

**Click Nilson**  
**Op-us 11000001 (February 2013)**

## **For BEER**

Text pieces suitable for laptop ensemble, sometimes deliberately underspecified.

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### **1 Acousmatics Anonymous** (dedicated to Jonty Harrison)

Optionally, the laptopists arrange themselves in a circle, facing each other.

The laptopists are here to celebrate varying degrees of liberation from acousmatic music. Some have only given it up for hours; others for weeks or years. The addiction is a tough one to beat, and lapses are frequent.

Each laptopist takes turns to solo; the others must confine themselves to sympathetic and supportative noises at appropriate points. Their solo tells the story of their addiction, though must walk a fine line between evoking the negative cliches of acousmatic music, and keeping itself linked to healthier pursuits, like beat-based music. A solo may be indicated by standing up, by a spotlight, or by another theatrical mechanism (perhaps by passing a cuddly toy to the new soloist).

There may be a session leader, whose job is to select the order of solos, to support any soloist whose solo breaks down, keep things hopeful, and not allow anyone to turn the lights off. Some newcomers to the ensemble may be reluctant to solo at their first performance.

Since for some unfortunate individuals there are lapses, a further option is to have an unashamed acousmatic in the circle, fresh from an all-night studio session, who at a certain trigger of beat-based music will cover themselves in a curtain and only omit high art for the remainder of the performance (or until the session leader can eject them from the room, or at least, turn down their sound.)

## **2 Real Alea**

(dedicated to Scott Wilson)

This piece is about the many algorithmic composition techniques available in UK pubs, created by specialised code brewers. The piece may proceed on one or more of two levels:

1) Consumption of large amounts of algorithmic composition, in as many varieties as possible, though for short amounts of time per algorithm, with a connoisseurial flair, and perhaps with prizes for the top three algorithms.

2) The brewing of one or more new code algorithms using metaphors harvested from the brewing of beer. The live coding of the algorithms must be replete with in-jokes, and only accessible to those with a fuller background in algorithmic composition.

It is likely that all participants will have novelty T-shirts extolling the virtues of particular rare algorithms.

The piece may feature a guest performance from Chad McKinney, which must be telematic even if he is at the same festival, and involve a comparison of US and UK algorithm brewing.

## **3 Shandy**

(dedicated to Shelly Knotts in good humour, but only on the understanding that no slight is intended to her, including association with averageness or shandy)

This piece is about diluting the power of acousmatic music with the sugary lemonade of Madonna\*'s greatest hits.

One audience member is nominated the funding judge. They will allocate cash and cachet to the resulting performance based on its averageness.

Half the performers are assigned acousmatic gestures of verifiable high art excellence.

Half the performers are assigned bonafide low art pop moves.

The mix of the performers is the work. The performers should make token moves to integrate, but really they don't understand one another.

The work is exactly 3 minutes long and ends with a major chord.

Variation: the piece is exactly 20 minutes long, and ends with an extended sound transformation.

\*insert any other female pop icon here, from Lady Lauper to Cyndi Gaga

## **4 Drunk programming**

(dedicated to Kassen)

There is a noise music performance where the performer imbibes pure spirit, getting drunker as they perform; in an almost stylish way, the performer is sick and still continues.

This is the laptop ensemble equivalent. All laptopists have a ready supply of alcohol, perhaps as concentrated spirit. The aim is to type and tipple.

Version 1: laptopists perform any other piece, but continue to drink as they do so until the pieces' original outlines are blurred. (A suggestion would be to perform this at the close of a concert, repeating a work from earlier with the alcoholic twist).

Version 2: The laptopists try to improvise a new work, perhaps using heavy drinking as a topic of conversation as they work. They accompany the conversation with actual heavy drinking until one or more laptopists collapse, leave the stage, puke on the audience or otherwise take themselves out of the running. Again, having this last in a concert is probably wise.

This work is not meant to be competitive; no-one should try to drink more than Scott.

