ReactiveML

The temporal expressiveness of synchronous languages with the power of functional programming.

Louis Mandel

Marc Pouzet

Cédric Pasteur

Guillaume Baudart, Mehdi Dogguy, Louis Jachiet

Why?

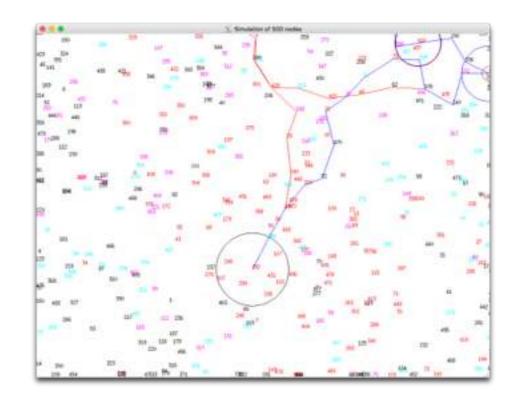
Programming Reactive Systems with:

- complex control and data structures
- lots of | communication | synchronization | concurrency

Why?

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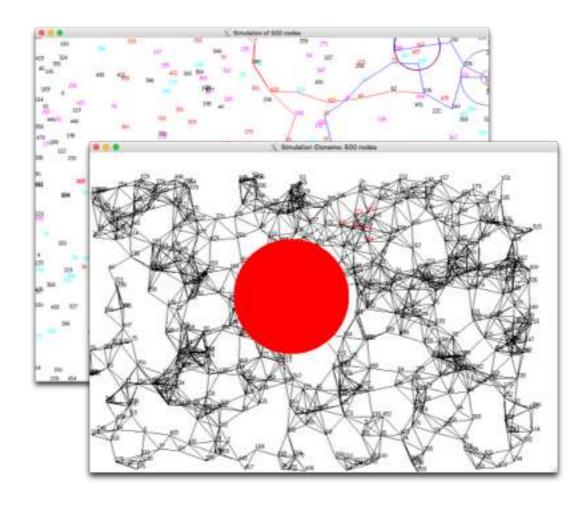
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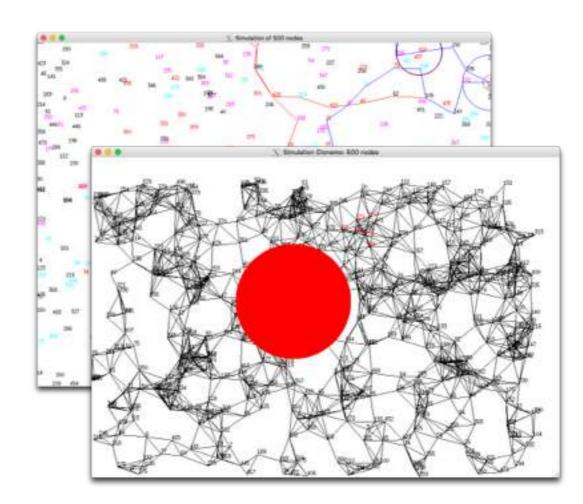
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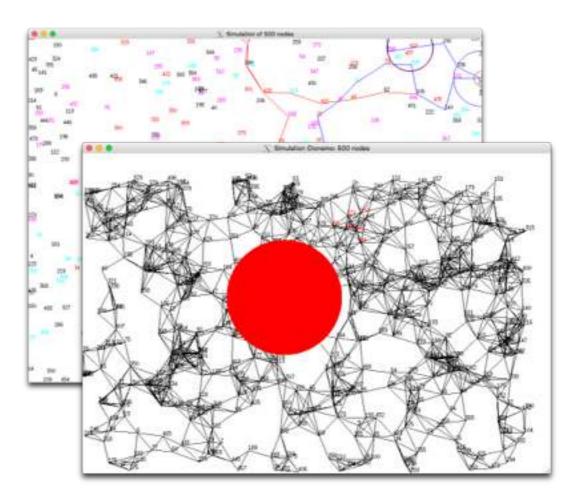
What?

General purpose programming language

Why?

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What?

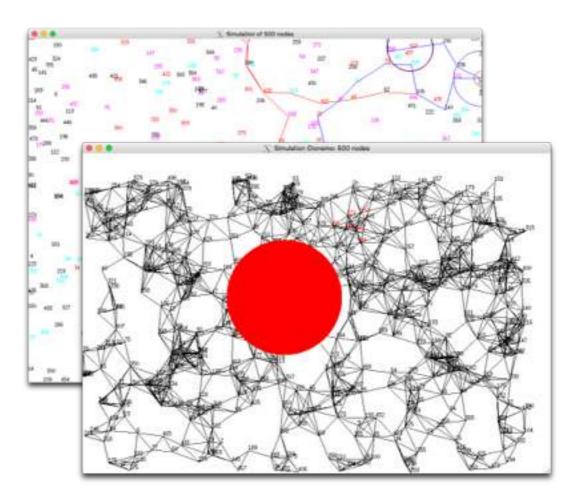
General purpose programming language

- Functional à la ML (OCaml)
- Synchronous lock-step concurrency (Esterel)
- Dynamic creation of processes

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What?

General purpose programming language

- Functional à la ML (OCaml)
- Synchronous lock-step concurrency (Esterel)
- Dynamic creation of processes

No real-time nor bounded memory constraints



ReactiveML, a Reactive Extension to ML*

Louis Mandel and Marc Pouzet Université Pierre et Marie Curie LIP6 †

ABSTRACT

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We present REACTIVEML, a programming language dedicated to the implementation of complex reactive systems as found in graphical user interfaces, video games or simulation problems. The language is based on the reactive model introduced by Boussinot. This model combines the so-called synchronous model found in ESTEREL which provides instantaneous communication and parallel composition with classical features found in asynchronous models like dynamic creation of processes.

The language comes as a conservative extension of an existing call-by-value ML language and it provides additional constructs for describing the temporal part of a system. The language receives a behavioral semantics à la ESTEREL and a transition semantics describing precisely the interaction between ML values and reactive constructs. It is statically typed through a Milner type inference system and programs are compiled into regular ML programs. The language has been used for programming several complex simulation problems (e.g., routing protocols in mobile ad-hoc networks).

