

## *Oil Stained America* by Lowell Gerard Fuchs

First Artist/Author: Lowell Fuchs

Mixed Quintet

Performers: Joshua Alexander, AJ Allen, Reese Burgan, Ellis Elzie, & Chris Gravely

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Stuart Gerber

### Fuchs's *Oil Stained America*: The Search for Creative Freedom in Music Composition

The fundamental innovation for this composition was derived from a personal curiosity on how visual senses and aural senses intermingle. Specifically, my focus was directed towards finding visual art containing many textural elements and emulating these textures aurally. The visual elements came from a photograph of an oil stain taken by myself in a parking garage. Using GIMP, an image manipulation program, I was able to explore and abstract textures from the oil stain in ways that simply looking at the photograph would not allow.

The decision to compose *Oil Stained America* for an unspecified ensemble led to many complex challenges. Below I have summarized the compositional process by using a chronological list of challenges I encountered throughout this project and the solutions that were made:

1.) How to create a textural sound world for an unknown ensemble with interchanging instrumentation and be content with the sonic results?

Answer: Strong communication through musical notation.

2.) How to communicate musical instruction to performers when traditional music notation can no longer express the musical concept of the work?

Answer: Graphic Notation

3.) How to craft graphic notational systems that are instructive, clear, and approachable to performers and minimize vague and highly interpretive characteristics within each individual graphic?

Answer:

- Intensive research of contemporary musical works containing graphic notation and of composers who frequently use graphic notation in their compositions.
- Finding reoccurring graphic in contemporary music that make up the "Standard" graphic notations.
- Testing the score with many ensembles of various instrumentations over the course of two months

The importance of sharing my composition *Oil Stained America* and the creation process it underwent is to show that music has no limitations or boundaries. Artistic creativity should not be restricted to staves and key signatures, paint and a canvas, or a hammer and chisel but rather use whatever structure necessary to express original innovation. It is the responsibility of modern artists to use our creativity freely to show the world that there will always be a way to express an idea no matter how complex or simple the idea may be.

Key Words:

*Oil Stained America* by Lowell Gerard Fuchs

First Artist/Author: Lowell Fuchs

Mixed Quintet

Performers: Joshua Alexander, AJ Allen, Reese Burgan, Ellis Elzie, & Chris Gravely

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Stuart Gerber

- Composition
- Graphic Notation
- Creative Freedom
- Textures
- Avant-garde Music