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# Reviews

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## Events

### **eMusic Indaba 2010: Home Made—Hand Made**

University of Kwazulu-Natal,  
Durban, South Africa, 23–25  
September 2010

*Reviewed by Dimitri Voudouris  
Johannesburg, South Africa*

The eMusic Indaba and the accompanying workshops “Home Made—Hand Made” were held 23–25 September 2010; they included two evenings of electroacoustic music performances and three days of workshops. (Indaba is a Zulu term meaning *conference*.) The workshops were held at various venues around the School of Music at the University of Kwazulu-Natal (UKZN) and the live performances took place at the Howard College Theatre. The university is situated in the city of Durban, Kwazulu-Natal Province, South Africa. The Indaba is a feature of New Music South Africa (NMSA); the event was curated by Jürgen Bräuninger and Fiona Tozer and was organized by Mandy Witken. Five years on since UNYAZI 2005, the first electronic music symposium/festival to be held in Africa, there has been an increasing number of academic institutions offering music technology courses. The intention of this, the third festival, was to broaden the acoustic horizons of local practitioners and students in establishing bonds through their common

workshop experiences with the international composed and improvised electronic music community.

On Thursday, 23 September, the Indaba opened with morning and afternoon workshops. The first workshop featured Nicholas Collins on handmade electronics, showing upcoming composers who did not necessarily have much background in the area of electronics the possibilities of working with low-budget technologies. Collins led the composers through a number of projects to create novel new instruments that subverted the intended use of the appliances that were modified (such as analog radios and children's toys). Not only did the results themselves spark ideas about how the composers might incorporate them in new works, but the process also taught them, in a very practical way, some of the most fundamental principles of electronically produced sound. The concept for this workshop underscored the festival subtitle, “home made—hand made.”

The POW Ensemble from The Netherlands conducted workshops featuring DJ DNA, who presented a very personal introduction to turntablism and how DJs can be integrated into instrumental groups. He told the story of his work with a number of such groups and demonstrated his extremely idiosyncratic techniques. Many of these techniques have been developed in direct response to the situation of working as part of an instrumental ensemble, rather than as a dance DJ. The presentation was fascinating for the wide-ranging group of performers and composers who attended. In addition, other members of the ensemble presented workshops demonstrating extended saxophone techniques (Luc Houtkamp), baroque recorder (Erik Bosgraaf), and vocal group improvisation and vocal processing (Guy Harries). Performers as well as com-

posers interested in creating works for these instruments attended the workshops.

The evening at the Howard College Theatre featured first the works of Nicholas Collins, a pioneer in the use of microcomputers in live performance, using simple processes to generate musical material. Some of the works employed festival guests and workshop participants. *Pea Soup II*, with Petra Ronner on piano, used a fair emulation (with extensions) in software, and what was particularly noticeable was how the acoustical personality of the room was transformed into an aural experience. In *Mortal Coil* the introduction of the glove in the one hand allowed the performer to interfere with the electromagnetic sound field. He performed three other works: *The Talking Cure*, *Salvage (Gulyu Blues)* (workshop participants collaborated in this work for handmade electronics), and *In Memoriam Michel Waisvisz*.

The second part of the evening belonged to Petra Ronner, a pianist from Switzerland showcasing her work *Pianessence*, a program developed for piano and electronics that seeks to create a fusion of concert-oriented piano music and sound installation involving a pianist. The performer acknowledged characteristics of a physical space—its acoustical properties, appearance, and meaning—and, with extreme focus and determination, she felt her way toward a kind of performance state, one that was developed anew for each particular set of circumstances. This part of the eMusic Indaba showcased works by South African composers and as a result the quality of the work was of the highest order. However, not one of the works seemed to have a specific recognizable aural South African or African identity. The subject matter derived from new expressions, both of political and scientific issues, with influences mainly from European,

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American, and neo-Japanese contemporary styles. Identities are considerably important as result of social, economic, and political factors and the philosophies these generate. The disadvantages of globalization go against the principals of freedom and origin, where inclusion and marginalization do not serve humanity on a social level. When we examine language and music, aural identities are the first to be consumed by a higher order that disrespects ethnicity, and racial or cultural community values. The current use of electronic media as a source of communication forces a totalitarian global order that may be in danger of reintroducing a new version of colonialism, where various art forms no longer have origins or identities.