1. INTRODUCTION

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Synchronous programming [4] has been introduced in the 80's as a way to design and implement safety critical real-time systems. It is founded on the ideal zero delay model where communications and computations are supposed to be instantaneous. In this model, time is defined logically as the sequence of reactions of the system to input events. The main consequence of this model is to conciliate parallelism—allowing for a modular description of the system—and determinism. Moreover, techniques were proposed for this parallelism to be statically compiled, i.e, parallel programs are translated into purely sequential imperative code.

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in terms of transition systems [5, 14].

Synchronous languages are restricted to the domain of real-time systems and their semantics has been specifically tuned for this purpose. In particular, they forbid important features like recursion or dynamically allocated data in order to ensure an execution in bounded time and memory. In the 90's, Boussinot observed that it was possible to conciliate the basic principles of synchronous languages with the dynamic creation of processes if the system cannot react in-stantaneously to the absence of an event. In this way, logical inconsistencies which may appear during the synchronous composition of processes disappear as well as the need of complex causality analysis to statically reject inconsistent programs. This model was called the synchronous reactive model (or simply reactive) and identified inside SL [11], a synchronous reactive calculus derived from ESTEBEL. Later on, the JUNIOR [15] calculus was introduced as a way to give a semantics to the SUGARCUERS [13], this last one being an embedding of the reactive model inside JAVA. This model has been used successfully for the implementation of complex interactive systems as found in graphics user interfaces, video-games or simulation problems [12, 13, 2] and appears as a competitive alternative to the classical thread-based approach.

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From these first experiments, several embedding of the reactive model have been developed [7, 13, 25, 27]. These implementations have been proposed in the form of libraries inside general purpose programming languages. The 'library' approach was indeed very attractive because it gives access to all the features of the host language and it is relatively light to implement. Nonetheless, this approach can lead to confusions between values from the host languages used for programming the instant and reactive constructs. This can lead to re-entrance phenomena which are usually detected by run-time tests. Moreover, signals in the reactive model are subject to dynamic scoping rules, making the reasoning on programs hard. Most importantly, implementations of the reactive model have to compete with traditional (mostly sequential) implementation techniques of complex simulation problems. This calls for specific compliation, optimization and program analysis techniques which can be hardly done with the library approach.

The approach we choose is to provide concurrency at language level. We enrich a strict ML language with new primitives for reactive programming. We separate regular ML expressions from reactive ones through the notion of a process. An ML expression is considered to be an atomic (timeless) computation whereas a process is a state machine whose be-

ReactiveML, a Reactive Extension to ML*

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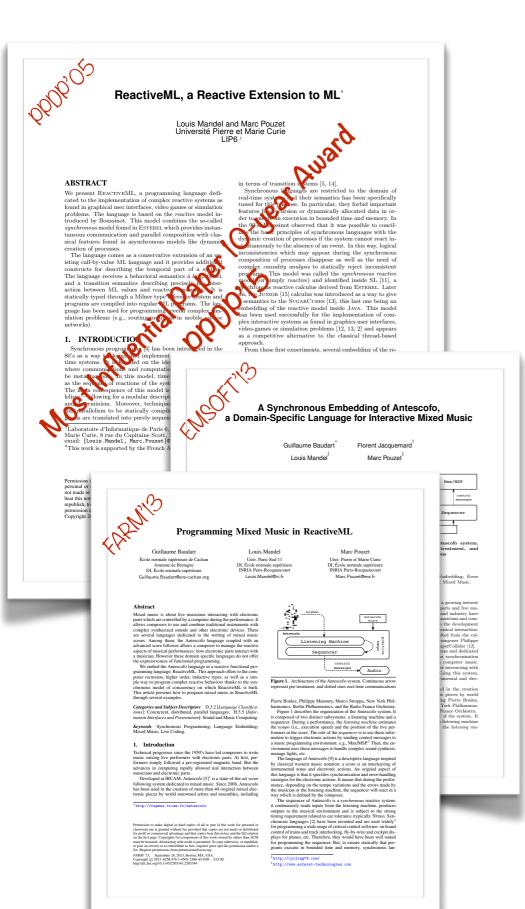
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SR3/A

Reactivity of Cooperative Systems Application to ReactiveML

Louis Mandel^{1,3} and Cédric Pasteur^{2,5}

¹ Collège de France
² DI École normale supérieure (now at ANSYS-Esterel Technologies)
³ INRIA Paris-Rocquencourt

bstract. Cooperative scheduling enables efficient sequential impleentations of concurrency. It is widely used to provide lightweight threadcilities as libraries or programming constructs in many programming nguages. However, it is up to programmers to actually cooperate to

issure the reactivity of their programs. We present a static analysis that cheels the reactivity of programs by by present a static analysis that cheels the reactivity of programs by Isstracting them into as-called behaviors using a type-anal-effect system. The properties of the programs of the programs of the simplicity of programs. The simplicity of the analysis is mandatory for the programmer to be able to understand the analysis is mandatory for the programmer to be able to understand the programs of the programs of the programmer to be able to understand the programs of the programs of the programmer to be able to understand the programs of the programs of the programmer to the programmer to the programmer to the program of the programs of the program of the pro

Dur work is applied and implemented in the functional synchronous lanuage ReactiveML. It handles recursion, higher-order processes and firstlass signals. We prove the soundness of our analysis with respect to the sig-step semantics of the language: a well-typed program with reactive fields is reactive. The analysis is easy to implement and generic enough

Introduction

foot programming languages offer lightweight thread facilities, either integrated the language libe the asynchronous computations [30] of F±, or available as a brary like GNU Pth [12] for C, Concurrent Haskell [15] or Lut [34] for OCanl. These libraries are based on cooperative scheduling: each thread of execution coperates with the scheduler to let other threads execute. This enables an efcient and sequential implementation of concurrency, allowing to create up will ullinoor of separate threads, which is impossible with operating system threads, ynchronization also comes almost for free, without requiring synchronization rimitives like locks.

