

Program note:

Shaken Out was written in the spring of 2010 and was premièred by *El Perro Andaluz* (Dresden) in Oslo on December 13th 2010. The piece was inspired by the following quotation from Aldous Huxley's *The Doors of Perception* (1954):

To be shaken out of the ruts of ordinary perception, to be shown the inner world, not as they appear to an animal obsessed with survival or to a human being obsessed with words and notions, but as they are apprehended, directly and unconditionally, by Mind at Large.

Shaken Out is constructed from 4 bars of material. These bars are repeated 55 times back to back and constitute the piece in its entirety. However, for each repetition I have allowed myself to leave out any number of notes from the full cell; in a sense they are *Shaken Out* and we are *shown the inner world*. The extreme versions of the cell are exposed at the opening of the piece, with two cycles of a full exposition and two with all of the notes taken out (tacet for the duration). The following 51 iterations move between the worlds of complete silence, solo passages and dense iterations. In addition I have created a pointillistic iteration of the cell to contrast the complexity of the initial material.

I have employed the structural model above, in order to explore the possibility of a creating a musical structure based on the psychological model of *working memory*. The fundamental principle is that the listener is gradually made aware of the revisiting of the material as the piece transpires. I am fascinated by the notion that the same music can seem formless to some, whilst at the same time appearing naturally structured to others. This can be explained by the human mind's constant search for structure. We try to connect all the streams of impulses into a coherent whole, in the way it makes sense to us; different people simply have different frameworks of reference

Phenomenologically speaking, the notion of surprise is an essential component of a stimulating experience. Regardless of people's individual frameworks of reference, if we impose a semblance of structure, we can take it away with amplified effect. As the collective congregation of people waiting for a train turn to the sound of it approaching, a familiar musical landscape imposes expectation upon a musical experience. This allows us to exploit their expectation and elicit surprise, by allowing the train to approach us from the opposite direction.