

# Snowflake

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for Peyee Chen

Voice and live Electronics (MaxMSP)

## Programme Note:

It is a cliché that no two snowflakes are the same, but the iterative mechanism is what makes it interesting. Many environmental variables influence the formation of each snowflake, and the infinitesimal differences between these variables are magnified by the hexagonal crystal branching structure. So too in this piece, the differences between notes are magnified by the spectral interaction in the electronic part. Differences that are barely perceivable, become magnified by iteration.

*It seems to me very clear and even expectable that end organs [eyes, ears, etc.] can receive only news of difference. Each receives difference and creates news of difference; and, of course, this proposes the possibility of differences between differences, and differences that are differently effective or differently meaningful according to the network within which they exist.*

- Gregory Bateson, Afterword to 'About Bateson' (1977)

## Performance Instructions

- Choose two high register pitches (e.g. D#5-F#5; no closer than a 2<sup>nd</sup> apart, no further than a 5<sup>th</sup>), these are represented by the two lines in the score.
  - Choose comfortable but resonant pitches, that you can sustain and project. The score is marked *piano* but the level of the electronics may require that this is a relatively loud *piano*.
- Each time one of the two pitches is sung it should be microtonally different from the last iteration of that pitch; these differences should mostly be very subtle, the electronics will amplify the differences. Occasionally a larger difference (much less than a semitone) should be used.
- Long lines should be sustained for about 5 seconds, short lines for about 2 seconds.
- Attacks should be clear but note ends should taper off.
  - During sections with *decrescendo*, the notes should gradually disappear into the electronics.
- S-shaped lines are glissandi and should sound prominent, not rushed, or dramatic, but not exaggerated either.
- Breath marks and fermata are paragraph breaks and page breaks respectively. Breath marks should be long enough to distinctly separate the phrases, fermata may be quite long.
- Phonemes should be sung. For most pitches, use hard consonants and distinctive vowel sounds, for *decrescendo* sections use softer consonants and similar vowels.

