Some Issues about Emotion in Multimedia Musical Works

Alain Bonardi
Paris IV-Sorbonne University
5, impasse du Débarcadère - 78000 Versailles - France - entretemps.bonardi@wanadoo.fr

Francis Rousseaux
Reims University
20, rue de Condé - 75006 Paris - France - Francis.Rousseaux@lip6.fr

Specifications for a Multimedia Opera

The philosopher Henri Bergson[1] distinguishes between two kinds of emotion. The former corresponds to " an image of an intellectual representation within the world of feelings ", whereas in the latter case, " the emotion is not determined by a representation to be followed [...] the emotion became a cause, rather than an effect [...] ", and in the case of music, "each new creation incorporates new feelings, created by the music itself and living within it, [...]". This is a key-point in our research, since in the design of our interactive opera, we do not try to arouse the spectator's feelings, artificially produced by computer-aided intellectual representations; on the contrary we assume that this technology serves to set a viewpoint from musical and narrative contents. We pay particular attention to the singularity of each formal aspect, hoping that they will enable to free the spectator's emotion.

We therefore set the following specifications for our opera:
˚ a specific spectator/composer relationship, relying on both creativities
¸ a specific spectator/work relatioship based on the idea of a " Chamber Music for CD-ROM"
a specific music/text relationship : the text is no longer the cornerstone of the opera; some causality links, induced by classical narration procedures, have to be blurred
˝ specific kinematics : open forms and integration of computerised menus into the dramatic process
˛ graphical metaphors of musical entities : 3D "corridors" built according to an internal analytic representation :

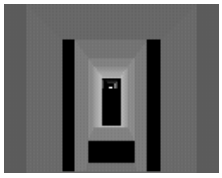

figure 1 : example of a generated corridor

[1] Bergson Henri, "Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion", Paris : Presses Universitaires de France, 1932, 340 p.

Questions Raised

Facing these five general specifications, we consider two different aspects dealing with emotion : non-linguistic perception and creativity. Concerning non-linguistic perception, we assume that the main purpose of multimedia computing is to directly address the perception using complex interfaces. Isn't it paradoxal since multimedia is still strongly based on two linguistic devices for purposes of articulation : menus that clearly use language, and icons, which are individual signs that embody actions ? It seems that the contents (images, sounds) address non-language perception levels whereas the form addresses language levels. In our opera conception, which is close to chinese one, text is only an element among others. We consider music, enhanced by 3D metaphors, as strong enough to enable formal articulation on a non-linguistic level.

Concerning creativity, let us notice that moments of creativity are often moments of emotion. More accurately, arousing a desire for creativity leads to an emotional state, that maybe leads to an optimum of creativity. We propose the following chart, crossing interactive opera specifications and these two positions regarding emotion.

Specifications	Non-linguistic perception	Creativity
˚ spectator/composer relationship	not yet studied	graphical metaphors could be used as tools for creation
¸ spectator/work relationship	through musical wandering, appropriation of the work by the spectator	closed climate necessary for creation
music/text relationship	predominance of music in both aspects : contents and formal articulation	not yet studied
˝ kinematics	1 - open forms based on music articulation 2-progressive discovery of possibilities of interaction	not yet studied
˛ graphical metaphors of music	music has less to do with articulated language	not yet studied