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HUMAN-MACHINE IMPROVISATIONS (CORK, 2010)

REAL-TIME, MUSICAL INTERACTIONS BETWEEN HUMAN AND TECHNOLOGICAL PERFORMERS

io 0.0.1 beta++ with Han-earl Park, Bruce Coates and Franziska Schroeder
plus iWife with John Godfrey and Francis Heery

(Cork, Ireland—Mar 31 2010) A unique and exciting on-stage meeting between human and machine improvisers takes place on **26 May 2010** at **Blackrock Castle Observatory** (Cork, Ireland). This event will mark the debut of two extraordinary machine musicians, **io 0.0.1 beta++** and **iWife** constructed by **Han-earl Park** and **John Godfrey** respectively. Featuring Park and Godfrey (guitars), **Bruce Coates** and **Franziska Schroeder** (saxophones), and **Francis Heery** (diffusion), the performance will be part critique and part playful exploration, both a boundary-breaking public demonstration of socio-musical technologies and an ironic sci-fi parody.

io 0.0.1 beta++ and iWife are modern-day musical automata. They are not instruments to be played, but non-human artificial musicians that perform alongside their human counterparts. They represent contrasting approaches to the artistic investigation of technology, interaction, improvisation, and musicality itself. io 0.0.1 beta++ whimsically evokes a 1950s B-movie robot, seemingly jerry-rigged, constructed from ad-hoc components including plumbing, kitchenware, speakers and missile switches. While io 0.0.1 beta++ celebrates the material and corporeal, iWife, in contrast, is disembodied and delocalized; a diffuse ghost in acoustic space.

The performances with these artificial musicians will highlight society's entanglement with technology, demonstrate alternative modes of interfacing the musical and the technological, and illuminate the creative and improvisative processes in music. With the simultaneously high-tech and Frankensteinian backdrop of Blackrock Castle Observatory, the event will be a radical and playful engagement with powerful and problematic dreams (and nightmares) of the artificial; a dream as old as the anthropology of robots.

With (human) performers representing diverse traditions and practices of present-day, transnational improvised musics (from avant jazz, free improvisation, AACM and post-AACM practices, European and Euro-American experimental musics), expect musical improvisations that fuse, fragment and recombine musical histories, traditions and expectations.

The event will begin at **8:00 pm** (doors at 7:45 pm). Tickets are **€16** (**€10** concessions) from www.tickets.ie.

Presented with funding from the Music Network Performance and Touring Award, and support from the Arts Council of Ireland, Blackrock Castle Observatory, The Castle Bar and Trattoria and the UCC School of Music.



further information

Event details: www.io001b.com

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event summary

Date: Wednesday, 26 May 2010.

Time: 8:00 pm (doors: 7:45 pm).

Venue: Blackrock Castle Observatory, Castle Road, Blackrock, Co. Cork Ireland.

Performers: io o.o.i beta++ (itself)

with Han-earl Park (guitar),

Bruce Coates (saxophone) and Franziska Schroeder (saxophone)

plus iWife (itself)

with John Godfrey (guitar) and Francis Heery (diffusion).

Tickets: €16 (€10) from www.tickets.ie

the machine musicians

io o.o.i beta++ (www.io001b.com) whimsically evokes a 1950s B-movie robot, constructed from ad-hoc components including plumbing, kitchenware and missile switches. Its celebrates the material and corporeal; embracing the localized and embodied aspects of sociality, performance and improvisation.

io o.o.i beta++ is an interactive, semiautonomous technological artifact that, in partnership with its human associates, performs a deliberately amplified staging of a socio-technical network—a network in which the primary protocol is improvisation. Together the cyborg ensemble explores the performance of identities, hybrids and relationships, and highlights the social agency of artifacts, and the social dimension of improvisation. Engineered by Han-earl Park, io o.o.i beta++ is a descendant, and significant re-construction, of his previous machine musicians, and it builds upon the work done with, and address some of the musical and practical problems of, these previous artifacts.

The construction of io o.o.i beta++ has been made possible by the generous support of the Arts Council of Ireland, and the Blackrock Castle Observatory event will be its first public performance.

