

NIME: A MIS-USER'S MANUAL



Simon Rose, Paul Stapleton

situation. NIME activities demand open to the propensity of things re-membering models of encounter creative work. Gauging this trade underestimate its significance is to either a questionably memorable or mechanistic exercise in iterative prototyping.

Recognition of the inherent politicalities of musical instruments [34] beyond western innovation-centrist tendencies, incites reflection on the roles and influences of memory in our work. By providing insights into musicking's social and technical affordances, NIME media archaeological investigation of instruments from different parts of the globe [9, 3, 32] opens up exciting terrain for 21st century explores, developers and performers. In parallel, the swift obsolescence of recent technologies - programmed or unplanned - reinforces the need to rethink our notions of technological time [11]. The drive to prolong, adapt, reuse, or repurpose instruments and DMIs, thus acknowledging maintainability and sustainability issues as a NIME community [28, 29], is prompting appreciable creative responses [12]. The wicked question that then arises is whether recycling and updating might not turn NIME's infamous DMI graveyard into a land of zombies.

Regardless of the cultural importance of memory and legacies of archives and historically charged objects, the social value of



Sally Jane Norman with
Warren Maxwell's Kern

the strong technique entirely” [McAuley 2025, Section 2.3]. Later he recognised that his failure to precisely imitate the conventional version of the one-handed roll was in many ways a positive, a realisation that occurred while watching a performance by Mark Sanders who likewise employed a version of the technique which was less focused on optimisation and more about opening up new musical pathways. “It was simply a different way of getting my hands around the drum, another method to produce abundance” [ibid]. Here McAuley is referring to the concept of “redundancy” as excessive and unnecessary, according to greater adaptability and resilience, a point which has been developed in the context of ecological aesthetics and musical interaction [Rodger, et al.

**poke at the limits of inherited metaphors
to undermine attempts
to provide a fixed orderliness,
make many things with a light touch**



**value the oddity of
idiosyncratic encounters that
condition deep diversity**

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the wrong technique entirely” [McAuley 2025, Section 2.3]. It is noted that his failure to precisely imitate the movement of the one-handed roll was in many ways a realisation that occurred while watching a video of Mark Sanders who likewise employed a unique technique which was less focused on optimisation and more on opening up new musical pathways. “It was a way of getting my hands around the drum, a way of getting my hands around the piano, a way of getting my hands around the music,” he said. “It’s ‘motor abundance’” [ibid]. Here McAuley is referring to a shift in the study of skilful movement in which “motor redundancy” as excessive and unnecessary is replaced by “motor abundance” [Latash, 2012] as a way of getting greater adaptability and resilience, a concept that has likewise been developed in the context of robotics and machine learning [Bongard, Lipson, Müller, et al. 2013].

Shhhhhh!!!

David Sudnow’s *The Ways of The Hand* [1978] is a memoir of the author’s own development as a pianist. He discusses at length his encounters with other pianists he studied who notably accompanied themselves by swaying, quietly singing to themselves, or moving their hands in the air, all manner of what [!] might be called “airy gestures”—gestures which do not seem to matter to the piano’s striking of strings but which nevertheless have a significant effect on the sound produced.

