

Composing 'Volmet North', IDM sound sources in acousmatic music

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VOLMET: Global network of radio stations that broadcast weather and flight information to assist in aircraft navigation.

Research overview

Compositions

Intelligent Dance Music & Emmerson's Language Grid

Volmet North

Technical considerations

Stylistic considerations

Compositional considerations

Some conclusions

Research overview

Portfolio

New works are exploring the relationships between IDM and acousmatic music.

Compositional practice

- Develop a closer relationship between acousmatic and Intelligent Dance Music (IDM) practices
- Further explore compositional possibilities within my work
- Study and practice composition and diffusion theories
- Move further away from commercialism

Compositions

The first half

The first four pieces of the portfolio explored more mimetic acousmatic music composition to gain a deeper appreciation of the practice and theory.

Each of the pieces incorporated a structuring process or set of materials which I had not examined previously.

The first four pieces are:

- Solid Phase
- Décalage
- Low-bypass
- Batteries of Orchards

Compositions

The second half

The remaining five pieces in the portfolio blend Intelligent Dance Music (IDM) and acousmatic music in varying ways.

These pieces incorporate IDM practices & adopt techniques explored in the compositions previously mentioned.

These pieces are:

Papa November

Volmet North

IDM study 1 (WIP)

IDM study 2 (WIP)

IDM study 3 (WIP)

Emmerson's Language Grid

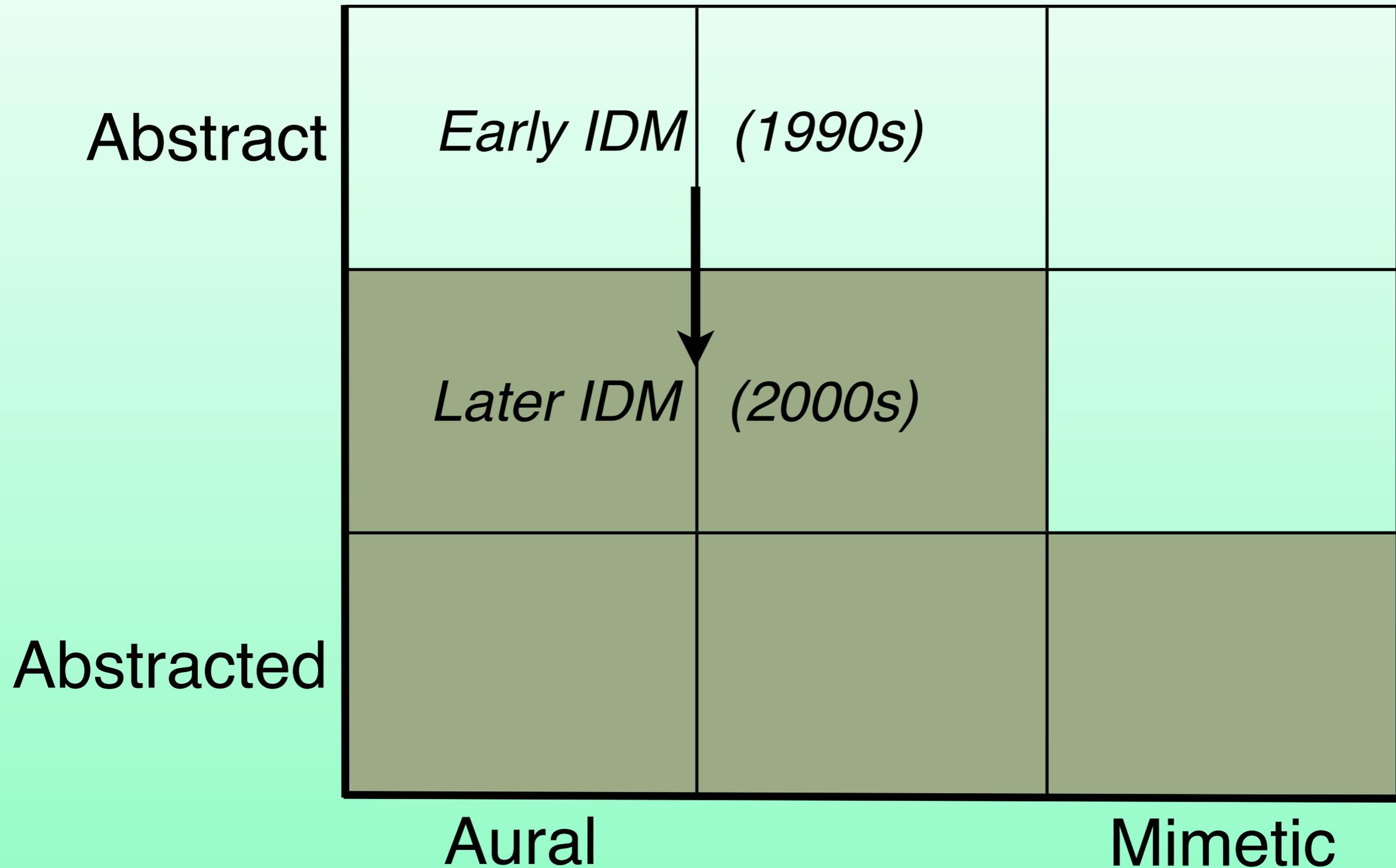
The language grid has been vital part of defining my own practice as well as defining IDM compositional practice.

