

Interactive Music for Clarinet and Computer: Performance Practice Problems and Solutions

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Since the development of interactive music software in the 1980s, a new genre of works for clarinet and computer has emerged. The rapid proliferation of interactive music resulted in a great deal of experimentation, creating a lack of standardization in both the composition and performance of this repertoire. In addition, many performers are reluctant to approach these works due to unfamiliarity with the genre and its technical and musical considerations. Performance practice commonly refers to interpretation of a written score, but the technology involved in interactive music requires a broader definition of performance practice; one that also addresses computer software, coordination between the performer and computer system, and technology such as microphones and pedals. The problems and potential solutions of interactive music performance practice are explored in this presentation through review of the relevant published literature, interviews with experts in the field, and examination of musical examples from works for clarinet and computer by Lippe, May, Pinkston, Rowe, and Welch.

Performance practice considerations of interactive music fall into the categories of notation, technology, interpretation, rehearsal, and repertoire. From the interviews and the literature, it is clear that the performance of interactive music requires specific knowledge and skills that performers may not encounter in other genres of contemporary music, including microphone technique, spatialization, sound processing, and improvisation. Performance practice issues are often mediated by close collaboration between performers and composers, but they can inhibit the accessibility of these works to new performers, and

may be detrimental to the long-term viability of interactive music. Potential solutions for performers of interactive music are proposed, based on interviews with clarinetists who specialize in the genre. A listing of over one hundred interactive works for clarinet and computer is also included.