

GLUCK FELLOWS PROGRAM OF THE  
ARTS AT UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,  
RIVERSIDE

PRESENTS

# WORDLESS BLISS

Composed by Bob Bozonelos, Graduate  
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Program of the Arts

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Wordless Bliss  
Mixed Media Composition by Bob Bozonelos

*Wordless Bliss* is a derivative composition based on a melodic segment from an anonymous 13th century English minstrel. The piece was written specifically for a lecture course on minimalism lead by Dr. Ian Dicke, Professor of Composition at UC Riverside. As part of this course, we created musical devices to explore patterns within our compositions' structure. Of the numerous devices, I selected to use concepts based on Terry Riley's 1964 composition *In C*. Riley's music is notable for its use of repetition, tape music techniques, and delay systems. *In C* incorporates the use of 53 short melodic patterns that vary in length. Riley instructs players to begin on a melodic pattern and cycle through all the cells at the player's discretion. The players can choose how long to stay on a pattern before moving to the next, thus creating unique patterns that are aleatoric rather than fixed.

Like *In C*, *Wordless Bliss* is constructed on fixed melodic cells based on the original melody's first nine measures. Each cell (or bar) is introduced a  $1/16$  away from the main downbeat. Unlike *In C*, each player chooses a part before beginning the piece. The player is directed to stay on their part until all nine cells have come together. Once the first cell is set in motion, it's up to the next player to enter at their discretion. When all nine melodic cells have come together, the composition has reached its pinnacle in sonic and rhythmic density. From here, it's up to each player to decide how long to sustain full dynamism and volume. In essence, *Wordless Bliss* aims to come together like a neural network, mimicking the way a human brain operates at various stages of creative flow.

*Wordless Bliss* begins with a drone that is sustained throughout the entirety of the performance. The drone mimics frequencies related to theta brain waves. Theta brain waves often occur in sleep and during meditation. These brain waves are visualized by the introductory video of nebulous clouds of calmness. Following the drone, a synth bass enters that will remain throughout the composition. The synth bass was inspired by the composer Vangelis, who used ambient sounds in the movie *Blade Runner*. Roughly around 44 seconds into the piece, the first melodic cells enter. Here, the video changes to flowing atmospheric clouds where neural activity represents the brain engaged in preliminary thought.

Right around 1:10, the music begins to grow in sonic density. The video during this section shows how the brain communicates like a server, sending and receiving information to various parts of the brain. At 1:50, the layers of melodic and rhythmic complexity have reached a state of intuitive design. This is signaled by geometric and spherical forms that have coalesced via the neural network. By 2:10, the composition has reached its climax. All nine melodic cells are playing together, and the piece is very dense. This density displays all facets of neural activity in the form of gravity, the universal force of attraction acting between all matter. The next following sequences are similar to a palindrome. As the melodic cells begin to exist, the videos return to the initial state of nebulous clouds of calmness, ending with the synth bass rather than the drone. I intentionally chose the synth bass's heaviness, as it represents the need for rest following this excursion into thought. The melodic cells were recorded on a 16th century Spanish Vihuela replica, and the drone and synth bass were produced using Native Instruments Massive plugin. The videos were sourced from pixels.com and are free to use with no restrictions and the need for attributions.

# Wordless Bliss

H. Bozonelos

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Drone

Piano

Player 1

Player 2

Player 3

Player 4

Player 5

Player 6

Player 7

Player 8

Player 9