My own acousmatic music practice often uses abstracted syntax to create works which explore the aural - mimetic continuum.

IDM uses both abstract and abstracted syntax but the resulting discourse is primarily aurally carried, otherwise its identity would be lost - the music would become soundscape, minimal music concrète or something similar.

Understanding this has been critical to creating works in the second half of the portfolio.

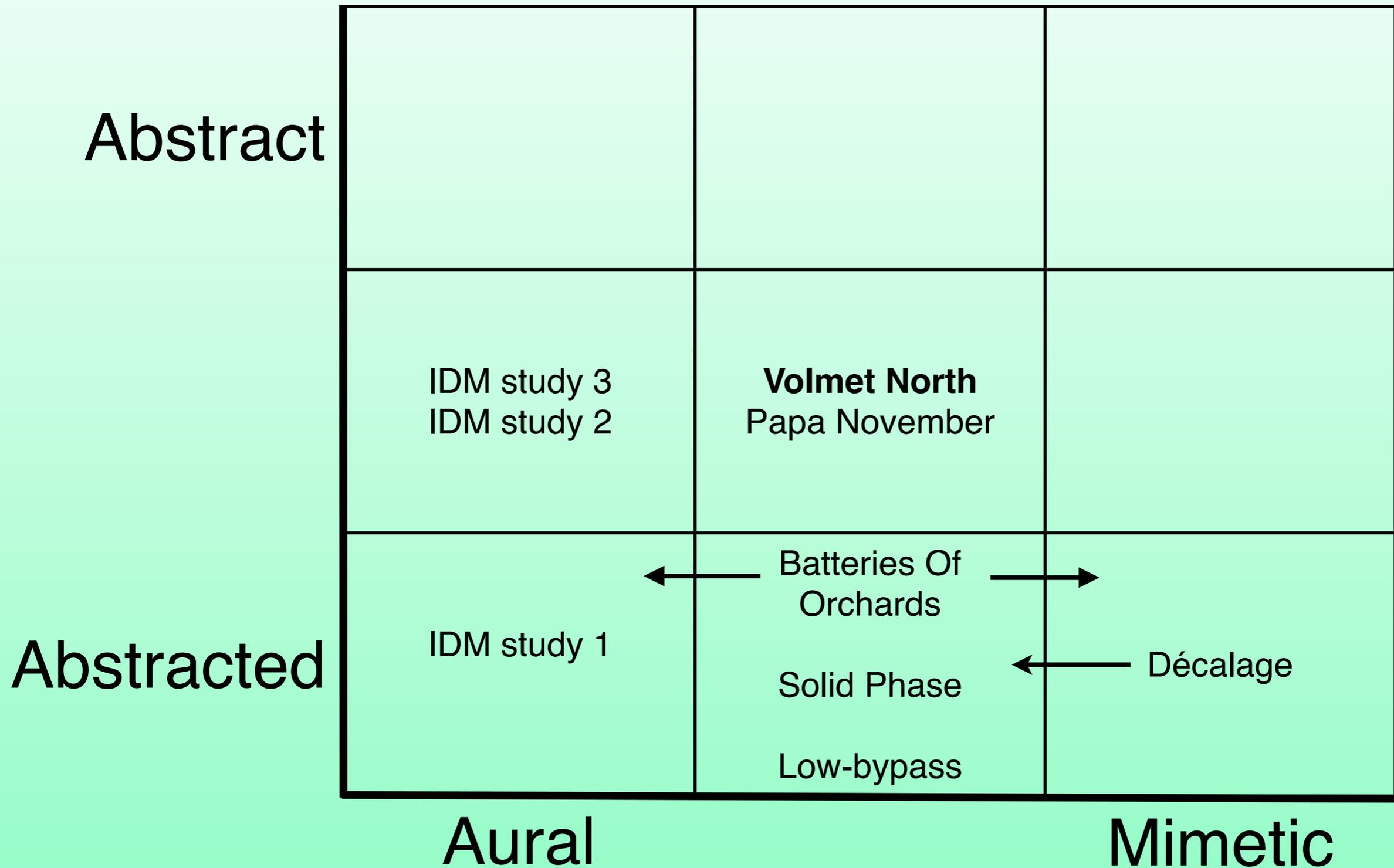
IDM and Emmerson's Language Grid - the loss of identity?



