

sound of ai accelerator

mentor self-presentation

alexander lerch



background

education

- **PhD, TU Berlin** 1994–2000
 - Software-Based Extraction of Objective Parameters from Music Performances
 - summa cum laude

- **Diplom-Ingenieur Electrical Engineering, TU Berlin** 2004–2008
 - concentration: telecommunications/signal processing, minors: communications and technical acoustics
 - summa cum laude

- **(Diplom-Tonmeister (Music Production), UdK Berlin)** 1996–2000
 - no degree



background

professional

■ Full-time

- *Assistant/Associate Professor, Georgia Institute of Technology* 2013–pres
- *Co-Founder/Head of Research, zplane.development* 2000–2013

■ Temporary

- *Visiting Professor, Central Conservatory of Music, China* Summer 2023
- *Visiting Professor, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China* Summer 2019
- *Visiting Professor, ShanghaiTech University, China* Summer 2018
- *Post-Doc, University of Victoria, Canada* 2010



research

areas of interest

■ audio content analysis

- music/speech classification
- musical instrument recognition
- drum transcription
- chord detection
- auto tagging
- ...

■ audio processing

- source separation
- audio effects
- ...

■ music performance analysis

- extraction of objective performance parameters
- student assessment



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methods

methods of interest

■ representation learning

- improved structure of embedded representations
- transferring knowledge from other representations and tasks
- enforcing the meaning of specific embedding dimensions
- ...

■ insufficient data for training

- semi- and self-supervised learning
- reprogramming
- ...

■ objective system evaluation

- evaluation of controllable systems with correlated attributes
- statistical models for comparison of properties
- metrics for sound generation



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overview









- founded in 2000
 - founders: Tim Flohrer, Martin Schwerdtfeger, Alexander Lerch
- high-quality (production quality) state-of-the-art algorithms for music analysis and processing
 - research collaboration with universities
- products
 - cross-platform SDKs (software developer kits)
 - some end-user products



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products

- technology provider to the music industry
- best known for algorithms time and pitch modification of music: *time stretching*, *pitch shifting*

tempo manipulation	original		double tempo		mod. timing	
pitch manipulation	original		rand. modified		harmonized	
	original		minorized			

- technology licensed mainly for
 - Digital Audio Workstations (DAW)
 - DJ software
 - music production tools



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historical background

- started with minimal resources
 - no start-up ecosystem/support
 - no investors, but a bank loan
- started with minimal business knowledge
 - three engineers
 - no insights into market beyond consumer view
 - no experience with marketing or customer relations
- started with limited software engineering knowledge
 - experience with implementation of algorithms
 - no experience with architectural design, maintenance, etc.
 - limited experience with performance optimization



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business model

- iteration 1
 - service provider for music software industry
- iteration 2
 - develop SDK and exclusively sell it
- iteration 3
 - sell non-exclusively
 - negotiate for visibility
- iteration 4
 - royalties-based b2b model
- iteration 4.5
 - add simple end-user products for visibility and evening out cash-flow



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take-aways

- do your thing
 - get all the advise you can get but make up your own mind
 - you decide but always be open to question decisions/processes
 - have a clearly defined value system (but get out of your comfort zone!)
 - know when to listen to customers and when not
- don't believe...
 - ... your competitors' marketing — everyone cooks with water
 - ... your own marketing — it's ok not being a genius
- transparency where possible can build trust
 - explain decisions and problems to users
 - don't be afraid to share some technical details here and there
- IF you have long-term plans
 - minimize 3rd party dependencies (API calls, platforms, libraries,...)
 - don't over-engineer but spend a significant amount of time on automated tests
 - define coding and commenting style and commit behavior
 - avoid concentrating critical knowledge in only one person without fallback strategy



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thank you!

contact

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