The downside of cooperative scheduling is that it is necessary to make sure hat threads actually cooperate:

- Control must regularly be returned to the scheduler. This is particularly true for infinite loops, which are very often present in reactive and interactive
- Blocking functions, like operating system primitives for I/O, cannot be called.

Extensions

· Reactivity Analysis

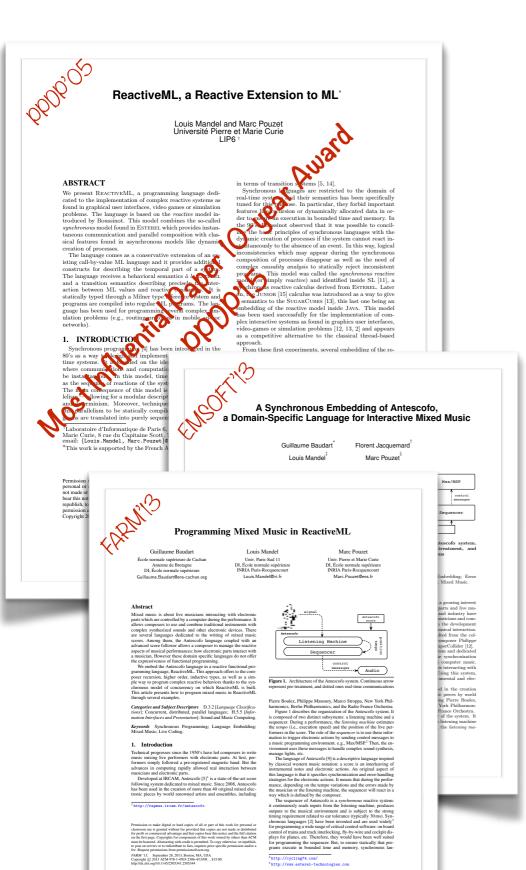


Reactivity of Cooperative Systems Application to ReactiveML Time Refinement in a Functional Synchronous Language Science of Computer Programming Time refinement in a functional synchronous language Louis Mandel a,*, Cédric Pasteur b,*,1, Marc Pouzet d,b,c ARTICLE INFO The concept of logical time greatly simplifies the programming of concurrent and reactive systems. It is the basis of synchronous languages [1] like ESTERE [2]. Its principle is to see the execution of a reactive system as a sequence of reactions, called instants, where all communications and computations are considered to be instantaneous during one reaction. This interpretation of time is logical because it does not account for exact computation time and the precise way all the computations are done during a reaction. It has been originally introduced for programming real-time embedded controllers, but it applicable for a wader range of applications, in particular large scale simulations. Consider, for example, the simulation of the power consumption on network [3]. In order to precisely estimate the power consumption, we need to simulate the hardware of certain nodes, in particular the radio. There are now multiple time scales: for example, the time scale of the software (i.e., MAC protocol) is in milliseconds, while the time step of the hardware vould be in microseconds. The communication between these time scales must be restricted. Eg., a slowy process, whose time scale is in milisecond, cannot observe all the changes of a faster process, whose scale is in microseconds. Said differently, a signal that is produced by a fast process cannot be used to communicate a value with a slower process. Furthermore, depending on the level of precision required for the simulation, it makes sense to be able to replace a precise

3

Extensions

- Reactivity Analysis
- · Time Refinement





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Extensions

- Reactivity Analysis
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ReactiveML, Ten Years Later

Louis Mandel IBM Research

Cédric Pasteur École normale supérieur (now at ANSYS-Esterel Technologies) cedric.pasteur@ansys.com

Marc Pouzet École normale supérieure

Abstract

Ten years ago we introduced ReactiveML, an extension of a strict Ten years ago we introduced ReactiveML, an extension of a strict ML language with synchronous parallelism à la Esterel to program reactive applications. Our purpose was to demonstrate that synchronous language principles, or ginally invented and used for critical real-time control software, would integrate well with ML and prove useful in a wider context: reactive applications with complex data structures and sequential algorithms, organized as a dynamically evolving set of tightly synchronized parallel tasks. While all ReactiveML programs presented at PPDP'05 still compile, the language has evolved continuously to incorporate powed programming constructs, commission techniques and ded-

novel programming constructs, compilation techniques and dedicated static analyses. ReactiveML has been used for applications that we never anticipated: the simulation of large-scale ad-hoc and that we never anticipated: the simulation of large-scale ad-hoc and sensor networks, an interactive debugger, and interactive mixed music. These applications were only possible due to the efficient compilation of ReactiveML into sequential code, which we present here for the first time. We also present a parallel implementation that uses work-stealing techniques through shared memory. Finally, we give a retrospective view on ReactiveML over the past ten years.

All general purpose programming languages propose a notion of parallel composition and synchronization. It is essential to program applications where several tasks evolve concurrently and communicate. If we consider OCaml, for example, there is the preemptive threads module Thread of the standard library, ¹ cooperative threads sibraries like Lutt. ² Async. ³ and Muthreads. ⁴ There is also library to the control of the standard LUEDD. ⁵ Such all Standard CEDD. ⁵ a library of Functional Reactive Programming (FRP),5 and a library for event driven programming.6

http://caml.inria.fr/pub/docs/manual-ocaml-4.02/

3 https://ocaml.janestreet.com/ocaml-core/111.28.00/doc/

4 http://christophe.deleuze.free.fr/muthreads

http://erratique.ch/software/react

6 http://www.camlcity.org/archive/programming/equeue.html

PPDP '15, July 14 - 16, 2015, Siena, Italy. Copyright © 2015 ACM 978-1-4503-3516-4/15/07...\$15.00. http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/7790449.2790509

A distinctive feature of ReactiveML is to provide a deterministic model of concurrency with rich control structures. ReactiveML programs can await and react simultaneously to several events, compose processes in parallel and modularly suspend or preempted

compose processes in parallel and modularly suspend or preempted parts of a system.

The concurrency model of ReactiveML is based on that of Esterel [5, 8], a language designed for programming control in safety critical real-time systems (e.g., avionic software [7]). This model of concurrency is the synchronous model [3]. It relies on a notion of time defined as a succession of logical instants. In the context of real-time systems, logical time allows software to be programmed without having to worry about physical time and then later to check that the worst case execution time of an instan

then later to check that the worst case execution time of an instant respects the real-time constraints.