The works performed included Max E. Keller's *Selbstgespräche* (2006), a dialogue between performer and machine. Jürgen Bräuninger, who studied in Stuttgart under Ulrich Süße and is currently a professor of music at UKZN teaching composition and music technology, was represented by *torture/taxis*, a phenomenal aural experience of high quality electronic sound from the tape part with high precision performance from the pianist. The work explores the past and present political realities of South Africa. Also included on the program were two emerging composers Daniel Hutchinson and Angie Mullins, who were commissioned by NMSA and funded by a grant from the Endowment for National Arts (SAMRO) to produce works for the Indaba. *Developing Nation* by Mullins explores the contradictory and contrasting forces in the city of Johannesburg. It could only partly be realized, unfortunately, due to a technical problem during the execution of the work. Dimitri Voudouris was represented by *[O]-Rd:2*, a work composed for piano and

tape that is a site-specific project, exploring the elastic behavior exhibited by unidirectional vehicular motion in cluster formations. Rüdiger Meyer's *divided west and equally* (1999) for video, grand piano, and MIDI piano, travels through pitch and time space where the visual component of the work consists of geometric lines coupled with quotes from Marcel Proust, Milan Kundera, and Richard Rorty. This work was well executed by the performer with the audio component. Pierre-Henri Wicomb's *earthed* for piano and mini-jacks uses primal electronics and acoustic media. Ulrich Süße's *Petra plus one* for piano and electronic sounds is an improvisational work focusing on two players who play freely, and the CD (player) that reacts and adds to the musical expression.

On Friday 24 September, the POW Ensemble's workshop of Daniel Hutchinson's work *Pass the Salt*, for tenor recorder, flutes, musical bows, and electronics, possessed elements of ethnic identity, and the 2.5-hour session gave the workshop participants a very detailed, in-depth look at musical creation from written score to actual realization using improvisation, electronic live processing, sampling, as well as interaction between the electronics and acoustic instruments such as voice and saxophone. Petra Ronner's workshop gave students a valuable interactive experience of piano and electronics. After studying various scores, participants had the opportunity to experiment with duets between the piano and the pre-programmed digital audio processor that featured in Max Keller's composition from Petra Ronner's concert program, Ulrich Süße *Plus One* series, as well as Steve Reich's *Piano Phase*.

The POW Ensemble's concert that evening used live electronics, computers as musical instruments,

dancing, and theatrics which added a sense of black humor to the performance of *Ekhaya on Wooden Shoes* [*The adventure of Josef Brezelbacker who realizes he cannot reconstruct his own identity, finds a new one that is enriched by all his experiences during his adventure*]. The text is by Luc Houtkamp, Sazi Dlamini, and William Blake. *Ekhaya* introduces a variety of musical styles such as South African tunes, free jazz saxophone improvisations, scratching, Dutch traditional sound elements, and disordering songs melting together. The movements and gestures of the performers are extensions of their instruments, an enlargement of their personality. If at some point these performers speak, there need be no surprise if we take this as an integral part of their sound palette. The complex electronic environments had a direct counterpart in the structure of the improvised score, dominated by long-held, variedly elaborated sounds, mostly produced by Sazi Dlamini on flute, umqangala, umakhweyane, voice, and percussion, which are disturbed by whirling passages or occasionally eruptive breakouts. The computer mediated and acted between all these elements, sometimes merging them together, and occasionally colliding them with each other, leading to original and often surprising combinations. They ended by playing a short version of *The Bioscope*, a District 6 project from Cape Town.

The Indaba closed on Saturday, 25 September, with a workshop involving most of the guest performers-instructors. The session covered some of the issues facing South African composers, and the benefits of introducing them to international ideas and performers. It enabled local composers to voice concerns relating to difficulties within South Africa in accessing information on the world

stage, and allowed the visitors to answer questions relating to their fields of expertise. It was notable that those attending the festival came from hugely diverse musical backgrounds, from university-based musicians to others from more informal communities.

