

Richard Felciano

RESPONSORY

for male voice and live electronics

for Richard Crocker

Responsory

for solo male voice and live electronics

Program Note

Based on the plainsong Gradual for the Mass of Christmas Day, **Responsory** is set up in such a way that the singer sings only the original chant (and from the original neumatic notation). While there are no new pitches, individual contours are isolated through pauses and sometimes repetitions, in order to form the appropriate "contrapuntal" interaction with the processed sound, which is itself derived solely from the singer's voice. The composition of the work consisted in designing processes whose character would evolve to a conclusive end, not simply a momentary interaction with each plainsong gesture. Such a creative approach bears much in common with that of painters like Jackson Pollack, where much depends upon the artist's ability to select from available data that which will interact effectively with the frame -- or, in this instance, the processing. Of course, Pollack created the data with the painting in mind, as I created the processing with the chant in mind. The nature of that processing owes not a small amount to my fascination with the ideas of my distinguished colleague, Richard Crocker, regarding the Responsories of the monastic office -- specifically those ideas concerning "the whole diatonic pitch set . . . potentially sounding, before, around, and beyond any particular pitch that is sung," to quote him directly, and that "this pitch set is tuned, with all pitches in as many relationships of maximum resonance as possible. In practical terms this means perfect fifths and fourths above and below." -- from my standpoint, not only an accurate estimation of the self-reinforcing properties of these intervals, but one which yields (appropriately?) the bell-like combination tones which emerge toward the end.

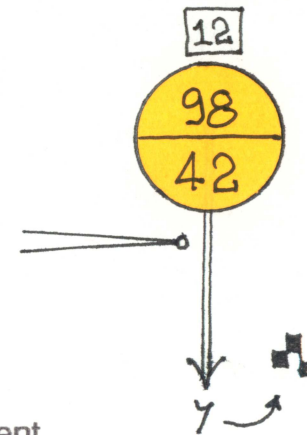
While a student in France, I once lived three weeks in a Benedictine monastery to study such music, and I have probably incorporated something of the extraordinary variety of distance and proximity cues which seemed to resonate from every room's stone walls and floors. In the interaction between the singer and the processed version of his own voice, the word "responsory" takes on a new meaning, though one, I hope, which is not insensitive to its origins. My thanks to David Wessel and Guy Garnett of CNMAT for constant readiness to help with the electronics and to Richard Crocker for his encouragement.

Performance instructions

Pauses

- ’ breath (brief, but not hurried)
- ∨ longer pause, length ad libitum
- 2" ∨ 2 second pause

A program change circle with a double-line arrow:
do not go on until processed sound fades out;
then change the program immediately [7] →
and begin the immediate singing of the next fragment.



Sustained Notes

- lengthen or stress a note
- ⌒ lengthen for a longer time
- 4" ⌒ 4" sustain suggested, not mandatory

General

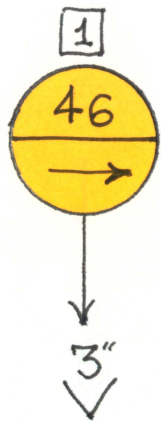
a tempo = move with dispatch; move along

 = fades to zero (silence)

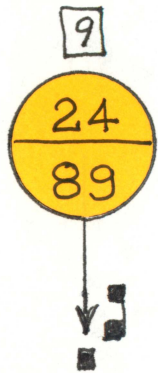
Program Symbols

Program changes are indicated in circles and are activated by computer or other external device. The circle is divided horizontally, the upper figure the program number for the SPX I and the lower for SPX II. The current step in the program sequence is indicated in a small box above the circle.

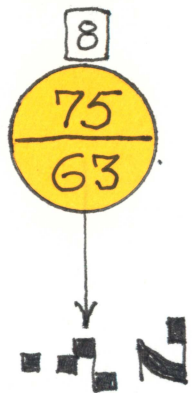
Program change circles with *single-line arrows*:



advance program during voice pause (processed sound may continue during advance)



