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Sometimes i open my eyes to make sure you're not beside for real

Generative Music Composition
based on sonic affectspheres of ASMR online videos (2020)

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The pandemic has reframed the notions of touch, encounter and contact and translocated them radically into digital realms of mediated intimacies and digital affectspheres.

In 2020 the use of online pornography has increased with a reported approx. 25% higher online traffic during lockdown periods, ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response) was one of the most popular search terms.

This affect can cause pleasurable tingling sensations in response to visual and mainly auditory stimuli, performed, shared and commented on video and adult video online platforms.

ASMR-porn is an idiosyncratic example of current everyday internet practices that strikingly illustrates the diverse forms that mediated digital intimacy can take, forms of social intimacy that intent is the simulation of embodied social intimacy between viewer and performer.

This forms are explicitly erotic or performed affiliative behaviours, sound of interpersonal bonds like mediated care-giving/-recieving or performed intimacy such as hugging, licking, petting, kissing, massaging, touching, breathing and whispering.

Particularly the disembodied voice does seem to retain its status as a locus of authority, comfort and medium of intimacy.

As pointed out by critics, ASMR, framed as forms of sonic engagement refers to the opposite of what it promises to offer: the radically unmet need for intimate connection, touch and existential, authentic personal encounter.

SONIC TRANSLATION

Spoken language as highly stylized vocal and gestural performance in ASMR becomes a sonic material to be manipulated, rather than a medium for the delivery of information.

The project makes reference to asemantic tendencies of ASMR voices and pushes it further. It rephrases the sonic affectsphere of ASMR porn online communities to a steady self evolving realtime generative music composition. This music is based on processed sampled data, sonification and sound information retrieval techniques (getting spectra, pitch, onsets, peaks etc.). It sonifies certain acoustic properties and shapes their musical appearance (density, tonality, rhythmic macro- and micro structures etc.) using statistical datasets of online porn platforms (eg. average hourly usage etc.).

The main timing layer is derived from stylized vocal content of whispering or moaning artifacts and accumulated using more or less processed / resynthesized non-spoken ASMR-soundsnippets of pornographic, erotic and affiliative actions. Sounds are taken from online platforms and function as score and synthesis material at the same time.

In contrast to the polychronic fragmented audiences of online platforms, listeners are percieving within the same radiostream timeframe/space, invoking an almost nostalgic idea of music as a social practice and encounter in a shared simultaneity.

The sonification takes care to ensure that it is abstract enough to meet common legal restrictions of adult content in public to fit a daily radio program.

The title of this work is a found sentence, a comment of an online user.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The project is entirely realized in the SuperCollider programming environment. It was developed on a Mac with OSX10.13 with SuperCollider 3.10.1, is tested and runs stable in its current form. Any Mac with latest SuperCollider App installed will be fine.

The stereo-output can be grabbed to stream (either via internal output of Computer or Audio-Interface connected to Computer).

Required files like statistical platform usage data and sampled audio materials are read from the computers harddisk. For reasons of reliability there is no need to fetch online data while playing. Additionally some safety routines (eg. density limits, max. number of synths limits etc.) are built in to never overstrain the running system which articulates its music in realtime and autonomous.

The current version has some basic sound generation procedures implemented. I attach a recorded excerpt of the direct program output (some minutes) which

is a preliminary sketch to indicate the direction I am interested in.