I never thought of the possibility of combining a live score with premade computer music, and the addition of the live reader even further impressed me. I thought that the fast attack, shrill nature of the stringed instruments combined very well with the mellow background noise generated by the computer. It seemed like the piece followed a pattern of chaos at some climax points, followed by slow mellow drones that the voices would emerge from, and then to act as a comment to what the voices said, the strings would amplify and match the mood created by the drone and voices. I also liked how spacey the piece was. It created a sort of eerie atmosphere that made the strings and voices sound very haunting. Additionally the use of reverb on the male voice made it seem distant and dreamy which I think suited the piece very well.

Watras made it clear what the focus was at any given point. If the voce was talking, the strings and electronic aspect went to the background, and if the strings were the focal points everything else seemed like it meshed together to form a solid base for the strings to work off of.

Hearing Watras speak about how this sort of performance is coordinated impressed me. I originally thought the electronic score was all prerecorded and the performers just played their parts exactly the same way every time. Instead, the electronic part was cued at various points based off where the performers were in the piece. So she designed her performances with a lot of flexibility to allow the performer some freedom in their interpretations.

If I were to do a similar piece, I think I would put the electronic component on stage. I didn’t even know there was an electronic part being performed when it was happening because she was behind the audience. I would also make the computer part more prominent and maybe give it some control over the melody instead of it being in the background the whole time. I also would get a performer for the male voice and run it through reverb to give it the same effect. I just don’t see a point in only revealing half of the performance to the audience, it is very misleading and hard to tell what is being created live verses premade.

Overall I think it was very entertaining, but I would have liked to see more of what was behind the scenes. As part of the audience, it can be really distracting and take away from the beauty if you are too busy wondering what is actually being performed, but that’s just my opinion.

I also attended a bit over an hour of the Harry Parch presentation (extra credit??), and I was incredibly interested in some of compositions and instruments he came up with. As an engineer, I have a lot of respect for those who take matters into their own hands and make things themselves. It is clear he had a specific vision, and did all that was possible to achieve it. I think that is one of the most important qualities of an artist. I also enjoyed decrypting his notation on his scores. It is very logical versus standard music notation, which I like. The thing I found most interesting is how he developed his scale with the purpose of being able to notate human speech. I never considered the small pitch fluctuations in speech, but now it is clear to me. Overall, I enjoyed the presentation a lot and wish I could play around with some of his exotic instruments!