

Generator Programme Notes by Gary Ryan

Generator was written for Mark Eden and Chris Stell and is reminiscent of the sounds and rhythms generated by machinery.

The piece opens with a mysterious and spacious slow section in which deep tentative sounds emerge from silence. A series of mosaic-like ideas, which are partly ordered by the performers, underlay a rising melodic progression, with 'electrical sparks' symbolising the creation of the machine. Suddenly a pulsating cog-like rhythm ignites and the machine comes to life with unstoppable rhythmic energy, passing through a series of extraordinary sound worlds until eventually the symmetry of malfunction, death and decay brings the piece to extinction.

Along the way *Generator* explores an amazing array of sounds on the guitar blended with a wealth of musical influences both ancient and modern. There are many sources of inspiration which, through a kind of musical osmosis, have filtered down into the piece. These include techniques used in electronic music, free running, juggling, electrical circuits, obsessive thoughts and addictions, cloning, the harmonic series and its relationship to the blues scale, tribal chanting and folk music from India and America.

Generator was loosely inspired by H R Giger's paintings of 'biomechanoids', half human half machine-like creatures existing in a seemingly bleak futurescape. These surreal dreamscapes were the inspiration for Ridley Scott's movie 'Alien' which earned Giger the 1980 Oscar for Best Achievement for Visual Effects. The influence of the paintings of Max Escher is also present via what the artist described as 'rhythmic repetitions', the mathematical tricks and illusions such as those used in arguably his most famous painting 'The Eternal Staircase'.

The films of the Oscar winning British director Mike Leigh are strongly based around improvisation by the actors, which is then in turn refined and shaped again by the director. With this in mind, some of the musical material in *Generator* is intended to stimulate new ideas in the performers, who then steer the evolution of the piece via subsequent performances of the work.