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# Interview with Jean-Luc Lamarque

By Jim Andrews

No. 28 – 2003

*Jim Andrews: I have visited your Pianographique many times, Jean-Luc. Is it a kind of musical instrument?*

Jean-Luc Lamarque: It's a multimedia instrument. Just like a pianist, you have to practice and learn your score in order to play and have fun.

*But it is also a work of art, it seems to me. Do you think it is as good an instrument as it is a work of art?*

Each piano is an in-progress environment in which users can play. Though each piano is conceived with an artistic aim, i see it more as an open work rather than a work of art.

*Are there any important differences between instruments and works of art?*

The instrument belong to the artistic process. When the instrument is mastered it fades away and the work of art emerges.

*Are there any important differences between tools and works of art?*

Tools just like instruments are creation means.

*Is there a tension between the idea of a tool and the idea of a work of art?*

The original idea of the pianographique was to mix various graphic and sounds style. Though it is a myth i still dream about a magic tool or a process that would generate works of art.

*Have you found yourself before in a situation where, if you wanted to make it a better tool, it would make it less outstanding a work of art?*

Of course i always want to add new features to pianos. But i do it gradually to avoid complexity, i want to keep that fresh sensitive feeling.

*Do you see yourself working out new forms of music? How would you describe these, if so?*

My goal is more to create graphics and sounds that feed each other and see how the user will appropriate this.

*Does Pianographique have relation to the "music video"?*

When i created the *pianographique* in 1992, i was very influenced by Dada, surrealists, collage techniques and experimental movie makers like Oscar Fischinger who worked on the synesthetic relation of sound and image.

*Are you able to make money with Pianographique? I note that you make custom versions of it. Have you been commissioned by musicians to make versions for them?*

We did pianos for *The Beatles* website (comissioned by EMI) and for a " french touch " band *Bosco* (comissioned by the musicians who enjoyed the *pianographique* website). In France, the web is unfortunately considered as a tool of promotion and not as an innovation and/or experimental playground.

*I see that recently you have added some work by Nicolas Clauss to the Pianographique work. How did that go?*

Nicolas sent me an email to collaborate. Since we are/were both painters, the collab was easy. I did the piano engine , Nicolas created the visuals and Jean-Jacques Birgé the sounds. I enjoyed a lot this collaboration. When an artist has already his own universe, the piano is an open and ludic interpretation of his work. That was also the case with Xavier Pehuet (<http://seelans.net>) who has been working with me for 2 years and did the "Angular Entropy" and "krsh\_neige" pianos.

*Have you worked with servovalve? If so, what did you do together? Have you worked with Schmitt or Durieu? Do you share interests with them? What are they?*

I collaborated with servovalve for the Jean Tinguely CD-Rom. And we meet from time to time when we showcase. I worked with Durieu for an educational CD-rom for kids. We share this desire to explore new forms, each of us in our specific way.

*Are you involved in performance with Pianographique? What sort of venues, if so, and how are the performances?*

Since many people have contributed to the *pianographique's* adventure when we perform there is more than one interpretation. There is always a camera shooting

the keyboard so the audience can understand what is going on. Thus people can realize that interpretation is a very important notion in the *pianographique's* creative process.

*What are you working on now, and what do you want to do in the future?*

There will be new collabs with graphists and musicians that enjoy *pianographique*. There are also new tools in progress: The "pianomixer" that will allow to create your own piano by picking up elements in a database of graphics and sounds The "pianoscripter" that will generate and edit scores.