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The Risset Cycle, Recent Use Cases With SmartVox

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ABSTRACT

The “*In memoriam Jean-Claude Risset*” cycle of compositions marks a significant turn in the evolution of SmartVox: initially designed as a rehearsal and performance tool for choirs in which singers received their score and audio-guides through their smartphones’ browser, SmartVox can now be used in more diversified setups, from large ensembles with soloists and choir to small instrumental chamber music groups with players wearing head-mounted displays, in participative concerts with audience interaction, or in staged operatic contexts. This paper first situates SmartVox among various technologies of distributed animated notation, and then discusses four pieces extracted from the ‘Risset Cycle’, to all be performed with this technology (a form of computer-aided “conductor-free” performance). From a compositional point of view, these works were conceived as spectral mimetic transcriptions of synthesized sounds, as a tribute to the French pioneer of digital sound synthesis and co-founder of the spectral school. Spectral music as a compositional aesthetic emerged simultaneously with the birth of the digital era in the 1970s. Through a neo-spectral approach to music, this paper seeks to make a case for a compositional ideal (the mimetic transfer of a natural/synthesized sound to the instrumental/vocal domain) which today’s technologies have made more realistic.

1. INTRODUCTION: MIMESIS

If mimesis was a governing principle of artistic creation in Ancient Greece, it was most certainly also at the heart of the French spectral music’s project of the 1970s. In this context indeed, composers rarely put into question why for instance the faithful imitation of the harmonic spectrum of a bell sound qualified as art. Assuming that harmony in music is paramount, one can now examine how, in the case of singers for instance, this mimetic transfer might be facilitated when one receives an audio-score [1] through his/her ear, reproducing microtonal harmonies by just imitating the perceived pitch (as is the case with SmartVox). In this case the (auditory) notation closely resembles the desired effect. However, the philosopher Nelson Goodman demonstrated that this is not necessarily the case with musical notation: in fact even beyond the musical realm, he is famous for showing that one thing need not resemble another in order

for that other to represent it. Working on real-time animated music notation and virtual reality [2], the composer Benedict Carey reminds us of an essential aspect of musical notation: ‘the closer a musical unit gets to representing a direct action (that is, the movement of an object in space) the more mimetic it becomes.’ [3] This observation highlights the great complexity of rhythmic notation in common practice musical notation, when compared to modern video game-like notations such as, for instance, *Digital Audio Workstations* where a cursor scrolls from left to right, or in *Guitar Hero* and modern piano roll-notation, where notes or tablature fall from top to bottom of the screen. On the contrary, in traditional music notation, the historically inherited practice of the arithmetic division of tuplets, their fitting into bars and beats, and the constant adjustments instrumentalists have to make to coordinate with the gestures of a conductor show all together how mimetic representations are—for better or worse—much easier to understand for beginners than the culturally inherited common practice.

2. NOTATION

2.1 Creative use of Technology for Musical Notation: Global Context

Ryan Ross Smith’s *animatednotation.com* website demonstrates that today many composers find fixed common practice notation limiting. To solve this issue, attendees of the Tenor Conference¹ have proposed elements of response. With Kagel’s *Prima Vista* (1962/64) setting a major precedent, animated notation often relies on a large screen projecting the parts, as most famously exemplified in Smith’s compositional practice. The score can therefore be seen by the performers but also by the audience, thus making notation part of the theatrical performance.

Other performance-oriented systems (SmartVox [4] [5], Zscore [6], Decibel [7] [8], Maxscore [9], *comprovisador* [10]) endeavor to distribute and synchronize each part of the score on the performer’s devices (whether Smartphones, tablets or laptops). With SmartVox for instance, rendering the score in the browser directly revealed itself to be very effective for this kind of setup. Thanks to cross-platform web technologies, the application works with any browser capable device, and no installation is required by the client. The node.js²/websocket architecture of SmartVox will hopefully inspire more composers, researchers and developers to investigate the emerging musical practice of distributed notation.

