GREEN SKIES.... MOMENTS

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ABSTRACT

Green Skies.... Moments is a series of experimental 8 minute films for the Federation Square Big Screen. It will be created over a period of 10 months within a calendar year. It is designed to interpret the changes that occur in a public space over a year, focussing on changes in use, environment, and inhabitants, documented through film, as audio-visual works. Five outcomes are intended for each month: sonic/musical responses to the film, and an audio-visual interpretation of the film by each artist, and a collaborative interpretation that amalgamates the outcomes to create a third.

This paper discusses the individual and collaborative processes used by each artist to create the works. First it details the processes used in creating *Green Skies* ... *Moments*; then the individual approaches each artist takes to creating each work, and finally how the artist integrate those approaches in developing the final collaborative works. A short demonstration of works so far will be shown.

1 INTRODUCTION

Burke and Alsop have worked together on a number of interactive audio-visual works, and each has a strong history of individually creating such works. Burke's focus is on integrating musical ideas with a combination of different media, as an exploration of her artistic process. Her activities include: performance, composition, improvisation, installation, collaborations with dancers, acoustic performers and other new media performers, print making, pen and ink drawings, painting and digital animation, and she brings these together under the umbrella of polymedia.

Alsop works across a variety of art forms, with a focus on mapping as a creative approach, interactivity, and cross-media in creating works in which all of the elements in use or expressed are interdependent. He too has worked in dance, installation art, algorithmic composition, and collaborative art, and has also worked with communities in creating artworks and in documenting aspects of different communities.

The provocation behind *Green Skies* ... *Moments* was an invitation to Bourke to create a series of works for the Federation Square Big Screen, she then invited Alsop to be part of the developmental process and it was decided that taking a multifaceted approach would best represent each artist and their particular approach. The decision to create a final collaborative work each month that results from the individual works by each artist indicates the collaborative, community oriented nature of the Square itself, and this is what will be handed to Federation Square to be presented on the big screen.

2 INTENTIONS

The process for developing *Green Skies* ... *Moments* has five steps. The first step is for Alsop and Burke to film the environment of Federation Square. Here the focus will be on natural events. The intention is to represent the effect of how changes in the natural elements will create a visual score and provide a sonic narrative over the time in which *Green Skies* ... *Moments* is being created. The artists will then select from the films taken to create the various works. These need not be the same films, and it is possible for each artist to use a different film as a visual score and as the basis for inspiration for the audiovisual works developed from the selected film. The final work will be developed collaboratively from the resulting individual works, and the parameters of the collaboration will be decided on a work-by-work basis.

The visual images will be used to create a score which may be interpreted through any sound making device, this may be traditional instruments, instruments created from natural objects, or instruments created within a computer. The sounds captured in the film may be used as source material, as inspiration for a piece, or as indicators for different approaches to sonic composition. By taking these different approaches diverse works will be created from Burke and Alsop's different interpretations. These differing interpretations will create diverse outcomes based on the same events, and these outcomes will be amalgamated in the final collaborative work.

While Federation Square is in effect designed as a communal meeting place for people to inhabit, and therefore people are its focus, *Green Skies* ... *Moments* considers that the natural elements have a major effect on the public's use of that space and the behaviour of people within it. By documenting and interpreting these changes, it is anticipated that a interpretive diary of Federation Square will be created.

3 TWO CREATIVE APPROACHES TO GREEN SKIES

Each author gives the following two descriptions of the creative processes in their own words. They demonstrate the particular idiosyncrasies each take to the creative process, and how very different works can be derived from the same images and images taken form the same location.

3.1 Brigid Burke

The first thing that I look for is an image of Federation Square that for some reason strikes me as charged with meaning, even if I cannot formulate this meaning in discursive or conceptual terms. See two raw images of Federation Square in Figure 1 and 2.



