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Nicolas Collins: Opens the Sound Hacking World

Nicolas Collins, who is a “pioneer in musical hacking,” is a professor in the Department of Sound at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He is inspired by Alvin Lucier, who created “I Am Sitting In A Room” and “Music On A Long Thin Wire.” Collins explores the sound world by “opening.” He opens, changes, and plays with sound: create arts. Collins said, “You take the toy and you do something that the factory doesn’t want you to do.”(Canonne) For example, Collins used a trombone as a mouse to operate his music, and used a CDplayers just to get the sound when it is paused. Collins said, he felt very liberating since there is no requirement nor strong background needed for creating sounds, and that liberating feeling pushed him to be a composer, music hacker and instrumentalist.

He prefers to play the sounds and instruments he made on stage by improvisers, rather recording at a studio. He likes the intimacy from the stage, the concept of improvised music.

I like his musical hacker ethics, and his hand-made electronic music series. As Collins mentioned, our generation experiences a digital hangover. The reason why this class is fascinating will be that we are learning the farthest new technology(such as Max) as well as with the classic technology, which is generated by our physical hands. Nowadays, all the data and softwares exists in the air where we cannot actually see nor touch. His sound hacking artworks

are meaningful since he creates sound from the air, which is full of information and electricity, by his hand and exploration.

Can you imagine a world without sound? Definitely sound is an amazing medium for art. The sound can make the audience curious, happy, cry and think. It is an art. However, if you are doing painting, you need to know how to use a brush. If you do photography, you need to know how to use a camera at least. If you want to make a sound to do art, technology is like a brush and a camera. I think technology is deeply related to sound art.

Work Cited

Canonne, Clément. "Hacking Through Contemporary Electronic Music." *Hacking Through Contemporary Electronic Music - Books & Ideas*, Books & Ideas, booksandideas.net/Hacking-Through-Contemporary-Electronic-Music.html.