Scoring an Interactive, Multimedia Performance Work

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ABSTRACT
The Color of Waiting is an interactive theater work with music, dance, and video which was developed at STEIM in Amsterdam and further refined at CMMAS in Morelia Mexico with funding from Meet the Composer. Using Max/MSP/Jitter a cellist is able to control sound and video during the performance while performing a structured improvisation in response to the dancer’s movement. In order to ensure, repeated performances of The Color of Waiting, Kinesthetech Sense created the score contained in this paper. Performance is essential to the practice of time-based art as a living form, but has been complicated by the unique challenges in interpretation and re-creation posed by works incorporating technology. Creating a detailed score is one of the ways artists working with technology can combat obsolescence.

Keywords
Interactivity, Dance, Max/MSP/Jitter, Sustainability

1. INTRODUCTION
This score with descriptions of the electronic sounds, video compositing, choreography, cello tracking, lighting, costume stage diagram will enable performance of this work well into the future. A DVD with the Max/MSP/Jitter patch saved as text, the sound and video files used in the performance and video clips from various performances is included with the score. By including screen shots of relevant sections of the max patch in the score, we show which part of the interaction is most important for the artistic success of the work.

2. The Score
The following figures show full pages of the score. The entirety of the introductory materials (figures 1-3) is included while due to space restrictions only excerpts from the timeline of the performance are included (figures 4-6). The introduction serves to document all elements of the piece including the set, the lighting and the costumes. The timeline contains sketches of the choreography, performance instructions for the cellist and dancer, musical notation for the cellist including light and dance cues, and stills from the video showing brightness, and placement of elements.

3. Philosophy
A live event engages the audience in a unique way, where each member contributes to shaping the event, actively participating in its realization. In this way, the artistic experience becomes a dialectical one. Importantly, the live event implicates its audience both as individuals and as a collective. As critic Nicholas Bourriaud notes, “Each particular artwork is a proposal to live in a shared world…intersubjectivity…becomes the quintessence of artistic practice.” [1] In performance, audience members engage with the artists and their creations in a collective elaboration of meaning. This component of a communal development of meaning is an essential aspect of the artistic experience. At a live event, “there is the possibility of an immediate discussion: I see and perceive, I comment, and I evolve in a unique space and time.” [2] With the diminished critical distance comes an increasing emotional involvement where the participant is immersed “in a 360-degree…unity of time and place.” [3] The live event is thus a site of encounter and exploration.

By contrast, the viewer takes on a much more passive role when experiencing an event through documentation. Instead of a shared site of artistic communion, the document “refer[s] each individual to his or her space of private consumption.” [4] The viewer cannot participate in the communal aspect of a live performance, as the documentary forces him or her to acknowledge his or her current surroundings, separating the individual from the experience while allowing only a glimpse of it. In addition, a documentary of an event lacks the dynamism of meaning one encounters at a live event, as a document is essentially a predigested, one-sided interpretation of a historical circumstance. Documentation, no matter how thorough, is unavoidably biased towards producing a certain interpretation of the event: each image presented is mediated through the critic’s lens. Here, the relationship between viewer and image is one of authoritarian promotion and reception. [4] But art exists in time and space, and its reduction to mere document subtracts something essential from it, reducing it to an object that exists within the confined parameters of the viewer’s screen. Bourriaud argues that artistic form can only be realized “from a meeting between two levels of reality. For [the homogeneity of a document] does not produce [art]: it produces only the visual, otherwise put, ‘looped information.’” [5] Our score including the DVD is not a documentation of a performance, nor is it a document to be used in performance, rather it is a document to ensure repeated performances.

4. References
[2] Ibid., 16.
The Color of Waiting
for Cells, Interactive Sound and Video

Music and Programming by Margaret Schade
Choreography by Ives Fondberg
Video Design by Nick Fox-Coggs
Costume and Set Design by Althea Bregman

The Color of Waiting is an interactive theater work with music, dance, and video which was developed at STEMM in Amsterdam and further refined at CAMIANS in Mexico City. The production was funded by NEA, a grant from Meet the Composer, and a grant from The Rockefeller Foundation. The work was commissioned by the Netherlands Institute for Contemporary Art. After a performance at Stony Brook University Professor Haim Samerman called it a "visual journey through the lives of cells."

The work is divided into five sections:
I. Waiting for Love
II. Waiting for Inspiration
III. Waiting for Agreement
IV. Waiting for Something You Need
V. Waiting for the End

Each section uses a different kind of interaction between the elements of the work thereby providing an ever-shifting framework for the performers.

Teaching the Cells

The Max/MSP software patch tracks three elements of the cell: sound, volume, pitch and noise content. The volume of the cells controls the height of the waves; a deliberate decision to set up an opposition, the leader the column of the cells, the lower the proponent of the waves.

The noise content in the columns of the cells controls the space between the waves; it is the cells's volume. This control was added to increase the complexity of the interaction.

The space between the waves can be made large or small by adjusting the volume of the cells. The cells are able to move up and down in the space, and the greater the volume, the more the cells can move.

The following video clip shows how the cells move up and down in the space, and how the space between the waves changes.

Figure 1: Page 2 of score

Figure 2: Page 3 of score
Figure 5: Page 7 of score

Figure 6: Page 9 of score