

***Beatitudes* for fixed electronic media**

I. Beatitudes; Poor, Sick, Lonely, Homeless, Hungry

II. What... No Cheese?

III. Peace, Happiness, Joy

I.

Beatitudes opens with the same sound file as *Suffer* (Project 8). The way in which this piece develops, however, is different. The filter (made in image filter) includes a high pass filter with a narrow bandwidth that progressively gets lower (quite evident in the resultant sound file). A variation on that filter is used for the second file (not heard in *Suffer*). The first filter is heard again, but split left and right and offset in time. A second variation enters, and it has more pitch and stereo diffusion. After it dies out, a third variation (which is closely related to the second) is then played. The unaltered sound file (which is a spectrum synth stretching of a single syllable) sneaks in. A rendering of the “curved” note is heard, and a loop created from it (which is also used in *Suffer*) gives an ostinato. The clip “for today is” reveals the source of the curved note, and gives a nice unison to the ostinato. It grows into “text for today is.” It grows further into the full sample, “our gospel text for today is commonly referred to as beatitudes.” On the word “beatitudes,” the drone drops out. The major differences between this opening and the opening of *Suffer* is the additive process to the sample, it more distinctly uses the curved note, and the length: this an introduction to a multi-movement work, not just a 2:30 etude.

The second half of the first movement uses the word “Matthew” for a bass ostinato. In *Suffer*, the word “Matthew” was used in the same way as the opening. Rather than staying in the middle register, this section explores the low and upper registers of the frequency spectrum. I break up “the world is full of the poor...” into smaller sections. Using image synth, I took those words, and ran them through grain, stereo echo, etc.

I slowed down one of the bass notes using spectrum synth, and then reshaped it using the volume effect to give a swell effect (as if a double bass were doing a crescendo).

I used grain to create a rhythm first in the high texture, then in the bass line.

The word “Matthew” enters unaltered, and back in the mix. Because of its unaltered state, it’s quite obvious. It is not repeated immediately, but the bass notes do, so it becomes clear to the listener that the bass note was derived from the word. Once that is revealed, the final phrase begins.

The final phrase uses the whole statement with of its versions at the same time: since some are long than the others, it is a reverse pyramid effect. The ending repeats “the homeless, the hungry” (in a simple, trite way) only to set up movement II: “*What... No Cheese?*” I made a filter that slowly narrows the bandwidth. At the end I colored in some red, but blurred it with yellow so it moves off to the left ear, but not

all the way, say a 50% to a left placement in the stereo image. A touch of reverb was added to give it a little life.

When it switches to the single voice, the bass notes return one last time, but this time the first one is solo, and the second is doubled by the unaltered “Matthew.”

II. What... No Cheese?

The second movement begins with the “What, no cheese?” sample through two effects, then mixed 50%, and then using the Grain effect, stretched out and reverberated. Next, a drone that was created with a single vocal sound that was ran through a resonator, and then analyzed through spectrum synth, and then electronically regenerated using spectrum synth. This way, there are small derviations in the drone, rather than a single resonating drone. Using a resonator, I added a “C” to the text “there were no food pantries in the area” to match the drone. From that sample, I took “no food,” and slowed it down with spectrum synth to create the sound of a starving individual. It is then repeated louder and with the early reflections effect in the montage room.

I used the resonator for “So our parsonage...” to create a Csus chord. It added low and frequencies to the original sound file is very much in the mid-range. I kept the amount % low enough that the text is still audible. I added a similar chord to “when the doorbell would ring...” but with a very low amount % so the text is very clear. It is in the left speaker, but on the right speaker is a very unclear resonator sounding a low C. I had to balance clarity with creating a wider frequency range in the piece.

I used the image synth to expand the frequency range on “On this one particular day...”, but mixed it with the original file so the text is still clear. I copied the image into the high register and put it in the right speaker, and copied the image into the low register and put it in the left speaker. “Ham sandwich” sets off a dissonant chord to enhance the suspense. This sound is actually the image synth playing back a spectral analysis of the opening “what no cheese” that had already been altered using 3 effects. It was reshaped vertically to include lower and higher frequencies.

