

CONFERENCE REPORT: CSOUND CONFERENCE 2011

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ABSTRACT

The first international Csound Conference was held from September 30 to October 2 in 2011 in Hannover, Germany. The number of the participants is as small as about 40, but all the participants are impressive and highly motivated as symbolically indicated in the long discussion at the plenary Developer-User-Roundtable session. There were a keynote presentation, roundtable discussion between developers and users, paper presentations, workshops, sound installations, and a concert for Csound, one of the most widely acknowledged and long standing programs in the field of audio-programming.

1. INTRODUCTION

The first international Csound Conference[1] was held from September 30 to October 2 in 2011 by Incontri, the electronic studio in the institute for new music at HMTM (Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien) Hannover, in Germany. The conference was full of instructive and informative activities and lectures for Csound[2, 3, 4] like the keynote presentation, roundtable discussions between developers and users, paper presentations, workshops, sound installations, and a concert. You can virtually experience a part of the conference anytime because the video archive of the keynote presentation, roundtable discussions, paper presentations, workshops are publicly available [5].

2. KEYNOTE

In the beginning, after welcoming speech by Joachim Heintz who hosted the conference, there was the keynote presentation 'Csound yesterday, today and tomorrow' by Richard Boulanger (**Figure 1**).



Figure 1. Keynote by Richard Boulanger [5]

In the keynote, the story of introduction of Csound to OLPC as a standard software package, and the meaningfulness of Csound as having the spirit of open source was

mentioned. In the meantime, Dr. Boulanger handed an iPad running TouchOSC to the audiences and recommended them to freely try to control a remotely running Csound process with it and continued his talking. He said that there was no user-friendly manual for Csound when he started using it in 1979 and there was only a technical specification of Csound that computer specialists would refer to. He created easy-to-understand documents or tutorials for his college lecture, and that became the basis of 'Csound Book'. He also mentioned about an application of Csound called 'Csound therapy', where a handicapped person enjoy performing with the aid of Csound real-time sound generation.

After the keynote, there was a concert session with 'Richard Boulanger and friends'. Dr. Boulanger and his students, Takahiko Tsuchiya (the only Japanese participant except the author) and John Clements, and John ffitch played Radio Baton, Wiimotes, iPads, iPhones, p5 gloves and other stuff.

3. PAPER SESSIONS AND WORKSHOPS

6 papers were presented in the conference: Python Scripting in QuteCsound¹ (presented by QuteCsound developer Andrés Cabrera via Skype from Belfast), Csound and Object-orientation: Designing and implementing Cellular Automata for Algorithmic Composition, A Personal View on Teaching Csound (an educational practice at a Russian university), Circumspectral Sound Diffusion, Creating reverb effects using granular synthesis, PWGL: A Score Editor for Csound.

6 workshops were held: Writing Csound Opcodes in Lua (by Michael Gogins), Csound - Max/MSP : Implementing a framework for Serial Composition and Frequency Modulation in both environments (by Reza Payami), Composing with blue (by Steven Yi), quince - a modular approach to music editing (by Maximilian Marcoll), Introducing CsoundForLive (by Richard Boulanger), Developing Csound Plugins with Cabbage (by Rory Walsh).

All these paper presentations and workshops are on the website[1] and on YouTube [5].

4. INSTALLATIONS

Sound installations as shown in **Figure 2** were available all through the conference. The sound installation 'Csound Haiku' (the top picture of **Figure 2**) by Iain McCurdy includes 9 pieces created in real time with very short Csound

¹ A popular integrated programming environment for Csound with interactive widgets

files. By turning the pages of a book linked to the Csound program running, you can select which one to play.

Also there was an 8-speaker sound installation (the middle picture) where you were able to listen to one of the 11 pieces submitted to the conference. Each piece was played in rotation and was selectable on the QuteCsound-based player (the picture at the bottom).

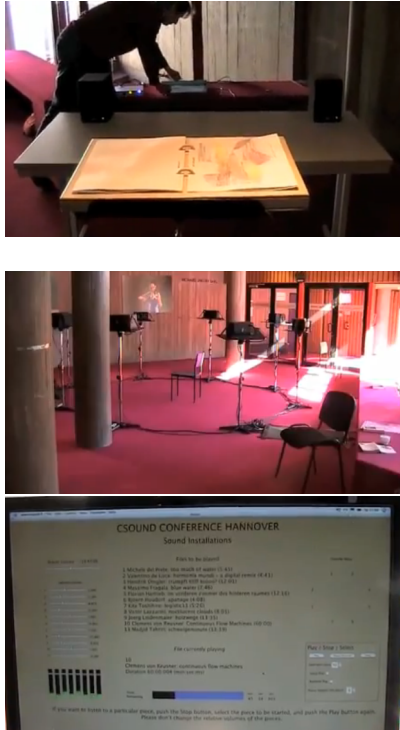


Figure 2. Sound installations in the Foyer [5]

5. CONCERT

In the evening of the second day, a concert was held and 11 pieces from various countries were performed or played at Kammermusiksaal (**Figure 3**).



Figure 3. Concert hall (Kammermusiksaal)

8 speakers were located around the audiences in the very nice hall. All the pieces were inspiring to the author, including a piece for flute and live electronics, a piece performed with mice and many small mechanical switches that were operated by audiences, and a tune played with distorted electric guitar and voice being modulated in real time.

6. ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS

On the second and the third day, we had Developer-User-Roundtable sessions (**Figure 4**) where all the participants joined and made discussions for totally six hours.



Figure 4. Developer-User-Roundtable

Each of the core developers of Csound or Csound related tools made some speech and in response all the participants discussed various topics on the technological aspects, the community building, and other things.

7. REMARKS

The number of the participants of the conference is as small as about 40, but each participant is impressive and has the unique contribution as symbolically indicated in the long discussion at the plenary Developer-User-Roundtable session (and at the still continued 'unofficial session' at the nearby cafe every night).

Through this conference, I was highly impressed that Csound will be continuously developed and extended for more various applications by contributions from developers and users around the world. The next Csound Conference is planned to be held in one or two years.

8. REFERENCES

- [1] Csound Conference Website
<http://www.cs-conf.de/>
- [2] Csound on Sourceforge
<http://csound.sourceforge.net/>
- [3] Csounds.com <http://www.csounds.com/>
- [4] Csound at FLOSS Manuals
<http://en.flossmanuals.net/csound/index/>
- [5] Csound Conference videos on YouTube
<http://www.youtube.com/user/csconf2011>

9. AUTHOR'S PROFILE

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Born in Nara in 1967. Withdrew from his doctoral program with certification accredited by his academic advisor, of Graduate School of Engineering, Kyoto University. Currently a professor at the Institute for e-Learning Development of Kumamoto University. Ph.D. in Engineering (Nagoya University, 2005). Fields of interest: e-learning systems, nonlinear systems, electronic music.