Interview with Servovalve

By Jim Andrews

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Jim Andrews: It seems you have been doing interesting work with Shockwave for quite some time. When did you start working with Director?

servovalve: It was around 97/98... I don't remember exactly...I just remember that the first version of Shockwave arrived at the same time...since then I share most of my working time between Director and music software.

You are a programmer, I take it? Did you study programming or take it up on your own?

I'm not really a programmer... perhaps I'm becoming one... progressively...I've studied graphic art / visual communication. Mixed with the influence of music....the curiosity of combining both disciplines brings me to programming...It was not easy in the beginning... I'm not scientific minded...I started with Director using it as an animator (horizontal score). and step by step, with help / exchange from people like JL.Lamarque, O. Koechlin, and A. Schmitt, things became clear...it opened a large/infinite field of exploration to me. My scores are verticalizing progressively.

You are a musician also. How would you describe the music you do?

Electronic, rhythmic, energic, atmospheric, horologic (clock connected), meta-lithurgic... subambiant... neurodance...

You perform, also. What sort of performances are these?

Live cinema... random or controlled diffusion of audio and visual elements, synchronized or not. Trying to focus audience on the screen/sonic amber... I'm controlling the process, but each part contains generative / graphic + random / sonic logics... and give me different results...

Do you use the work on servovalve.org much in these performances?

Most pieces on servovalve.org come from these performances, as in "doin' dat much"; sometimes it's the opposite, as in "x-liner" or "carbon"... no accurate rules...

only the interactivity is different... not the same control to drive a graphic process // to offer a usable enigmatic piece on a website.

You have quite a few CD's out. You produce your own music. Do you go back and forth between sound only and sound and programming a lot? Mostly just sound? Or a mixture?

a chaotic mixture... you've got the answer.... instinctively, a constant going back and forth between sonic/graphic movements and programmed control process... always checking the possible results... I try to use the computer as a chaotic audio player, not as a sound tool to record special tracks... so programming is the ultimate part of the work...

Who are the other people you know who are working with Shockwave and interactive audio?

Including people you list a few lines down... I can add Olivier Koechlin.

Few musicians seem to combine the web.work seriously with their music, but you do. What is your feeling about this mix?

A necessity... with the electronic... live sensation... fragility... imperfect... just 1 instant. The "webwork" (light files) orientates sonic work toward minimalism... to get an understanding that things change... the computer is the diffusion system... using it with random rules/variations seems natural and sensual...
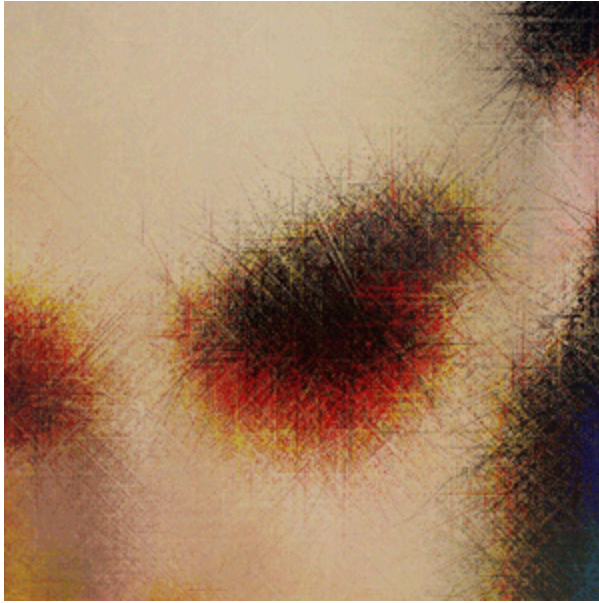
How would you describe your main concerns as an artist-programmer?

1 : random crossing reality... synchronicity ???

2 : visual / sonic obsession

3 : mental penetration / comprehension

4 : curiosity

What are you working on at the moment?

The construction/production of an "infinite audio cd" played on a computer. The name of this project is N8... more info soon at: http://www.servovalve.org/cd/n8/

What concerns and interests do you share with Schmitt, Clauss, Durieu and Jean-Luc Lamarque?

Antoine and Jean Luc are good friends of mine and we have worked together several times. I know Frederic quite well, but I haven't met Nicolas Clauss.

You all use Director and are artist-programmers. How did this come about?

I thing that the attraction with Director comes from the easy way you can quickly visualize a sophisticated programmed piece.

Do you get together with them from time to time?

At first, I met them through their work on the net... then we met... cause we all were living in Paris. I notice that people working in this discipline/search are often very nice... passionate... interesting... just as if their work's philosophy was melting with their life... or the opposite? We had the opportunity to have dinner a few times together... we were talking in Lingo...!!

Do you think of this situation as unusual—that you are part of such a talented group of artists that all use the same tool and are web.artists in the same vicinity? It seems very splendid to me.

Our common point is the use of a tool for its exploration possibilities... similarities stop here... everybody can express his own sensitivity... and happily, we're not using this tool/instrument in the same way... a trash-metal guitarist, or a country guitarist are both using a guitar... we're building our instrument, and we're playing with it... sometimes we share it.

What is it about where you are that has produced such a group of high energy artists doing terrific multimedia with Director for the Web?

"Where you are ... ?" I'm not sure I get it... the important thing is what has been done, what is made, what will be done. It's excellent that many people work in this way. Where we are is not so important... We were all living in Paris... that's the way we met each other... that's all... that's everything. Thanks for all...your enthusiasm, your energy.