Frédéric Boussinot was the first to see that the synchronous model can be used outside the scope of real-time systems [10, 13]. The notion of logical time is useful even if not bound to physical time. In particular, it allows for a precise and deterministic semantics of concurrency and some expressive control structures. ReactiveML is build on these ideas.

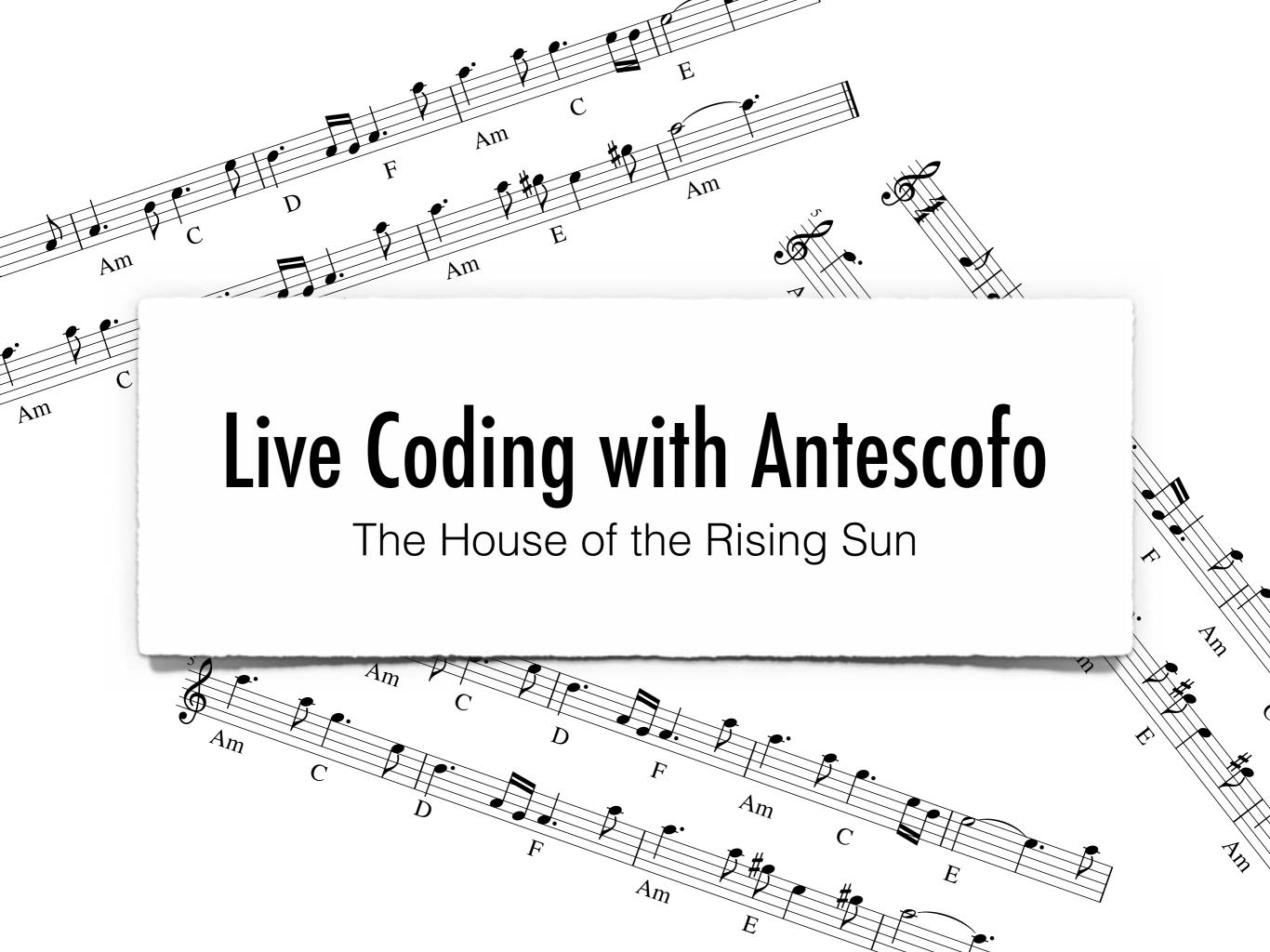
In our 2005 article [28], we introduced the ReactiveML language and defined its formal semantics of the structures. In this article, after an illustration of the language on an example (section 2), we explain its compilation (section 3) and the runtime (section 4). The implementation of suspension and preemption is explained in section 5. We present a parallel implementation of the runtime (section 4) and the runtime (section 6) and compare our implementation with other related systems (section 7). Finally, we will reflect on our experiences over the last ten years and discuss the choices made in ReactiveML (section 8). The compiler and examples are available at the address http://reactiveml.org.

http://reactiveml.org.

2. A Complete Example

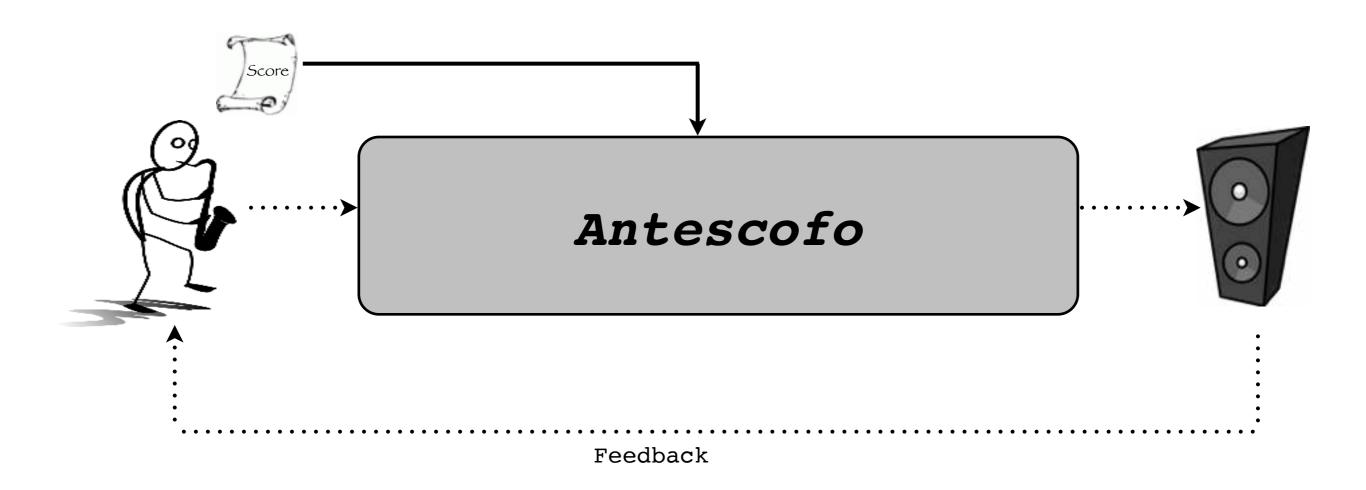
2. A Comprete Example
In this section we propose a solution to the 2013 ICFP Contest.
This example illustrates the mixing of algorithmic and reactive
parts in a ReactiveML program. It also serves to present the language syntax and intuitive semantics.

