

L8Nite Performance

Phonetic Karaoke - Ystrandilovi
Glitch/appropriation based audiovisual piece

While listening to a CD found inside a donation box, my thoughts took a strange U-turn, going from the subjective "how can this be good" to the more objective "how can I make this worse". My research at the time was about failure as creative feedstock, so it just seemed appropriate to try to make a bad album so much worse that it would actually end up being an improvement. Hence, I glitched the CD by interfering directly on the optical side of the physical media with permanent markers and stickers, a standard technique. It took me some time to get a CD player which could actually read through the entire album, but I managed to find such virtuoso and recorded the output of its 16 minutes and 16 seconds performance. However, even though the result was extremely interesting, with fragments of the leftover vocal utterances progressively recombining into new phonemes and building a very specific formal arch, the average listener, and even many not so average, would not engage in listening to it. So, in order to win hearts and souls, I decided to make a karaoke video for it, so that people would be able to sing along to it with their loved ones. And while at it, I decided to transcribe it not to Portuguese, the language of the original album, but according to the International Phonetic Alphabet, so that we can bring the world together in these approximately 16:30 of a stupid, useless and painfully laborious work.

Underneath its apparent lack of purpose, however, there are political, philosophical and conceptual motivations for such an intentional awkwardness which is also fed by a strong scepticism regarding openly critical works. By exploring a degree of absurdism and non-sense in connection to glitch music and appropriation art, the general intention was to produce a piece that causes sufficient institutional discomfort for it not to be (re)appropriated and alienated into a new commodifiable product. Nonetheless, the contrast of its engagement with such a popular thing as a karaoke produces alternative kinds of comments that are generous to the audience, suggesting reflections of a different order, beyond the aesthetic, but not leaving it aside.

The discussion concerning identity and categorization also seem to be especially relevant in this piece. After all, is the glitched audio track obliged to the original album in the same way that a photograph of a picture refers to what it frames? Even if 15 out of 16 parts of the picture are out of focus and proportion? Even if creatively used in a radically different context? In the end, I believe it comes down to the fact that the CD player was given a specific set of conditions in which to perform a task, but the performance choices which resulted in the glitched track in that context were its own. Hence, what we have here could be understood to be closer to an open work composed through my interferences on the CD, just as a traditional music composition process is an interference not only on a piece of paper, but on an entire set of given conventions and traditions, providing performance instructions which restrict the range of possible actions that the player might take in order for the sonic output to conform to the piece's intended ontological or morphological quality. Or, we could simply understand it as an almost-ready-made, a found object which required just a little kick-start.

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Caeso [Carlos Eduardo Soares - Brazil]: musician and sound artist, his creative output is diverse, exploring mediums such as acousmatic music, live electronics, free improvisation and also traditional written composition, besides building sound sculptures, videos and other multimedia artworks. Holds both a bachelor's and a master's degree in Music Composition, and is a docARTES PhD candidate on artistic research in music at

Orpheus Institute (BE) and Leiden University (NL). His current interests are the poetics of negativity and creative uses of DIY practices in sound based artistic practices. His collaborations with other artists range from soundtracks, sound design and soundscapes to more technical development in digital and analog media. He has been granted a CAPES MUSIC ALIVE! scholarship (2010), a CNPq scholarship for research in Glitch Art (2012/13), a CAPES Master's scholarship for research about failure as creative feedstock in art (2015/2017), and the prizes Funarte for Classical Composition 2016 and Best Music by the 72H Rio 2014 Film Festival.