GLOSSOLALIA

For Alto Saxophone and Electronics

-DOUGLAS MCCAUSLAND-

Program Note:

Written primarily in late 2016 to early 2017, and then revised in the summer of 2018, *Glossolalia* is a work for solo alto saxophone and electronics that is both introspectively reflective of, and "extrospectively" influenced by, the socio-political climate of the United States following the 2016 presidential election cycle.

When I began working on this piece, I initially did not intend for it to be a piece with such a pronounced socio-political edge. In fact, *Glossolalia* was originally commissioned as a work for trumpet and fixed-media. It was completed and delivered in early-mid 2017, at which point the performer who had commissioned me backed out only a few hours after delivery citing the "dark tone" and "political content" of the piece. At this point, *Glossolalia* lay dormant for almost a year until I began speaking with saxophonist Kyle Landry. Kyle not only expressed interest in championing the piece, but also expressed that he would also like for the work to have an expanded electronics component, including live-processing. At this point, I began the revision process of re-composing the work for saxophone with live electronics. Ultimately, Kyle and my collaboration yielded a successful premiere performance at the 2018 *New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival*, a performance that I will remember fondly as "the one that was so loud it made part of the ceiling cave in". As such, this piece is dedicated to Kyle as a thank you for his support throughout its creation.

In regards to the specific content of the piece; I was recording demo material with a circuit-bent radio I had just finished preparing late one night in early January 2017. After spending some time 'finding sounds', I flipped from the AM band to FM. In doing so, I was confronted with radio broadcasts filled with hateful rhetoric, sinister message, and manipulative presentation of "facts". Thankfully, I happened to still be recording, and eventually realized that I hadn't moved from that spot for a number of hours. In that session, I was struck by how in this context, even statements that seem at first innocuous can take on new sinister meanings due to their proximity to such outlandish, zealotry-driven, and openly hateful rhetoric.. With this wealth of recorded material, I chose to try and take these broadcasts and turn them "inside out" so to speak, to transform and / or augment them in ways that would ideally expose the logical leaps, signposting, logical fallacies, and broken syntactic relationships.. The broadcasts used in this piece vary in content, covering topics such as: predicting the United States' role in bringing about the biblical apocalypse, why monetary donations earn entry into the afterlife, to the "comforts" of mutually assured destruction, and so on.

I don't intend for this piece to be a prescriptive worldview, and encourage you to consider it from your own lens. However, I do intend *Glossolalia* to exist as a platform in which I can bring blind hatred, the sometimes sinister and manipulative nature of late-night rural radio, and dangerous zealotry under scrutiny.

Electronics Notes / Performance Options:

The electronics for *Glossolalia* are a mixture of fixed-media and two layers of real-time processing. The electronic elements of the piece are represented in the score with time-stamps, cue markers, audio descriptions, and time-aligned spectrographic images. While the term 'electronics' is sometimes vague, this piece in many ways is a quartet sonically between the saxophonist, the pre-programmed live-processing of the saxophonist, the fixed-media, and the interactive live-processing manipulation optionally controlled by a patch operator. For performance, the electronics are encapsulated within a 'patch', which is run through a dedicated program environment created in Max/MSP 7. The patch serves both as an environment to run the fixed-media, and to provide real-time processing such as minimal reverb, delay processing, pitch-shifting, and granular synthesis to augment the saxophone into a sort of meta-instrument. Additionally, the patch can also be used by an 'electronics performer' for more interactivity, and for amplification of the saxophonist. There are three potential options technically for performing *Glossolalia*:

- Lowest Tech Requirement: Though not the desired performance method, *Glossolalia* can be performed with the track and saxophone alone if needed.
- Middle Tech Requirements: *Glossolalia* can be performed with the pre-programmed live-processing and fixed-media by either a performer and patch operator, or by a performer with a foot-pedal.
- Highest Tech Requirements: If possible, *Glossolalia* should be performed with a dedicated 'electronics performer', who by using the patch, can add a further layer of interactive electronics processing to the performance. *This is the ideal method of performance, technical questions are either addressed below, or can be addressed to the composer.*

Performance Notes and Patch Operation:

Time-stamps and cues, paired with brief descriptions of the electroacoustic sound events and spectrographic imagery are

provided within the score in order to aid the performer in understanding the electronics, and how their role as a performer interacts with the electronics. In the event of a performance without the patch, the saxophonist should ideally still be lightly amplified through the same sound system used to perform the electronics; this serves to help the two voices blend more cohesively and to aid in balance. The audio levels for performance should generally be set respectably loud in order to allow events to have the impact desired, but not to a degree that creates a dangerous listening environment.

