YESCOLAB #14 (30 June 2022)

Accompanying Thoughts

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We spoke about the relationship between
- calculation, consciousness, algorithms, generative structures, plans
on one hand, and
- intuition, spontaneity, decision-by-feeling, unconsciousness
on the other hand.

We all seemed to agree that we all use both ways in our compositions.

We can call this "mixture", but perhaps it would be worth to describe the relationship between both parts more precise?

I learned from yesterday's discussion that somehow both parts carry the other part in themselves. I try to write down here two aspects of this extended subject.

1. When we look closer to the spontaneous or intuitive side, we will see that our phantasy (the images and possibilities that come in our mind in the moment of writing) happens in a certain context. When we are writing a melody in a tonal context, our phantasy will make suggestions related to this tonal context. When we are in a chromatic context, our phantasy will make suggestions related to this atonal context.
Another example for the connection between intuition and context: When we concentrate deeply in composing, our phantasy might behave more consistent than we know consciously. Schoenberg once described how doubtful he was in writing down the second subject in his chamber symphony op 9, because he could not see any connection to the first subject. But he followed his intuition and wrote it down anyway. Years later he discovered that there is a much closer relationship between both subjects than he knew . . .

2. As to the side of algorithms, we can experience so many different functions of using algorithms. For instance:

   - Use algorithms to create new structures (for instance melodies we would never create by intuition).
   - Use algorithms to have a rule, and then be able to break the rule.
   - Use algorithms to make structural decisions more consistent (struggle until you found this algorithm).
   - Use algorithms to challenge our invention (for instance: how different can i fill a certain sequence of durations).
   - Use algorithms as suggestions, and choose one, or modify.

Perhaps the question "what does the music need" (quoting Parham) is a good line to move sometimes to one and sometimes to the other side?