John Godfrey's **iWife** (I Will Improvise For Everyone) is a computer system designed to improvise and respond to input. Under most circumstances, that input will come from a human performer, but many other kinds of stimulus are possible. The system is based on a model of de Bono's Special Memory Surface, and has the characteristic ability to learn, adapt, transform between and/or overlay different stimuli, develop unexpected outcomes from input without the use of crude randomness, and generate new materials from those already present in a musical situation. The system has been in development since an Arts Council grant to purchase the necessary equipment was awarded in 2007, and the Blackrock Castle Observatory performance will be its first official outing.

the human performers

Han-earl Park (www.busterandfriends.com) works from/within/around the traditions of idiom-agnostic, experimental improvised musics, sometimes engineering theater, sometimes inventing ritual. He feels the gravitational pull of collaborative, multi-authored contexts, and has worked with animators, filmmakers, poets, theater and mime performers, dancers and installation artists. As a musician (guitar, banjo, bass guitar, piano, electronics and software) he has performed in clubs, theaters, art galleries, concert halls, and (ad-hoc) alternative spaces in Denmark, England, Ireland, The Netherlands, Scotland and the USA.

He is involved in ongoing collaborations with Bruce Coates, and with Franziska Schroeder, fifteen year long associations with Alex Fiennes and Murray Campbell. A UK tour in April 2010 will see him performing with Charles Hayward and Ian Smith at Cafe OTO (London). Recent performances include a duo concert with Paul Dunmall, a trio with Kato Hideki and Katie O'Looney, and the performance of Pauline Oliveros' 'Droniphonia' along side the composer. He has performed with Ishmael Wadada Leo Smith, George E. Lewis, J. D. Parran, Mark Sanders, Chick Lyall, Jan Langedijk, Stu Ritchie, Koen Nutters, Pedro Rebelo, Elspeth Murray, Mark Trayle and Hannes Raffaseder. He is also the constructor of io o.o.i beta++, an interactive musical artifact, and cofounder of the Church of Sonology. He has studied with the improviser-composers Smith, Lyall, Trayle, Richard Barrett, Joel Ryan and David Rosenboom, composers Clarence Barlow and Marina Adamia, and the installation artist Sara Roberts.

Park is a recipient of grants from the Arts Council of Ireland and Music Network, and a recipient of the Ahmanson Foundation Scholarship and the Calarts Scholarship. He has appeared at festivals including Sonic Acts (Amsterdam), the Center for Experiments in Art, Information and Technology Festival (California), dialogues festival (Edinburgh), Sonorities (Belfast) and VAIN Live Art (Oxford). In addition to numerous self-released CDs, his work has been released by Owlhouse Recordings, frimp.co.uk and Frog Peak Music. He has performed live on Resonance FM (London) and on Drift Radio (at mediascot.org), and his recordings have been featured on Kalvos and Damian's New Music Bazaar (Vermont), and You Are Hear (at www.youarehear.co.uk) which was selected as Critics' Choice by The Independent (UK).

Park is founder and curator of Stet Lab, a monthly improvised music space in Cork, Ireland, and teaches improvisation at the UCC School of Music.

"Careful, crafty and well-played with that restrained yet fractured guitar that sounds so good."

(Bruce Lee Gallanter, Downtown Music Gallery, NY)

"Innovative..." (The Computer Music Journal)

"Electro weirdo..." (BBC - Collective)

"Doesn't sound like sewage!" (Kalvos and Damian's New Music Bazaar)

"Beautiful music, incredibly focused...!" (Nick Didkovsky, Doctor Nerve / Punos Music)

Bruce Coates (www.myspace.com/brucecoates) has been heavily involved with free jazz, free improvisation and experimental music for more than 15 years. He has collaborated and performed with a long list of some of the best-known names in these areas. He is cofounder of the Birmingham Improvisers' Orchestra, has a long standing working relationship in many different guises with guitarist Jamie Smith, a regular trio with David Ryan and bassist John Edwards and runs the monthly Birmingham FrImp night.

Recent collaborations have included regular performances with the saxophonist Paul Dunmall, appearing alongside Dunmall on his DUNS label (the only saxophonist to do so); the Paris-based Blackberry Orchestra led by Peter Corser and involving some of France's best known improvisers including Denis Charolles and Guillaume Roy; and a CD with the Amsterdam based Mount Fuji Doom Jazz Corporation released on the Ad Noiseam label in 2007. Current ensembles include SCHH with Chris Hobbs, Mike Hurley and Walt Shaw; Magtal with Mark Sanders and Jonny Marks; and the performance art oriented Mutt with Marks and Shaw. His ever-growing eclectic list of collaborators also includes Tony Oxley, Lol Coxhill, Christian Wolff (performing alongside the composer at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London), Hilary Jeffrey, Phil Gibbs, Paul Rogers, Trevor Lines, John Coxon, Misterlee, Bong Ra, Simon Picard, Tony Bianco, Han-earl Park, Tony and Miles Levin and Tony Marsh.

