

Performative Storytelling: Setting-Based Mobile Music Creation in Action

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Abstract. *This artistic presentation for Ubiquitous Music Symposium 2022 features 2 music compositions with accompanying visuals. The compositions represent various elements of setting-based mobile music creation model. The music as well as large sections of the videos have been created in 2019 and 2020 with mobile apps on older portable devices – iPhone 6s and iPad Air 2. The music was created within time and location constraints while preserving the stylistic objectives of an established electronica artist.*

Artwork concepts and methods

This music submission features a creative representation of the Model of Setting-Based Mobile Music Creation (Figure 1). This model is predominantly performative, with many of the elements performed live in settings chosen by the music creator. These elements are Pre-production, Instrumental Performance, Mixing and Effect Processing, Algorithmic Composition, Sequencing and Post-production [Koszolko 2021]. Figure 1 elements coloured in orange represent performative actions executed and captured live. Not all elements are required when creating music in this way, and it is up to the artists to choose which building blocks they want to work with.

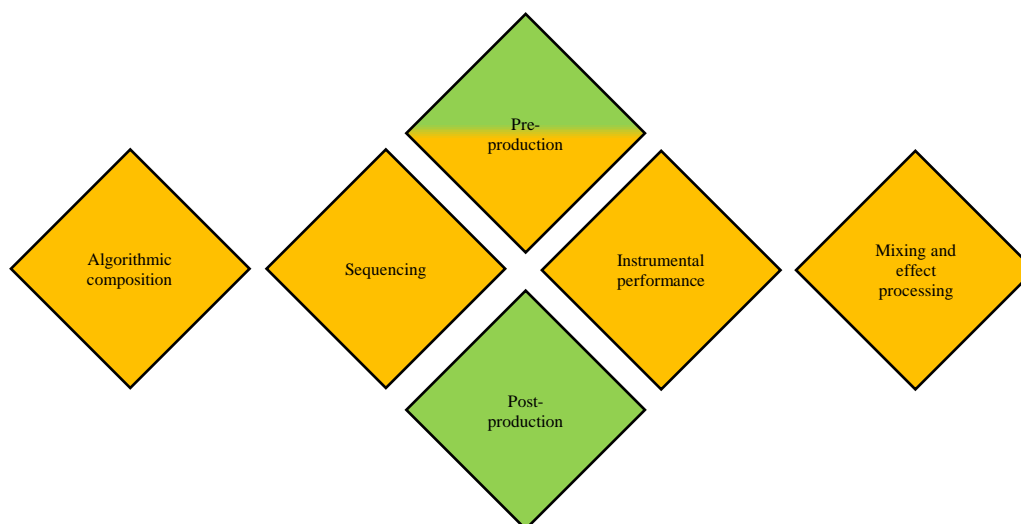


Figure 1: Elements of setting-based mobile music creation model

This creative demonstration for the Ubiquitous Music Symposium 2022 is presented under the artistic alias KOshowKO and features 2 music compositions with accompanying visuals. My other practical explorations of the setting-based model include curation and production of the compilation album titled '*Mobile Strategies: Battery-Powered Sonics*' (2019) for Clan Analogue – a long standing Australian electronic arts collective and record label. This album

includes contributions from 25 music producers located on 3 continents and utilising a broad range of portable, battery-powered setups.

Audio-visual material presented at Ubimus2022 includes the following pieces:

1. *Rich Machine (Birthday Train Ride One Take Phone Mix)*: 5min, 31sec [created in 2019]

Instrumentation: iPhone 6s with iOS apps AUM, ThumbJam, BlocsWave.

2. *Hanging Rock*: 3min, 35sec [created in 2020]

Instrumentation: iPhone 6s and iPad Air 2 with iOS apps Korg Gadget and AudioShare.

Both pieces signify the process of music creation within limited time frames and in environments not designed for music production, such as trains, stations and a state park. Audio and video components were recorded with the use of a single mobile device. Stylistically, work on these compositions was guided by the need to align with KOshowKO's existing discography where the artist explored various approaches to electronica.