Kristina Andersen

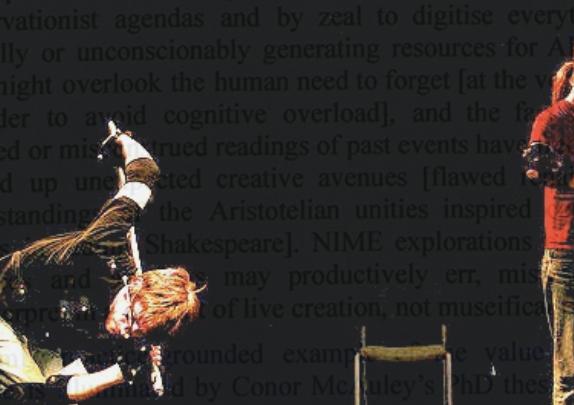
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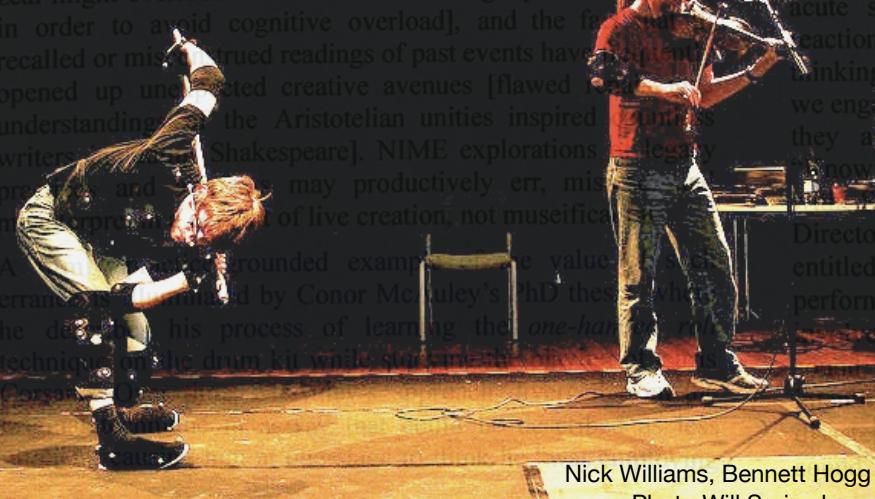
open to the propensity of things and timescapes, and re-membering models of encounter that can inspire further creative work. Gauging this trade-off is risky, but to underestimate its significance is to make live performance

**rescue performance from
the demo,
treat improvisatory action
in a shared now
as primary,
where our sensitivities to
when are most on display**

DMIs, thus acknowledging maintainability and sustainability issues as a NIME community [28, 29], is prompting appreciated creative responses [12]. The wicked question that then arises is whether recycling and updating might not turn NIME's infamous DMI graveyard into a land of zombies.

Regardless of the cultural importance of memory and legacy of archives and historically charged objects, the social values of live performance energies risks being overridden by preservationist agendas and by zeal to digitise everything willfully or unconsciously generating resources for AI. The zeal might overlook the human need to forget [at the very least in order to avoid cognitive overload], and the fact that recalled or misremembered readings of past events have opened up unexpected creative avenues [flawed understanding of the Aristotelian unities inspired writers like Shakespeare]. NIME explorations of memory, practice and performance may productively err, misinterpret and appropriate the art of live creation, not museification. A well-rounded example of the values at stake in this errand is provided by Conor McAluley's PhD thesis where he details his process of learning the one-handed techniques of a live drum kit whilst simultaneously





Nick Williams, Bennett Hogg
Photo Will Scrimshaw

A close-up profile shot of a man with short, light-colored hair and glasses, wearing a dark t-shirt. He is looking down at a keyboard instrument, which is partially visible. A microphone stand is positioned in front of him. The background is dark and out of focus, showing some vertical lines and textures.

MISSION WORKING-WHEN,

Joel Ryan

**find value in inefficient
machines
and risky performance,
fear not the
apparently superfluous
or mis-targeted**

reckless jumps, modest anticipation, desired change in space, absent-minded play, gamble, instinct, are executed by leaving these words behind and diving in [47 p423]. Improvisation curdles multiple forms

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Owen Green

broaden your concerns into the ecologies and ecosystems your work is embedded in, suggests, or takes for granted

explore
'interfacings' as a new
| for NIME



Lauren Sarah Hayes
Photo Nick Bryden



John Bowers workshop

bend or reimagine structures that encourage NIME participants to attentively engage with the messiness of performance practice

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on the other, and interface between)? Perhaps we should, if we may adopt a slogan of J. J. Gibson's, "Ask not what's in the machine but what the machine is in" and explore what becomes of the machine and those who ask when we think this way, that is, ecologically.

