International Conference on New Interfaces for Musical Expression

Alt F in Front of the Body

D. Andrew Stewart¹, Michał Seta², Dirk Stromberg³

¹University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Canada,

²Société des Arts Technologiques, Montréal, Canada, ³LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Alt F in Front of the Body is a performance showcasing three developed Digital Musical Instruments (DMI) whose combined history spans two decades: karlax, t-stick and phallophone.

The development of the karlax commenced in 2001, with the developers (Dury and Garabédian) constructing the initial TUB-x prototype. In 2006, the first t-stick – tenor t-stick – of the family of t-sticks was developed at the Input Devices and Music Interaction Lab at McGill University, led by a technologist-composer duo (Malloch and Stewart). The phallophone, described by its inventor (Stromberg) as a physical manifestation of a trans-visual/aural experience in performance, was completed in 2015. As a result, the composite creative work around these three instruments spans 20 years, coinciding with the emergence of the NIME community, itself.

The creative undercurrent of Alt F in Front of the Body is twofold.

Firstly, the praxis for all three instruments includes a performance orientation similar to regular instruments, which are held with two hands and positioned in front of the performer. Consequently, all three instruments may be understood as extensions of the performers' physiology, expanding the performers' reach into the surrounding space and soundscape; DMIs of this nature cease to be instrument-objects and, in the spirit of Merleau-Ponty's (1962) *Phenomenology of Perception*, become areas of sensitivity, extending the scope and active radius of touch and listening outward from the body.

Secondly, Alt F may be understood as a metaphor, and response to, alternative facts (Alt F), or an alternative truth sensibility. We wish to draw attention to a worldview that is human-centric, uncovering truths through play with the body. Alt F is a tribute to those who open new paths of play, questioning, appreciating and discovering new approaches. Consequently and in response to the NIME theme, we propose that without play, learning is impossible. "Play is a taproot from which original art springs; it is the raw stuff that the artist channels and organises with all [their] learning and technique." (Nachmanovitch, 1990)

While the trio of digital musical instrumentalists, who will perform Alt F, have a rich history of in-the-flesh, live electronic performance, they have learned to adapt to telematic performances. Consequently, they are able to share what they have learned with the NIME community by providing a remote performance.

PROGRAM NOTES

Alt F in Front of the Body showcases three instruments: karlax, sopranino t-stick and phallophone. The composite creative work around these DMIs spans twenty years, coinciding with the emergence of the NIME community, itself. The development of the karlax commenced in 2001, with the developers (Dury and Garabédian) constructing the initial TUB-x prototype. In 2006, the first t-stick was developed at the Input Devices and Music Interaction Lab at McGill University, led by a technologist-composer duo (Malloch and Stewart). The phallophone, described by its inventor (Stromberg) as a physical manifestation of a trans-visual/aural experience in performance, was completed in 2015. The creative undercurrent of Alt F is twofold. Firstly, these instruments, positioned in front of the body, are extensions of the performers' physiology; DMIs of this nature cease to be instrument-objects and become areas of sensitivity, extending the scope and active radius of touch and listening outward from the body. Secondly, Alt F is a response to alternative facts. Alt F is a tribute to those who seek truth by opening new paths of play, questioning, appreciating and discovering new approaches. Play is a taproot from which original art springs; it is the raw stuff that the artist channels and organises with all their learning and technique (Nachmanovitch, 1990).

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

Date constraint

- Avoid scheduling performance on 17 June, 16:00 to 21:00 UTC, if possible, please

Audio

- Minimum 2 channels (stereo) output, but 6 to 8 channels, equally spaced in performance area, are preferred. Full range, 3-way or 4-way PA system, appropriately time aligned with sufficient power for 110dB at the mix position.
- 3 stage monitors
- 1 In Ear Monitor pack (stereo) if available
- 4 DI boxes or equivalent number of channels of multi-channel system (e.g., 12 DI boxes for multi-channel system)
- Audio connectivity from stage to the mixing console

Video

- Digital projector
- Large screen/surface

- Long HDMI cable

Electrical

- 7 power bars/sources
- Extension cords

Network

- High Speed (200mbps) internet connection

Furniture

- 3 chairs
- 2 small tables

Space

- 1 hour (set-up)
- 1 hour (rehearsal, if possible)
- Venue preferences in order of preference: 1st gallery, 2nd concert stage, 3rd public space

Performers

- 3 digital musical instrumentalists (authors)

Feasibility

- Please refer to composite performer history (PDF)

MEDIA

Alt F in Front of the Body will be a newly created and premiered composition at NIME 2021.

Visit the web version of this article to view interactive content.

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