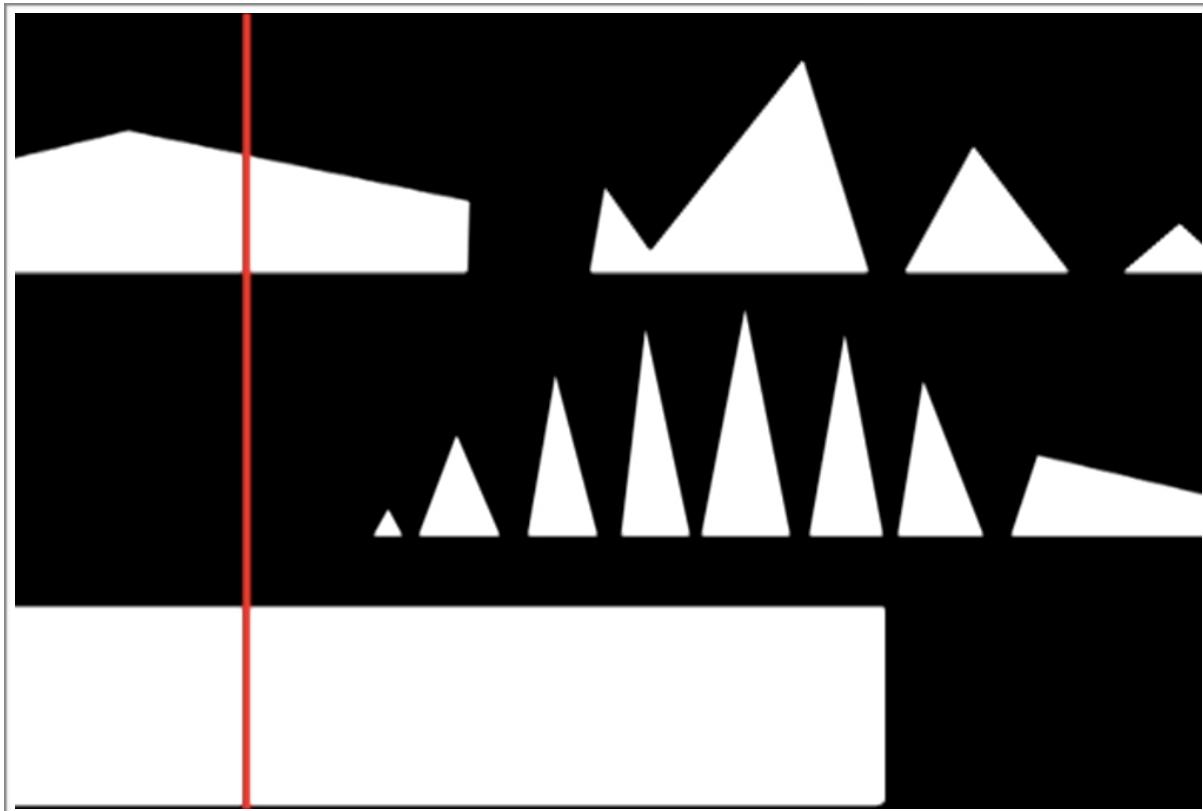


Animated Notation

Improving Live Electronic Music Performance Practice



Christian M. Fischer
PhD student - composition department
Estonian Academy of Music and Theater in Tallinn

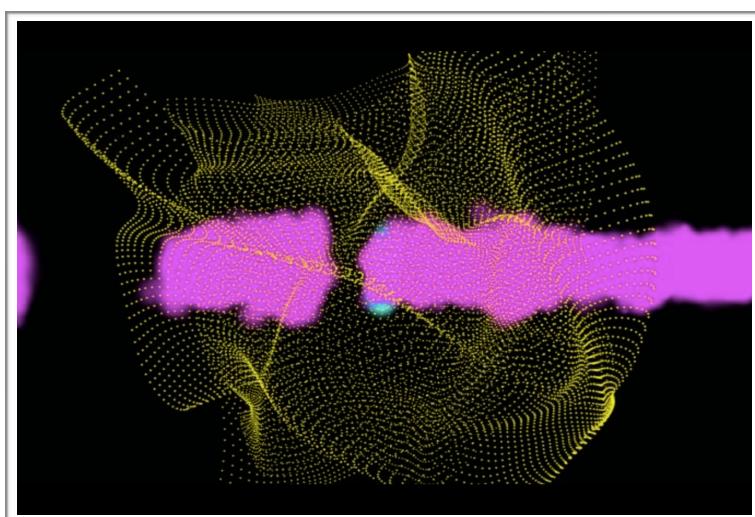
Animated Notation

Improving Live Electronic Music Performance Practice

Content of this Research

From my own experience as a composer, performer and audience of live electronic music I know that this special kind of music often struggles with specific problems. Namely a poor attendance in concerts, audiences difficulties in understanding the music and it's structure, a domination of improvised pieces, intransparent actions of the computer musician, a general lack of musical performance in concerts and finally there is no music notation for live electronic music that combines acoustic and computer instruments in an adequate way.

The use of animated notation for the composition of live electronic music and especially its performance can help solving these issues. Displaying the animated score during the concert can enhance the audiovisual and aesthetic experience for the audience. Furthermore it supports the understanding of musical structures. Animated notation is not bound to a rigid framework and therefore allows to notate anything from just triggering improvisation to the exact display of musical parameters like pitch or dynamics. Thereby the actions, especially of the computer musician become more transparent. It is also possible to notate any kind of objects for sound making. Therefore animated notation can be utilized as a common notation for all musicians, despite of their instruments.



The theoretical part of the research includes the historical roots of animated notation in the avant-garde music of the 20th century and its notation practices right up to the growing interest in contemporary notation in music practice and research of the recent years. The practical core of the research are four doctoral concerts which are analyzed in the thesis. These concerts feature exclusively composed pieces and animated scores to explore which practices and types of notation work best for which compositional purpose. Thereby a kind of categorization of animated notation and guidelines to use it are developed. The work with the musicians involved in the concerts is also documented. Furthermore questionnaires for musicians and audience constitute another valid source of information and data.

Impact of this Research

The research is in its third year and the final concert (to prove the findings so far) is still to come. Yet, the research has shown some impact in the following way.

- The interest in the research community when presenting the topic and some results is unexpectedly high.
- I was using animated notation for some time before starting the PhD. Still the research, the communication with other composers using animated notation and the analysis of their scores and writings has changed my artistic work significantly because it allowed to compare techniques and approaches regarding their usefulness and usability for classically trained musicians that are not used to live electronic music. Furthermore it helped me to understand how I could utilize animated notation in my teaching, especially of young and musically untrained children.
- The results of my questionnaires indicated that, when dealing profoundly with animated notation, for instance by applying my guidelines, musicians were able to approach contemporary music from a fresh and different perspective. It also helped to allay their fears of dealing with alternative notation approaches in general.

An example of one score and live performance can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jhf8cUM35I>