Figure 1 Federation Square blurred raw image



Figure 2 Federation Square raw image on a clear day

As soon as this meaning becomes sufficiently clear in my mind, I set about developing it into a story, or better yet, it is the images themselves that develop their own implicit potentialities, the story they carry within them. Into the organization of this material, which is no longer purely visual but also conceptual, their now enters my deliberate intent to give order and sense to the development of the story, see figures 3 and 4. The images have been processed with other abstract paintings and drawings I have created. By layering these drawings they evoke a scene aimed to create themes in the musical composition through the pulse of film clips and the still images density of colours.



Figure 3 Federation Square processed



Figure 4 Federation Square processed

My approach is intuitive and evolutionary, and unique to each situation. The footage in these two photographs were both taken on cold gusty days these two situations created a anguished and fast pulsed movement in the music which I will interpret intuitively in performance and when creating the anosmatic sound.

3.1.1 Live Performance

The samples are made into a live interactive performance work using clarinet gestures, and electronic sounds from Federation Square to trigger visual samples.

The music component by Brigid is a combination of clarinet gestures depicting wind, fragmented chattering that are processed with granulations, reverbs, room placements and distortion and incorporates effects that warp and laminate and are mixed with synthetic samples of computerised wind and textured pulses of low frequencies samples. They are reminiscent of the behaviour of light reflecting and distorting the patterns of light and wave shapes. An example of these abstractions can be seen in Figure 3 and 4.

The visuals of the buildings and shapes of movement and light move in subtle ways through a spectrum of colours to depict the environmental aspects first envisaged for this composition, with added components different environments throughout the composition. A series of blue images, blue stills in pen and ink, silkscreen depicts the reflections created by light as seen in these images. Examples of these pen and ink drawings are seen in images in figures 3 & 4

3.2 Roger Alsop

Alsop's approach to interpreting the films is to see them as simply integrated visual and aural elements, without any focus on narrative or in relation to the location. He then examines them aesthetically as both documents of the events at the time of filming and as abstract aesthetic constructs. Figure 5 to Figure 7 are taken from one film shot in the evening of August 11, 2015. The film lasts for approximately sixteen minutes and the images are from the beginning, middle and end of the film.

Images from audio-visual works developed for *Green Skies* ... can be seen in Figure 8: % blending Figure 1 and Figure 5, Figure 9 <= blend of Figure 1 and Figure 2, and Figure $10 \sim \text{blend}$ of Figure 5 and Figure 6.



Figure 5: Light Sky

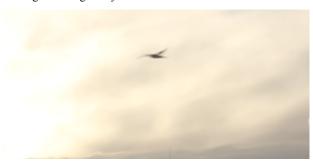


Figure 6: Light Sky with Bird



Figure 7 Darkening Sky



Figure 8: % blending Figure 1 and Figure 5



Figure 9 <= blend of Figure 1 and Figure 2



Figure 10 ~ blend of Figure 5 and Figure 6

These images are then represented in a 48 by 48 block matrix where the red, green and blue values of each block generate an audio signal using triangle, rectangle and saw waves, and the alpha value sets the amplitudes. The results form an audio response to the images as they are being generated and effected through the processes indicated.

Alsop has used the process of using pixel qualities to generate audio responses previously (Alsop 2007), where the mapped interaction between the image and the audio is used to create a sound work built from novel sonic interactions that the author may not have initially developed or considered. Like Burke he then allows for personal resonances within these interactions to emanate, and filters the outcomes to represent his aesthetic response, interpretations, and intentions. However there

is no intention of "developing a story", or "exploring implicit potentialities".

4 CONCLUSION

While the outcomes may initially seem to fit the area of 'visual music', the approaches taken fit the range of those used by 'visual music artists', (DeWitt 1987, Dannenberg 2005, Evans 2005, Jones and Nevile 2005) where an intuitive interpretation is made and implemented, often through the paradigms of musical composition, and approaches to data interpretation (Lodha, Beahan et al. 1997, de Campo 2007, Park, Kim et al. 2010, Alsop and Giles 2015) are equally used. By Burke and Alsop first individually developing works that lean towards these two poles, by finally blending these approaches and works it is seen that new works, which demonstrate more than the sum of their parts, will be created.

Versions of the works developed will be presented at the ACMC2015 conference, where the processes used will be demonstrated.

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