

blind date – an audiovisual performance by Pd~graz

blind date is an audiovisual performance which aims at an artistic extension of common patterns in computer programming: rather than featuring isolated programmers, several persons at a time are working together on a single program (a Pd patch). All participants are using their own physical keyboard, mouse and monitor, but they are all operating the same logical interfaces, e.g. a single mouse focus to manipulate a single audio-engine. Working in the very same environment allows them to share ideas on a low level. At the same time this interaction becomes interference, e.g. when a person hinders their partner to write a certain bit of code. Since they have to share access to the environment, the players need to coordinate their work in order to produce a (technically and musically) functioning patch. Rather than merely representing a technical tool for generating music, the patch therefore also becomes the primary means of communication between the programmers.

The performers start with a blank canvas (i.e. an empty patch), and gradually build-up and modify a running program, in the tradition of Live Coding. Besides the resulting audio (and potentially video) works, the patches themselves are projected into the performance environment as well. As opposed to usual objectives of audiovisual programming, this allows for a deep insight of the audience into the processes of programming and communication among the players.



Illustration 2: blind date performers



Illustration 1: blind-data patches for the audience

So far, blind date has been performed at a number of festivals and concerts in Europe and North America, including among others, the „Musikprotokoll im Steirischen Herbst“ (Graz, Austria; 2005) and the „Pure-data Convention 07“ (Montreal, Canada; 2007).

pd~graz

The range of users and developers of Pd in the city of Graz, Austria covers a very wide spectrum, reaching from independent artistic production to academic research. Also, several local institutions have a long tradition of dealing with art in a technological context and contribute greatly to the community:

- mur.at as a cooperation for the promotion of network art (<http://www.mur.at>)
- the ESC gallery(<http://esc.mur.at>)
- the CC - mur.at's "competence center" (<http://cc.mur.at>)
- the Institute of Electronic Music and Acoustics (IEM) (<http://iem.at>) at the University of Music and Dramatic Arts, and
- the medien.KUNSTLABOR (media art lab) at the Kunsthhaus Graz (<http://www.medienkunstlabor.at>)

In 2004, community efforts have made it possible to organize and host the First International Pd~Convention in Graz, which represented the first meeting of Pd developers and users on an international basis. The exchange of ideas among more than 20 of Pd's most important developers in the course of lectures and workshops has had a lasting influence on the further development of the software. Along with local artists, they have also presented their artistic works in numerous concerts. About 15 theorists have been invited to hold discussion panels on the significance of Pd and free software in general. Beginners' workshops have been held as well. In 2005, the Pd~graz group has been founded as a collaboration for the organization of artistic performances, workshops, etc. At the same time, the newborn Pd~ record label has published its first release: a DVD including artistic works presented at the Pd~Convention 2004.

Current members of pd~graz are: Ypatios Grigoriadis, Lukas Gruber, Reni Hofmüller, Florian Hollerweger, Georg Holzmann, Karin Koschell, Thomas Musil, Markus Noisternig, Renate Oblak, Michael Pinter, Peter Plessas, Nicole Pruckermayr, Winfried Ritsch, Romana Rust, Uwe Vollmann, Franz Xaver, Ales Zemene, Fränk Zimmer, IOhannes m zmölnig

During performances, pd~graz explore new ideas and techniques of collaborative improvisation.