

Jeffrey M. Morris

Installation: The Collected Solo Piano Works of Ferin Martino, as Conjured by Your Presence



Topic: Music

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References:

[1] Umberto Eco, *The Open Work*, trans. Anna Cancogni, Harvard University Press, USA, 1962/1989

[2]

<http://www.morrismusic.org/2011/the-collected-solo-piano-works-of-ferin-martino-as-conjured-by-your-presence>

Abstract:

This is an interactive art installation using a piano-playing computer algorithm that generates music reminiscent of early twentieth century expressionist composers like Arnold Schönberg. Since it is capable of generating its own oeuvre, I gave the software a human-like name, Ferin Martino. In this installation, motion of the viewers (seen by the computer's video camera) disrupts the flow of the music created. This creates a situation that lets us reflect on the ontological nature of music: this music cannot be heard without the audience causing changes in the composition. By extension, it offers a chance to reflect on the way that any composer's music only has its existence in the minds of its audiences, and that the modes of its existence may be as diverse as its listeners. This is an idea suggested by literary theorist Umberto Eco in *The Open Work* [1].

This work consists entirely of software and can generate new material practically indefinitely. The fact that the code fits on one screen indicates the elegance of the approach to generating endless music with pleasing results.

A sample recording is available at reference [2].

Technical requirements: 1) Computer with webcam and either 2A) Yamaha Disklavier piano and MIDI interface or 2B) amplifier and speaker. The composer can provide 1 and 2B if necessary.



Example: Motion as detected by the software, to disrupt the flow of music

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Keywords:

Improvisation, interaction, piano, authenticity, aesthetics