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Music 220b

Artful Computer Intervention

The claim that computers should do things that can't be done without them seems obvious, but that hadn't occurred to me until recently, when it was explicitly said during class and then reinforced in the reading. Paul Lansky's "Homebrew" is an example of a piece that could only exist because of computers. When we listened to the movement "Table's Clear" in class, I felt like computer music suddenly became more accessible to me. Prior to this class, I had never really heard computer music that reflected some aspect of daily life. Even though "Homebrew" is comprised of familiar sounds, the composition is "only possible through some artful intervention of the computer." After assignment 1, Homebrew, was assigned to us and after finishing reading chapter 4 of *Artful Design*, I started to notice the sounds around me a lot more. It was almost as if, though it sounds cheesy, my days had turned into soundtracks. The mere thought of the Homebrew assignment in the back of my head allowed me to find beauty in the mundane.

"Beijing" is another example of a piece that transforms everyday sounds into a work of art. Hearing an excerpt of it in class was somewhat nostalgic for me. I'm of Chinese descent, and though I don't visit China often, I'm familiar with the subway message and the street food that Ge mentioned in his book. Since I grew up in the U.S., however, I tend to associate things that are Chinese more closely with my parents or grandparents than to myself, who I would consider to be more "traditional" than I am. Like many other children of immigrants, I sometimes feel a disconnect from my parents in the sense that we were brought up in different cultures, but listening to Beijing seemed to bridge that gap in my mind. Technology has the power to intertwine the traditional (or what I think of as "traditional") and the modern.