



# Mike Olson Six Projects

1. Flute Clouds	06:00
2. Noopiming	20:32
3. De Novo	05:56
4. What They're Doing	07:38
5. Implied Movement	09:24
6. Shift	05:44
Total:	55:14

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**Flute Clouds** was created in 2007 for the unveiling of Atmosphere: a large site-specific sculpture installation created by Joyce Crain, ([www.joycecrain.com](http://www.joycecrain.com)) with choreography by Susan Ginrasso, ([www.uwsp.edu/theatre-dance/Pages/Faculty/ginrasso.aspx](http://www.uwsp.edu/theatre-dance/Pages/Faculty/ginrasso.aspx)). The work was installed at the University of Utah in Blanding.

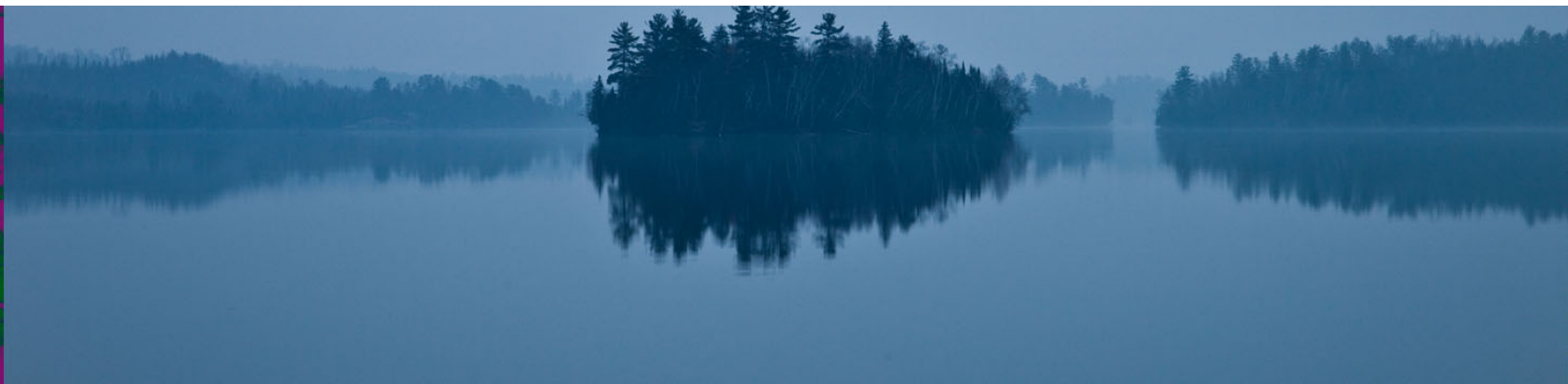
Flute Clouds is another of my fragment-based compositions. I recorded Tom Kehoe ([www.miratomkehoe.com](http://www.miratomkehoe.com)) performing a variety of improvisational gestures on an assortment of Western and non-Western flutes. I then edited that material and constructed the finished piece in the computer using the various musical fragments as source material. The piece also makes use of a homemade wind chime made-up entirely of old keys, and some natural sounds of wind, rain and distant thunder.

The metaphor upon which the sculpture was based is a meteorological phenomenon called virga. These are cloud formations that consist of clouds with rain falling from them that never quite reaches the ground. The falling rain forms long wispy tails that extend beneath the clouds. I took some creative license and included the sound of rain impacting on the ground.

Tom Kehoe: Flutes

Mike Olson: Wind chimes and sound design





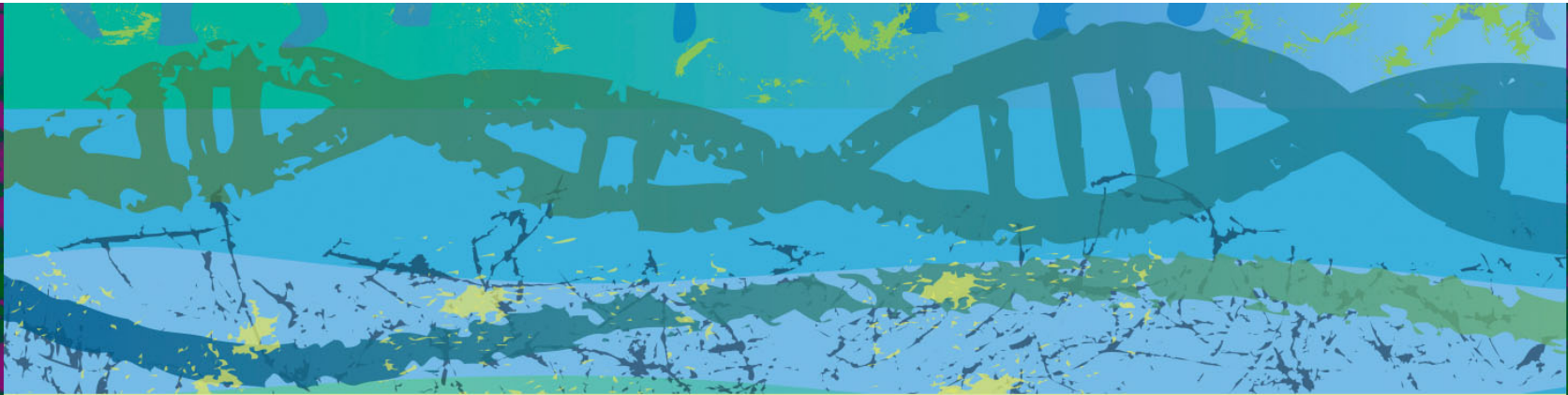
**Noopiming** is a single movement a cappella choral piece. The title of the work is also the text. Noopiming is an Ojibwe word which translates as "in the North, inland, in the woods". All of the vocalizations in the piece are created using various elements of this single word.

