

Chapter 10

Concluding Thoughts

Writing a history of Live-Looping has posed a number of quite significant problems. The first problem being that Live-Looping hasn't been recognised as a genre of music, only as a tool for the composition or performance of music. This has meant that there are almost no written historical lineages about it. To write its history has therefore been a huge undertaking of finding and linking relevant information. Also because Live-Looping has no status as a genre this has affected the quality of my resources. Interview material of its' artists seems to have been conducted by journalists who are unaware of Live-Looping as a genre of music, or its history. This has meant that most artist's interviews and articles have been a very shallow source of information. The second problem I have faced has been having no reference point to base or guide my research upon. I have had to make subjective judgements about those artists who have been the most important to the movement based almost solely upon my research. This lack of other formal sources of information has made my work a unique insight into an alternative history of a possible musical genre.

My research has yielded a large amount of material that I would have liked to have put into this research paper but space has prevented me. This includes material generated from interviews with Jim Fulkerson, Steve Lawson and in-depth email correspondences with many artists. There has also been insufficient time for me to look at all of the sections of Live-Looping. For instance, there were a significant amount of other artists I would have liked to look at e.g. Matthius Grob, Richard Zvonar, Daniel Lentz,

Paul Dresher, Carl Stone etc. I also wish to look further into the use of Max/Msp for Live-Looping as my research uncovered a large amount of activity in this area, but due to its underground and obscure nature its something that would take me a long time to fully research.

Live-Looping as a Genre

After completing this research paper I believe that there is a strong case for Live-Looping to exist as a musical genre and for history to relate its unfolding story. On listening to a large range of music produced by the process of Live-Looping I have found that pieces from contrasting musical genres have remarkably similar qualities. For example on listening to Terry Riley's *Poppy No Good And The Phantom Band*, Fripp and Eno *No Pussyfooting Around*, Jim Fulkerson's *Co-Ordinate Systems No.10*, David Torn's *Suyafhu Skin* back to back, reveals huge similarities in the overall listening experience. I think it is fair to say that in some respects these works seem to be more related to each other than the music of the genre each artist has been positioned in. Even listening to very contemporary music of Andre Lafosse or Amy X the music seems very attached to the idea of a Live-Looping genre of music. If genre is taken as indicating a style of art or music then I believe that Live-Looping stylistically has a greater effect on an artist's sound than the genre their style of instrumental playing puts them in. For example I would say that Robert Fripp and Brian Eno's *No pussyfooting Around* has more in common with the idea of a Live-Looping genre than with the art-rock genre they are placed within. This idea can be applied to the music of most Live-Looper's to similar effect.

The Future

The falling cost of Digital equipment has opened looping up to the masses. Live-Looping is now a common occurrence across a range of musical genres. Software Live-Looping has recently been available to the masses thanks to the increase in the processing power of computers. Live-Looping has become so integrated into musical technology that its use is now commonplace. The increasing power of digital processing has seen a rise in the complexity of looping devices and with software like Max/Msp also the user configurable nature of it. This has in turn led to an increasingly diverse output from Live-Looping with Live-Loopers now able to access a range of aesthetics from other musical genres. What we are currently seeing is a new generation of contemporary Live-Loopers applying the musical aesthetics and attitudes of their era to Live-Looping with very immediate and striking results.

New technology is also influencing the direction of Live-Looping via to the communication revolution. Live-Looping as a musical movement is still too obscure to exist as a scene with a sense of location and social contact. However the communication revolution of the Internet has allowed for a vibrant virtual Live-Looping community to emerge. The centre or focus for this movement is Loopers-Delight.com, which is a resource run by Kim Flint the software programmer for the Echoplex. The interest group is characterised by the sheer diversity of its members, with not only the premier developers of looping hardware contributing to discussions but also many of the premier artists. This creation of a community environment is clearly having a large effect on the communication of the technique and hence the music of Live-Looping. With this framework for promotion in place it has become easy for an interested person to look into

this previously obscure genre of experimental music. This environment of communication is having a strengthening effect on the genre as professional Live-Looping artists are now able to co-ordinate their efforts collectively to gain exposure for this little known form of experimental music.