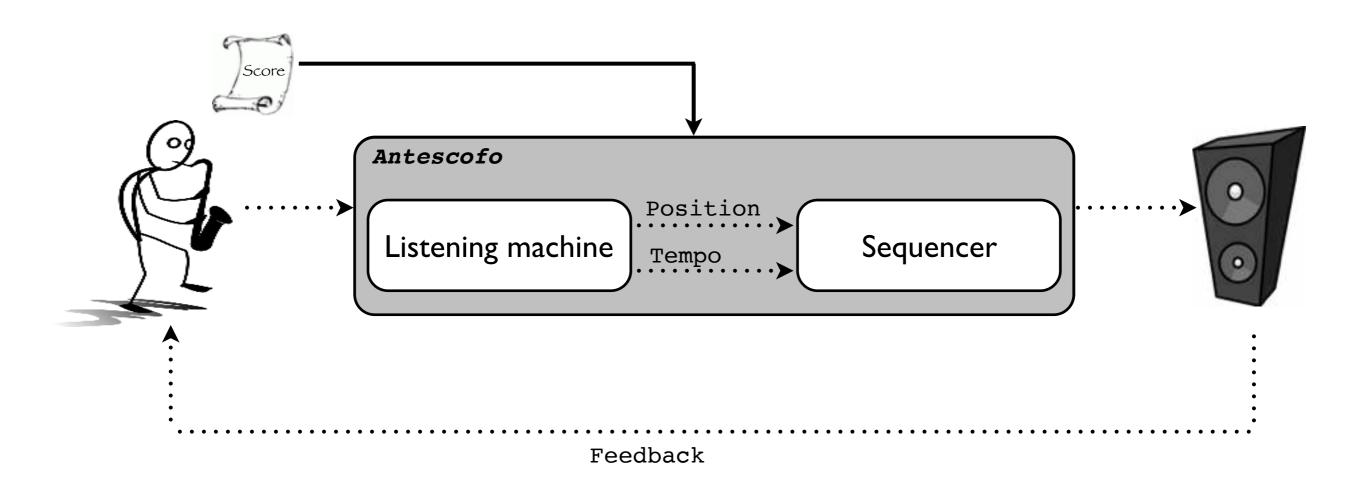
The purpose of the contest is to guess secret programs written
in a small language called My. Each program to guess is called a
problem. It as an ID and some meta-data about the program to guess
such as its size or the operators that it uses. The contest organizers
control a game server that provides the following services: (f) evaltimes as exerce the provides the following services: (f) evalserver that provides the following server that uate a secret program on an array of 256 inputs; (2) check contest tants solutions. If a contestant submits an incorrect solution, the server provides a counterexample. Contestants have 5 minutes to solve each problem. They are allowed to send at most 5 requests to the game server every 20 seconds. Communication with the game server occurs through a web API.

