

Benoit Maubrey's project for the DIVA Danish art residency: the FEEDBACK ENSEMBLE or Ballet a LARSEN

Definition of Feedback: ***Audio feedback (also known as the Larsen effect after the Danish scientist, Søren Larsen, who first discovered its principles) is a special kind of feedback which occurs when a sound loop exists between an audio input (for example, a microphone or guitar pickup) and an audio output (for example, a loudspeaker). In this example, a signal received by the microphone is amplified and passed out of the loudspeaker. The sound from the loudspeaker can then be received by the microphone again, amplified further, and then passed out through the loudspeaker again. This is a good example of positive feedback. The frequency of the resulting sound is determined by resonant frequencies in the microphone, amplifier, and loudspeaker, the acoustics of the room, the directional pick-up and emission patterns of the microphone and loudspeaker, and the distance between them.***

In the past, aside from my mobile multi-acoustic sound sculptures for outdoor spaces (AUDIO HERD, AUDIO BALLERINAS, VIDEO PEACOCKS and others) I have created specific "phonic bodies" that work individually within architectural spaces and/or stages.

My project for DIVA (Danish Arts Council Grant) residency and the SPOR festival in Aarhus is to create a "feedback ensemble". The performers are equipped with loudspeakers (strapped to the backs like backpacks), guitar-effect systems (reverb/delay effects in

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sound via their movement within the space around them. Large spaces are ideal for these concerts.

Official presentation of the Project is on May 5th at 19:30 at Institut for (X), Skovgårdsgade 3. 8000 Århus C.

From: Benoît Maubrey / DIE AUDIO GRUPPE  
Baitzer Bahnhofstr.47, 14822 Brück OT Baitz Germany  
tel: +49+33841-8265  
mobile +49-177 349 6354  
e-mail: mail@benoitmaubrey.com  
<http://www.benoitmaubrey.com/>

## **FEEDBACK FRED a phonic Body**

Benoît Maubrey is the director of DIE AUDIO GRUPPE a Berlin-based art group that build and perform with electronic clothes (AUDIO BALLERINAS, AUDIO GEISHAS, AUDIO STEELWORKERS, BONG BOYS, VIDEO PEACOCKS...). Basically these are electro-acoustic clothes and dresses (equipped with amplifiers and loudspeakers) that create sounds by interacting with their environment.

Over the years some of the Audio Gruppe's members have developed solos with a particular instrument: certain costumes have muted into highly individualistic and self-contained sound units. These are individual "phonic" bodies that produce their own personal sounds and movements in intimate and close-to-the-spectator performances.

An essential figure is Feedback Fred.. This character, equipped with an oversized loudspeaker box on his back and a microphone-mask, "feeds back" his own voice through the interaction of his wearable PA system and physical gyrations throughout the performance space. This personality can be likened to a cross-cloning of Hamlet and an electronic-laden Hunchback of Notre Dame. Known as a performer (recently at the Digital Arts Week in Zurich and VERSCH Festival in Amsterdam) he is actually a social fellow trying to interact with casual acquaintances and everyday encounters, like most of us he only wants friendship and love -- were it not for his inborn handicap.

An extension of this project was FEEBACK FRIEDA that uses a guitar amplifier strapped to her back that reacts to a microphone attached to her arm and/or leg. The interaction of the microphone and loudspeaker box is enhanced with various guitar effects such as reverb and distortion.



Feedback Fred. Spiral Hall, Tokyo, 1997.



Feedback Fred, 12 volt 30 watts.  
Sound and Movement Conference, Freie Universität Berlin 2001.  
Microphone face mask and loudspeaker box.

Feedback Fred  
NTT-ICC Tokyo Opera House. 1997  
Microphone face mask and loudspeaker box.



Example of Feedback Frieda electroacoustic outfit.  
Freie University/Berlin. Kulturen des Performativen“  
Festival on Sound and Movement. 2001.