If using the patch, levels have been set preemptively as best as they can within the patch itself, but care should be taken to check audio levels in the "output mixer" section of the patch accordingly. Optionally, a performer can control the patch via a MIDI; if this is desired you may contact the composer at 'domccau@gmail.com' to pursue a patch specified for a MIDI controller or other device. The primary version of the patch is already optimized to utilize a Korg NanoKontrol2 MIDI controller, with faders assigned to mixing levels, interactive electronics controls, and so on within the patch. The NanoKontrol2 is a very affordable piece of equipment, and does provide a convenient way to perform the electronics for this piece. Alternatively, the electronics can be controlled entirely with the computer keyboard, simply consult the 'readme' file which accompanies the patch. A master volume control has been integrated for overall control of patch volume, this starts at a default level of '0' and must be raised before the patch can be heard; this parameter is controlled with the master fader within the patch – or with the rightmost fader on the Korg NanoKontrol2.

To start the piece, the following steps must be taken:
1. Open the patch in Max/MSP
2. Turn on 'Digital Signal Processing' (lower right-hand corner)
3. Adjust volumes to desired level (as seen in the mixer section at the center of the patch)
4. Press the NanoKontrol2's "Play" button to advance cues, or alternatively the space bar to begin the piece.
5. Continue... Optionally adding additional interactive electronics as desired…

-At the end of the piece...-

1. End with the final cue.
2. After final fadeout, lower output volume
3. Turn off 'Digital Signal Processing" (lower right-hand corner)
4. Close the patch

Note: In performances utilizing the patch, it is HIGHLY recommended to thoroughly test and rehearse beforehand. If the patch starts to generate feedback, take care to lower the amplification volume specifically. If there is a significant malfunction, a "panic" button is built into the patch designed to cut digital signal processing entirely; this triggered with the keyboard key 'esc', or with the NanoKontrol2's "Stop" button.

Technical Requirements:

The patch for this piece is not incredibly CPU-intensive, and though originally designed to run on a Mac platform running OS X Sierra or newer, should be operable on most platforms that can run Max/MSP 7. Additionally, the performance will require an appropriate microphone to amplify the saxophone performer and bring their sound into the patch, USB audio interface with a minimum of one channel in and two channels out, and finally a minimum of two speakers (if possible, it is encouraged for the work to be diffused to a larger speaker setup). The speakers should be placed in the front left and right corners of the room, so as to complement the overall image if the performance is given in stereo.

Any questions in regards to technical requirements such as mic choice, patch operation, larger speaker diffusions, and so on – and questions about performance practices of the piece can be directed to the composer at 'domccau@gmail.com'.

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Please Note: As of the summer of 2018, *Glossolalia* also has a companion work entitled *[re]Glossolalia* for live shortwave radios, handmade electronic instruments, live-processing, and fixed-media. It is closely linked to *Glossolalia*, and utilizes the same radio recordings as source material. More details are available online if you are interested.

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GLOSSOLALIA

For Kyle Landry

Douglas McCausland

Nebulous, unfocused (♩ = 60 app.)

10 seconds

8 seconds

Breath sound through instrument,
slowly increasing in volume to match
fading-in static.

Letter noteheads indicate consonant
to utilize as articulation sound

*In time

Un-pitched
flutter tongue

slap tongue

normale

Alto Saxophone

pp

f

h t k t

p

ff

mp

Elapsed
Time

Electro-
acoustics

0:00 *Fixed Media: "Click", followed
by radio static fade-in*

0:10 *FM: Radio tuning sounds,
voice fragments, etc.*

0:18 *FM: Transposed
piano jingle*

0:22

C. 1

C. 2

10 seconds

10 seconds

Use embouchure / voicing to mimic spoken
voice, pitch contour is general.
'×' indicates tight, '○' indicates loose

Un-pitched
flutter tongue

Use embouchure / voicing to mimic spoken
voice, pitch contour is general.

ff

f

0:26 *FM: Transposed
piano jingle (lower)*

0:30 *FM: "I want to pause right there, because I
know that many of you out there depend on this
program for your alternative news"*

0:40

0:42 *FM: "I told you - a month and a half ago - that we ..."*

C. 3

C. 4

5 seconds

6 seconds

let roll flat,
lose note entirely

normale → aggressive

p   *fp*   *niente*

FM: "... ended up - that we are in deficit of our media bill - of four-hundred and seventy-thousand dollars"

0:52 *FM: Fluttering / distorted crescendo*

0:57 *FM: "Watch them do horrible..."*

7 seconds

31 seconds

Pitched
flutter tongue

normale

embouchure / voicing →
"I want to pause right there..."

p   *ff*

mf

subito p

mf

1:03 *FM: Screech swells in
through radio noise*

1:10 *FM: "Now the Bible says we are going
to defend Israel against the Antichrist"*

... FM: continues with a mixture of speech and radio sounds ...