advance program on first note of phrase

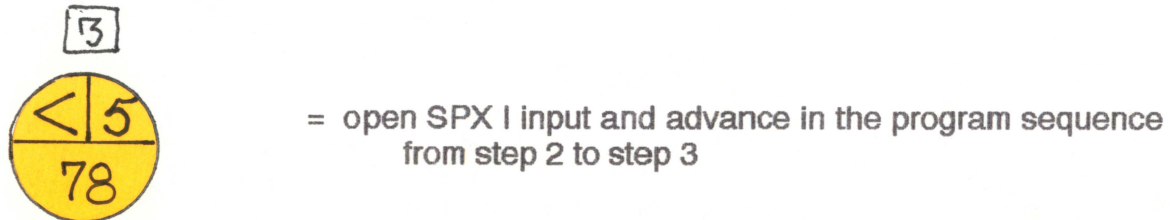
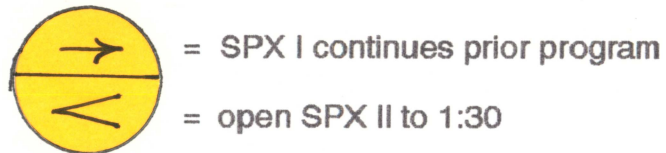
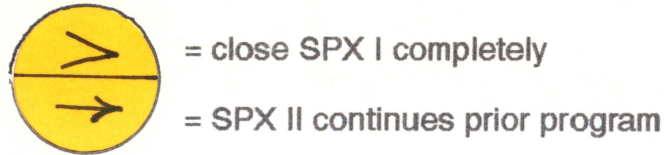


advance program during phrase -- at or near indicated note

Program advances which must be accomplished in 1/2" silence (no processing or singing) are indicated by *double-line arrows* (see above under **Pauses**); in these places, it is important that the singer not continue until cued, indicating that the program has been advanced.

INPUT controls

Instructions to open or close the input potentiometers of the two SPX's are given in circles which may not have program sequence boxes above them. The input pots of the two units, set normally at 1:30 or 2:00 o'clock, are manipulated by hand.



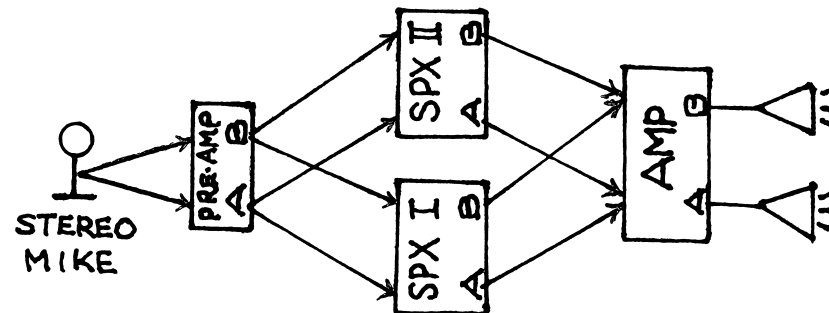
When necessary (*double-line arrows*), the person operating the control equipment cues the singer to indicate that the program has been advanced, indicating that the singer is free to continue.

Singer

The general style of performance should conform to that of the original chant, with a sense of freedom and fluidity, and a "new life" injected into the beginning of each phrase, softening toward the phrase's end. Pitches with fermate are held as indicated, but subsequent pitches move immediately in the normal manner. In a few places, dynamic indications are suggested, largely as a means better to exploit the processing.

Technician

The equipment is set up so that the SPX I & SPX II process sound independently and in parallel with each other. No serial processing (the output of one SPX going to the input of the other) is used. The goal is the differentiation between two modes of simultaneous processing and the psychological differences generated by distance and proximity cues.



Software

A disk is supplied containing the control program, written in MAX, an object-oriented programming language (not supplied) for MIDI and multimedia originally conceived by Miller Puckette at IRCAM and further developed and marketed by Opcode. Also included on the disk are two MAX table objects controlling the sequence of program changes, one for each SPX 1000, and bulk dumps of memory settings and their program assignments on the two SPX units. Bulk dump data can be accessed via the Opcode DX-7 Editor librarian (not supplied).

Before the performance begins, pre-record the following, using the Freeze 1 program with overdub [SPX II, memory 98]. Transpose the written pitches to those you will actually sing in the live performance.

STEP #

1 RECORD

2 OVER-DUB

3 OVER-DUB

4 OVER-DUB

5 OVER-DUB

For recording this passage, increase SPX II input level to 3 o'clock or higher to get optimum recording level, then drop level to 1:30 or 2 o'clock for performance.

Rhythms should be free and natural, not lined up precisely as the score would seem to indicate, though the latter does give a loose approximation of how they should dove-tail. Take care to let go of each of the final notes lightly.

* avoid consonant as final sound of sample, which should be that of a pitched vowel, diminuendo.

