**DOUG VAN NORT**

The negotiation that is collective free improvisation - call it music, noise, sound art, etc. - is bound up in a process of distributing intention and gesturality through a practice of shared listening/sound. This process is marked by perpetual differencing, mimicry and relational modulations of sonic form. The collective attention of a given ensemble is conditioned (among other things) by the felt presence of a given space, the chosen instrumentation and perhaps by shared metaphors or rules of engagement. In our contemporary, post-deep listening context it is uncontroversial to conceive of structuring principles for this listening/sounding dialogue as a form of human algorithm. It likewise is uncontroversial in our post-electroacoustic improv context to regard the electronic system-as-instrument as a living, material agent in a nonlinear network of gestural engagement with other sounding bodies - whether this manifests in the instrumental sonic character of a no-input mixer or circuit-bent casio, or in the network of shared sonic gestural inflections in collectives such as the Evan Parker Electro/Acoustic ensemble, or MEV. In either case, there is a giving over of oneself, a folding into the sonic fabric wherein one's own sense of distinct voice can become lost in a state of productive confusion. In so doing, real, felt immersion is achieved through the collectivity of the engagement as it unfolds and resonates a given acoustic space, perhaps through a shared modulation of a mediating layer of electro/acoustic blending. The act of responding, diverging, augmenting within this fabric is certainly affective and unconscious, but also may be volitional - with actions informed by the trace of one's sonic memory.

But what of the collapsing of the directed algorithm and the system-as-instrument that we find when interjecting digital instrumentation into this equation? How can the 'perfect' memory of the digital system represent and re-inject these sonic gestural inflections in a manner that is more like palimpsest than total recall, and how might such systems productively engage with the fabric of performance in a way that might extend collective intentionality, in-situ or tele-presently?  Conversely, how do the limitations of real-time systems, of spectral representations and of the neatly-defined worlds of psychoacoustics and signal modeling act as barriers between the algorithm's 'lived' episodic memory and the performer's own phenomenology of time consciousness? This paper speculates on these questions through the lens of the author's research and performance practice in distributed agency and electro/acoustic improvisation, following its trajectory through a historicization of instrumental systems, machine improvisation and 'computer network music'.

Bio:

Doug Van Nort is a sonic artist/researcher whose work is concerned with the complex and embodied nature of listening, improvisation both with and by machines, the phenomenology of time consciousness and of collective co-creation. His research takes the form of scholarly writings on these phenomena, composed and improvised electroacoustic music, pieces of sound-focused art and interactive systems designed and developed in these pursuits. Van Nort's work is a synthesis of his background in mathematics, media arts, music composition and performance; in recent years he has a growing engagement with teaching courses and workshops that combine this set of experiences with his personal take on Deep Listening practice, in which he is a certified instructor. Van Nort regularly presents his work in N. America and abroad, in recent years at venues such as the Stone (NYC), Experimental Intermedia (NYC), Casa da Musica (Porto), the New Museum (NYC), Skolska28 (Prague), Liebig12 (Berlin), Quiet Cue (Berlin), Issue Project Room (NYC), Xfest (Holyoke), the Guelph Jazz Festival, the Miller Theatre (NYC), EMPAC (Troy), Cafe OTO (London), the Red Room (Baltimore), Eyebeam (NYC); he often performs solo as well as with a wide array of artists spanning musical styles and artistic media. Regular collaborators include Pauline Oliveros, If, Bwana and working as a member of the Composers Inside Electronics. His music appears on several labels (e.g. Pogus, Deep Listening, Attenuation Circuit, Zeromoon) and his writings on sound/performance/electroacoustics have been published by a number of outlets (e.g. Organised Sound, Leonardo Music Journal, Journal of New Music Research). Van Nort was a Banting Fellow at Hexagram/Concordia University in Montreal, and recently joined the Faculty of Fine Arts at York University in the department of Theatre. He also works as an Assistant Editor for the Computer Music Journal (MIT Press).

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