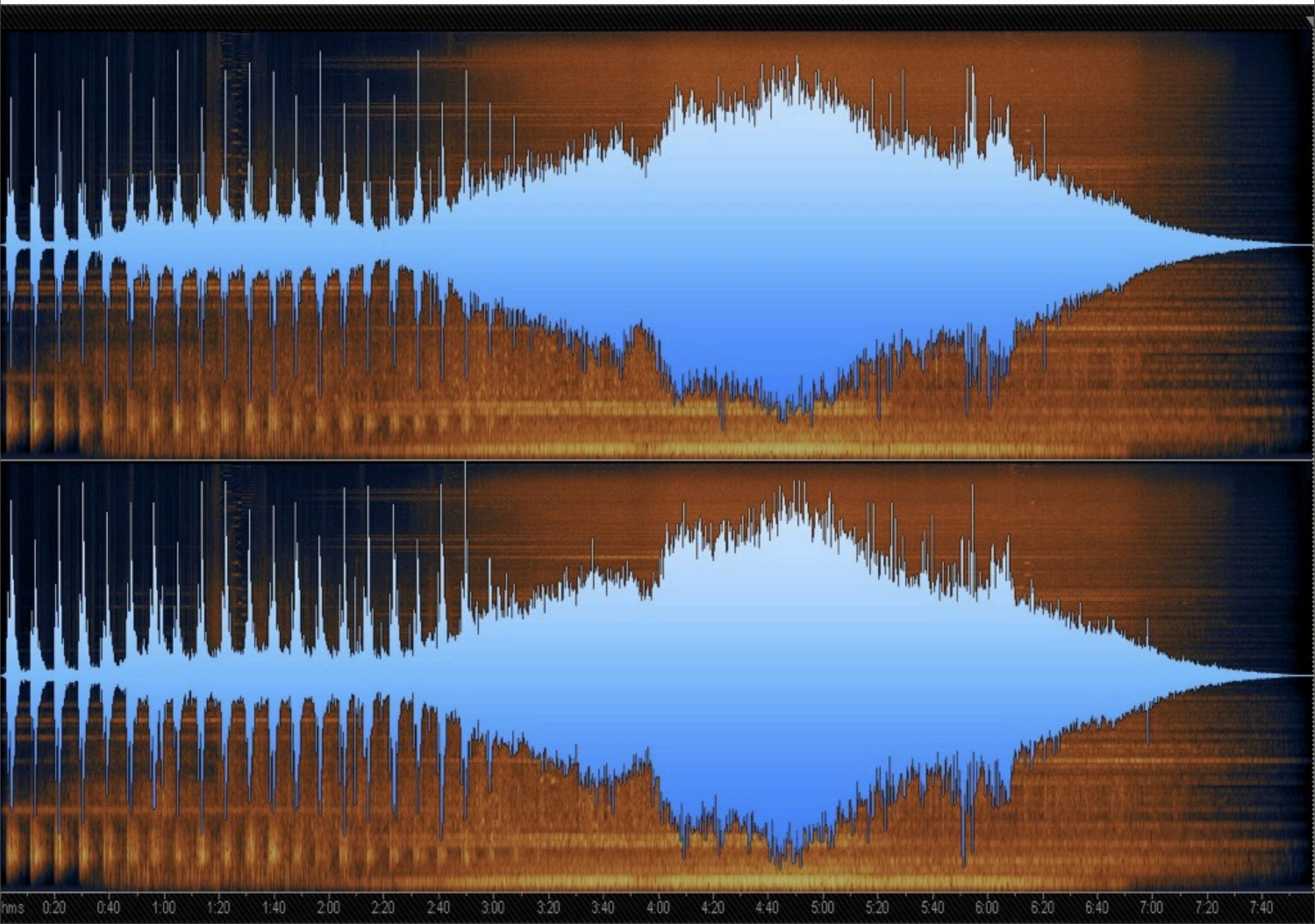
IDM and Emmerson's Language Grid - the loss of identity?

