Howard Kenty
Spider
(For Tape)
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Program Notes:

I began *Spider* by experimenting with a number of physical modeling commands in Csound (based on models by Perry Cook) that allow the user to stretch, shape, and bend the parameters of virtual instruments beyond what would be possible in the physical world. Virtual flutes (wgflute), clarinets (wgclar), brass (wgbrass), and shakers (shaker) can act quite surprisingly when manipulated in improbable ways; I achieved the most interesting results when I used values that would be wildly unrealistic in the physical world and modulated these values over the duration of the output to create long, evolving textures. The sounds occasionally resembled those of their physical counterparts, but more often than not were very abstracted. Though the help files for these commands apologetically stated that the models produced unexpected results, I found this much to my advantage. The modeled sounds that I began creating were fascinating: definitively electronic, but strangely organic, almost arachnoid: furtive, surprising, and dangerous.

For each of the four virtual models that I worked with, I created a number of different samples, increasing or decreasing parameter values from file to file enough to create variation but not wholly change the character of the sounds. After creating a large amount of source material, I brought the most compelling and interesting samples into Sonar. Here, I arranged the material into a succinct, coherent sequence consisting of eight overlapping sections delineated by changes in texture, representing the appendages of what had by now become the piece's subject. I typically used different related sample variations simultaneously to thicken and spacialize the sound. The only additional processing done in Sonar consisted of splicing, arranging, mixing (volume and panning), and mastering.

I still find *Spider* slightly unsettling, suggestive of a sudden yet anticipated predatory strike. The piece starts slowly, with sporadic arachnoid chirping that begins to transform, gradually building to a climax in pitch, rhythm, and intensity, finally winding down in a squall of feedback and a coda of diminished chirping. As a purely electronic tape piece, there is no score, per se, but I have included a spectrogram that is quite helpful to follow when listening, revealing the structures and patterns that shape the piece and provide internal coherence.

- Howard Kenty