

Howard Kenty

*Confustion (Denigrate)*

Presented for live electronics and tape at the Extensible Toy Piano Festival (XTP) at Clark University, 2005, and at University of Albany, 2007

Notes:

*Confustion (Denigrate)* was composed using only toy piano samples as source material. For the XTP festival, organizing Professors David Claman and Matt Malsky recorded samples of multiple toy pianos, including the complete range of keyboard notes at different velocities as well as special effects, such as tapping on the cases and glissandos on the piano strings themselves. These samples were made available to participants online, for use in creating a score for human performance or to process for tape pieces. I decided to mangle them entirely and create a densely layered abstract piece using the MAX/MSP programming environment.

The recorded piece consists of multiple layers of audio samples that were fed through a MAX/MSP patch. The processing within the patch allows for manipulation of audio via amplitude modulation, delay, and panning, and for recorded material, alteration of playback speed and direction. Loading in the recorded samples and controlling the MAX/MSP patch via an external MIDI controller gave me enormous flexibility in quickly producing complex sonic textures, which were then layered together, fed through additional processing, and sequenced in Cakewalk's SONAR. During live performance at the XTP Festivals, prerecorded material was played back while being simultaneously sampled and processed in realtime once more.

Briefly, with the *Confustion* patch, the user can process live material, record live material and process it, or load in pre-existing audio samples for processing. On screen sliders and buttons allow for realtime control of live sample recording and playback, amplitude modulation frequency, delay time and feedback, panning position and rate (random, auto, or manual modes, in stereo or quadraphonic configuration), playback speed and direction for recorded material, and volume for live wet/dry mix, playback wet/dry mix, and overall input and output. MIDI sliders for external devices can be quickly and easily "learned" by simply clicking the "L" switch for the desired parameter, moving the MIDI slider to be assigned, and clicking the "L" switch once more. Additionally, select MIDI notes from C(48) through B(71) allow the user to trigger different discrete playback speeds. Parameter and control presets can be saved for quick recall and triggered in realtime via the black MIDI keyboard keys from F(42) to D(51).

- Howard Kenty