Abstract	'Advance' LFO (1996)	'Foil' Autechre (1994)	
	'Gas Street Basin' HIA & Biosphere (2000)		
Abstracted			
	Aural		Mimetic

My practice and the Language Grid



Volmet North



Volmet North - Technical considerations

Explores some commonality from my acousmatic practice.

- Granular synthesis / Spectral processing / Convolution

Many of the sounds in the piece are formed from transformations of IDM works created between 1999 and 2004. (example 1.1)

The inclusion of these transformations is intended as the beginning of an acousmatic 'remix' by treating earlier compositions as concrete source materials (sonic memes: timbral & compositional).

Radio broadcasts were captured & recorded from a Yupiteru MVT-7100 multi-band scanner.

Volmet North - Stylistic considerations

Based around a blend of materials - processed field recordings, recordings of radio broadcasts and synthesised elements.

The central theme of the piece is the capture (and recapture) of materials that should have been, or were already lost in the aether.

Volmet North - Compositional considerations

A 2 channel acousmatic piece.

Fixed media: in 2ch live performance the piece has been 'unfixed'.

Composed roughly around a metric grid.

The second attempt at beginning to combining IDM & acousmatic compositional practice.

Volmet North - Compositional considerations

Largely composed around texture, rather than gesture as formative elements.

Moves away from causality (mimetic relationships) to associations based on the grid (aural relationships).

Spectromorphological thinking is explored in the piece through the use of filters, processing and transformation.

Volmet North - Compositional considerations

The syntax of the piece is a mixture of abstract and abstracted.

Some of the material has been manipulated so it behaves in a concrete way (bouncing, fluttering, oscillating). (example 1.2)

This results in a work which is primarily aurally carried but contains some mimetic properties.

This fact is a fundamental aspect of creating a work of this kind as IDM is always primarily aurally carried, regardless whether the syntax is abstract or abstracted.

Volmet North - Some conclusions

Volmet North works back towards IDM by using a combination of abstract and abstracted syntax resulting in a musical discourse which is a mix of aural & mimetic.

The structure of the piece is associated with IDM:

- Arranged around a metric grid rather than around causality
- Use of sonic memes
- Layers of sound reveal compositional structure
- Fixed & unfixed
- 2 channel

This piece is not the final conclusion to the question, rather one part of the answer.

Current work - (the rest of the answer)

IDM study 1

Acousmatic 'remix' of a well established artist. All source material is from one previous 2 channel composition. Source is treated as concrete material.

IDM study 2

Explores causality with the use of beats and pitched material.

Based around both synthetic and recorded elements which are borrowed from both IDM and acousmatic practice.

The piece also contains the use of sonic memes (metaphors) passed on from Techno (TR-909 and glitchy percussive elements).

Future work

IDM study 3

The final piece in the portfolio will bring many of the previous elements together as well as exploring other compositional ideas that arise through writing the thesis.

The piece will focus on blending gestural and textural material and will contain strong causal relationships between the sounds.

The sounds themselves will be highly rhythmic in nature, but their structuring and spatialisation will borrow directly from my acousmatic practices.

The piece will also explore many memes from the field of IDM and will use these as primary compositional sources.

Thanks for listening...

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