Ubiquitous music researchers have highlighted the environmental impact of the fast renewal cycle of mobile devices [Keller and Lazzarini, 2017]. I also share this concern, avoid using the newest devices and instead acquire older mobile equipment on the second-hand market. The music presented here was produced using relatively old but perfectly functional mobile equipment, a 2015 iPhone 6s as well as a 2014 iPad Air 2.

The pieces represent the setting-based model in various ways. For example, the pre-production of piece #2 'Hanging Rock', incorporates actions such as audio field recordings capturing the sounds of walking in Hanging Rock State Park. Pre-production in both pieces also included filming in locations where all or at least a significant part of the music creation took place. Instrumental performance highlighted in the model is also featured. In piece #1, 'Rich Machine', this is evidenced by trumpet parts performed live while walking between trains and using the ThumbJam app on the phone. The ability to perform a trumpet piece with the use of a built-in gyroscope and accelerometer, for adding the vibrato, while walking on a train station demonstrates the potential of mobile devices to take expressive music making outside of the confines of traditional studio and venue spaces. This performance can be seen in sections of the music video that accompanies the piece. In 'Rich Machine', the entire music creation process occurred within four short train rides as well as walks between trains in Melbourne on September 16, 2019. Each train ride lasted for approximately 15 minutes during which sequencing, recording, and mixing took place. Both pieces include performative mixing and effect processing as well as algorithmic and generative composition and sequencing elements. Post-production involved synchronisation of the video content with audio in order to enhance musical narratives.

Performative storytelling explored throughout the presented compositions, refers to site-specific sampling and use of iOS-based instrumentation, such as apps that facilitate field recording and synthesis. Presented performative strategies relied substantially on live sequencing, algorithmic composition, live mixing and effect processing. In addition to creating music in public and outdoor settings, the circumstances where the music was made are highlighted by the titles reflecting the production environments as well as the video footage shot at the same location.

Mobile music creation represented by these two compositions was more rapid in comparison to using non-mobile tools and traditional studio processes. The production allowed the creator to work within the parameters of a pre-determined musical style while also highlighting the circumstances of the creative process via the incorporation of live instrumental performance captured on mobile devices, field recordings and location footage.

References:

Keller, D., and Lazzarini, V. (2017) 'Ecologically Grounded Creative Practices in Ubiquitous Music'. *Organised Sound*, 22(1), pp.61–72.

Koszolko, M K. (2021) 'Performative Storytelling: The Model of Setting-Based Mobile Music Creation'. In *Mobile Storytelling in an Age of Smartphones*. Springer Publishing. Edited by Xiaoge Xu and Max Schleser.

Various Artists. (2019) 'Mobile strategies: Battery powered sonics'. *Clan Analogue*. <https://www.clananalogue.org/featured/ca053-mobile-strategies-various-artists>. Accessed 30 April 2022.

Technical description

Program notes:

The proposed material encompasses two music compositions as well as their music videos.

Intended venue:

Online

Duration and instrumentation:

Proposed material includes 2 compositions:

Rich Machine (Birthday Train Ride One Take Phone Mix): 5min, 31sec
Instrumentation: iPhone 6s with iOS apps AUM, ThumbJam, BlocsWave

Hanging Rock: 3min, 35sec
Instrumentation: iPhone 6s and iPad Air 2 with iOS apps Korg Gadget and AudioShare.

Video files accompanying the submission feature footage shot on the same mobile devices that were used for the music creation.

Names of performers:

KOshowKO

Composer / performer bios or a link to where these can be found online:

<https://philosophyofsound.info/research>

<https://philosophyofsound.info/koshowko>

Detailed description of technical requirements, including equipment and setup time:

This is a proposal for online streaming presentation. A single video file with stereo audio is submitted under the link below.

Download link to the audio-visual file:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/ykjh wz7ol02hdrs/KOshowKO%20music%20video%20presentation%20for%20ubimus2022.mp4?dl=0>