

David Bithell - Artist Statement

Experimental Music Theater

As a composer, musician, and intermedia artist I create work that explores the connections between music, theater, and performance art while engaging with new technologies and real-time interactive environments. The resulting “Experimental Music Theater” brings the precision and meticulous structure of contemporary music together with an understanding of performance, narrative, and humor drawn from recent theater and performance art.

Form, Narrative, and Meaning

My approach to Experimental Music Theater is to create narrative structures out of abstract sonic and visual materials. These structures set up audience expectations that are subsequently manipulated and subverted in surprising and superficially comical ways. This process of subversion is essential in creating an underlying sense of form in my work.

By creating a perceived uncertainty within the structure of the work, I have the ability to impart a larger and more provocative uncertainty within the audience. In the moment of structural subversion, the audience sees beyond their current perception of the work, creating a multi-layered experience that extends into their perception of reality. The smoke and mirrors of a magician cause one to question more than the rabbit in the hat.

Electronics, Ambience, and Illusion

I have chosen to work with electronics as a way of extending my fascination with the illusory nature of artistic materials. I compose sonic and visual relationships that seem intuitive, while at the same time create scenarios to expose the arbitrariness of these connections and subvert their intuitive meanings. Electronic interactivity and “false” interactivity (systems which appear to be interactive, but are in fact highly-composed pre-determined forms) are used as essential structural materials – giving the concept of interactivity an important role in the creation of my work’s artistic meaning.

I also use technology generatively to create richly detailed performance environments. These function both as stable states of being as well as formal signifiers – complex enough to be interesting in the moment, clear enough to be perceived as referable moments.