

Squirt

Pete Stollery

In 1994, I became very interested in the live action paintings of artists such as Jackson Pollock. What particularly fascinated me technically about their work was the methodology of spontaneous expression followed by modelling to produce the desired result. Henri Michaux, more widely known for his poetry, would create work in this way, squirting ink or paint onto a canvas and then smearing it to produce images.

I wanted to be able to do something similar using sound as the medium - to be able to project a sound into a landscape and then to model and reshape that sound, creating new images. The most obvious example of this is seen in the first gesture of the piece where the saxophonist "squirts" a sound out into the space, which is subsequently smeared. Throughout the piece various squirts and smears, in both the saxophone and tape parts, serve to articulate other material derived from this opening squirt/smear gesture.

Squirt was composed for Doug Skinner and premiered by him in April 1995 at Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas. The tape part was realised in the Electroacoustic Music Studios at Northern College, Aberdeen. It was released on CD (EMF) in early 2003.