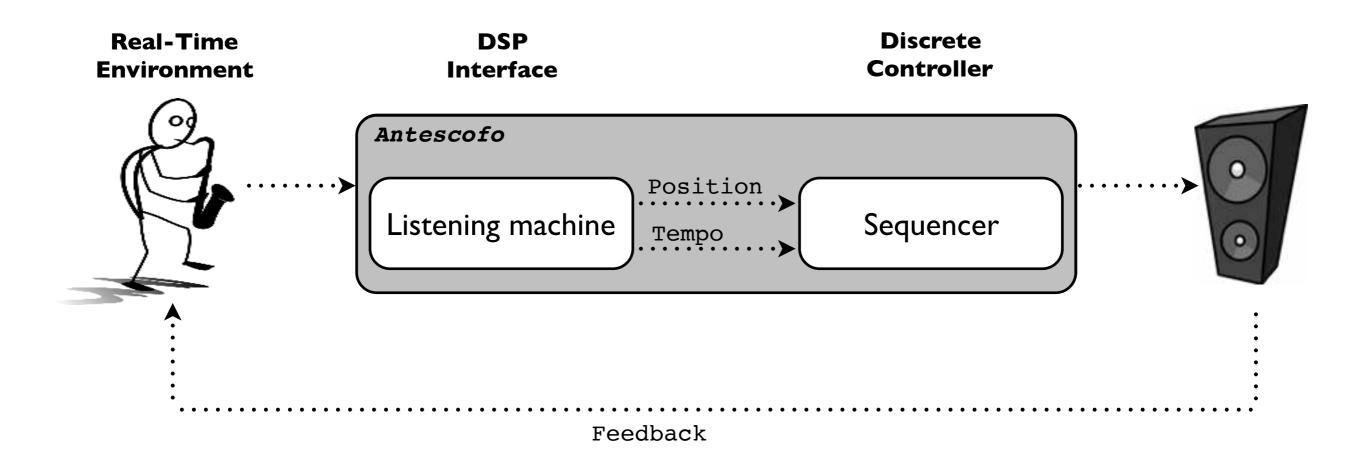


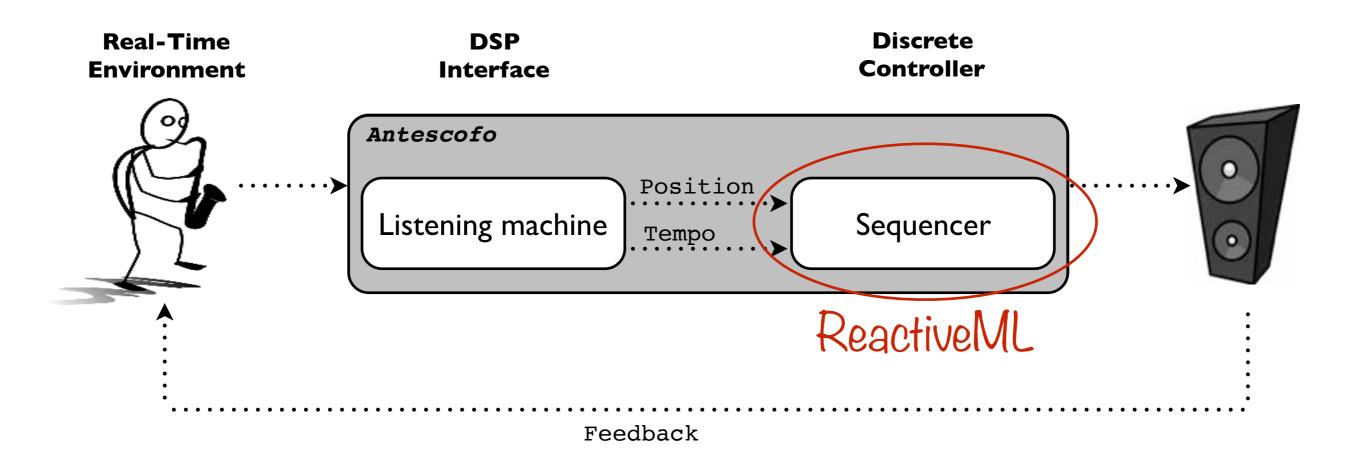












Higher order processes

```
let process killable kill p =
   do
     run p
   until kill done
```

val killable: (unit, unit) event -> unit process -> unit process

Higher order processes

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let process killable kill p =
    do
        run p
    until kill done
control signal
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val killable: (unit, unit) event -> unit process -> unit process

```
let process killable kill p =
   do
     run p
                             control signal
   until kill done
val killable: (unit, unit) event -> unit process -> unit process
let rec process replaceable replace p =
  do
    run p
  until replace(q) ->
    run (replaceable replace q)
```

done

val replaceable: (unit process, unit process) event -> unit process -> unit process

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let process killable kill p =
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run (replaceable replace q)

done

control signal

carries a process
```

val replaceable: (unit process, unit process) event -> unit process -> unit process





n-body Simulation







```
let process f s_out =
  domain ck do
  loop
    emit s_out 1; pause ck;
    emit s_out 2; pause ck;
    emit s_out 3; pause topck
  end
  done
```

Idea: hide local time steps

```
let process f s_out =
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Here 3 steps of ck for one of topck

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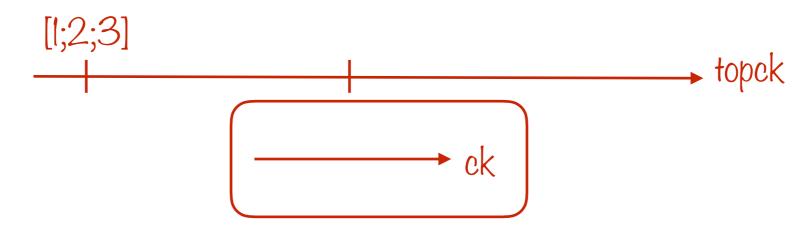


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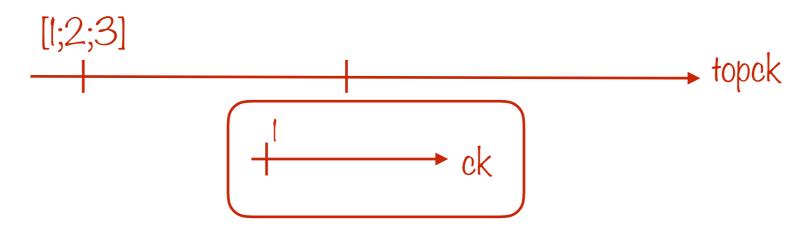
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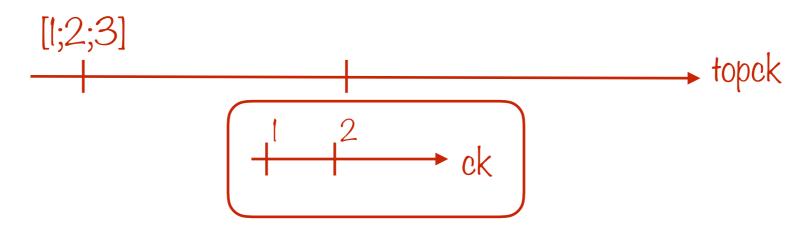
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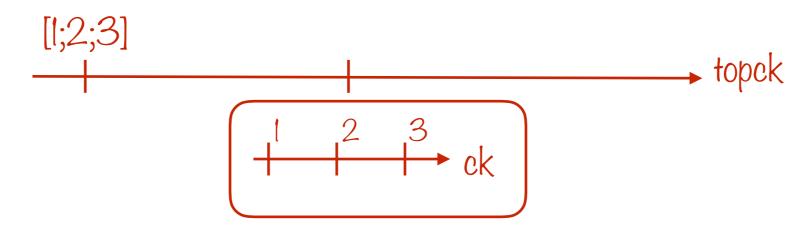
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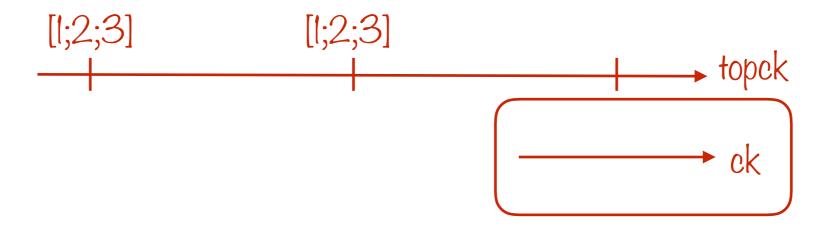
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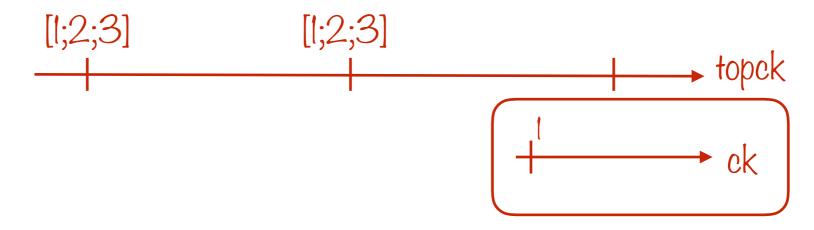
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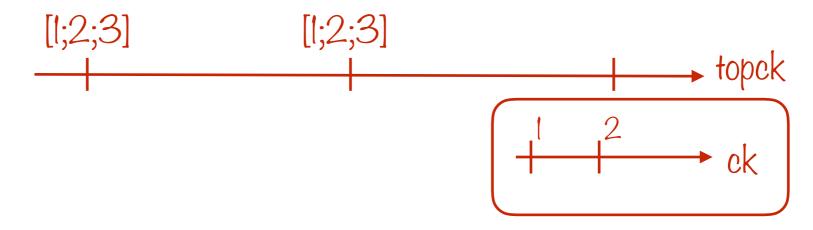
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       emit s_out 2; pause ck;
       emit s_out 3; pause topck
    end
  done
```



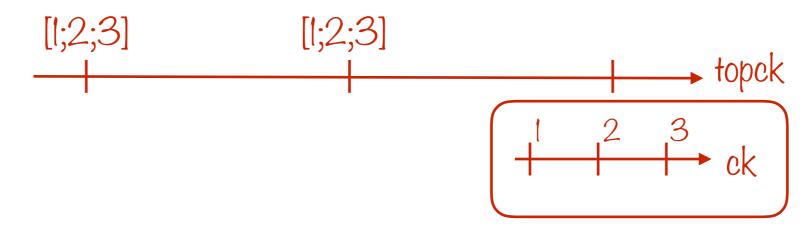
Idea: hide local time steps