C. 5

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Glossolalia

gradually

p note: accidentals apply through section unless otherwise notated

f

ff

fff

(1:41) *FM: Modulating screech*

3   5   6   3

(C. 6)

A

14 seconds

Mimic spoken voice, should sound like the "one day you're gonna die" phrase from later in the FM.

30 seconds

Steadily breathe through the sax, inhale and exhale deliberately and close enough to the microphone so it can be adequately amplified to meld into electronic texture, slowly cresc...

Improvise erratic and manic speech-like patterns using fragments of both motive 'A' and 'B'. This section should be evocative of both motives, but should vary wildly in dynamic and style and should not use either motive in its entirety. It should be as if the 'speaker' the sax represents is actually multiple people - or perhaps one person overcome by a severe psychosis. Let it flow directly into next section.

A   *B*

ff

3

FM: "The board and department of children and family services have confirmed that the 14 year-old took her life by hanging herself in the bathroom of her foster parents' home, live on Facebook."

(1:48)

(2:02) *FM: Distortion swells to climax*

(2:06) *FM: For the duration of this section, FM is a chaotic mix of unintelligible speech, radio noise, and brief distorted tones / crackles . While active, it is meant to provide a sonic platform for the saxophone soloist to cut through.*

(C. 7)

(C. 8)

14 seconds

slowly accel

growl / flutter

fp

f

slap tongue

slap tongue, let resonate

fp

fp

(2:36) *FM: Pitched HD motor sweeps up to a slightly flat C#, sustains for approximately 12 seconds before sweeping down.*

(C. 9)

24 seconds

slowly accel

fp

p

f

quick

5

ff

(2:50) *FM: Hard drive tone fades out, and long comb-filtered bass sweep begins descending while reversed radio sounds emerge out of texture, building into a 'breaking point' at 3:14.*
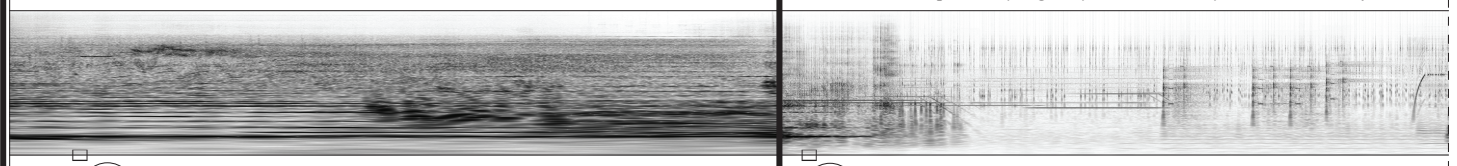
quick

growl / flutter

B *48 seconds*

slap tongue

Remain completely silent and still...

fff

3

(3:14) *FM: Electronics break down completely, what remains are ambient tones underpinned by a glitchy voice-based rhythm. A moment of rest...*
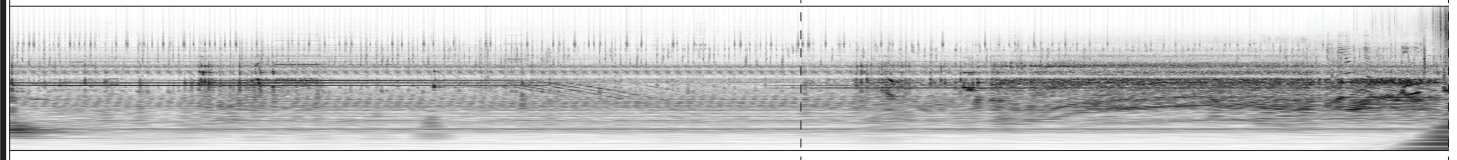
(C. 10) *15 seconds*

(C. 11) *12 seconds*

mp *mf* *mp* *mp* *f* *mf* *3* *ff*

(4:02) *FM: After brief fade-in, sustaining tones re-enter with a 'click'.*

(4:17) *FM: Tones fade-in again, pitched lower*

5 seconds

Letter noteheads indicate consonant to utilize as articulation sound
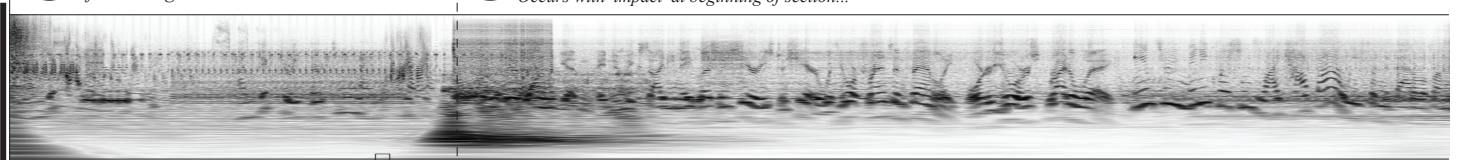
Un-pitched flutter tongue

15 seconds

Use embouchure / voicing to mimic spoken voice, pitch contour is general.

