

Foil-Counterfoil

Duration 12'20

This work was completed in the spring of 1997 and follows on from *Study in Ink* (a work investigating the sonic qualities of a single sound source - that of a pen on a whiteboard) by investigating the sonic qualities of a number of interesting sources. Initially, tin foil was recorded with very close microphone positions to reveal hidden sounds. This stage of composition was investigation of quality. The (mainly) textural material was then compared with other types of sound source such as glass and balloons, both of which merged with the tin foil sounds through spectra and gestural linkage. Sounds were set along a continuum of likeness to each other. In traversing this continuum (which essentially forms the structure of the work) some of the sounds enter as counter-subjects to a main idea, others enter as subjects in their own right.

This became the point of the piece: foil and its opponents and it was at this point that the title of the piece emerged. The work was taken through many drafts in order to resolve its final form, one where phrase structure has become an important issue. Obviously the foil sounds related more to 'noise' than 'pitch' so a series of resonant filters were tuned to certain pitches in order to colour some of the foil and balloon sounds thereby merging them more with the glass and bottles. There exists a middle ground: occupied by computer processing. The computer processed soundfiles using all the current techniques. Sounds were granulated and filtered using resonant filters in csound. Filtering took place within the Pro-Tools mixing environment.

The musicality of concrete sounds. The shaping of gestures either intrinsic (derived from) or extrinsic (imposed upon) led the composition to a series of phrases: initially short then gradually longer. The process of composition began like a jigsaw: work on different passages of material which merged together. However, this particular jigsaw was deconstructed and reconstructed in continuous variation form. Only at the end (see excerpt on DAT) does a falling pitch indicate closure of the work. In addition, extrinsic 'up-beats' are composed, repetition of material indicates coherence between sections and filtering separates sound structure in the vertical dimension as time separates sound structure in the horizontal dimension.