```
let process f s_out =
  domain ck do
    loop
       emit s_out 1; pause ck;
       emit s_out 2; pause ck;
       emit s_out 3; pause topck
    end
  done
```



Idea: hide local time steps

```
let process f s_out =
  domain ck do
    loop
      emit s_out 1; pause ck;
      emit s_out 2; pause ck;
      emit s_out 3; pause topck
    end
  done
```

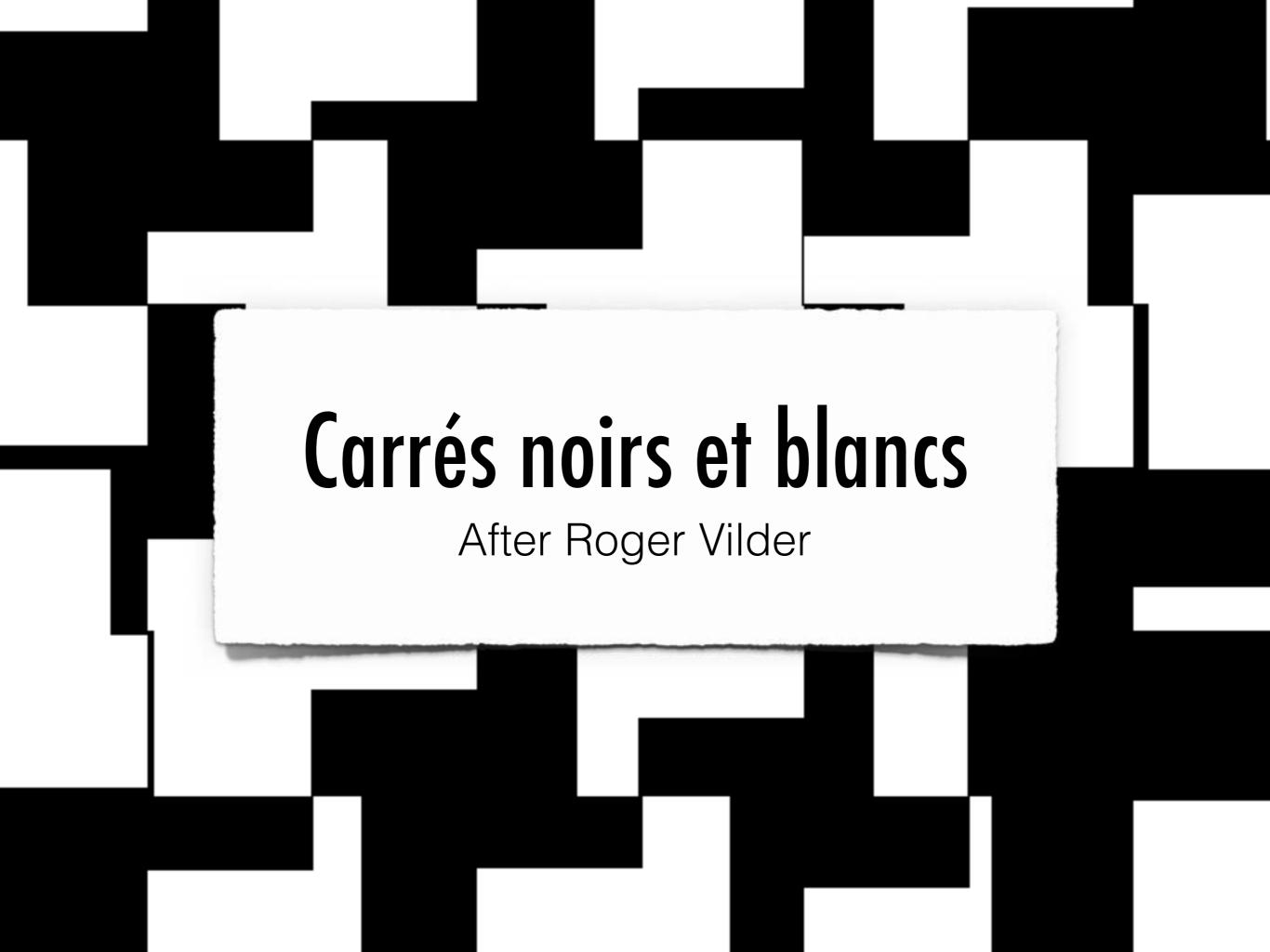