## **5 FREE BEER**

The performers begin inert (think musical statues with no music). A projection or sign warns the audience that they will have to pay coins to performers in exchange for activity: it might state 'Awaiting freedom'. There may be a sign per performer: given a projection, there may be text for each laptopist, and when performing, 'free' replaces 'awaiting freedom'.

If a coin is placed near a performer, they may perform for a set time; either proportional to coin value (perhaps in local currency only), or a fixed time no matter what coin is offered. The set time is relatively short, and consists of outlining a musical theme.

There are two variations:

- 1) Once a theme is outlined, a performer repeats it over and over until another coin is provided.
- 2) A performer is just silent unless under the influence of a coin.

An overall countdown runs for the performance to a duration agreed in advance, however much money is being accumulated. No money can be accepted once the duration is over.

Any coins gained in this performance must be spent in the venue on drinks, for performers first but if necessary (given a large haul) for members of the audience too.

## **6 Cocktail hour**

A set of different synthesis recipes are prepared in advance and put onto a menu. The audience request particular synthesis recipes from individual performers, who must type the recipe and run the sound for a duration equivalent to the audience member downing the sound. Extra snazziness is gained by live coding cocktail preparation moves, such as shimmying, juggling laptops or mobiles, tossing mice in the air, using keyboards on their side, impersonating Tom Cruise, and the like.

The performance either lasts an hour, or a duration that feels like an hour.

Variation: the performance is an installation which lasts all evening, with visitors coming and going as in a real bar; visitor requests cue particular sound activity as above.

## **7 Barrel roll**

A laptop is set at the bottom of the hill, playing barrel organ simulations. A keg of beer is unleashed from the top of the hill, aimed at the laptop. The performance is over once the laptop has been crushed.

The performance may take place in simulated form.

A chorus of laptopists may comment on proceedings from side of the hill; their sound motifs may be derived from 'Donkey Kong'.

Variation: the whole performance takes place in the belly of a large transport plane, using an interior built-up ramp, or opening the exit ramp mid-air. A barrel roll is carried out while the performance proceeds.

## **8 Barred**

Materials are prepared in advance: audio and/or video of spilling drinks, and bar rowdiness.

One performer acts as the landlord/bar owner. Each time a laptopist 'spills a drink' or sounds too rowdy, they are given first a yellow card, then a red card and barred from the performance. The performance ends when all the ensemble have been so barred.

## **9 Whine Critics**

While laptopists live code sound to an agreed time limit, over-flowery descriptions of the sound and processes are made by one or more critics. They are likely to be a mixture of derogatory slander, and over-enthusiastic expostulations. Laptopists may only respond to their critics through the wit and brilliance of their live coding, though this may entail use of comments.

## **10 Cider**

This piece can only be performed on apple computers or i-Devices, or lacking any Apple tech, a glow in the dark apple can be attached to alternative computational devices.

The piece has no set musical restrictions, except that all performers must use Garage Band, creating a work from scratch on stage in exactly 2 minutes. The audience hears the gradual construction of these works as auditioned. At the 2 minutes mark, all the final compositions are played back simultaneously.

Variation: non-Apple users bitch about the Apple fans from the sidelines while the Applists have fun.

## **11 Vodka**

Russian music and vodka advertising is manipulated until frostbite and/or political repression sets in. Pushkin may be celebrated at any point during the performance.

## **12 Trappist**

A clash of Belgian beer and trap music is instigated. The music is 100% stronger than the usual music created by the laptop ensemble, and the piece finishes in half the usual time.

## **13 Drinks cabinet**

One or more of the pieces in this set are performed simultaneously, by one or more teenagers left in their parent's laptop salon while said parents are away for the weekend.

## **14 Whisky**

(dedicated to Pete Stollery)

In this piece, which must not actually be performed in concert, a group of composers gather round a table and one of them then decides to buy the rest a round of whiskies. The whiskies are delivered, and there is much comparison through sniffing of each others' drinks.