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¹ <http://www.tenor-conference.org/>

² Server-side JavaScript, see: <https://nodejs.org/en/>

2.2 Graphical Notation in *Bach*

Most pieces performed with SmartVox rely highly on *Bach* [11], a realtime computer-aided composition package for Max/MSP. The use of color and shape in pieces like *In Memoriam JC Risset 1* or *Mit Allen Augen (In memoriam JC Risset 2)* was inspired by Cat Hope [12] and Lyndsey Vickery [13], two active composers, researchers, developers of the Decibel ScorePlayer [8], whose approach to animated graphical notation opens new territories for musical scores today.

Unlike other notation packages in Max (MaxScore [9], or the Symbolist [14]) which were imagined as symbolic representations in the first place (Rama Gottfried describes the Symbolist as a version of adobe illustrator in Max), the *Bach* environment emerged from *Open Music* [15] and computer-aided composition, which explains some of its limitations from a graphical point of view: for instance, it is impossible to insert a picture in a *bach.roll* (in proportional notation), and the *bach.roll* object does not support articulations (unlike the *bach.score* object in bars and beats notation). However, one can get around this graphical limitation by adjusting the duration line settings (see Figure 1). The use of colors is also easily customizable with the help of ‘slots’.



Figure 1. Duration line adjustment in *Bach*.

In spite of its few display limitations, one of the strengths of *Bach* consists of its ability to control synthesizers from the notation directly. Slots can therefore be understood as metadata or temporal automations that can subsequently be mapped onto any Max-programmed synthesizers, enabling staves of a score to be manipulated as tracks of a DAW³.

2.3 Distributed Musical Notation

Composers and researchers increasingly acknowledge the strong analogy which can be drawn between the traditional ‘score and parts’ musical practice led by a conductor, and the modern distributed systems or web applications (Zscore [6] - MASD [16] - SmartVox [4]), in which multiple clients coordinate their actions by passing messages to one another.

The Tenor 2018 conference in Montreal revealed to the author an interesting similarity between the Decibel ScorePlayer and SmartVox, in the sense that the two softwares are rather elementary solutions both converging towards the *score player* performance-oriented paradigm, whilst other notation packages (*Bach*, *Maxscore*, *Symbolist*...) were also designed for more elaborate computer-aided composition and real-time processes. Although the Decibel ScorePlayer is today’s most reliable iOS application solution for distributed animated notation, Cat Hope and Aaron Wyatt have evoked the possibility to migrate their system to the browser, for instant access over the internet presumably, but also optimization of networking issues, and cheaper

³ see <https://youtu.be/s4qS2khwkT0> for demonstration.

production cost in local settings—e.g. for projects involving over fifty devices, the iPad becomes a very expensive solution). The most likely architecture to allow this transfer of technology would be a node.js server⁴ (server-side javascript), with the WebSocket communication protocol, a solution used by SmartVox as early as 2015, thanks to Norbert Schnell and Benjamin Matuszewski from IRCAM in Paris. SmartVox sends and synchronises mp4 audiovisual scores, which has demonstrated undeniable robustness in large scale concerts and rehearsals, but also reveals the potential weakness of a ‘non-realtime’ solution (as a sort of fixed multichannel tape) in which performances of the piece would be similar each time. Other composers/researchers (Georg Hajdu, Rama Gottfried, Slavko Zagorac) are currently investigating forward thinking solutions which will allow the control of SVG (Scalable Vector Graphic) directly on the client-side HTML page. The architecture chosen for this by Georg Hajdu and Rama Gottfried is node.js, sending osc over WebSockets. This project will result in a realtime distributed 144-parts site-specific composition in Hamburg in May 2019.

2.4 Augmented Reality Distributed Notation

*In Memoriam JC Risset 1*⁵, premiered in September 2018 at the Gaudeamus Festival (Utrecht), constitutes the author’s first experiment using head-mounted displays. By simply displaying each part of the score over the heads of the performers (for flute and clarinet only), this piece has revealed interesting potentials to be exploited in future works.

Just as traditional scores placed on a music stand, screen-scores displayed on a tablet (for instrumentalists) or on a phone (for singers) oblige musicians to look and orientate their body constantly in the direction of the score. This well-established convention of the classical concert setup considerably limits the possibilities of staging music, in a theatrical context for instance. In such cases as the Ictus Ensemble’s interpretation of *Vortex Temporum* by Gérard Grisey⁶, where the musicians had to learn the score by heart, and perform without a conductor, Wi-Fi-synchronized head-mounted displays might be an interesting way to help musicians coordinate in time and space, while moving on stage or around the audience, without insurmountable performance challenges.