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SPX I: 45
SPX II: 98

initial setting

0

1

2

mp TRG

WAIT 5" AFTER SAMPLE

5" 5" 2" 5" 7"

Grad. 5. V

Iderunt [background mp] mf 6- mf mnes * fines tér- rae sa-

mf

slightly emphasize and sustain circled notes so that they remain prominent in the processing

3

4

5

6

7

8

51/49

91/23

95

71

47

48/58

with dispatch

Hold fermata notes about 1 1/2". Move the others quickly. 2" 2" 2"

Move, don't sustain 5"

processing fades to silence

[PAN]

[MULT. PAN]

[CHORUS]

[5"] long

mf non dim

lu-tá-re

Dé- i nóstri :

mf jubi-lá-te (mf) jubi-lá-te (mf) jubi-lá-te (mf) jubi-lá-te

sustain final note, so voices catch up

segue

↑ EACH "JUBILATE" IDENTICALLY SUNG, LIKE A CALL AWAITING A RESPONSE, THE FINAL ONE SUSTAINED A LONG TIME

Blend with background.
Sustain final note 2"-3"
to allow bell-like sonority
to form.

gently, but
a tempo

SOTTO VOCE UNTIL [10] →

↓ DON'T RUSH: LET BACKGROUND BE
HEARD BETWEEN SONG PHRASES

segue
subito
p

[2"] [2"-3"] 3" distant [2"-3"] 3" [2"-3"] 4" [2"-3"] 5" [2"-3"] 4" = 120 2" 2"

Dé- o 6- mni is tér-ra. (pp) a. mf a

pp! sustain a until processed voices
complete their motion

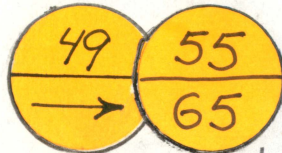
PROCESSING
FADES OUT DURING
THIS PHRASE

THE NEXT 3 ENTRIES
REGULARLY PACED.

on
voice
entry

[9]

[10]



suddenly
louder,
forthrightly

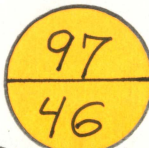
ADJUST LEVELS
SO LIVE &
PROCESSED VOICES
ARE EQUALLY
LOUD

[11]



processing:
bell-like
hum tone

[12]



[LOWER II INPUT LEVEL SO CHORUS DOES NOT COVER SOLO VOICE ON I]

Move the microphone away slightly and sing gently. The processing will respond with great sensitivity to the slightest inflection or dynamic change of your voice; treat it as an extension thereof. Soften and sustain the ends of phrases so that you form a soft choral background for the emerging solo voice. Allow the emerging solo voice alone to nearly complete each phrase. With a small overlap, you then begin the next phrase. This is the general goal but most importantly, an *ad libitum* feeling must be preserved.

ATTACK GENTLY
THEN →, SUSTAIN
LAST NOTE 3"
DIM. TO
NOTHING

WAIT FOR
PROCESSED
DIMINUENDO TO
CONCLUDE THE
FIRST SECTION.
WHEN IT FADES
TO COMPLETE
SILENCE,
PAUSE 1"
THEN GO ON,
SOTTO VOCE

a tempo V. Nó-tum fé-cit Dó- 6- 6-

pp! begin after silence, very softly!
slower, as though the beginning of a new section

[1"]

SUSTAIN UNTIL AFTER PROCESSED VOICES HAVE STOPPED MOVING

6 mi-nus

RETURN II TO NORMAL SETTING

13

44

14

23

solo [intone]

sa-lu-tá-re sú-um :

mf! - louder and forth rightly

FOR SUSTAINED SOUND INCREASE I TO 4 o'clock THEN RETURN TO NORMAL DURING FRAGMENT

15

41 / 60

16

69

quickly, enunciate

float 5"

DON'T RUSH: WAIT, LISTEN

ante conspéctum

clear, accurate PITCHES important here, as they will be trapped by the processing

ON TOP NOTE, OPEN I TO FULL FOR 2" THEN CLOSE COMPLETELY, SO AS NOT TO TRAP SUBSEQUENT PITCHES:

17

47

LET PROCESSED BACKGROUND BE HEARD CONSTANTLY, BOTH BETWEEN and BEHIND VOCAL FRAGMENTS

DON'T RUSH LISTEN

3" 5" 3"

gén-ti-um re-ve-lá-vit*

SUSTAIN TOP NOTE 3" UNTIL VOICES CATCH UP, THEN CONNECT TO REST OF WORD WITHOUT BREAK.

18

80

BETWEEN PHRASES

6" 4" 5"

justi-ti-am sú-am. a

mp

OPEN I TO 12 o'clock

[am]

evenly, very slowly

[$\downarrow=40$]

19

20

21

22

TRIGGERS FADE

48/81

88

89

49

am.

am.

am.

am.

sustain one beat after echo occurs in processing.

Keep a regular alternation, and constant dynamic, like a tolling bell.

San Francisco
12/91
ca. 7'

NON RALLENTANDO E NON DIMINUENDO