

# **Art of the Synthesizer in four Books**

**Bill Robinson**

**for Synthesizers in 14 tracks**

April 1984—July 1985: re-written August 1—Sept. 7, 2005

*Duration:* Total, 34' (and a little bit);  
Book the First, 13'; Book the Second, 8 ½'; Book the Third, 5';  
Book the Fourth, 7 ½', of course all depending on taste

*In Loving Memory of 2(methylamino)-2(o-chlorophenyl) cyclohexanone*

This work originated in Denton, Texas as one of several intended for live performance by the Zebras, a group of five synthesizers at NTSU that played jazz and pop music. However my scores were both too difficult and too different from what they were accustomed to playing, and the music was rejected.

I got my first synthesizer in 2004 (a Roland JV-2080 module) and can now hear and record my electronic music. The original score required a great deal of re-writing, major cuts, and addition of details to make the first recording. I am not a specialist in electronic music, nor do I have elaborate equipment; however the first effort gives a good idea as to the intent. This and the *Variations on Beethoven's Great Fugue* are, and will remain, my only ventures into electronic music.

This score is designed to be used by electronic musicians in much the same way as classical scores, although implicit in the medium is rather more flexibility in realization. The score is available in the original Finale format and also in a MIDI file. I have included the patch settings appropriate for my setup, but of course this would be different for another musician and is only a general guide. Likewise, the

dynamics are adjusted for this specific synthesizer and those patches and can only be a general idea for another setup. The first recording is a good guide for the initial intent. The synthesist is expected to add tracks, doublings, new articulations, and whatever else required to bring the score to life in his vision of how it should sound. While an elaborate studio could render the music in splendid fashion, the music is designed to play on very modest equipment. Adequate gear is easily available given the power of currently available personal computers and programs.

Live performance is an ideal that may or may not be practical; certainly 14 keyboardists (and their attendant egos) would be difficult to herd together on any stage. However it could be done, especially as the score could be edited to combine synths. Almost all the time each track could be played by one hand. Rarely there are octave doublings (most notably at the end of the fourth book) that could be played with an automatic octave doubling on a synth. Perhaps more realistic would be an arrangement for a large performance ensemble of any suitable type. Another future possibility would be a device for controlling a live performance of a sequenced synthesizer, as such devices are under development. This could allow spontaneous control of phrasing, tempos, dynamics and other subtleties that can be rather cold in a studio-produced recording.

As a general rule the emphasis should be on simplicity, clarity, and musical expressiveness, with a minimum of sound effects, goofy noise, and other contemporary bushwa. You may note that the only percussion in my music is pitched, such as vibraphone, marimba, and most especially timpani (which I manage to fit into the most unlikely places throughout my catalog). Please do not add a trap set!

This is a relatively long work and may be difficult to perform or record all at once. Each book can stand alone or in any combination with the others. Also they may be distributed through a program if the musicians fear the short attention span of the audiences. Enjoying this music requires attention and clear focus; it is *not* suitable for background music.

By the way, the tempo marking for Book the Third, *Largo ricardo*, is due to the Wagnerian flavor of the opening (repeated near the end).

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