According to the performers’ feedback, head-mounted setups provide a large and comfortable display, since the environment is still visible around the score (see Figure 2), or through the score in the case of holographic display (such as the Aryzon headset for instance). The performers also showed interest in their ability to move freely on stage or elsewhere (the piece was choreographed differently according to the venue: in a church, the flute and clarinet started the piece behind the audience and gradually approached the altar), which relates to the term *phygital* (physical+digital) coined by Fabrizio Lamberti [17], who claims that with AR and VR, the possibilities of physicalization of gaming will soon encompass other fields.

⁴ According to a private email conversation with the developer Aaron Wyatt.

⁵ A recording of the piece is available at the following address: <https://youtu.be/hQtyu1dcCaI>

⁶ See: <https://youtu.be/JFvrYy6EeWE>

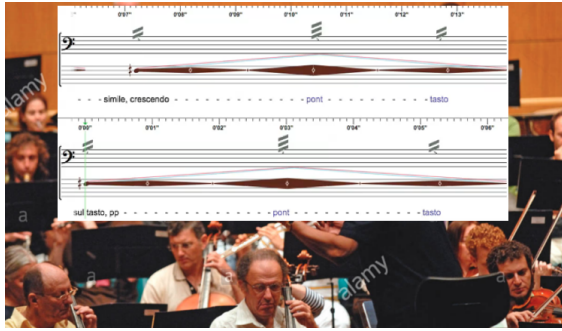


Figure 2. Score display from the performer's point of view.

While awaiting more discrete (such as Google glasses, which would be invisible from an audience's point of view) but still affordable solution, AR opens vast domains for further research, which could go far beyond the mere display of animated notation. However, important questions then arise regarding what would be pertinent to achieve with such technology: in a VR context for instance, with a player on stage, how can the limitation due to the destabilization of the performer's proprioception be overcome? Also, now that any form of immersive score can be prototyped,⁷ how would this be of musical interest, and how could this have a convincing musical impact on the compositional/performative outcome? SmartVox, for instance, delivers and synchronizes mp4 files, and should soon support 360-degree videos⁸, but how can this benefit the performer in a musical sense? Australia holds today the world's largest community of composers/researchers working in animated notation, and Australian composers such as Benedict Carey [2] and David Kim Boyle [18], who specifically investigate 3D-scores in VR environments, should soon bring elements of response to this issue.

3. NETWORKED MUSICAL PERFORMANCES - NMPS

3.1 SmartVox.eu, Score Distribution over the Web and Remote NMPS

With the exponential growth of the web, hosting *SmartVox*⁹ on the internet (i.e. on a remote server rather than a local one) appeared as a necessity. However we demonstrated (in Chapter 4.2 'Measurements of timing accuracy' [5]) that, although the synchronization of different parts was quite accurate in this way, local solutions remained safer (in the same room, over Wi-Fi). Also, notwithstanding the fact that SmartVox undoubtedly belongs to the realm of Networked Musical Performances, it became clear that its practical application falls under the 'local NMPS' sub-category defined by Gabrielli and Squartini [19].

Since the advent of the internet, thorough research has

⁷ Such as the ones imagined by Mauricio Kagel's film *Ludwig Van* (1969), see for instance: <https://youtu.be/718vPWF1gxI?t=1591>

⁸ This could be done by simply implementing a 360 media player in HTML5, e.g.: <https://bitmovin.com/demos/vr-360>

⁹ Each instrumental/vocal part of the piece *And the Sea* is accessible through the following url www.smartvox.eu, and can be accessed simultaneously from e.g., an iPad for the flute, Android tablets for piano and cello, and a phone for the singer. A trailer of the premiere of the piece is accessible here: <https://youtu.be/prcXUbdh-ZY>