3

t h t k t

f *p*

(4:29) *FM: 'Impact', followed by a mix of stuttering sounds and voice*

(4:34) *FM: "From here to armageddon - a new exciting eight lesson series to share with your friends and family - order yours right away..." Occurs with 'impact' at beginning of section...*

(C. 12)

C *9 seconds* *Wild sung gliss while growling; match character of electronic squeal.* *5 seconds*

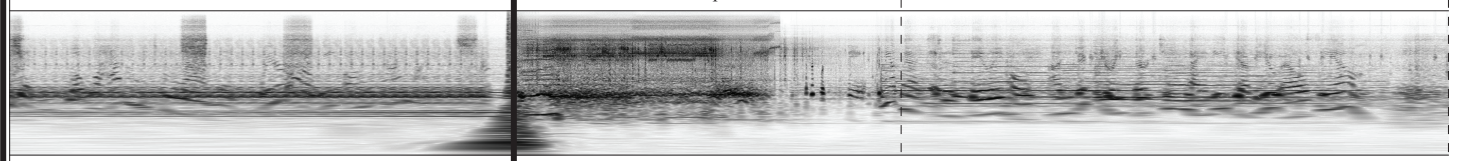*Ad-lib un-pitched 'd' articulation, match with stuttering 'd' in FM*

pretty, match jingle

d d d   d d d

mp *f* *ff* *mf*

(4:49) *FM: Screeching impact, pans around stereo spectrum*

(4:58) *FM: Jingle enters with female radio voice*

6 seconds

Mimic spoken voice, in echo; should sound obviously derived from "One day you're...".

Ad-lib un-pitched 'd' articulation, transition from growled note...

21 seconds

random consonants shifting slowly to 'd'

Gliss on 'Ssss' sound through sax, general pitch contour

ff

d d d → d d d

t s k

SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS

3

slap tongue, into tone

p

(5:03) *FM: Hammer stroke followed by "One day you're gonna die..."*

(5:09) *FM: "-and you get to heaven..." excerpt with rising speech noise in background*

C. 13

14 seconds

D

Let pitch roll flat with descending sung gliss

inhale through instrument

exhale through instrument

Un-pitched flutter tongue

8 seconds

"I want to pause right there..."

4 seconds

t

fp < **f** >

p < **f**

mf

3

niente < **f**

(5:30) *FM: 'Impact', with hard drive tones accompanied by edited speech...*

(5:44) *FM: Speech-rhythm with repeated 'mon-', feedback shot begins fading in at 5:48*

(5:52) *FM: Feedback shot swells*

C. 14

15 seconds

time embouchure growls with feedback

9 seconds

s k s k s k s k s k s k   s k s k

t t t t t t t

f

f > **p**

mp

3   *3*

(5:56) *FM: Broken timbres with shots of distortion interspersed*

(6:11) *FM: "It looks like - money - is a fulfillment of Bible prophecy"*

40 seconds

In this section, improvise wild nonsensical 'gibberish' in the style of earlier speech-style manipulating embouchure inbetween dialogue of FM. It should seem as though the sax voice is responding to the 'insanity' of the conversation by filling in the gaps with 'gibberish' or 'babble.' Variation between dynamic levels and style should be extreme.

E

6 seconds

7 seconds

fp >

f

3

slap tongue, into tone

wild bend

ff

slap tongue, let resonate

(6:20) *FM: Low electronic 'grunt' followed by laughing... Ensuing section is made up of edited / destroyed text that jumps to various points in the thought without regard for syntactic relationships or semiotic content...*

(7:00) *FM: "I saw the movie", "well then we're dead", "right"*

(7:06) *FM: "One day you're gonna die", followed by radio audio and a feedback fade-in*

C. 15

3 seconds

3 seconds

18 seconds

repeat note, gradually accel

ffp *maintain note at low volume*

3

5

3

(7:13) FM: 'Impact' and feedback fade-in

(7:16) FM: 'Impact' and "Why do I get the feeling this..."

(7:19) FM: 'Impact' followed by mechanical stutters and dissonant hard-drive tones

6 seconds

29 seconds

3 seconds

after sustaining, let pitch roll flat back to C-sharp

simile, roll flat back to D-sharp

in time with final quote

ff

ffp > *niente* < ***mf*** > *niente* < ***mf*** > *niente*

f

lose note entirely

3

(7:37) FM: Loud upward gliss with feedback

(7:43) FM: Hard-drive tones with accompanying conversation about mutually assured destruction in the case of nuclear attack - offhand playoff of "I saw the movie", etc.

(8:12) FM: Final "One day you're gonna die"

(8:15) FM: -END-

C. 16

C. 17