

FOLIAGE FORWARD

Elliott is the most prolific musician I know. He never seems to sleep and is always working on something new with a guitar in one hand, a computer in the other, and a cup of coffee between the two.

This kind of restless energy is reflected in his latest graphic score *Foliage*. A sense of motion and improvisation is made visible through a sequence of distorted pages of traditionally notated music. These twisted white staff lines and white notations on black backgrounds are in sharp contrast with the fixed and linear nature of traditional notation.

Previously, Elliott has generated a number of scores informed by his interest in the mathematics of the Fibonacci series, the Golden Ratio, and fractal geometry. This lineage is visible in *Foliage*, but he is now using a more organic and aleatory process.

Using graphics software, Elliott creates the visual equivalent of what he does with audio editing software in a live performance. Altering what he sees the same way he alters what he hears, by modulating, distorting, filtering, stretching, multiplying, layering, inverting, blurring, and ultimately exploding the traditionally written sheet music.

In *Foliage*, design and spontaneity become one by engaging the creativity of the interpreters. Elliott is not only interested in blurring the distinction between structure and improvisation, but also between digital and analogue. Electronics are not only tools for him to extend the potential of acoustic instruments, but are also a new way to write music. This balanced approach lets him retain a tactile and acoustic quality in live performance.

I find that musicians often come up with images that visual artists would not create, because they have the advantage of “hearing images,” a synesthesia that comes from years of practice and playing, a unique synchronization between the eyes, the hands, and the instrument. Through this transposition from sound to image and back, *Foliage* will inspire musicians to play what they see and make audible what Elliott hears in his graphics.

Christian Marclay
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