

## ABSTRACT:

### **Dripping, Leaking, Framing, Flowing, and Dynamic Form: Narrative Allusions to Heraclites and Hitchcock**

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The paper investigates how associations elicited by naturalistic sounds in electronic music influence the creation and interpretation of musical form, via narrative. In particular, the associations of water sounds are considered.

A number of important electronic works stress water sounds: Hugh Le Caine's *Dripsody* (1955), Barry Truax's *Riverrun* (1986), and Wayne Slawson's *Water Colors* (2006). In such works, water sounds, like other borrowed sounds, provide affect. Yet, more than is the case with many other borrowed sounds, water sounds also suggest processive narratives. This is because the sound of water implies motion—still water is silent. Heraclites's river slogan—"upon stepping into rivers, ever different waters flow"—plays a role here. Narratives conjured by water sounds emphasize continuous flux over crisp change or stasis. So they suggest *dynamic form* over static form, form as flux rather than form as structure.

Truax and Slawson describe their works as composed of sections built from processes. Le Caine's *Dripsody* is more problematic. Superficially, its highest level of form also seems sectional (ABA), but further consideration reveals a dynamic (processive) form interrupted by an intervening process. The author reflects on how his childhood experience of hearing Alfred Hitchcock's *Ghost Stories for Young People* perhaps influenced his reading of *Dripsody*'s form, because Hitchcock's telling of the stories involves a framing narrative based on a dripping water process repeatedly interrupted. Also presented will be the author's processive form graph for *Dripsody*; it synthesizes the flux of loudness, contour, transposition, and drip-pulse density into one visual representation.