been undertaken in the realm of remote Networked Musical Performances (NMP) [20]. Today however, local NMPS still seem today more viable, both technically and artistically speaking. While young generations tend to play video games online (i.e. remotely), with friend avatars or anonymous players most often around the globe, many examples would show that musicians still feel more inclined to the idea of reading a score or improvising together in the same room. In *Embodiment and Disembodiment in Networked Music Performance* [21] Georg Hajdu explains that "appreciation [of the musical experience] relies on the plausibility between physical action and sonic result." Since the emergence of NMPS,¹⁰ some disappointment arose from the fact that, from the audience's point of view (but also for the musicians themselves), very little can be seen and therefore understood, which worsens with distant performers: "Because of the remoteness of the participants, these actions may not always be perceived directly or immediately [...], classical cause-and-effect relationships [...] are replaced by plausibility, that is the amount to which performers and spectators are capable of 'buying' the outcome of a performance by building mental maps of the interaction. In NMP, this can be facilitated by the use of avatars, projected visually, and carefully orchestrated dramaturgies, involving participants in game-like scenarios." Many VR environments today focus on this interaction between a physical action and its sonic result. *New Atlantis* ([22]), for instance, is a multi-user sound exploration platform in which several players can interact with each other.¹¹ With their ability to represent avatars of musical performers, these new interfaces may soon have the ability to recreate the visual entity producing sound (or music). By recreating virtual causal links between an action and its sonic result, these online game interfaces should provide users with the missing visual element that prevent NMPS from becoming a genuine globalized musical practice.

3.2 The 'SmartBox', a Raspberry Pi Hardware Embedded System Solution for Local NMPS

The author has shown evidence that SmartVox is suitable for large scale projects such as *le temps des nuages*¹² in which eighty singers and musicians had their score synchronized through the same network [5]. These productions still enjoy an increasing interest from choirs and ensembles,¹³ requiring a very modest technical setup (only one Wi-Fi access point, e.g. Ubiquiti Unifi) for choirs up to thirty singers, with a node.js server running on a Mac computer. However, in the more intimate context of chamber music (as in *In Memoriam JC Risset 1*), the focus is slightly different: the network load is much lighter, which encouraged finding a minimal hardware solution, in order to make possible rehearsals without the physical presence of the composer or the mobilization of a technician only to

¹⁰ The American computer music network band 'the Hub', formed in 1986, contributed to the popularization of this new genre.

¹¹ Towards the end of the following extract, three players can be observed producing sounds together: <https://vimeo.com/264626943>

¹² A recording of the piece is available at the following address: <https://youtu.be/SyFdR2HiF00>

¹³ SmartVox was used for the rehearsals and performance of *To See The Invisible*, an opera by Emily Howard, Aldeburgh, Snape Maltings 2018 <https://snapmaltings.co.uk/concerts-history/aldeburgh-festival-2018/to-see-the-invisible/>

setup a network. Installing the server on the performer’s computer remotely has often been successful with musicians unfamiliar with technology, thanks to the flexibility of the Node Package Manager (NPM), which reduces the installation of SmartVox to a few command lines.¹⁴ This installation process nevertheless remained an obstacle for the dissemination of SmartVox. In search of a light plug-and-play dedicated system to be sent over the post, the Raspberry Pi quickly appeared as the best option to host SmartVox on an embedded system. Node.js runs on Raspbian, and SmartVox proved to be very stable on a Raspberry Pi 3, so, once installed, the only two steps for a *0-conf* deliverable hardware were:

- Setting up a static address for a dedicated router (e.g. tp-link...).
- Starting SmartVox at boot.

Starting a script at boot can be done on Raspbian with a file containing the following in the `etc/systemd/system`:

```
[Unit]
Description=My service
[Service]
ExecStart=/home/pi/Desktop/hello.sh
[Install]
WantedBy=multi-user.target
```

With the `hello.sh` script containing the following to launch the server:

```
#!/bin/bash
cd /home/pi/Desktop/risset
npm run start
exec bash
```

This low-cost system (less than 65 €, for a Raspberry and a router) now allows the sending of ready-to-use scores. Once the system is power-supplied, all the performers need to do is to join the dedicated Wi-Fi, and type the static IP address of the server on their smartphone/tablet (i.e. for the performers: 192.168.0.100:8000, and for the conductor: 192.168.0.100:8000/conductor). In January 2019, the system was rented to the Caen French conservatoire via *BabelScores*¹⁵, thus proposing a rental of performing scores (separate parts) of a new kind.

