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Addendum to our Proposal for the VR-symposium about artistic research 2020 - theme: Actualization

Systemic Improvisation: Confusing Distribution of Roles in Free Improvisation

Because of the changed circumstances due to the corona situation, we propose the following modification of our presentation proposal, based on our experiences from the changed circumstances that also our research project has had to adjust to.

During the spring of 2020, we have experimented with forms for online group improvisation, and investigated how our signaling systems for role negotiation can be applied for distance interactions. We want to demonstrate this to an online audience by doing a session within Zoom, where the specific infrastructure and affordances of this medium are used to constrain and mediate a musical improvisation situation.

We propose a session with the following setup:

- Audience shares the session with us, but are muted, and watch and listen.

- A short introduction is given (5 minutes).

- Three musicians interact in one or two sessions of 10-15 minutes each. In the first session, we use dice, hour glasses, and the online signaling signs within zoom to trigger role change and assignment. This is a new scheme, based on our previous off-line improvisation systems, but here designed in an environment known to the listeners/viewers,to show how even familiar and simple signals can radically reform musical interactions. The in-meeting signals **(raise hand, yes/no, go slower, go faster, agree/disagree, clap, need a break, away)** are re-interpreted musically according to different musical role schema.

- In the second session, we demonstrate our own signaling system which uses custom software and touch tablets for more complex role assignment between musicians.

- We have added **verbal roles** to our usual musical ones, primarily those of **Questioner** (musician asks a question about what is happening or what someone or everyone is doing) and **Describer** (describes what is happening, from her own perspective), and **Observer** (observes and retells what the others are doing). In this way, the musical interactions are intermixed with a sharing of what is happening, including confusions, impressions, surprises and expectations. This is related to the Think-Aloud protocol, which we have used as a method in some of our previous research experiments to analyze the underlying thoughts and actions in an improvisational setting, here used as an efficient method to share what is happening with an audience who is new to the context.

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The session is followed by a discussion session with questions from the listeners.

In total we would need 40-45 minutes for the whole session.