

Aurphones

Pete Stollery

I was asked by one of my students, Ross Whyte, to compose the soundtrack to a short film he'd assembled using what he calls "orphans", that is, small fragments of film which have become disassociated from their original context.

The repeating series of ten short "orphans", the frequency of which gradually slows down through the 3½ minutes of the film, made me think of my early days as a composer of electroacoustic music, when I used magnetic tape to create music rather than hard disk space. I used to throw endless amounts of this stuff in the bin at the end of a session, bits of tape containing sounds that I'd decided that I didn't want to use. Composing in the digital domain, there's nothing "thrown away" like this as you don't actually cut into the equivalent of a piece of tape and discard what you don't need; the computer finds the portion of the sound you want to work with and leaves the original file unaltered.

For the soundtrack to this film, I decided to revisit a number of recent pieces of music and find parts of sounds that I did not use in the final piece; digital audio orphans – or "aurphones".

Aurphones was presented in the Belmont Cinema, Aberdeen 4th March 2012.