The Raspberry Pi was interestingly used for score rendering by the Troy-based composer Kelly Fox, for the performance of his piece *Accretion* [23]: “*the paper seeks to make a case for adopting the Raspberry Pi as a powerful device and method of distribution/performance of Animated Music Notation*”. Unlike SmartVox, in which the Raspberry Pi is used to launch a `node.js server`.¹⁶ Fox’s approach proposes to use several Raspberry Pies as notation rendering *clients*.

4. MIMETIC ORCHESTRATION

With the exception of the first opus (*In Memoriam JC Risset I*), whose pitch material was extracted from the analysis of FM synthesis spectra, all the pieces of this cycle constitute *mimetic* (a term attributed to Lindsay Vickery [24] and Benedict Carey [3]) orchestrations of the PRISM laboratory synthesizer, developed by Richard Kronland-Martinet

[25], who worked for thirty years with Jean-Claude Risset at LMA, Marseille, France.

This synthesizer is based on a perceptive model (as opposed to a physical model [26]) and carries the influence of Risset’s exploration of timbre synthesis, examined through the perspective of human perception [27]. The great majority of the electronics in other pieces of the cycle (*In Memoriam 2, 3 and 4*) makes extensive use of the *liquefaction* parameter, which turns a continuous sound into small grains evoking the resounding impacts of drops on multiple resonant metallic surfaces, or some form of imaginary rain on metallic chimes.¹⁶ The *Bach* library was again very helpful for musical transcription, subsequently allowing for transfer to the instrumental domain.

Benedict Carey’s doctoral thesis ‘Between Mimetics and Memetics’ examines the credo assumed by various spectral composers, for whom the very act of composing was sometimes almost equivalent to the ability to orchestrate or translate sounds to the instrumental domain. Classical contemporary music scenes such as those represented in Europe in Gaudeamus or Darmstadt academies and festivals reveal, however, that such preoccupations are often today very far from what the young generations of composers wish to express. Therefore, one can only talk of neo or post-spectralism when referring to such techniques. Whilst still taught in institutions like IRCAM, or briefly mentioned as part of the undergraduate composition curricula, one can deplore the fact that this aesthetic canon has seen its day now that technologies (such as the tools presented in the present paper) finally allow more intuitive and user-friendly interfaces to the composer (Bach, Ableton, PRISM synthesizer), auditory and visual computer assistance for microtonal intonation and synchronization adjustments to the performer (SmartVox), and thus probably more convincing results from an audience’s point of view.

4.1 Time Domain: Temporal Precision and Mimetic Transfer

At IRCAM in January 2018, Benjamin Matuszewski highly improved the synchronization possibilities of SmartVox by implementing a client-side algorithm that puts back in sync devices whose drift exceeds a certain threshold ([5], Chapter 4.3). Until this new release, SmartVox had to deal with a more approximate temporality, but it can now explore a wide range of tightly synchronized musical situations, between musicians, electronics and video for instance.

In none-pulsed music, in spite of the great conducting tradition in chamber music and orchestral works, left-to-right scrolling cursors distributed on the performers’ devices (as in the Decibel ScorePlayer or SmartVox) seem a far more straightforward strategy to obtain tight synchronization rather than the bars and beats ‘encoding’ (quantification by the composer with or without the help of algorithms) and decoding processes (a compromised interpretation by the instrumentalist, between the rhythmic values written on the page and the gestures of the conductor), inherited from a scoring tradition in which a regular meter was assumed.

The `bach.roll` object displays notation in proportional time, and outputs notifications of its playback status in real-time.

¹⁴ SmartVox is open source and ready to download on GitHub: <https://github.com/belljonathan50/SmartVox0.1>.

¹⁵ Babelscores (<https://www.babelscores.com/>) is an online score database for classical contemporary music, currently actively supporting the SmartVox project: <http://1uh2.mj.am/n12/1uh2/1gi4u.html>.

