

ALT 2008 Conference Performance

DUET for EYES II: Moving with the Sprites

8pm Tuesday 9 September, Leeds University Theatre.

SMARTlab's Inter-FACES project aims to give a human face to new technologies, and to empower creative people of all levels of physical ability to express themselves freely. As part of this long term project, the team have engaged for the past 2 years in a series of workshops and performance showcases to demonstrate the power of specific tools to make a real difference to the lives of real people. Our work has been shown in London, Dublin, Prague, Singapore, Ohio and L.A., and is coming to Leeds for the first time with this performance.

Katie Gilligan and James Brosnan lead a 'Duet for Eyes' with Bobby Byrne and the company. The duet demonstrates how creative spirits with very limited physical movement can lead and inspire movement in others, using an eye-gaze technology tool customised by the team.

The team includes SMARTlab core faculty and performers, and also a wider group of collaborating 'spirits' who regularly give of their time and energy to make live work together. This group, known as SPIRITlevel, was founded by Lizbeth Goodman in 2003, following on the first major collaboration that led to the Special Olympics pre-show performed live in Dublin. SPIRITlevel continues to grow, and now invites a first collaboration with 'the sprites'! In this showcase for ALT2008, we will combine the 'Duet for Eyes' with an improvised dance with the Sprites.

The Sprites:

Dr Sita Popat and Scott Palmer of Leeds University have completed an AHRC-funded Projecting Performance project in collaboration with KMA Creative Technologies. (<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/paci/projectingperformance/home.html>)

This work explores and articulates the emergent nature of the interface between technological object and human that is fundamental to the development of new design thinking and practices. The Sprites are the informal name for the dancing apparitions created by the interface of the tablet to the screen, combined for the first time in this performance with the live interaction of performers with Cerebral Palsy, moving these virtual dance partners with their hands and with their eyes.

One part of the live jam is led by **James Brosnan** - of the Centre for Independent Living in Dublin, also a Research Fellow at SMARTlab - using his eyes to control the live feed music in real time.



Katie Gilligan (a Central Remedial Clinic School graduate and original Spiritlevel dancer) leads the second part of the live jam, and dances with the sprites.

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Team:

James Brosnan, Bobby Byrne, Mick Donegan, Sandy Ana Fuentes, Katie Gilligan, Lizbeth Goodman, Colm O'Snodaigh, Scott Palmer, Robbie Perry, Sita Popat, Chrissie Poulter, Vanessa Wiegand, Hayley Willis, Aejaz Zahid.

Bobby Byrne of Counterbalance Dance leads the movement, and has choreographed the piece.



Colm O'Snodaigh (Kíla), and **Robbie Perry** (Dead can Dance) have written and scored new music with and for James and Katie, and have created a range of new musical instruments as well as assistive tech tools with the team for this purpose.



Scott Palmer is a Lecturer in Scenography and Director of Enterprise and Knowledge Transfer in the School of Performance and Creative Industries at the University of Leeds.

Dr Sita Popat is a Researcher and Choreographer, as well as Head of Research and Lecturer in Dance at the University of Leeds. She achieved her PhD in January 2002, creating a model for interactive choreography on the Internet.



Chrissie Poulter of Trinity College Drama Department has co-devised this show with the Spiritlevel team, starting with a showcase performance extract as part of the Project Brand New series at Project Arts staged in March.

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MyTobii (Sweden) have donated the hardware for the show, whilst the 3D interactive soundscape was provided by Martyn Ware (Culture Club/Heaven 17) for Illustrious Company.

Dr Mick Donegan, Principal Investigator of the InterFACES Project, will introduce his bespoke Grid and interactive jamming software tools as part of the showing.



The show, like all SMARTlab's Spiritlevel showcase performances, has been conceived and directed by **Lizbeth Goodman**, with the team. She and Mick will invite post-show discussion and future collaborations using this amazing breakthrough in assistive technology for creative expression!

WITH THANKS TO

Leeds University Department of Performance and the Creative Industries
ALT2008 Organising Committee: Hayley Willis, Marion Samler, Seb Schmoller

& thanks to - Roger Henriksson and Lisa Oosthuizen from Tobii Technology for the loan of the MyTobii Gaze Control systems, & to the SMARTlab/Spiritlevel Tech Team including: Rachel Armstrong, Toby Borland, Camille Baker, Taey Kim, Rachel Lakesbikan, Stanislava Mislanova, Tamarin Norwood, Eion O'Brien, Dr Marc Price (BBC R&D), Jana Riedel, Vanessa Wiegand, Aejaz Zahid; & for assistance to Ms Gilligan and Mr Brosnan: Ajibola Adestimi, Hugh Brosnan, Kathryn Brosnan, Martin Brosnan, Tina Gilligan, Rachel Glennane, Sandy Ana Fuentes, Abraham Shodiya.

