International Conference on New Interfaces for Musical Expression

The International Soundboard of Tourism

**Adam Colestock¹, Yiru Lu¹, Po-Wen Shih¹, Christina Lan¹,
Dorian Janezic¹, Michael Morran¹, Enrique Garcia¹**

¹NYU Tisch / NYU Shanghai

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1. ABSTRACT

We are a collective of artists from around the world enrolled in NYU's Global Low Residency program in Interactive Media Arts and, in this project, we are collaborating to build and learn to play together in an online environment. We have been learning remotely since last summer as part of the inaugural cohort of the Low-Res IMA program, which is rooted in a maker culture of "learning by doing", creative expression, and critical engagement. Essential to our time together has been developing our own individual artistic forms of expression, as well as sharing experiences with each other grounded in our own local contexts.

For this project we have designed a musical interface inspired by the spirit of our program by creating an experience that invites each musician to develop their own 'instrument,' gathering and representing distinctive features of their locales according to their own personal style and orientation to critical engagement. These sonifications of our respective cities are then uploaded to an online platform allowing us to perform, compose and remix as we are learning to play and playing to learn...together.

Together, we represent four countries and six different cities. We came together having all met for the first time through our program and, due to circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, we have not had a chance to meet in person as was originally intended. Consequently, we have sought ways to strengthen ties and build community remotely. The design of this musical interface emerged from such an attempt as we saw a unique chance to explore cities we know very little about and would otherwise never experience through the eyes and ears of a local.

After some initial planning sessions we headed out into our respective cities with our focus directed towards identifying aspects of our lived environment that we thought would contribute something interesting to the musical conversation that we were developing. We experimented with direct sound recordings as well as the sonification of data streams gathered using sensors or online data repositories. Through the initial collection and subsequent iterations of how we each chose to highlight our cities, we were building not just a practice in harmonizing, but an opportunity to establish camaraderie.

In order to be able to perform using the sounds that are collected from or generated by our cities, a web-browser interface uses socket connections to coordinate all captured data to generate audio and visual output. The performers can draw on the

interface, and respond to the interactions of others in real time. Raspberry Pis with relevant sensors are used to collect and to connect live data to the webpage. For example, we are exploring synthesizing sound from air quality sensors in Shanghai or live streaming the sirens regularly tested by firehouses in Ljubljana. Through computation and sound synthesis, these data will become part of an ensemble of six place-based sound instruments, which we will use to practice and perform.

2. BIO(S)

We are a collective of artists from around the world enrolled in NYU's Global Low Residency program in Interactive Media Arts and, in this project, we are collaborating to build and learn to play together in an online environment.

Adam is a coding teacher from Chicago often found biking the lakefront trail who enjoys a nice long stare at a Jackson Pollock painting.

Michael is a theatre-maker from Austin who loves running his dog around Town Lake and is fascinated by the highway noise barriers near his home.

Enrique is a creative technologist from Mexico City who enjoys walking randomly through the city and making experiments with code, interfaces and sound.

Christina is a sound artist from NYC who misses biking home at 5am after bouncing between clubs, ending on some glittery, sticky floor, crying with strangers to bootleg MC.

Yiru is a spatial and experience designer from Shanghai who loves walking and listening to sounds in the city and the river park near her home.

Po-Wen is a designer based in Shanghai who enjoys art and music making. Currently, he is experimenting with city sound signatures he collects in parks.

Dorian is a sound engineer from Ljubljana. If not in the studio, he enjoys being surrounded by nature, playing sports and cooking.

Hongyi is a photographer in Shanghai interested in using the combination of sound and video to express the relationship between the individual and the environment.

3. LINKS

<https://vimeo.com/517891246>

<http://www.internationalsoundboard.xyz/>

4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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