PICTURES OF STRANGERS

A DISSERTATION IN
Music Composition

Presented to the Faculty of the University of Missouri-Kansas City in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

by

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ABSTRACT

Pictures of Strangers is primarily concerned with the differences between perception and reality. These differences are approached both conceptually and musically through a variety of means. The movement titles are drawn from the works of Kurt Vonnegut, Robert Ashley, and Laurie Anderson. Each of these artists has frequently confronted the paradoxes of perception and reality in their own works as it relates to the reconciliation of the individual and society and the individual and modern technology. Whether represented by the slowly evolving madness of Dwayne Hoover in Vonnegut's *Breakfast of Champions*, the simultaneously disturbingly nostalgic and surreal depiction of American life in Robert Ashley's *Perfect Lives*, or the clear disconnective properties of modern technology in Laurie Anderson's *O Superman* and *Time to Go*, all of these artists address the issue of the elevation of false realities and the role that our technologically obsessed society plays in advancing these idealized stereotypes.

The title "Pictures of Strangers" directly refers to the promotional photos used in retail picture frames. These photos typically depict an idealized event or relationship such as a wedding, or a loving couple sitting in a park. These strangers are meant to represent a situation to which the buyer can relate but never faithfully duplicate since idealized settings cannot reflect actual circumstances.
These concepts are represented musically by the recurrence of a descending motive found throughout the piece. The motive is initially heard in the first movement, where it resists attempts at thematic development by instead forcing its supporting material to evolve around its own static existence. This motive is less prominent in the subsequent movements until it is eventually mocked by the brasses in the final movement, which initiates a sarcastic circus march. The development of this motive, or its lack of development, in relationship to its changing musical surroundings is meant to depict the differences in individual perception and absolute reality. The music's commentary on the use of technology in modern society and its relationship to the works of the artists mentioned above may only exist in the mind of the composer, but this musical work is his reality and is subject to his own perceptions.
The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the Conservatory of Music, have examined a thesis titled “Pictures of Strangers” presented by Myles Bradford Baumgardner, candidate for the Doctor of Musical Arts Degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

Supervisory Committee

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Pictures of Strangers
for Wind Ensemble

I. Goodbye Blue Monday  - Duration Ca. 6 Minutes
II. Bookmarks (Your Petrochemical Arms . . . ) - Duration Ca. 3.5 Minutes
III. Broken Landscapes, Faded Edges (Big Muscle Gone to Seed) - Duration Ca. 3 Minutes
IV. Wayne Hoobler Rides Again - Duration Ca. 7 Minutes

Total Duration Ca. 20 Minutes

Instrumentation (one per part)

Piccolo
Flutes - 3
Oboes - 2
English Horn
Bassoons - 2
Contrabassoon
Eb Clarinet
Clarinets - 3
Bass Clarinet
Soprano Saxophone
Alto Saxophone
Tenor Saxophone
Baritone Saxophone
Trumpets - 3
Horns - 4
Tenor Trombones - 2
Bass Trombone
Euphoniums - 2
Tuba
Percussion 1 - Tubular Bells, Timpani, Marimba, Vibraphone, Xylophone
Percussion 2 - Claves, Snare Drum, Toms (3), Brake Drums (3 - preferrably suspended, Bass Drum, Suspended Cymbal
Percussion 3 - Triangles (2), Xylophone, Suspended Cymbal, Woodblocks (3), Tam-Tam Crash Cymbals, Bass Drum, Tambourine
Percussion 4 - Crotales, Glockenspiel, Tubular Bells, Xylophone, Vibraphone

The Tubular Bells, Vibraphone, Xylophone, Bass Drum, and Suspended Cymbal may be shared among the percussion parts if required.
Performance Notes:

Accidentals carry through the bar, but not through octave displacements.

The ♦ symbol is used in the winds to indicate flutter tongue.

The timpani part should ideally be played on a five drum set up. If five drums are not available, the pitch E3 may be transposed down one octave in order to be played on the 32" drum. This should make the part playable on four drums. Suggested tunings are offered in the score and part, but the player may choose alternate tuning systems based upon his or her individual musical discretion.

The three brakedrums required in the first movement should all be of different sizes and should produce distinctly different pitches/timbers. They should be suspended from a frame if possible, or be placed upon snare stands if suspension is not possible. A superball mallet produces the ideal attack, but soft yarn mallets may be used if a superball mallet is not available.
III.
Broken Landscapes, Faded Edges
(Big Muscle Gone to Seed . . .)

Lento \( \frac{\text{b}}{\text{e}} = 60 \)

(Continued)
IV.
Wayne Hoobler Rides Again

Forcefully
Brad Baumgardner has been featured as a performer and composer all over the United States. His music has been performed by the Commonwealth Clarinet Quartet, the Trio Bel Canto, the Liberace Winds, and the avant-garde ensemble thingNY. Brad remains active as a performer both as a solo artist and as a member of prominent area ensembles. His playing has been described by the Kansas City Star as “effortless” and “unearthly”. Recent engagements include performances of Adam Hardin’s Echolalia at the Electronic Music Midwest and SPARK festivals, multiple featured performances with the Kansas City Electronic Music Association, performances for the Charlotte Street foundation at Kansas City’s fabled Blue Room, and a performance as a soloist with the UMKC student orchestra on the premiere performance of his own concerto for bass clarinet and orchestra.

Brad also remains active as an educator. Recent teaching positions at UMKC include: listening lab, ensemble for composers, and advanced orchestration. In addition to teaching he was the assistant director for the UMKC new music ensemble, Musica Nova. His creative programming and leadership was rewarded with the Kauffman Foundation Excellence in Graduate Teaching Award in 2010. Prior to relocating to Kansas City, Brad was an adjunct professor at the University of Louisville and taught orchestration in addition to working for the department of bands.
Brad continues to foster the development of contemporary and experimental art music both as a composer and as a performer. In the fall of 2007, he commissioned seven local composers to create new works featuring the bass clarinet. These works were presented as a part of the (De)Constructions concert series. He co-founded the University of Louisville Improv ensemble in the fall of 2007, plays with the Blackhouse Improvisor’s Collective, and continues to explore improvisatory and experimental music, often creating his own hybrid instruments. During his time in Kansas City, Brad has played on the premiere performances of over thirty new works. He is a founding member of the Digital Honk Box Revival, which focuses on music that features electronic and acoustic influences and open collaborations with multidisciplinary artists. His recent awards include an individual artist grant from the Kentucky Arts Council, a residency as an associate artist at the Atlantic Center for the Arts, and the Kauffman Foundation's 2010 Excellence in Graduate Teaching Award.