4. INEFFICIENCY, FORGETTING, GESTURAL ABUNDANCE

Ricki O'Rawe, Conor McAuley, Paul Stapleton

Inefficiency and forgetting are liberating species in our creative ecology. [Wetzel 148, p57, paraphrased]

the wrong technique entirely" [McAuley 2025, Section 2.3]. Later, he recognised that his failure to precisely imitate the conventional version of the one-handed roll was in many ways a positive, a realisation that occurred while watching a performance by Mark Sanders who likewise employed a version of the technique which was less focused on optimisation and more about opening up new musical pathways. "It was simply a different way of putting my hands around the drum, another nod to motor abundance" [ibid]. Here McAuley is referencing a recent shift in discussions of skillful movement in psychology, from "motor redundancy" as undesirable and undesirable, to "motor abundance" [Latack, 2012] as a multi-layered providing for greater adaptability and resilience, a multi-layered concept that has been developed in the context of

(Re-)frame topics to kickstart exchange on new fertile grounds for collaboration, grounded not in agreement but in vibrant uncompromise and festive dissent

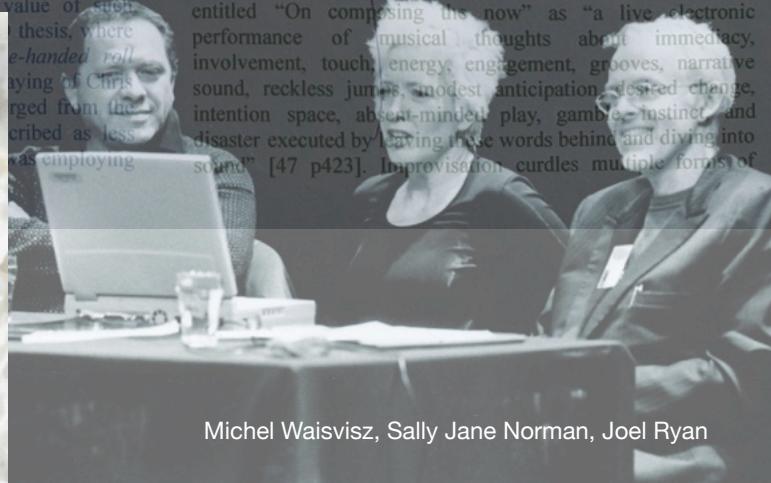


Paul Stapleton
John Bowers
Simon Waters

Developers and performers. In parallel, the swift obsolescence of recent technologies - programmed or unplanned - reinforces the need to rethink our notions of technological time [11]. The need to prolong, adapt, reuse, and repurpose instruments and MLs, thus acknowledging the potentialities and vulnerabilities as a NIME developer. Creative re-use, whether it's a found object or a complex algorithm, can be a powerful way to extend the life of a technology. In this spirit, we can see that the legacies of musicking's influences of archaeology, the globe [9, 10], and the explorer

example, a contribution from a co-performer or an unexpected resonance from a complex chord he had found himself playing. A hand poised in the air could fall down to parts of the keyboard that a hand still resting on the last keys played might stumble over. A swaying, humming body might give a literal sway to the music that a taut, silent body would not—and so forth. Rather than separate ancillary from functional gestures, or think about what's efficient and inefficient, or what is risky and safe, or what is remembered and what is forgotten, or right or wrong, we would prefer to ask about the potential musicality of all these matters. Inefficient machines and performers that take ridiculous risks, forget all that is trusted, true and worthy, amidst a flurry of camp ancillary gestures may well rock hard.

Address
openness to failure as a creative strategy, find a place for dissent and variation, with faith in scientific replication and convergence not required



IMPROVISATION, KNOWING-WHEN, COMPOSING-THE-NOW

Ryan describes "Knowing when", the title of his *Music and Mathematics IX* seminar [39], as an articulate knowledge that is as rendered as language: performance actions mobilise an acute sense of precision and immediate awareness, where reaction times are often much faster than self-conscious thinking or action. Tangible and intangible things with which we engage in performance are more than just sensitively placed: they are opportunistic agents in a collaborative process. "Knowing when" builds on Ryan's long-standing collaboration with STEIM and the late Michel Waisvisz as its Artistic Director. Waisvisz describes his 2006 NIME performance entitled "On composing the now" as "a live electronic performance of musical thoughts about immediacy, involvement, touch, energy, engagement, grooves, narrative sound, reckless jumps, modest anticipation, desired change, intention space, absent-minded play, gamble instinct, and disaster executed by leaving these words behind and diving into sound" [47 p423]. Improvisation curdles multiple forms of