Franziska Schroeder (www.sarc.qub.ac.uk/~fschroeder) is a performer, a theorist and an improviser. She is a founder of the digital media collective laut and has been awarded her PhD by the School of Arts, Culture and Environment at the University of Edinburgh, UK.

Her research interests include the intersection of philosophy and performance in technology-informed environments, in particular the role of the body in the age of technological change.

Schroeder has written for many international journals. She has guest-edited a double issue for the Contemporary Music Review Journal (Routledge) and is on the editorial board for the ARiADA (Advanced Research in Aesthetics in the Digital Arts) online journal, UK. Schroeder was recently invited to be on the programming committee for the 2009 DRHA (Digital Resources in the Humanities and Arts) conference.

In April 2007 Schroeder took up a three year AHRC funded Research Fellowship at the Sonic Arts Research Centre in Belfast where she investigates network performance environments.

Schroeder was the Artistic Director for the Roots Ensemble at the ICMC 2008 (International Computer Music Conference). With her trio FAINT, Schroeder has released a double CD (CS088) of Improvised and Electroacoustic Music with Pedro Rebelo (piano and instrumental parasites) and Steven Davis (drums) on Creative Source Recordings. This project was supported by an Arts Council Northern Ireland Grant. Schroeder has subsequently released her second CD on the Creative Source label. With Imogene Newland, she is involved in a radical re-imagining of Stockhausen's 'Tierkreis', and has recently performed with Pauline Oliveros and with Evan Parker.

John Godfrey (www.quietmusicensemble.com) is a composer and performer and lectures in the Music School of the University College Cork. He has a long history of involvement with new music, as composer, performer, teacher and entrepreneur.

Godfrey's compositions and arrangements have been performed worldwide and many appear on CD. He has written for many prestigious ensembles, including The Bang On A Can All-Stars (USA), Bradyworks (Canada), The Crash Ensemble (Ireland) and Icebreaker (UK). He has written music for The CruX Dance Company, based in Cork. He recently completed a commission for The Crash Ensemble.

Previously highly influenced by the Hague School, Godfrey's compositional work is currently focussed on experimental and improvisation-based music, often with live and interactive electronics. It is particularly influenced by experimental music based on acoustical phenomena, such as that by La Monte Young and Alvin Lucier.

In 2006, he was awarded an Equipment Bursary by the Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon for purchase of equipment for research into live improvising/interactive computer systems. Another Arts Council award in 2007 allowed Godfrey to establish a new professional performing ensemble and to run a major festival of Experimental Music in Cork (summer, 2008). The Festival included the first Deep Listening Retreat with Pauline Oliveros in Ireland, and featured new works, and appearances by, Alvin Lucier, Mark Appelbaum, David Toop and others.

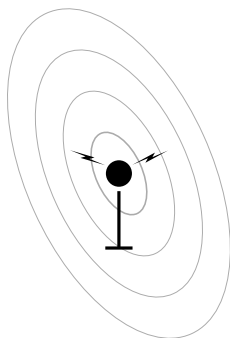
Godfrey performs pre-composed, improvised and semi-improvised work, both on piano/keyboards and on electric guitar.

In 1989 he cofounded, and was subsequently the Musical Director of, the new music group Icebreaker, which became one of the most successful ensembles in its field. The group appeared extensively in Europe and America, and made several CDs for Decca Argo (UK), New Tone (Italy), Donemus (Holland) and Canteloupe (USA). He left Icebreaker in 1997, and in the same year was invited to join Ireland's premiere new music group, the Crash Ensemble. The latter has also toured extensively, with major appearances in Europe, the US, and Australia, and has made a number of recordings and radio broadcasts

Godfrey has set up many new initiatives in the field of new music in Cork, including two festivals of contemporary music in 1997 and 1998, and has been an outspoken promoter of new music in the city. He works with many local artists and performs with Cork's improvisation collective The Quiet Club.

Francis Heery is a composer and performer living in Cork. He holds a masters degree in Music and Media Technology and is currently studying for a PhD in Composition in UCC. His instrumental compositions have been performed on numerous occasions in England and Ireland and his electro-acoustic works have been broadcast internationally. As well as composing, he is actively involved in electro-acoustic improvisation and has performed in numerous solo and collaborative projects across Ireland. He is a member of the Irish Composer's Collective and is a part-time lecturer in UCC.

images



io o.o.i beta++ logo

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Han-earl Park

photo by Stephanie Hough

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Bruce Coates

photo by John Hough

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Franziska Schroeder

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John Godfrey

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