

Kurt Mortensen

Synergiosis I

For B \flat , Soprano Saxophone & Mallet Percussion

Full Score

Synergiosis I

Duration: ca. 9 minutes

First performance:
March 20, 2001
at Northern Illinois University
by:

Joren Cain: soprano saxophone
Anne Carmel: vibraphone, marimba

Second performance:
October 8, 2001
at the University of North Texas
by:

Joren Cain: soprano saxophone
Stephanie Carr: vibraphone, marimba

for more information about Kurt Mortensen's music visit:
<http://kurtmortensen.org>

The Synergiosis Series

Synergiosis: is the collective title of a group of planned chamber pieces written for unusual instrument combinations. At the present time, the goal is to complete a new *Synergiosis* work each year with the first beginning in 2000. The number of such compositions to be written is undetermined. The title is a fusion of the words synergy and symbiosis, which together reflect the intention of these pieces. Webster's Dictionary defines synergy as "combined action or operation" and symbiosis as "a cooperative relationship" between two dissimilar groups. The "bi" in symbiosis was purposefully left out of the title to allow for larger ensembles other than duos. The *Synergiosis* works are intended to be challenging compositions with virtuoso elements. There is a thematic line which will serve as the foundation for all the works in the series although it will be most evident in *Synergiosis I*. All will explore specific strict compositional procedures and be based around a specific tonal center.

Program Notes By The Composer

Synergiosis I (2000): The first in this series is a duo scored for soprano saxophone and mallet percussion. It was written specifically for Joren Cain, to coincide with his tenure at Northern Illinois University as a guest faculty member during the Spring 2001 semester.

The compositional techniques employed in this piece include mensuration canon, tonal pitch manipulation around the note C, thematic fragmentation reassembled into new musical lines, melodic variation and polymeter.

This work is built around three different thematic ideas: the opening gesture, the synergiosis theme and the axis melody.



opening gesture

The opening gesture comprises two measures with the second being an inversion of the first, reinforcing the C aeolian tonal center which is the focus of the piece. This is presented in several different tempos throughout the work giving it a different character in various contexts.



synergiosis theme

The synergiosis theme manifests itself in many guises throughout the piece. Initially only fragments of the theme appear which are used to reconstruct new melodic lines. The theme is first presented as a whole, but in augmentation, in the middle slow section. This is a four-part mensuration canon which is achieved by use of the damper pedal on the vibraphone, thus allowing the percussionist to play three of the voices.



axis melody

The axis melody does not show up until the last quarter of the piece. Essentially the notes which form this short two-measure theme work in equal intervals around the C pitch center. This concept of alternating intervallically around the note C plays an important role in this work even when the axis melody is not present.

There is also a contrasting minimalist section that is based around a marimba groove which begins in 5/4 time. After several repetitions, the percussion part becomes semi-polymetric as the left hand begins to play quarter note beats in 7/4 pitch groupings while the right hand maintains the 5/4 ostinato. The result is a specious 4/4 feel, which in actuality is more complex. The saxophone alternates between the repetitions of the 5/4 line and expansions of it which add another beat, thus 6/4, while fading in and out of the texture. Different canonic relationships result from this process. There is also a real 4/4 part which interrupts the polymetric groove.

There are several multi-meter sections based on fragments of the synergiosis theme which are played on either (depending on the section) the marimba or the vibraphone in unison with the saxophone. In a few measures the sax plays the retrograde of the percussion part and in one part they are in canon. The result is a contrast between precise synchronization and a deceptive chaos. This type of interplay is one example of the intention to musically represent the concept which the title of the work evokes.

Performance Notes

Saxophone:

All explanations are indicated in the score with a footnote, however one item needs further clarification. Ideally, circular breathing is preferred for the long repetitive pattern, beginning in m. 93. If needed, notes in parenthesis may be substituted for rests. If endurance becomes an issue, the saxophone may fade out anywhere after m. 106 and fade back in before m. 110 within the area specified by dotted bracket. This will allow the performer to take as long or as short as a rest as needed. The fades should be gradual though.

