



Sisyphus in Situ

presented by Paul Koonce

Sisyphus in Situ is my second composition realized using wave field synthesis. The work uses 24 channels of sound to present the classic tale of Sisyphus. In the piece, we don't see Sisyphus, but rather hear him through wobbling sounds selected to depict the step-by-step ascent of the heavy boulder, as it is pushed up the hill. A central synthesis technique in the piece uses sound analysis data to automate the selection of other sounds, chosen so as to reinforce and build upon the resonances and spectral form of the wobbles with which they synchronize. I imagine this process of orchestration as inscriptional, as it uses each driving sound to grow coincident sound events ranging from highlighted resonances, spread across the space's background field, to foregrounded gestural extrapolations and the antiphonies they inspire. I like to think that this range of sound somehow parallels Sisyphus' experience, as it repeatedly shifts between the intimacy of his studied task and the dramatic erasure of its completion, once the boulder meets its fall.



Paul Koonce (b.1956) studied composition at the University of Illinois and the University of California, San Diego where he received the Ph.D. in Music. He is the recipient of fellowships from the Guggenheim and McKnight Foundations, and has received awards and commissions from the Luigi Russolo Competition, the National Flute Association, Prix Ars Electronica, IMEB, ICMA, and Dartmouth College. His music is available on CD from SEAMUS, Mnemosyne, ICMA, Panorama, Innova, Einstein, Centaur, Computer Music Journal, and Mode records. He holds the position of Professor of Music at the University of Florida.