Paths

for solo performer

Stephen F. Lilly

(2020)

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Performance Notes:
The graphic on the page following these instructions constitutes the performer's score. It consists of multicolored paths and dots. For the most part, the paths serve as boundaries for individual fields of monochromatic dots, but occasionally, dots do intersect the paths themselves.

In interpreting the score, the performer starts at one end of any path and travels along it to its conclusion. Traversing a single path is the equivalent of a musical phrase. In constructing a performance, the performer should interpret multiple paths, one after another, taking care not to repeat any. For any one performance, it is not necessary to interpret every available path; the number paths should be arrived at organically in rehearsal.

I am intentionally not providing more explicit descriptions of "start" and "conclusion" as I want to leave these decisions in the hands of the performer, but I do want to give some guidance on how one could interpret the various elements in the graphic.

Pitch is not to be controlled by one's horizontal or vertical coordinates, e.g. moving along a path headed down the page should not be interpreted as pitch drifting ever lower. Use another visual element to control pitch such as the color of the path, the current thickness of the path, and/or the color of an adjacent dot field. Position coordinates can, however, influence another musical parameter, such as sound-silence balance or noise-pitch balance.

All performance decisions should be made by evaluating one's position on the path. In addition to the visual elements mentioned above, one could also consult the overall shape of the path, the length of the path, the current direction of the path, discontinuities in or interruptions to the path, the current opacity of the path, the color or size of an adjacent dot field, the dot density or average dot size within an adjacent field, etc. In addition to pitch, these could control musical parameters such as duration—of each phrase or of each note event within a phrase; number of note events within a phrase; dynamic level; articulation; timbre—e.g. the use of extended techniques, the complexity of each note event; etc.

Optional Accompaniment: While the "soloist" performs the paths, another instrument performs the dot fields.