

Tuned Constraint

Federico Visi

Interdisciplinary Centre for Computer Music Research (ICCMR),
Plymouth, United Kingdom
federico.visi@plymouth.ac.uk

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Performance Description

In the past four decades, electronic music performance has seen several paradigm shifts in the way it is performed live. New electronic musical instruments and the role of the performer's body are still highly debated topics at academic conferences and in artistic environments. This is also due to the nature of the medium itself, as the presence of the performer is not strictly necessary for a performance to happen. However, some electronic performers rely heavily on their presence and make use of their bodies in very detailed and profound manners, for instance by performing with sensors capturing their biologic signals.



Figure 1. Still from the performance.

In this performance, I wanted to combine recent motion sensors technologies I have been using for my doctoral research with the classic modalities of interaction involved in traditional analogue synthesis, such as operating knobs and switches on a synthesiser front panel. My goal is to explore the constraints that both interface paradigms impose on the gestural behaviour of the body, and to use such constraints as constitutive expressive elements. From a research standpoint, I argue that there is an emerging vocabulary of gestures involved in electronic music performance that is becoming part of a shared knowledge, similarly to what we have observed with other instruments (Visi et al. 2015). In this work, the performer's body is the site where different control paradigms are actualised, and the actions involved in the process are integral parts of the musical experience of the audience. This practice as research work aims at exploring and reflecting on how the choice of interfaces (and consequentially its constraints and affordances) can have a radical impact on liveness, immediacy, presence, and flow of the performance.

Additional information

Biography

Federico Visi is a researcher, composer and performer. After obtaining his master's degree in communication, multimedia and design, he studied music for image in Milan and composition at the music academy Accademia Pianistica in Imola. He is currently based in Plymouth (UK) where he is conducting his doctoral research at the Interdisciplinary Centre for Computer Music Research (ICCMR). His research focuses on body movement in performances with traditional musical instruments. He has composed music for films and installations, performed live in solo sets, with bands and in contemporary theatre and dance performances, and presented his research at several international conferences. He has worked and is currently working on collaborative interdisciplinary projects with researchers in Europe (Ghent University, University of Bologna), North America (NYU, UCLA) and South America (Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul).

www.federicovisi.com

An excerpt of the performance can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/jdVw22D3NNM>.

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References

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