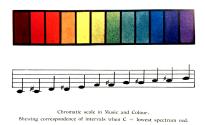# Skybells

Video and Sound using samples from Berkeley's Sather Bells
Steven Trimmer
2014
http://vimeo.com/105148312 (please select HD option)
www.theleapyear.com

Chromatic scale in Music and Colour.
Shewing correspondence of intervals when C = lowest spectrum red.

For this piece I was interested in creating a conversation between two already existing songs of faith. I asked two close friends to each choose a song that would be representative of their spiritual tradition. The songs chosen were the Jewish "Oseh Shalom" and the Muslim "Tala' Al Badru 'Alaina." I randomly chose 4 bar sections of each song and transcribed the notes from these selected patterns onto five concentric circles, keeping the source songs separate. By setting these circular scores moving in contrary directions over one another and video compositing the overlapping notes I was able to devise a new piece of music. Only the notes that overlap between scores are sounded. The resulting video is representative of a dialogue between beliefs; a hymn to conversation. The piece is played here on Berkeley's Sather Bells. Samples of the bells were also turned into a granular synthesizer patch, which plays the low phrase on this recording.

I hope to project this video onto the Campanile Sather Tower while the bell piece is performed live. I would like to extend the duration of the piece to work in songs of faith from many different traditions. I would very much enjoy the challenge of staging a collaboration with live players responding to a generative video score lasting an entire evening. Each player would be responsible for a handful of notes and would watch for the corresponding colors to glow. Seeing complex relationships visualized and attentively reacting to changes requires a sustained concentration quite different than the quickly shifting attention increasingly demanded of us. Would this meditative gaze resonate through the audience and passerby? One video could be projected onto the tower while the bell players watch the same score unfold on a monitor, thus keeping everything in sync. Auxiliary players outside (horns, strings) could react to the projection onto the tower. It would be wonderful to have the live audio effecting the coloration and hue of the projected video background as well. This could be achieved using VDMX or MaxMSP software, and would provide a uniquely dreamlike synesthetic experience. Such experiences can loosen us from our seemingly reasonable state of mind and make us more receptive to wonder, conversation, laughter, and play. The staging of this piece would also provide a wonderful opportunity for collaboration between digital media arts and the classical music community. We would all learn and benefit from such a collaboration! I have a handful of players from Santa Cruz New Music Works and UCSC DANM who would be interested in helping to stage an evening performance along with anyone from Berkeley who would like to participate after a brief introduction to the concept.

The initial inspiration for this work came from the traditional Japanese song, "A Bell Ringing In The Empty Sky" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=61Jh4tllxE4) and A. Wallace Rimington's book of "Color Music" (an image from which tops this page : https://archive.org/details/colouartof00rimi). This video was made in a spirit of peace and loving conversation. All pictures of the sky and of clouds were taken while traveling cross country in August of 2014. I'm currently a graduate student in the Digital Art New Media department at UC Santa Cruz.
Audio @ :
soundcloud.com/steventrimmer/skybells

Steven Trimmer
UCSC DANM Mechatronics MFA Student
(386) 490 3328
September 1st, 2014