Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

DARREN MILLER

MMus (University of Victoria, 2008)
BMus (University of Saskatchewan, 2005)

“The Morphing and Morphology of Music and Audio”

School of Music

Wednesday, May 20, 2015
1:00pm
David Turpin Building
Room A136

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Dániel Biró, School of Music, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Prof. Christopher Butterfield, School of Music, UVic (Member)
Dr. John Celona, School of Music, UVic (Member)
Dr. George Tzanetakis, Department of Computer Science, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Joshua Fineberg, College of Fine Arts, Boston University

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Suzanne Urbanczyk, Department of Linguistics, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

The following dissertation thesis is concerned with two closely related concepts: morphing and morphology; as they inform the analysis, understanding, manipulation, synthesis, and – above all – composition of music and audio. As a composer of contemporary music, my primary focus will be on the creative possibilities suggested by research into sonic morphing and morphology. This focus will be most clearly embodied in the accompanying composition for ten musicians (for chelsea smith), and its analysis in the sixth chapter of the written dissertation. The remaining thesis will deal with the contextualization of this research within the broader history of western art music. Traditional paradigms of musical organization such as pitch, timbre, and form will be considered in light of the existing literature on morphing and morphology. Bookending these considerations of past repertoire will be separate chapters dedicated to sonic morphing’s terminological and technological aspects, respectively.

Given that my compositional practice is equally rooted in live electronics and more traditional performing forces, attention will be given to both spheres of activity. The terms “musical morphology” and “musical morphing” will therefore refer to a highly diverse body of sound types and production methods, necessitating a wide variety of research methods. First, terminology and literature will be addressed in Chapter 1. Analyses of past music will follow in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. Technical research and development will be presented in Chapter 5, while the creative production that is the primary focus of my project will receive attention in Chapter 6 and the appended musical composition: for chelsea smith.