

Choir – Quarrel, project description

by Palle Dahlstedt, Department of Applied IT & Academy of Music and Drama, University of Gothenburg, palle.dahlstedt@gu.se

A interactive live electronics piece for 8 singers and 8 speakers, performed by Palle Dahlstedt and the choir Voces Nordicae conducted by Lone Larsen, as part of the installation/concert *Bryt upp, bryt upp (Breaking times)* at Tällberg Forum 2013, Tällberg Sweden

I participated in this 2.5-hour concert with a lecture recital about my research into new technologies for improvisation and creativity, exemplified by a series of solo performances on keyboard and electronics. As a bridge to the choir performance that would follow, I composed *Choir-Quarrel*, a piece for 8 singers and 8 loudspeakers, where the singers improvise in a dialogue with “their” speaker. The speaker answers to each phrase with an imitation, as best as it can. Or with something completely different. The computer voice is very funny and annoying, and the chaotic dialogue that emerges is a rich sonic landscape of linguistic and musical utterances. During the performance, Palle Dahlstedt controlled global parameters of the system, thus shaping the overall form of the piece.

The piece was performed in the main public concert of the Tällberg Forum 2013, in a huge circus tent. The audience consisted of 700 people from 50 different countries, and the speakers and singers were placed in a circle around the audience.

The response from the singers, who had not really performed anything like this before, was very positive. They greatly enjoyed interacting with the system. Further collaborations are planned.

The implementation of the piece uses novel approaches to pitch and timbre detection, using adaptive techniques developed within Palle Dahlstedt’s research project Creative Performance, of which two sub-project deals with computer-mediated interaction models and autonomous co-improvisers. The pitch and timbre contour of the singer’s phrase is recorded and processed, and used as a basis for an immediate response by the electronic voice.

The software was developed by Palle Dahlstedt in the Nord Modular G2 signal processing environment. Two screenshots of the realtime signal processing patch are attached.

Documentation

The performance was recorded and filmed professionally by the organizers, but I have not been able to access the recorded material yet. This will be added when it is available.