Sui Generis

for steel-string acoustic guitar with electronics

Taylor Brook

2014

About *Sui Generis*:

Sui Generis was written during the Winter of 2014 for Kobe Van Cauwenburghe for his album with Carrier Records, *Give my regards to 116th street*.

The title, *Sui Generis*, is latin for "of it's own kind". This composition follows from a 2008 solo guitar piece entitled *In Terra Nullius* (empty land), that attempts to depict remote areas of Northern British Columbia in musical terms. Instead of depicting imagery, *Sui Generis* concerns itself with the nature of the steel-string guitar and music/sound itself. As a legal principle, Terra Nullius was invoked by colonizing forces to claim land inhabited by aboriginal populations. Colonizing forces claimed that there was no law among these groups and therefor the land could be considered an uninhabited, Terra Nullius. Some groups, such as the Inuits of Alaska, responded by invoking Sui Generis: we have different laws, laws of our own kind.

To perform this work, the guitar must be drastically retuned. Each string is tuned down in pitch, resulting in a generally mellow tone, closer to that of a baritone guitar. The intervals between the strings has also been altered to create a microtonal chord of naturally tuned intervals relating to a B-flat tonic, further altering the resonance of the instrument. The upper three strings form a B-flat major triad, while the lower three strings are tuned to more complex intervals: the just minor third, the just seventh, and the just tritone. The electronic sound pushes the harmonic possibilities of the piece further, blending microtonal guitar samples with the live guitar as seamlessly as possible.

Sui Generis Technical Rider:

Description:
Sui Generis is a composition for steel-string guitar and electronics. The electronic component of the work requires a stereo speaker setup and microphones to amplify the steel-string guitar and a midi pedal connected to a computer that triggers sound file playback. The amplification should be fairly loud and the sound files should be played at a volume to match the amplified guitar or be just below it: the sound files should not be louder than the amplified live guitar. Furthermore, the soundfiles and guitar should be run through the same EQ and reverb to help the sounds blend. As the sound files are made of guitar samples, the goal is for the electronics and live instrument to blend as seamlessly as possible: the soundfile should be made to sound like an extension of the live guitar and therefor the speakers should carry the level of the live guitar equal to that of the level of the soundfiles. Furthermore, the speakers should be located in proximity to one another: a wide stereo spread is not desirable.

As different venues require different microphones for a successful amplification setup, I leave the details of amplification to the technician. However, the amplification should be as clear and high-quality as possible. At least one high-quality, large-diaphram condensor mic on the soundbox combined with a ribbon mic at the 12th fret is suggested.

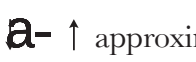
Equipment requirement:
- 2 loudspeakers
- MIDI pedal
- microphones for amplification (AKG C414's or similar)
- audio interface (MOTU suggested)
- mixer
- computer (Macbook pro suggested)

Software requirement:
Any software that is capable of using a midi pedal to trigger a sound-file playback such as Qlab or a MAX/MSP patch.
* Reverb and EQ may be realized in software or hardware.

notation:

The following acccidental nomenclature is used to approximate exact pitches:

 approximately 1/4 tone flat or sharp (50c)

 approximately 1/6 tone flat or sharp (33c)

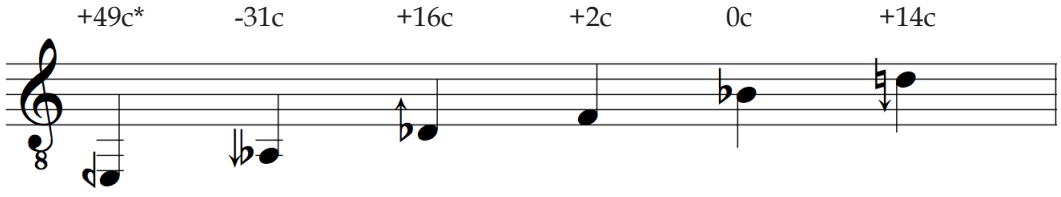
 approximately 1/12 tone flat or sharp (17c)

right hand positions:
s.p. - sul ponticello (right hand position towards the bridge)
s.t. - sul tasto (right hand position over the sound hole)
p.s.t. - poco sul tasto
p.s.p. - poco sul ponticello
a.s.t. - alto sul tasto
a.s.p. - alto sul ponticello
ord. - ordinario (normal right-hand position)

Important note on dampening practice:
Notes should always be allowed to vibrate for as long as possible, including through rests. This piece was carefully orchestrated to allow for the maximun resonance of the instrument by considering every fingering precisely. You will find that almost always four or more of the strings will be ringing at once.

scordatura:

11:8	7:4	6:5	3:2	1:1	5:4
+49c*	-31c	+16c	+2c	0c	+14c



*cents — hundredths of a semitone

I would advise to tune these notes with an electronic tuner or the soundfiles provided here:

www.taylorbrookmusic/tunings/suigeneris/

To check the precision of the tuning you may do the following:

The seventh harmonic, located just below the 10th fret of the 6th string, should be the same as the harmonic at the 5th fret of the 4th string.

The seventh harmonic, located just below the 10th fret of the 2nd string, should be two octaves above the harmonic at the 5th fret of the 5th string.

The harmonic at the 4th fret of the 4th string should be the same as the harmonic at the 5th fret of the 3rd string.

The harmonic at the 5th fret of 3rd string should be the same as the harmonic at the 7th fret of the 2nd string.

