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Jansch, Adam

Towards the open outcome record: a portfolio of works exploring strategies of freeing the record from fixity

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Human jukebox x n
Adam Jansch
Artistic guidelines

These are the guidelines for performers taking part in Adam Jansch's sound art performance piece, *Human jukebox x n*. It describes how performers should approach a rendition of this piece. For specific instructions regarding the piece's technical setup, and for a copy of the jukebox software, please contact the artist.

General points

A performance of *Human jukebox x n* should last for a minimum of sixty minutes. There is no maximum limit, though choice of running time should take into account the locale of the performance and the stamina of the performers. The *n* in the title should be replaced with a digit representing with the number of performers, e.g. *Human jukebox x 4*.

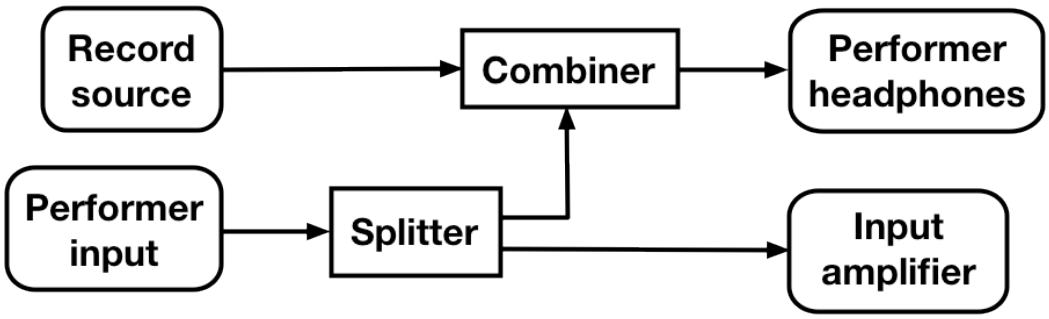
The performing ensemble should be typical of a chosen style or genre; for example, pop or rock band, string quartet, jazz quintet, etc. There should be at least three performers in any given performance.

In *Human jukebox x n*, the performers and audience share the performance space; keep this in mind when selecting a venue. Within the space, the performers should be staged equidistantly surrounding the audience, with ample space left for the audience to move around between the performers. It is also acceptable for the performers to be staged in a line, provided adequate separation is maintained.

The start and end of the performance is handled through the automatic activation/deactivation of the jukebox software. Performers should be set ready to perform five minutes before the scheduled jukebox activation time, and each should start playing when their first tune comes over their headphones. When the jukebox deactivates it will stop the currently playing track immediately: performers should also stop playing immediately, wait a short period and remove their headphones.

Technical requirements

Human jukebox x n is based around multiple instances of a technological configuration called a **performer unit**, one of which must be implemented for each performer. A performer unit is configured thus:



The correct implementation of performer units will bring about the performative and social isolation of the performers, each locked into their own personal bubble. Such implementation necessitates the use of over-ear closed-back headphones and the physical separation of amplifiers – do not use a PA.

This configuration may be adapted to cater for different instruments as long as the performer bubble is maintained and the performers remain isolated from one another: with drums, for example, the performer monitoring loop and amplifier may be unnecessary, and thus left out.

Jukebox software

A custom software jukebox, designed to run on a modern web browser, has been built especially for *Human jukebox x n*, and should be deployed individually for each performer. Specific steps must be followed for the configuration and presentation of the jukebox, and the preparation of its sound files; these steps will be provided by the artist should the jukebox software be requested.

Performer guidelines

In *Human jukebox x n*, the presentation and demeanour of the performers is paramount. Prior to a performance, each performer chooses the records to go on their own jukebox, this process being governed thus:

- All tracks chosen should be personal favourites of the performer, and should be suitable for their chosen instrument.
- The tastes of the audience must be taken into account in the selection process: most records chosen should be widely acknowledged as being universally popular; a few records in the selection may be of a more obscure nature.
- Between 20-30 tracks per performer is adequate, with a maximum of two from any one artist or group.

Additionally, there are a number of performative guidelines to follow:

- The performer should be very well acquainted with the records s/he has chosen, and should have experience playing along to them confidently.
- Personal interpretation during performance should be deemed essential — the performer should aim to make each tune their own through the act of performance.
- The bubble instantiated by the use of headphones is fundamental to the working of the piece. The act of isolation goes beyond the aural barrier: thus, each performer must wear glasses with dark or mirrored lenses when performing.