indicates using hands and the tips of fingers to lightly strike the instrument, hitting groups of rods rather than strumming across the instrument. Additionally, the high/low notation indicates the extreme ranges of the instrument.

Percussion should always ring out (lv).

“Irregular” means a semi-random and uneven striking of the instruments and not an even roll.
This piece was inspired by the compositional techniques of painter Sol LeWitt (1928-2007). I was amazed at LeWitt’s early experiments in wall drawing that would become his legacy. In several of these pieces, LeWitt used fragile and delicate pencil lines to create a grand, yet understated, design that becomes integrated with the architecture of the space. In this way the art becomes an environmental, or ambient, element surrounding the viewer and encompassing their field of vision. In a similar way, I have attempted here to distribute a single monophonic line across the orchestra. This line is never stated singularly, but is self-reinforcing and unfolds into the orchestra creating a larger architecture. The soft, understated dynamics, blurred articulations, and kaleidoscopic harmonic language developed by this line is intended to parallel LeWitt’s techniques in a sonic environment. The sonification of space in *The Location of Lines* relates to the scale of LeWitt’s work; where in scale, visual art becomes a *temporal* art.
Lucid; like light in a haze \( \approx \) 66

For Orchestra

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