¹⁶ A *liquefaction* demonstration is available here: <https://youtu.be/2kdlaqAhUGs>

These notifications can be interpreted in *Max For Live* in order to synchronize 1/ the notation for human players in *Bach* and 2/ the electronics in Ableton Live. Figure 3 shows how Ableton’s playback controls can be accessed through the live-set path of the live object model (LOM), which makes constant back and forth playbacks possible between the score and the electronics, during the compositional process. This interface facilitated the composition of *Mit Allen Augen, In Memoriam J.-C. Risset 2*, a piece involving large forces to be performed in Paris in March 2019 (12 voices, 12 instruments and electronics).¹⁷

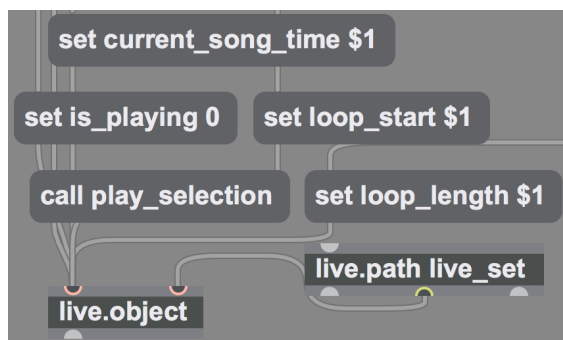


Figure 3. *Max For Live* device syncing *Bach* and Ableton.

Pieces of the Risset cycle all benefit from this improvement: in the first piece of the cycle, a passage is based on rhythmical games between performers, taking advantage of the cursor-type display of time.¹⁸ In *Das Hoheslied, In Memoriam Jean-Claude Risset 3*, to be premiered in June 2019, students of HfMT Hamburg were able to sight-sing (for the very first time) passages which strikingly resembled the target model.¹⁹ In the *Pocket Opera* similarly, voices should be able to match the attack of the tape with great accuracy.²⁰

4.2 Frequency Domain: Harmonic Analysis of Frequency Modulation

Rather than citing the oft-used Shepard-Risset glissando illusion, the author found it more appropriate to re-activate one of the most successful techniques of the beginning of computer music: frequency modulation, which Risset was amongst the first composers to use in his piece *Mutations* (1969), thanks to Chowning’s generous permission. This is why nearly all the harmonic material from *In Memoriam J.C. Risset 1 and 3* was generated by FM synthesis.

For frequency analysis, although *Iana* [28] was formerly used (and also favored by Daniele Ghisi [11] in some of his transcription patches), the *zsa.freqpeak* descriptor [29] offered seemingly more accurate results. A *Max For Live* device was built for pitch visualization purposes.²¹

¹⁷ The following example shows the convenience of the Bach/Ableton inter-application communication <https://youtu.be/VJvY5wYl.cM>

¹⁸ A rhythmical passage in *In Memoriam Jean-Claude Risset 1* <https://youtu.be/hQtyu1dcCaI?t=349>

¹⁹ A *Target sound* is followed by its imitation by the choir in a sight-reading session of *Das Hoheslied, In Memoriam Jean-Claude Risset 3* <https://youtu.be/EHYq9nFF6sE>

²⁰ The harmonic/rhythmic contour of the electronics, once transcribed with the help of *Bach*, is then distributed to different voices in hoquet-like sort of games: https://youtu.be/eBshi_2F20k

²¹ Real-time spectral analysis with *Bach* and *Zsa.FreqPeak*

As a reference to Risset’s findings regarding the temporal evolution of the harmonic content of digitally recorded trumpet sounds (which becomes richer in high frequency harmonic when loudness increases [30], the evolution of frequency’s ‘Modulation index’²², was orchestrated by successive entries of voices, from the lowest register (bass) to the highest (soprano).²³

4.3 Conclusion on Mimetic Spectralism and Vocal Imitation

Some of the tools presented in this chapter show that the possibilities offered by today’s technologies would have appealed to the supporters of the ‘mimetic spectralism’ imagined in the 1970s. If the compositional aesthetics followed by these composers is not to everyone’s taste, they may at least provide a fertile ground for artistic/scientific research, because their aims and methods, concerned with the reproducibility of a model, are suitable to measurements and, for instance, quantifiable assessments.²⁴

In a more scientific context, members of the PRISM²⁵ laboratory undertook an experimental study of vocal imitation which recalls the sight-reading experiment in *Das Hoheslied*. According to the author, Thomas Bordonné, this study “aimed at determining the main characteristics of sounds used by participants during vocal imitations”. Bordonné, concludes: “Vocal imitations seem to be a good tool to access the perception and determine which aspects of the sounds are relevant” [31]. In this setup, therefore, the spontaneous vocal response of participants could be interpreted in similar ways to the SmartVox-led reading sessions in which the singers are asked to imitate what they hear.

