

MUSICIAN REACTS TO COMPUTER – ****FIRST TIME HEARING!!****

[LOOP WORK 4]

FOR EUGENE UGHETTI

BY JAMIE HOWELL
NOVEMBER 2022

Musician Reacts To Computer - ****FIRST TIME HEARING!!****

Equipment List:

Orchestral Bass Drum (approx. 30"-40")

Suspended Gong (ideally the same size as the bass drum)

Platforms to raise the gong and bass drum so that the performer can stand between them and comfortably play both at around chest height

Medium hard rubber xylophone mallet with thin flexible shaft

Laptop running Ableton Live (Live Set available from me)

Audio interface with minimum 2 inputs

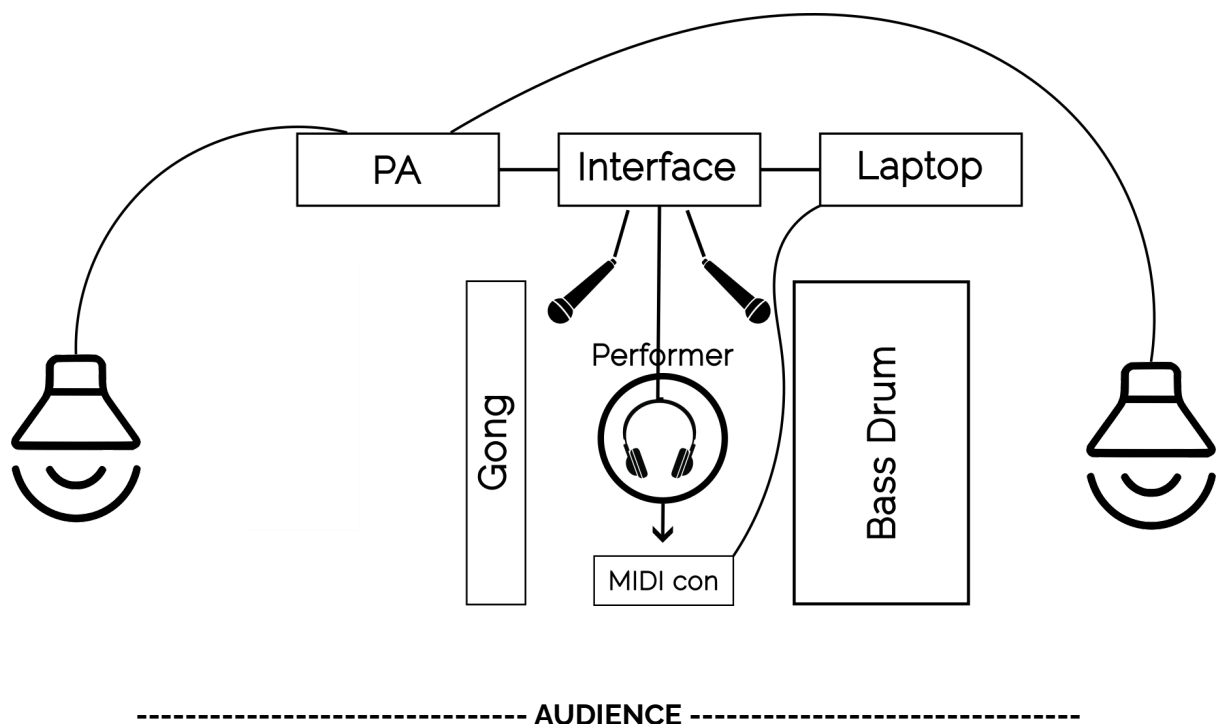
MIDI controller (preferably drum pad or footswitch) - only 1 switch needed

2 x microphones (preferably small diaphragm condensers)

A pair of headphones (worn by performer throughout)

PA with 2 speakers placed and balanced to allow the audience to perceive each speaker output and the live percussion as three distinct sound sources

Stage set-up:



The two microphone inputs are summed into one stereo channel in Ableton. This channel is then sent to two separate processing channels which, in turn, are sent to the left and right PA and headphone channels. As such, the processing channel outputs react to, and are a result of, what the performer plays. However, the processing parameters change randomly so the resulting sound is unpredictable. The processing is mostly delay with some other distortions of the sound

The MIDI controller toggles off/on processing randomisation. When pressed, the effect of sound processing remains in its current state until pressed again

The piece will work best if the notated loop is memorised

Throughout the piece the performer plays the bass drum and gong while interacting with the sound in the left and right headphones

The performer can choose to interact with either the left or right output singly, or the sum of both together

The performer is invited to bend and break the instructions given below if the musical outcome is worth it

The piece has 2 sections - A & B - and an ending

SECTION A

Start the Ableton set running

Begin to loop the notated material

Interact with the resultant sound:

- If the response is minimal and does not encroach on the sound of your playing in a strong way, continue to play the loop
- If the response includes sound which significantly overlaps with the live sound, create space for it by playing fragments of the loop and leaving gaps
- Fragments can come from any section of the loop and do not have to follow in order
- If the response involves noticeable rhythmic elements, incorporate them into the loop
- Tempo can be changed at any time

In section A, the sound parameters are stable for a moderate period of time before changing to another random set of parameters

Around 5 mins, when the rate of change of sound parameters increases sharply, creating a much less stable sonic environment, and new sounds start to emerge, move to section B

SECTION B

The notated part no longer needs to be followed; instead the player improvises using the notated part as a launching off point

However, the improvisation largely takes the form of 'reconfiguration' rather than 'soloining' - i.e. pattern based and 'grooving' rather than a soloistic lead part

If the player is enjoying improvising with the current response parameters, they may be captured by pressing the MIDI controller, and released back to randomising by pressing it again

ENDING

Approaching 10 mins, 2 drum kit samples will sound. At the first sample, live playing should quickly die away stopping completely at the second sample. This will leave the piece to finish with the voice sample saying "Done very nicely"

Musician Reacts To Computer - ****FIRST TIME HEARING!!****

Jamie Howell

♩ = 180

Bass (Mallet)
Drum (Hand)
Gong

mp
fp
f

16
3
5
7

Bass Drum

Mallet:

Normal notehead = strike the skin near the rim

x = strike a lug

Hand:

Normal notehead = strike the skin in the centre with an open hand

▴ = sweep the open hand across the whole head, with pressure, for the duration of the note

Gong

Normal notehead = strike the gong with the mallet head - vary the position from centre to edge

▼ = sweep the shaft of the mallet around the bumpy outer edge of the gong

SECTION A

Play the loop

Interact with sound in headphones:

- if minimal, play whole loop
- if more substantial, play fragments
- if rhythmic, incorporate into groove

SECTION B

Improvise off loop

If desired, capture current sound with MIDI controller

Stop playing between first and second drum samples