Percussion:

Mallets: Hard Yarn & Medium Yarn

Bow

Pedalings: half pedaling is indicated by a $\frac{1}{2}$. If nothing is listed, it can be assume that a full pedal is desired, although full pedal is often written in these areas. In some places, such as mm. 26-42 and mm. 158-173, there are no pedal markings. In these sections, the percussionist should use the pedal with discretion to prevent an overly clinkly sound, but the overall effect is to avoid any noticeable resonance.

C3 (i.e. one octave below middle C) is the lowest note on the marimba.

for Joren Cain
Synergiosis I
 for B \flat , Soprano Saxophone & Mallet Percussion

Kurt Mortensen
 2000

$\text{♩} = 140$ Floating free tempo

B \flat , Soprano Saxophone

Percussion

Vibraphone Hard Yarn Mallets

with bow

full pedal

1 2 3 4

$\text{♩} = 80$ fl. & timbre trill*

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

with mallets

with bow

with mallets

with bow

with mallets

f mp mf mp mf f mf f

5 6 7 8 9 10 11

fl. & timbre trill* 14

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

with bow

with mallets

f mf f

12 13 14 15 16 17

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

18 19 20 21

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

mf f mf f mf f

22 23 24 25

* = Flutter tongue and timbre trill using C \sharp key.
 Match intensity of bowed vibraphone

26 Forcefully

B \flat , Sop. Sax

Perc.

f

26 27 28

B \flat , Sop. Sax

Perc.

ff

29 30 31

B \flat , Sop. Sax

Perc.

32 33

B \flat , Sop. Sax

Perc.

34 35

B \flat , Sop. Sax

Perc.

36 37

B \flat , Sop. Sax

Perc.

38 39

B \flat , Sop. Sax

Perc.

mf sub. *f*

40 41

B \flat , Sop. Sax

Perc.

43 **senza vibrato** ^

mf *p*

Switch to Medium Yarn Mallets

mf *mp* *p* full pedal

42 43 44 45 46 47

B \flat , Sop. Sax

Perc.

48 49 50 51 52 53

B \flat , Sop. Sax

Perc.

add vibrato 58

mf

54 55 56 57 58 59

^ = very little vibrato is fine as an alternative

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

60 61 62 63 64 65

accel.

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

66 67 68 69 70 71

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

$\text{♩} = 110$

72 73 74 75 76 77

mp *f*

Long

78

f *mp* *mf* *f*

Long

B, Sop. Sax

Marimba Medium Yarn Mallets

Perc.

78 79 80

f

mf

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

81 82 83 84

B, Sop. Sax

85 86 87 88

B, Sop. Sax

89 90 91 92

B, Sop. Sax

93

pp

93 94 95 96

B, Sop. Sax

f

97 98 99 100

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

101 102 103 104

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

105 106 107 108

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

109 110 111 112

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

113 114 115

(♪) = Notes in parentheses are optional if breathes are needed
 □ = Optional fade out/in anywhere between measures mm.106 and 110 if rest is needed

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

mp sub.

116 117 118

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

mf

f

119 120 121 122

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

123 124 125

125

f

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

mp

mp

126 127 128

B, Sop. Sax

mf

Perc.

f

129 130 131

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

132 133 134

135 $\text{♩} = 140$

B, Sop. Sax

f

Perc.

f

135 136

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

137 138 139

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

140 141 142 143

mp

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

144 145 146

f

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

147 148 149

mp *mf* *f*

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

150 151 152

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

153 154 155

156 ♩ = 100

B, Sop. Sax

p *mf* *mp*

Perc. **Vibraphone** Medium Yarn Mallets

p *mp* *mf* *mp*

156 157 158 159

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

160 161 162 163 164

Forcefully

B, Sop. Sax

f

Perc.

f

165 166 167 168

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

169 170 171 172

174 **senza vibrato**

B, Sop. Sax

p

Perc.

$\frac{1}{2}$ *mf*

173 174 175 176 177

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

178 179 180 181 182 183 184

mp

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

185 186 187 188 189 190 191

mf *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *f*

add vibrato //

f //

192 ♩ = 140

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

192 193 194

f

Hard Yarn Mallets (preferred)

f

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

195 196 197

B, Sop. Sax

Perc.

198 199 200

for more information about Kurt Mortensen's music visit:
<http://www.kurtmortensen.org>