

Composer Dimitri Voudouris
Work title NPFAl .1
Composed 2002
Duration 16min46sec

NPFAl. 1 – New Possibilities for African Instruments. is an electro-acoustic composition for kundi and m'bira with computer assisted processing.

Kalimba or m'bira is a finger piano made of wood and metal strips used in ceremonial music. In Western Africa this instrument is known as m'bira and in Eastern Africa it is used by the Shona of Zimbabwe who calls it kalimba. The kundi a bowed harp is a ceremonial instrument originating from the Mangbetu tribe of the Congo.

My main goal in constructing this work was to create extensive percussive and organic environments whilst using the sounds of each of the two instruments so that their acoustic physiology could comfortably stand alongside the electronic sound processing generated by the computer. The natures of percussive sounds and organic environments created were from frequencies generated by the decomposition of the original sound source in the process of obtaining continuous sounds out of discontinued one's as there is a logarithmic relationship between the increase in density and perception. The sound field below consists of 15 processed layers each layer varying slightly in magnitude. Each layer was individually manipulated until a point of change was noticed thus increasing the magnitude of the sound field 225 times in total, however the way the final result is perceived is a change of one. Change in timbre played a very important role; each tone had a duration of 60ms or longer with a 4db change in the mid or high harmonics and 10db change in the lower harmonics

In NPFAl.1 working with each individual layer gave me a better control in the change of sound characteristics as some sound phenomena changed, disappeared, as new sounds surfaced creating new possibilities.

The graphic diagram below is as a result of fusing 15 graphic sketches from each of the sound layers of the score at a given time. The work reflects my interest in creating, the open intersection of multiples bringing together the African instrument which is an extension of both the African inhabitant and the African environment.

NPFAl.1 sound field construction



5min30sec

7min45sec