

## Time Bandit

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In Louis Andriessen's book, *The Art of Stealing Time* (2002), he explains the difference between the Baroque and the Romantic conceptions of "rubato." In the Baroque era, the word rubato would tell the performer to lengthen a note and make up the lost time by shortening the following few notes; essentially, a few notes would "lend" time to the note that preceded them. After a transitional Classical period, Romantic performance practice changed the notion of rubato, which then indicated a lengthening of all the notes in the sequence. The borrowed time was never returned; it was "stolen." After all, the Italian verb, rubare, means "to steal or rob," and also, "to withdraw or to be deceptive." In a sense, in creating music, composers steal time from the environment and fix it in musical form.

In his *De Tijd (Time)* from 1979-81, for large ensemble and women's choir, Andriessen sought to express both a temporal stasis (eternity) *and* an audible passage of time. What he did create is a *simulation* of stasis by means an *inaudible* passage of time. He uses "three simultaneously audible musical structures of unequal length" that ultimately come together at the end of the 41-minute piece. These enduring structures give the music a character of constant change (forward motion in time) but escape our perceptions because of their very large scale. To help simulate a stasis, Andriessen bases the harmonies around dominant chords without their fifth scale degree, and with the tonic note of their traditional resolution. For example, one major chord is an E dominant with an added A, the tonic of its resolution chord: "an endless suspension of which the resolution is always present" (Andriessen, 2002: 166).

In this new work, I have stolen Andriessen's harmonic and micro-rhythmic material, pulling it out of its simulated stasis and placing it within a new, more immediate temporal structure. By compressing much of Andriessen's large-scale gestures into a short span, I have recontextualized the sounds and given them different meaning.

Two of Andriessen's other compositions have time-based techniques at their core: *Hout* (1991) is a quartet in which each instrument plays the same melodic line an eighth-note after the one before it – an acoustic delay effect. *Hocketus* (1975-76), for two identical ensembles on either side of a hall, is a long series of hocketed rhythms, the two groups alternating eighth-notes. Samples from Bang on a Can's recordings of these pieces incorporate themselves into my new temporal representation of *De Tijd*.

In listening to *De Tijd*, I hear elements of John Coltrane's epic ballad about his wife, *Naima*. Many of Andriessen's harmonies contain a minor second interval reminiscent of a "minor ninth" sound, and individual lines over pairs of successive Andriessen chords outline descending major and minor thirds, which are significant motives within *Naima*'s melody. To connect the two works, I have superimposed live saxophone lines, often from the *Naima* melody, on top of *De Tijd* chords. To connect certain samples within my work, I have included quick, melodic saxophone lines reminiscent of the post-Coltrane contemporary jazz/jazz fusion style. I have also included sections at the beginning and towards the end for live improvisation.

While Ives most likely used many of his borrowing techniques without classifying them, Burkholder chose to assign to him 14 different methods. I have used some of these, including:

4. *Setting an existing tune* to form a new melody, theme, or motive (*Naima* loosely set to voice leading in Andriessen chords)
8. *Stylistic allusion* (allusion to contemporary jazz in saxophone figures; allusion to Squarepusher and “Intelligent Dance Music” electronic beats)
13. *Patchwork*, in which fragments of two or more tunes are stitched together.

Instead of mimicking a contemporary classical composer’s style, I chose to create my electronic beats by mixing the quick, hyper-rhythmic, often frantic style of Squarepusher with various rhythms associated with African djembe music.

## References

Andreissen, Louis. *The Art of Stealing Time*. Ed. Mirjam Zegers, trans. Clare Yates. Lancs, UK: Arc Music, 2002.

Program notes to below De Tijd compact disc. Schonberger, Elmer. Trans. Nicoline Gatehouse.

Burkholder, J. Peter. "Ives's Use of Existing Music." 1995.

## Recordings Sampled

"Louis Andriessen: De Tijd." Schonberg Ensemble; Reinbert de Leeuw, conductor. New York: Elektra Entertainment, 1993.

"Bang on a Can: Industry." Bang on a Can. New York: Sony, 1995.