To conclude, electronic music is expanding fast in Africa, with the arrival of digital media and global access via the Internet; a composer's functional limitations in education, learning, exchanging information, and obtaining the necessary audio software/hardware and processing systems have become less important. "Hand made—home made" showed us what could be done with low-cost technologies; it is time to move forward in developing new expressions in the world of electronic music that are specifically African. A hugely problematic area that faces South Africa currently and for years to come is educating listeners in the field of new music.

## Publications

### Chris Salter: *Entangled: Technology and the Transformation of Performance*

Hardcover, 2010, ISBN 978-0-262-19588-1, 480 pages, illustrated, US\$ 40; The MIT Press, 55 Hayward Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02142, USA; telephone (+1) 617-253-5643; fax (+1) 617-258-6779; electronic mail [mitpress-orders@mit.edu](mailto:mitpress-orders@mit.edu); Web [mitpress.mit.edu/](http://mitpress.mit.edu/).

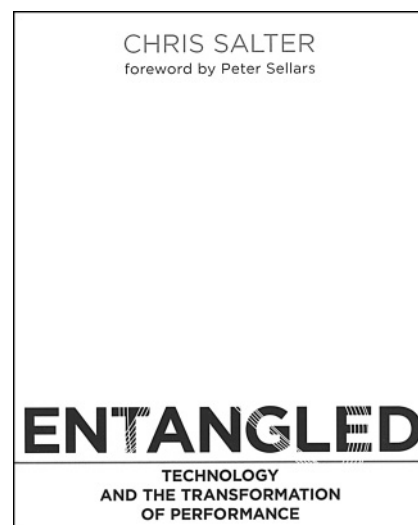
*Reviewed by Margaret Schedel  
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When particles or quantum systems are entangled, their properties remain correlated

across vast distances and vast times. Light-years apart, they share something that is physical, yet not only physical. Spooky paradoxes arise, unresolvable until one understands how entanglement encodes information, measured in bits or their drolly named quantum counterpart, qubits (James Gleick, *The Information: a History, a Theory, a Flood*, p. 10).

Although Chris Salter titled his book after "performance practices that consciously and intentionally entangle technologies so that they are inseparable from the form and operation of the work" (p. xxxv), I think the physics definition from James Gleick is equally apt; this book covers art works correlated across distance and time, covering the entire history of technology and performance from 1900 to the current day. Mr. Salter wrote the book because he felt that "performance studies has largely been a human-centered affair, remaining, with a few exceptions, conspicuously silent on issues of machines, technologies, objects and matter, and increasingly proving inadequate for wrestling with the complex human-machine relationships that mark not only contemporary artistic practices, but also scientific ones within technoculture" (p. xxvii).

This ambitious volume contains eight chapters, almost 40 pages of introductory material, a conclusion, and a glossary in addition to the mandatory references and index. When covering such a wide range of topics in performance and technology overlaps are bound to occur; Mr. Salter uses what he calls a "simplified hyper-text cross-referencing system" (p. xviii) to prevent repetition, citing his own text as necessary. Another nice feature of the book is the glossary with technical terms italicized in the



text; this allows the reader to keep the linguistic flow, while still being able to find information when needed. This glossary alone would be an invaluable primer for anyone starting to experiment with technology and performance. I agree with Mr. Salter's statement that it is a "necessity for theorists and practitioners to know what came before" (p. xiv). This valuable book is a comprehensive history of "seemingly disconnected disciplines" (p. xxvi), which holds together thanks to the disciplined scholarship of the author.

The chapters are first divided based on theme; each chapter then chronologically covers the span of the 20th-century machine age, to the first stirrings of the of the computational age, to the current day. It is fascinating to see how each artistic practice evolved with, and at the same time helped develop, the available technologies. Chapter 1, *Scene/Machine*, examines the theatrical and architectural space, and the similarly titled Chapter 2, *Media Scenographies*, explores new kinds of "spatiomechanical, electrotechnical apparatuses" (p. xxxvi), such as the stage design of Josef Svoboda.