Jazz.Computer

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ABSTRACT

Jazz.Computer is an interactive song in which the listener's scrolling affects the timbre, arrangement and progress of the music. We chose scrolling as the interaction both because it is often the first thing users do when arriving at a web page and because Jazz.Computer recontextualizes a Facebook-style news feed to in order to transform passive information consumption into active musical engagement. The song itself is about these kinds of information feeds and their effects those of us who are always scrolling: sometimes uplifting, sometimes disheartening.

The audio is all triggered and synthesized live using Tone.js, a Web Audio framework, allowing every part of the song to vary in response to the user's input. Musical parameters like tempo, envelopes, waveforms, and effects are interpolated depending on the user's vertical scroll position on the page. As the song speeds and slows down, the arrangement of the song changes to match the tempo; at the top of the page, the song is four-on-the-floor dance beat and at the bottom, Jazz.Computer has a laid-back triplet feel with a gradient of textures in between. Jazz.Computer's visuals are all created by THREE.js, a WebGL library. Each instrument has a corresponding geometric element which is triggered along with the sound.

Jazz.Computer is an open-ended composition which is different for each player and on each listen. It demonstrates a participatory musical experience enabled by the Web Audio API and distributed through the browser.

WEB LINKS

Jazz.Computer: http://jazz.computer

THREE.js: http://threejs.org

Tone.js: https://github.com/Tonejs/Tone.js

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