Il Prete Rosso
for amplified violin, motion sensor, and computer

Charles Nichols
Il Prete Rosso, for violin, motion sensor, and computer, was inspired by the violin concertos of Italian Baroque composer and virtuoso violinist Antonio Vivaldi, who was nicknamed The Red Priest because of his red hair and Catholic ordination. In the piece, the amplified violin is recorded live and played back in four parts, spatialized around the audience, as an accompaniment with itself. Following the violinist, a computer musician triggers wah, phaser, and delay effects, that process the amplified violin. A motion sensor on the hand of the violinist tracks bow arm performance gesture, to interactively control the frequency sweep of the wah effect. Il Prete Rosso was written for Sarah Plum, with a commission from Drake University, and composed at the Brush Creek artist retreat. The full premiere was performed in the 124.4-channel spatial audio system in the Cube of the Moss Arts Center at Virginia Tech.