The piece has as its primary aesthetic underpinning, some of my own personal impressions of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. I have been doing canoe trips in the BWCA my entire life and have often felt a sense of connection with the natural world there. It's a feeling of being connected to something primordial - something darkly beautiful that seems to draw me in, while at the same time, if I'm not mindful, could swallow me whole, leaving no trace.

Kim Sueoka:	Soprano
Kathy Lee:	Soprano
Kris Kautzman:	Alto
Linda Kachelmeier:	Alto
Bryan Fisher:	Tenor
Justin Karch:	Tenor
Tim O'Brien:	Bass
Mike Meyer:	Bass

I collaborated with the wonderful photographer Dale Robert Klous ([www.dalerobertklous.com](http://www.dalerobertklous.com)) on this project. He has a beautiful and powerful body of work focussing on the BWCA and his aesthetic was a perfect fit for Noopiming. After the music was completed I created a DVD slide show of Dale's images that was tightly synchronized with the music.





**De Novo** is scored for Moog synthesizer, Hammond organ, drums and percussion. It was created for an animation by multimedia artist, Lynn Fellman, ([www.fellmanstudio.com](http://www.fellmanstudio.com)). Lynn's work strives to communicate discoveries in human evolution and genomic science through art and narrative. The title of this composition comes from Lynn's work associated with research being done on the Neanderthal genome. De Novo literally means "something new" and refers to genetic mutations that all humans and their extinct cousins, the Neanderthals, are born with. The overall form of this composition was strongly influenced by input Lynn provided regarding our current understanding of the human genome and how it has developed over time.

This is another of my fragment-based compositions, where all of the performances were essentially guided improvisations, which were recorded separately and then heavily edited and used as source material for the final compositional construction in the computer. It was my very great pleasure to work with drummer Dave King and percussionist Heather Barringer on this project.

Dave King:	Drums
Heather Barringer:	Percussion
Mike Olson:	Hammond organ and Moog Model 12 modular synthesizer





**What They're Doing** was created out of preexisting musical fragments on a computer using digital audio editing techniques, during a period extending from the Fall of 2003 into mid January of 2004. It is the third piece which I have created using this compositional technique. The contemporary concert music ensemble, Zeitgeist, provided me with four CDs full of various unreleased live performance recordings of their group. I recorded this material into a computer, and then went through each piece, carefully extracting fragments, which I thought could be musically useful for the composition I wanted to create. I then used these fragments as source material for the multi-layered composition construction of the finished piece in the computer.

Heather Barringer and Patti Cudd - Percussion / Pat O'Keefe - Woodwinds  
Shannon Wettstein, Anatoly Larkin and Carl Witt - piano / Alastair Brown - Violin  
([www.zeitgeistnewmusic.org](http://www.zeitgeistnewmusic.org))

Compositions from which musical fragments were extracted:  
Genesis VII and Three Songs of the Spirit: Janika Vandervelde / Scherzo: Stefan Kac  
Eclipse Time: Paul Drescher / Improvisation: Zeitgeist / Lucky Dreams: Anthony Gatto  
Sound Fishes: Pauline Oliveros / Zamuro Tumbo Mirage: Ricardo Lorenz  
Two Fridas: Carl Witt / Unlimited Partnerships: Arthur Krieger  
Webster Band Suite: Webster Elementary School students





**Implied Movement** is an electronic music piece, created on a combination of vintage and contemporary analogue modular synthesizers and a vintage Minimoog D. All of the material was recorded into a computer, where the final composition was assembled using my fragment-based compositional process. The piece has as its primary organizational underpinning, a series of short repeating ostinatos, which are constantly evolving in one way or another. This is significant, as it is a bit of a departure for me. I tend to avoid loops like the plague, but using hardware-based sequencers on this project opened my mind to the idea of working with repeating patterns. This naturally brought me back to Minimalism, which is clearly in evidence as an influence in this piece.

The technology also lends itself well to chance operations through the application of random voltages, which can be controlled and shaped to some degree. An example of this can be heard near the beginning of the piece at about 0:45, when the first quick notes appear.

The prominent melodic material in the middle of the piece was performed on the Minimoog through a Big Muff distortion box. A beautiful combination.

Mike Olson: Moog Model 12, Modcan and various eurorack modular syntheizers and Minimoog D.





**Shift** consists of two primary sections. It opens with a short gesture performed on a Minimoog, (see image above). This gesture ends in a drone, which crossfades into a drone generated by a sample of a female voice. This voice sample is what this whole first section is based on. It's of a woman singing a long held note on a single pitch, while gradually shifting through the vowel sounds, a-e-i-o-u. A chord is gradually built up using this sample, starting with the lowest note and ending with the highest note. The sample plays slower to generate lower notes and faster to get higher notes. The notes of the chord were laid-out in time, lowest to highest so that they would all reach the end of the sample at the same time. This creates a very interesting effect with the overtones. Once this high point is reached, the entire process is reversed, (though in a sonically mutated form) until we get back to the original note that we started with.

This mutated vocal drone transitions fluidly into the second section, which starts with a descending three-note Minimoog ostinato. Interestingly, this ostinato is joined by - and works contrapuntally with - a second bass part, which along with some minimal drums, form a nice groove. Buzzy electronic strings are added along with a Minimoog solo, before we return to the mutated voice sample at the end of the piece.

Mary Danna: Voice

Mike Olson: Minimoog, Roland D550 and EMU Proformance 1+ synthesizers,  
Akai S900 sampler and Linndrum drum machine





All music recorded by Mike Olson, with the exception of the source material for "What They're Doing", which was provided by Zeitgeist. Mixed and mastered at Intuitive with additional mastering at Rare Form.