

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: The Machine Strikes Back: An Original Composition for Electronic Media

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PAGES: 53

The Machine Strikes Back is an original composition in three movements created through the use of electronic media. The focus of the work is the use of audio samples taken from published recordings of popular guitarist Tom Morello as the basis of the construction of the piece. Several modification techniques were used to edit the samples and re-contextualize them into new content, including sample slicing, time-stretching, and filter modulation. Through this seventeen-minute work, the composer explores ideas of altering and re-contextualizing a fixed-sample set to create new forms of artistic expression.

The accompanying document provides historical context for the piece and a discussion of the musical elements and compositional processes used in the work. An overview of the use of audio samples in musical composition is provided, including a discussion on the practices of partial and total importation, as well as remixing. The review of repertoire considers a selection of recent works that represent varied uses of samples in the creation of new musical content. The

methodology chapter provides an overview of the composer's inspiration and goals for the work, as well as an introduction to the compositional techniques and electronic processes used throughout each movement.

An analysis of each movement provides an in-depth discussion on the particular use of samples for each section, including explanations of modification techniques, sound mixing, and effects usage. The first movement utilizes distorted tones and explores ideas of granularity and re-contextualization of melody. The second movement provides contrast to the first by utilizing clean-tone guitar samples and focusing on the use of sample slicing and pitch-shifting. The third movement reintroduces some of the energy from the start of the piece and focuses on the processes of unraveling and time-stretching.