5. CASE STUDY: THE POCKET OPERA, COLORS AS A METAPHOR FOR HARMONY IN PARTICIPATIVE SETTINGS

5.1 Participation

Productions based on SmartVox have highly taken advantage of the emergence of participative concerts, in which local community choirs or students get an opportunity to sing with professional musicians (e.g. *SmartVox* or *Le temps des Nuages*).

Like SmartVox, the web application *Your Smartest Choice*²⁶ (dedicated to a concert piece of the same name by Huihui Cheng) was developed by Benjamin Matuszewski at IRCAM, in the SoundWorks frameworks [32]. In this piece, the audience interacts with the performers on stage through a video game running in the browser of their smartphone. This project encouraged the author to take this participative aspect even further, not only with singers of various levels

<https://youtu.be/D6mCgx4pSxs>

²² See <https://youtu.be/OnT-Zgkh5MA> for demo purposes.

²³ See <https://youtu.be/sgSjIpSD8yQ>.

²⁴ As, for instance, in the aforementioned Hamburg’s choir sight-reading example: *Das Hoheslied, In Memoriam Jean-Claude Risset 3*.

²⁵ <https://www.prism.cnrs.fr/>

²⁶ *Your Smartest Choice*, by composer Huihui Cheng, is an IRCAM-Eclat Festival joined production in which the audience interacts with the performers through their smartphones. <http://cosima.IRCAM.fr/2017/02/05/your-smartest-choice-eclat-festival/> The piece was subsequently performed at the Luxembourg Rainy Days Festival, the code for the game is available here:

<https://github.com/IRCAM-cosima/your-smartest-choice>

joining professionals in a production (as in *SmartVox* or *Le temps des Nuages*), but also with the audience participating in the performance, through a video game deployed over Wi-Fi, accessible through their own smartphone, just like the performers' scores.

5.2 Chroma, the Relationship Between Pitch and color

The *pocket opera* project (*In Memoriam J.C. Risset 4*) consists in a staged work in which professional musicians (the *De Caelis* ensemble) will interact with secondary school choirs (singing) and with the audience (playing). The pedagogical interest here consists of familiarizing the students with notions of tuning, intonation and harmony. As in most *SmartVox* projects, the personalized in-ear guide tones will help the choral students to sing in tune, but this time the audience will also be asked to follow the musical action happening on stage. The full score is projected on a screen and the game displays balloons of different colors scrolling on the phone. Each color corresponds to a specific pitch/sound, in order to prompt audience members to follow the score and click on the matching color. A didactic introduction will explain the rules of the game.²⁷

Reflecting again on questions raised by Lyndsey Vickery [13] regarding the possible roles of color in musical notation, and taking his findings to a musical language more focused on pitch and harmony, color was used for its harmonic significance, remembering that the Ancient Greek word for color (*chroma*) interestingly led to chromaticism. With all harmonic fields generated from liquefied sounds of the PRISM synthesizer [25], the *pocket opera* project²⁸ (*in memoriam J.C. Risset 4*) seeks to develop, through a process of *gamification* of musical notation, an awareness to notions of pitch and spectral harmony among audiences of all backgrounds.

6. CONCLUSION

Initially conceived almost exclusively as a rehearsal tool for choral practices [4] [5], recent use cases have shown that *SmartVox* is in fact better described as a *distributed score player* suitable for instruments as well as vocalists with or without electronics. If notation remains a key concept for *SmartVox*, the notion of *Networked Musical Performance* probably defines it more specifically. Its recent synchronizing capabilities make it well-suited for mimetic spectral music, in which the rhythmic and harmonic characteristics of a recorded sound serve as a basis for composition and orchestration.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Georg Hajdu, Daniele Ghisi, Benjamin Matuszewski and Richard Kronland-Martinet.

²⁷ The piece starts with an explanation of the game's principal: <https://youtu.be/s-VSs3TcqLk>, it then explores various possibilities with the system (<https://youtu.be/p4fT1CQGf-A>)

²⁸ A description of the project is available at the following address: <https://www.decaelis.fr>

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