The story continues, and the “punchline” enters. This is the “defining moment” or “climax” of the movement. 5 voices simultaneously say “what... no cheese,” each with different effects. The word “hungry” (which was slowed down) picks up the rhythm of the grain effect by using the pulse effect on the image synth (which gives a chordal character). I used semitones in all Image Synth for this movement, giving it a tonal character.

Other tonal references are heard between “hungry.” The “parsonage” passage is stretched and given pitch with the spectrum synth. It takes the place of the drone, which also makes this moment structural. Some frames are held longer to have variation in harmonic rhythm. It picks up to the original speed at “poor, the hungry, the homeless...” which is matched up to the unaltered sound file. The word

“hungry” is heard twice more, and the spectrum synth slowly fades out. It is interrupted by “What?” with a very long reverb that fades out with it. This is the time to reflect on the homeless.

III. Peace, Happiness, Joy

The third and final movement begins with a melody in F Mixolydian. If you read ahead without listening first, it will ruin the surprise, but here it goes. I took the sample of a prayer that my father used to read at the dinner table when he was a kid. It is what he used to close his sermon. I transposed the pitch by two octaves, but kept the tempo the same (this version of the sound files is heard at 3:20). This way, I created a rhythm based precisely on the original recording. I took that file and used resonator to sound “F.” I repeated the process for Db, B, and A. I used the harmonize effect and drew in a melody, and then applied the same transposition map to all keys.

The next sound heard is the same melody truncated (to end on “A”), and with an F pedal. Here, a resonator is used along with the rendered F melody. The third sound has a counterpoint: I used harmonizer to draw in the counterpoint line. This was rendered for all keys previously mentioned. A second counterpoint is used in the fourth sound, plus a third voice on a pedal “F.”

Other reiterations follow, giving a little more complexity to the counterpoint.

At 1:01 the texture and register switch abruptly (I used only alto and treble range pitches to represent that the prayer was originally said by a child). A retrograde of the prayer rhythm is mixed with a low “C.” Splashes of C7 (in just intonation) are based on the spectral analysis of the word “Peace,” which, at the end of the phrase, is heard unaltered along with the C7 chord.

The third section (1:15) is based on the first, with the theme and 1st counterpoint in Db, a deceptive cadence. A Bb bass line and theme enter in rhythmic augmentation (200%).

The fourth section (1:31) is also in Bb, and a rhythmic use of the spectrum synth creates a blanket for splashes of Bb9 (also in just intonation). The word “happiness” slowly becomes audible, but even the final iteration is not as clear as “peace.”

The fifth section (1:58) is also based on the first, this time in Gb. I have always liked a falling thirds progression from bVI-IV-bII for a tonal scheme. It is as if the bII is a tritone substitute for V, and the previous tonal areas lead to. The theme enters in Bb, and then in “F” and “A”: bitonal. The theme is heard again in “F” and “A” simultaneously, but in inversion.

The sixth section (2:25) interrupts the theme and stretches the word “Joy.” Here, I wanted to bring out the bending of a half step. One can hear the beating of the pitch. The word “Joy” is repeated also. The listener may expect a third “Joy” at around 2:42 (I know I do when I listen back), but it is not given—possibly, it is implied. Empty space is experienced above the stretched “Joy” for several seconds...

The seventh section (2:49) is the final recapitulation of the main theme, and serves as Coda to the entire composition (explaining its length in comparison to the other six sections). Slowly, there is a transformation of the main theme to the

spoken text. The text is not ultimately clear until the very end of the piece. The theme is played along with the text, so the listener discovers that the melody is based on the rhythm of the prayer.

Form: A-B-A-C-A-D-A, where B, C and D each play with a single word.

On the whole, the piece extracts what I felt was the vital text to retain the meaning of the sermon. Over the course of the whole work, it progresses from textural to tonal. The second movement acts as a bridge in these respects.