

## **David Gorton**

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### **Austerity in Performance: David Gorton's Austerity Measures I for 10-string guitar** (Paper and a live performance)

This presentation is co-authored with Dr. Stefan Östersjö, Dr. Dirk Moelants, and Prof. Dr. Esther Coorevits. Performer Stefan Östersjö.

The score of David Gorton's *Austerity Measures I* functions as an inhuman economic system which imposes increasing restrictions on the actions of the human performer. It consists of 64 bars of musical material and a set of instructions, requiring the performer to play through the given material four times. On each repetition, a proportion of the given material is cut out and replaced with silence, meaning that by the fourth rendition only a quarter of the original material remains: fragments of a blasted landscape punctuated by long silences. While the performer has some choice of which materials to cut and when to cut them, the system nevertheless forces the performer to re-evaluate the materials in each repetition, devising performance strategies to manage the implications of the cuts in the shaping of fractured phrases and the framing of ever increasing silences. Seen as capital, the cut materials attain a sense of nostalgia, being implied and referenced by the surrounding, surviving materials. And yet, the composition only comes into full existence through its own deconstruction in performance. The piece acts as a metaphor for the human condition of managing circumstances beyond their control. Using the quantitative analysis of audio and qualitative analysis of video, taken from live performances of the piece, this presentation will consider the manner in which the individuality, and indeed humanity, of the performer is expressed through their interaction and engagement with the system imposed within the piece. How does the performer express their identity within the inhuman framework defined by the score? The analysis has been carried out by a team of researchers including the performer, the composer, and two researchers from IPeM (Ghent University), using onset timing data [Leech-Wilkinson, D. (2009)] and the coding of perceived expressive gesture [Desmet, F., Nijs, L., Demey, M., Lesaffre, M., Martens, J.-P., & Leman, M. (2012)], aiming at a multi-dimensional understanding of musical expression in performance. The study contributes to knowledge in a range of disciplines, including artistic research in music, gesture research, and performance studies. The presentation will include a live performance of the piece by Stefan Östersjö.

**David Gorton's** music first came to public attention in 2001 when he was awarded the Royal Philharmonic Society Composition Prize. Commissions followed for ensembles that include the London Sinfonietta, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Ensemble Exposé, and the Kreutzer Quartet. His music has been performed throughout Europe and America, in China, and in Vietnam. Much of his recent music is recorded on the Métier label. As a researcher Gorton is interested in exploring new instrumental techniques, alternative tuning systems, and developing diverse models of collaborative practice. He is the Associate Head of Research at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

**Stefan Östersjö** is a leading classical guitarist. Since his debut CD (Swedish Grammy in 1997) he has recorded extensively and toured Europe, the US and Asia. As a soloist he has cooperated with conductors such as Lothar Zagrosek, Peter Eötvös, Mario Venzago and Andrew Manze. He received his doctorate in 2008 on a dissertation on interpretation and contemporary performance practice and has since then been engaged in artistic research at the Malmö Academy of Music and the Orpheus Institute.