```
let process main =
...
domain computation_ck do
    signal env default zero_force gather add_force in
    for i = 1 to 10 dopar
        run body env (planet_sprite vp) (random_planet ())
    done
        ||
        run body env (sun_sprite vp) (sun ())
    done
...
```

n-body simulation

```
let process main =
                  —— Hide internal step for integration
  domain computation ck do
    signal env default zero force gather add force in
    for i = 1 to 10 dopar
      run body env (planet sprite vp) (random planet ())
    done
    run body env (sun sprite vp) (sun ())
 done
                                     Example RK4: 4 steps
let process compute k4 env st =
 (* step 1 *)
  let k1 v = run (compute a env st.b pos st.b weight) in
  let k1 p = st.b vel in
  (* step 2 *)
  let k2 p = add v st.b vel (sc mult (dt /. 2.0) k1 v) in
  let x 2 = add v st.b pos (sc mult (dt /. 2.0) k1 p) in
  let k2 v = run (compute a env x 2 st.b weight) in
```

http://reactiveml.org



```
A simple integrator x(n+1) = x(n) + delta
```

```
let process sum state delta =
  loop
    emit state (last ?state +. delta);
    pause
  end
```

val sum: (float, float) event -> float -> unit process

```
A simple integrator x(n+1) = x(n) + delta
```

val sum: (float, float) event -> float -> unit process

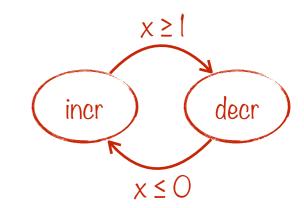
A simple integrator x(n+1) = x(n) + delta

```
let process sum state delta =
loop
  emit state (last ?state +. delta);
  pause
end

Discrete-Time step
```

val sum: (float, float) event -> float -> unit process

Two states automaton



```
let process incr_decr state delta =
```

```
let rec process incr =
   do run sum state delta
   until state(x) when x >= 1. -> run decr done

and process decr =
   do run sum state (-. delta)
   until state(x) when x <= 0. -> run incr done
in run incr
```

val incr decr: (float, float) event -> float -> unit process

Two states automaton

iner $x \ge 1$ $x \ge 1$ $x \ge 0$

Two mutually recursive processes

in run incr

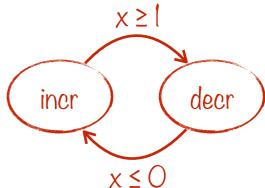
```
let process incr_decr state delta =

let rec process incr =
   do run sum state delta
   until state(x) when x >= 1. -> run decr done

and process decr =
   do run sum state (-. delta)
   until state(x) when x <= 0. -> run incr done
```

val incr decr: (float, float) event -> float -> unit process

Two states automaton



Two mutually recursive processes

```
let process incr decr state delta =
   let rec process incr =
     do run sum state delta
     until state(x) when x \ge 1. \rightarrow run decr done
   and process decr =
      do run sum state (-. delta)
     until state(x) when x <= 0. -> run incr done
   in run incr
Preemption: do ... until
```

val incr decr: (float, float) event -> float -> unit process

```
type dir = Up | Down | Left | Right

let process draw dir x y size state =
  loop
    await state(p) in
    begin match dir with
    | Up -> Graphics.fill_rect x y size (size *: p)
    | ...
  end
end
```

val draw: dir -> int -> int -> int -> ('a, float) event -> unit process

Drawing process

Types definition and match similar to OCaml

```
type dir = Up | Down | Left | Right

let process draw dir x y size state =
  loop
    await state(p) in
    begin match dir with
    | Up -> Graphics.fill_rect x y size (size *: p)
    | ...
    end
end
```

val draw: dir -> int -> int -> int -> ('a, float) event -> unit process

A simple Pump

```
let rec process pump dir x y size state delta =
  run incr_decr state delta ||
  run draw dir x y size state
```

val pump: dir -> int -> int -> int -> (float, float) event -> float -> unit process

A simple Pump

val pump: dir -> int -> int -> int -> (float, float) event -> float -> unit process

```
let rec process splittable split dir x y size init =
 signal state default 0. gather (+.) in
 do
   emit state init;
   run pump dir x y size state (random speed ())
 until split ->
   run cell split x y size (last ?state)
 done
and process cell split x y size init =
 let half = size/2 in
 run splittable split Left x y half init
 run splittable split Down (x+half) y half init ||
 run splittable split Up x (y+half) half init ||
 run splittable split Right (x+half) (y+half) half init
```

Run the process cell when the signal split is emitted

```
let rec process splittable split dir x y size init =
 signal state default 0. gather (+.) in
 do
   emit state init;
   run pump dir x y size state (random_speed ())
 until split ->
   run cell split x y size (last ?state)
 done
and process cell split x y size init =
 let half = size/2 in
 run splittable split Left x y half init
 run splittable split Down (x+half) y half init ||
 run splittable split Up x (y+half) half init
 run splittable split Right (x+half) (y+half) half init
```

Dynamic creation of pumps

Run the process cell when the signal split is emitted

```
let rec process splittable split dir x y size init =
  signal state default 0. gather (+.) in
 do
   emit state init;
    run pump dir x y size state (random speed ())
 until split ->
    run cell split x y size (last ?state)
 done
                                                 Split in 4 half-pumps
and process cell split x y size init =
                                                 in the 4 directions
  let half = size/2 in
 run splittable split Left x y half init
 run splittable split Down (x+half) y half init ||
 run splittable split Up x (y+half) half init | |
 run splittable split Right (x+half) (y+half) half init
```