

Intersecting Lines

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Biographical information

François Houle has established himself as one of Canada's finest musicians. His performances and recordings transcend the stylistic borders associated with his instrument in all of the diverse musical spheres he embraces: classical, jazz, new music, improvised music, and world music. As an improviser, he has developed a unique language, virtuosic and rich with sonic embellishments and technical extensions. As a soloist and chamber musician, he has actively expanded the clarinet's repertoire by commissioning some of today's leading Canadian and international composers and premiering over one hundred new works. An alumnus of McGill University and Yale University, François has been an artist-in-residence at the Banff Centre for the Arts and the Civitella Ranieri Foundation in Umbria, Italy. Now based in Vancouver, François is a leader in the city's music community and is considered by many to be Canada's leading exponent of the clarinet.

Keith Hamel is a Professor in the School of Music, an Associate Researcher at the Institute for Computing, Information and Cognitive Systems (ICICS), a Researcher at the Media and Graphics Interdisciplinary Centre (MAGIC) and Director of the Computer Music Studio at the University of British Columbia. Keith Hamel has written both acoustic and electroacoustic music and his works have been performed by many of the finest soloists and ensembles both in Canada and abroad. Many of his recent compositions focus on interaction between live performers and computer-controlled electronics.

Aleksandra Dulic is media artist, theorist and experimental filmmaker working at the intersections of multimedia and live performance with research foci in computational poetics, interactive animation and cross-cultural media performance. She has received a number of awards for her short animated films. She is active as a new media artist, curator, a writer, an educator, teaching courses, presenting art projects and publishing papers, across North America, Australia, Europe and Asia. She received her Ph.D. from the School of Interactive Art and Technology, Simon Fraser University in 2006. She is currently a Postdoctoral research fellow at the Media and Graphics Interdisciplinary Centre, University of British Columbia funded by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

Description of Piece

Intersecting Lines is a collaboration between clarinetist François Houle, interactive video artist Aleksandra Dulic and computer music composer Keith Hamel. The work grew out of Dulic's research in visual music and involves mapping a live clarinet improvisation onto both the visual and audio realms. In this work an intelligent system for visualization and signification is used to develop and expand the musical material played by the clarinet. This system monitors and interprets various nuances of the musical performance. The clarinetist's improvisations, musical intentions, meanings and feelings are enhanced and extended, both visually and aurally, by the computer system, so that the various textures and gestured played by the performer have corresponding visuals and computer-generated sounds. The melodic line, as played by the clarinet, is used as the main compositional strategy for visualization. Since the control input is based on a classical instrument, the strategy is based on calligraphic line drawing using artistic rendering; the computer-generated line is drawn in 3D space and rendered using expressive painterly and ink drawing styles. The appearance of animated lines and textures portray a new artistic expression that transforms a musical gesture onto a visual plane. Kenneth Newby made contributions to the development of the animation software. This project was made possible with generous support of Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.