#### Performances, Festivals and Installations (a selection):

(2009) Berlinische Galerie, Berlin, NAISA, Toronto, (2008) MOSTRA DES ARTES SESC/ Sao Paolo, MUSICA EX MACHINA/ Bilbao, (2007) IM AUGE DES KLANGS/Joseph Beuys Archive Moyland, INGENUITY/ Cleveland, Digital Arts Week/ Zurich, (2006) Sitelines Festival/ NYC, SIGGRAPH /Boston, Robodock Festival/Amsterdam, Taiwan Digital Arts Festival, (2004) Sonoric Atmospheres/Ostseebiennale der Klangkunst, AUDIO IGLOO Singuhr-Hörgalerie/Berlin, Lowlands Festival/Holland, LEM Festival/Gracia Territoria Sonor/Barcelona(2002), AUDIO BALLERINAS, Location One/NYC, Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum fuer Gegenwartskunst/Berlin, (2001) KunstMuseum/Wolfsburg, New Haven Festival for Arts and Ideas, Seoul Performing Arts Festival, Medi@terra/Athens, Musee des Arts et Industrie/Saint-Etienne, FETA Festival/Gdansk, (2000) Monaco Dance Danses Forum, Tollwood Festival/Munich, Postdamer Musikfestspiele, (1999) IDAT(International Dance and Technology Conference)Phoenix/Arizona, Les Nuits Savoureuses de Belfort, (1998) MALTA Festival/Poznan, Stockton Riverside Festival/UK, International Symposium for Electronic Arts/Chicago, (1996)Sound Art Festival/Krakow, (1997) ICC-NTT Tokyo, ISEA/Chicago. SONAMBIENTE Sound Art Festival/Berlin, 38eme Rugissants/Grenoble, (1995)Sound Art Festival/Hannover, (1994) International Symposium for Electronic Art/Helsinki, (1993) MEDIALE/Hamburg, BECK Forum/Munich, ULTIMA Festival/Oslo, (1992)Cleveland Performance Festival/Ohio, TISEA/Sydney, (1991) European Land Art Biennale Cottbus/Germany, (1990) Festival les Arts au Soleil, Aeronef/ Lille, Sound Symposium St. John's/ Newfoundland, 1989 Festival PERSPECTIVES/ Saarbrücken, (1988) Festival des Arts Electroniques de Rennes/France, „Parcours Sonores“ Musée de La Villette/Paris, Festival of Europeen Street Theatre, Aurillac/ France, (1996)STEIRISCHE HERBST Graz,/Austria, (1986)ARS ELECTRONICA Linz/ Austria, The Mattress Factory,Pittsburg/Pa, Berlin Atonal Festival, (1985) Bundesgartenschau 85/Berlin.

#### Workshops / Guest artist lectures:

Oberlin College, Concordia University, Johns Hopkins University, Virginia Commonwealth University, Dresden Academy of Arts , Academy of Arts Enschede, Simon Fraser University, George Washington University. MIT Media Lab, IDEA Center Colorado College.

Awards: Prix Ars Electronica 1991 Anerkennung , European Award for Street Theatre/Holzminden 1995, Franklin Furnace Fund for Performance NYC 2006, Palmarès du 35e Concours Internationaux de Musique et d'Art Sonore Electroacoustiques de Bourges 2004 (the LINE) and 2009 (CyberBirds), Grand Prix International Video Danse 2002 (Mention Speciale). Marler Video Installations Preis 2008, Skulpturenmuseum Glaskasten Marl.

Grants: 1999 Hull Time Based Arts, UK.

2006 Composer-in-Residence, Schloss Wiepersdorf, Brandenburg, Germany.

#### Bibliography:

LEONARDO, Vol.28, No.2, pp.93-97, 1995, Audio Jackets and Other Electroacosutic Clothes.

BENOIT MAUBREY/ DIE AUDIO GRUPPE, catalog 1985.

Die Audio Gruppe 1982-1998, catalog 1989.

-- PERFORMANCES WITH ELECTROACOUSTIC CLOTHES, DVD 2007.

-- Kulturen des Performativen“, Shaker Verlag ISBN 3-8322-2270-7-

-- Techno Textiles: Revolutionary Fabrics for Fashion and Design (9780500280966): Sarah E. Braddock, Marie O'Mahony,