

Challenging machine aesthetics and the musical automation

Henrik Frisk

Abstract

Departing from the artistic research project Goodbye Intuition (GI) hosted by the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo, this presentation discusses the aesthetics of improvising with machines. Playing with a system such as the one used by GI, with limited intelligence and no real cognitive skills will obviously reveal the weaknesses of the system, but it will also convey part of the preconditions and aesthetic frameworks that the human improviser brings to the table. If we want the autonomous system to have the same kind of freedom we commonly value in human players' improvisational practice, are we prepared to accept that it may develop in a direction that departs from our original aesthetical ambitions? The analyses presented here are based on some of the documented interplay between the musicians in the group in workshops and laboratories. The question of what constitutes an ethical relationship in this kind of improvisation is briefly discussed. The aspect of the machines disembodied relation to the music emerges as a central obstacle in the development of musical improvisation with machines.