

Show & Tell: SMARTlab Seminar Series 19 February 2010

Sketching Music: Composition and Representation with Dr. Jean-Baptiste Thiebaut

When: Friday 19 February 2010; 6:00pm – 8:00 pm
Where: SMARTlab Digital Media Institute, KD1.21 Knowledge Dock, UEL



Levi Strauss wrote about music that it is: “the supreme mystery among the human sciences” (1964). The practices of composition also remain, at large, mysterious. I adopt in my research a technological stance to analyse composition as a task involving equipment and artefacts, in particular notations and representations. Many studies of cognition have shown that the use of representations impacts the cognitive process. The early stages of music composition often involve sketching on paper. These sketches range from informal drawing and diagrams to partial drafts of the composition. My PhD research aimed at understanding the role played by these sketches in music composition: what are the techniques and technologies, the concrete

and individual actions involved in composition, and what role do they play in the shaping of a composition? I have designed and evaluated a computer program that provides similar functions to that of pen and paper. I will illustrate the findings of my thesis through a case study and a presentation of the software, the Music Sketcher.

Jean-Baptiste Thiebaut graduated in both music composition and computer science before starting a PhD with the Interaction, Media and Communication group at Queen Mary, University of London. He develops his own programs to compose music and to study composers practices. His research is inter-disciplinary, drawing on musicology, cognitive science and human-computer interaction. He is also active as an artist. Recent works include the sound design of the pilot of 365 (Zeina Abirached, 2009) for the French Television, the organisation of the event Augmented Instruments at the Luminaire, the installation The Giant Instrument, presented at the Shunt and The Dana Centre at the Science Museum, the installation Visual Sound at the ICA, and a performance based on the "sonification" of a portrait at the National Portrait Gallery. He composes and performs with the band pplato. He defended his PhD in 2009 and is currently a lecturer in the Interaction, Media and Communication group at Queen Mary, University of London.

*Please RSVP by sending an email to babak@smartlab.uk.com
To find us, please check our website <http://bit.ly/8YB6ju>*