

“You have a new memory”

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My phone beeps. A notification on the home screen says “You have a new memory”. It happens at times, unsupervised learning algorithms scan your photos and videos, look at their features and metadata, and then you get a nice slideshow of that trip to South America, or those shows you went to while you were in Hamburg or London. There is something ridiculous about this (the music they put on the slideshows, for example) as well as something eerie, something even slightly distressing perhaps. I guess it could be about the way your recent past is lumped into categories, or how different moments are juxtaposed in unexpected ways, or just because you’d rather be the one in charge of deciding when “you have a new memory.”

Sunday 28 July 2019

Idea I got while showering: what if I collected the sonic memories of this past year – like audio messages, audio from videos I shot while travelling, recorded journal entries, the music I listened to... – chopped them into very short fragments, use unsupervised learning algorithms to map them out, and then played them back using corpus-based concatenative synthesis or something similar?

Wednesday 4 September 2019

At Goldsmiths working on reinforcement learning. Looks like this could be a useful approach to explore different ways of interacting with complex synthesis engines. I’ll see if I can apply this to the sonic memories corpus idea. Ideally, I could interact with the corpus with a Myo sensor armband and give feedback to the artificial agent while I play using another device. I could implement gesture recognition on a second Myo, but even just a clicker would be sufficient.

Thursday 24 October 2019

RE: memory corpus idea: it might be quite difficult to structure such a complex corpus of diverse sounds. I should ask Jonas about the work he has done with self-organising maps and CataRT (Margraf, 2019).

Saturday 9 November 2019

In addition to the audio from messages, videos, etc. I could try obtain a list of my most played songs on Spotify and see if I can add them to the corpus. I wonder if there would be copyright issues with that. I should check out that paper by Sturm et al. (2019)... I think I’ll use the stems of the tracks I made with my long lost sibling AQAXA instead, we own those after all, they’re ours.

Today is the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall. Sometimes when I walk through Mauer Park or I pass by Berneauer Straße I try to imagine how things used to be back then. Remembering and preserving memories is extremely important.

Sunday 10 November 2019

I filmed¹ the performance of the memory corpus piece, I think I will call it “You have a new memory”. I will need:

- a projector;
- a table;
- a chair;
- a desk light.

I’ll play everything through my audio card, so I’ll just send a stereo pair to the PA.

Tuesday 12 November 2019

I submitted the piece to ICLI 2020, I did it in a hurry, primarily because I used most of the time I had before the deadline to write a full paper about the reinforcement learning approach I used here.

I feel I should dedicate more time to putting the research I do into practice. It is so fundamentally important to situate music research into actual practice, that’s how you really understand the *ergodynamics* of the tools you’re building. Thor really nailed it with that word, I enjoyed reading his book (Magnusson, 2019) during the summer.

I look forward to reading the comments of the reviewers for both submissions, I don’t know what to expect.

Friday 20 December 2019

The piece has been accepted! I am very pleased with the positive feedback I have received from all the reviewers. I’m particularly happy about the fact that they recognised the purpose behind this unusual way of writing an abstract for a performance.

Acknowledgements. Thank you G. for listening, and for helping me remember. I can’t wait to see you.

References

- Magnusson, T. (2019). Introduction: On Objects, Humans, and Machines. In *Sonic Writing*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Margraf, J. (2019). *Self-Organizing Maps for Sound Corpus Organization*. Master’s Thesis. Audiokommunikation – Technische Universität Berlin.
- Sturm, B. L. T., M. Iglesias, O. Ben-Tal, M. Miron, and E. Gómez (2019, sep). Artificial Intelligence and Music: Open Questions of Copyright Law and Engineering Praxis. *Arts* 8(3), 115.

¹Video: <http://www.federicovisi.com/you-have-a-new-memory/>