

**JOCELYN ROBERT:**  
*Le piano flou #1* (1992)

(1300 h)  
*world premiere performance*

We tend to think of computers as machines of cool calculation and great precision. But any computer programmer will tell you that computers are really quite imprecise and error-prone, at least in some circumstances. High-level programming languages — the kind that most programmers and virtually all musician-programmers use, because they handle most of the detail work of programming for you — tend to produce surprising results with alarming frequency. The more complex the program and application, the more likely the computer is to behave unpredictably.

Often, the computer's inaccuracy is a drawback. In most cases, or at least from a certain aesthetic point of view, a pianist's inaccuracies in performance are also considered a liability. Jocelyn Robert has chosen to make a virtue of these apparent failings, in a series of piano performance projects sharing the title *Le piano flou*.

In this piece, the computer magnifies the imprecision of the performer, and seasons its own pre-composed accompaniment material with controlled imprecision. The computer analyzes the pianist's performance, and transforms even slight deviations from the score by changing pitches and dynamics. Fluctuations in tempo are amplified through computer "echoes" of the performance. The structure of the work is defined through a conjugation of various combinations of different musical responses to inaccuracy.

The idea is to blur the distinction between interpretation and composition. The characteristics of each interpretation will re-compose the music, and every performance will make a new composition.

Jocelyn Robert, from Québec City, is a composer, performer and multi-media artist who was educated in architecture. He works mainly with sounds in relation to places and spaces, and often incorporates sculptural elements and computer interaction. In 1991, Robert was curator of a series on real-time use of computers in art, at the art centre Obscure in Québec. In March 1992, his A/B Box installation attracted media and audience acclaim at the Computer-Human Interaction show in Monterey, California.

Jocelyn Robert: Yamaha Disklavier™, Macintosh™ computer, MAX™ software



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