The harmonic at the 4th fret of the 2nd string should be the same as the harmonic at the 5th fret of the 1st string.

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♩ = 72 *rit. poco a poco* ♩ = 52 ♩ = 72

Guitar (sounding)

Guitar (tabulature)

Midi Switch

Electronics

p.s.t. s.p. l.h. s.t. ord. m.vib. s.vib. s.t.

mp *p* *mf* *p*

pp *mp* *pp* *pp* *mp* *p*

10 *poco accel.* ♩ = 96

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

Midi

El

p.s.p. ord. s.t. s.p. s.t. p.s.p. m.vib. s.vib.

mp *fp* *f* *f* *p*

18 *rit.* ♩ = 63 *accel.* ♩ = 72 *accel. poco a poco*

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

Midi

El

El

s.t. s.p. ord. a.s.t. ord. etc.

mf *mp* *p* *mf* *ff* *mp* *p*

cluster tremolos around pitch

26 ♩ = 144 *accel.* ♩ = fast as possible ♩ = 46

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

Midi

El

El

gradually slow down for 15"

X3 X4 X6

f *mp*

electronics remain in tempo as guitar speeds up

f *pp* *mp* *mf*

32

♩ = 63 *poco accel.* ♩ = 72 *accel.*

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

f *mp* *ff* *mp*

Midi

El

El

mp

♩ = 144 *rit.* ♩ = 96 (♪.=♩) ♩ = 128

36

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

f *sfz* s.t. *mp*

Midi

El

rit. ♩ = 72

42

Gtr. (snd)

ord. p.s.p. ord. p.s.p. ord. m.vib.

Gtr (tab)

ff *f*

Midi

El

f *mf*

49

Gtr. (snd)

p.s.p. s.vib. ord.

Gtr (tab)

mp

Midi

extended guitar resonance

El

54

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

Midi

El

mf m.vib. s.vib. m.vib. f s.vib. s.vib. m.vib. s.vib. mp ord. m.vib.

60

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

Midi

El

p.s.p. s.vib. f s.vib. m.vib. ord. mp m.vib. p.s.p. s.vib. f s.vib. m.vib. s.vib. m.vib. mf

67

♩. = 42

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

Midi

El

s.vib. m.vib. f s.t. mp p mp p mp p mp

72

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

Midi

El

mp p mp p mp p ord. s.p. mf s.t. mp p mp ord. s.p. mf guitar resonance only

79

♩ = 96

accel. ♩ = 108

accel. poco a poco

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

Midi

El

El

ord. mp p.s.p. mf s.p. sfz f sffz (s.p.) p i m a p pp norm. guitar timbre p p

♩ = 160 *rit. poco a poco*

86

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

Midi

El

El

El

extended guitar resonance

mf

♩ = 96

rit.

91

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

Midi

resonance continues until m.110

El

♩ = 63

96

Gtr. (snd)

ord.

s.p.

ord.

s.p.

mp

f

sfz

p a

ord.

Gtr (tab)

El

poco accel. ♩ = 72

101

Gtr. (snd)

s.p.

m.vib.

m.vib.

m.vib.

s.vib.

Gtr (tab)

106

Gtr. (snd)

ord.

s.p.

p.s.p.

(do not rearticulate the notes under the slurs)

slide on ④

sfz

sfz

Gtr (tab)

Midi

El

extended guitar resonance

110

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

mp

f

ff

Midi

pp

El

p

114

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

slide on ④

fff

Midi

clusters of guitar notes

El

mf

mf

mf

118

15ma

poco accel. ♩ = 72

Gtr. (snd)

p a

Gtr (tab)

mp

ff

Midi

quasi-randomized pitches, only rhythms provided in score

El

mf

123

Gtr. (snd)

p.s.t.

Gtr (tab)

mf

Midi

El

El

126

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

Midi

El

El

129

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

Midi

El

El

El

132

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

Midi

El

El

El

135

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

m.vib.

s.vib.

f

mp

Midi

El

El

El

♩ = 52

138

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

Midi

El

El

El

poco vib.
s.t.

mf

mp

f

142

poco accel.

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

Midi

El

s.vib.
s.t.

ord.

harmonics on 4 and 3

p

♩ = 63

148

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

Midi

El

mp *f* *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *mp*

rit.

♩ = 52

153

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

Midi

El

s.p.

ord.

p

f

♩ = 76

158

8va

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

p p p p p p p p p p p p

ff

8va 3

fff

sim.

Midi

El

The guitar resonance from the previous sections rings through.

163

(8va)

accel. poco a poco

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

(rasg.)

p a m i

sempre fff

mp

Midi

El

♩ = 114

169

X4

8va

Gtr. (snd)

Gtr (tab)

s.p.

f

mp f

mp ff

mp ff

mp fff

Midi

El

174

repeat as needed for the retuning

repeat as needed for the retuning

repeat as needed for the retuning

repeat as needed for the retuning

Gtr. (snd)

retune 5th string to a G sharp 35 cents (just major third of the 6th string)

retune 2nd string to a B 47 cents flat (just fifth of the 6th string)

retune 3rd string to an F 53 cents sharp (just major second of the 6th string)

retune 1ststring to an E 51 cents flat (unison with 6th string)

Gtr (tab)

fff

Midi

do not hit MIDI trigger on repeats

El

dense electronics solo

dense electronics solo

dense electronics solo

dense electronics solo

178

rit.

♩ = 63

Gtr. (snd)

p p i m a

Gtr (tab)

mp

Midi

El