

“ephemeral melody” : Music Played with Wind and Bubbles

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1 Introduction

The technology of recording allows music to have repeatability so that we can enjoy music freely. However, the innate characteristic of music as ‘one-off’ is forgotten because of the progressive technology. Originally, music was able to amuse people only at the time performed in a certain place. Also, music had responded to the situation of the places, so music could make the scene alive there. Then, we felt unity through listening to the same music at the same place. It is worthwhile for human to feel ‘unity’ with each other by listening to the music and to have a ‘one-off’ experience in the ever-changing life.

“ephemeral melody” (Figure 1) is a novel musical instrument that is played with soap bubbles. We can listen to the unrepeatable music at the time bubble burst through this instrument. It aims to play music that depends on the environment around the instrument rather than play by the electronic devices.



Figure 1: “ephemeral melody” is played by soap bubbles

2 ephemeral melody

There are two devices for the “ephemeral melody”(Figure 2). One of them is like a music box, and there is a bubble machine in the box. Another looks like a harp that equip with 48 copper pipes and two speakers. System diagram is illustrated in Figure 3. A handle attached to the box is an interface that controls machine to make bubbles. When you turn the handle, bubbles come out of the box instead of the sounds. Then bubbles become sounds when it hit the copper pipes in front of the box. At the time a bubble hit one pair of copper pipes, electrical current conduct between them. Then, analog signal input to MaxMSP and output sounds. Each 24 pairs of copper pipes have its own sound. We can listen to the sounds like a nylon guitar from these speakers.

“ephemeral melody” is an instrument that is played with soap bubbles. Soap bubbles have ephemerally because it disappears quickly, and soap bubbles are light so that they run irregularly by the wind. By using soap bubbles that have foregoing features, “ephemeral

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melody” offers us an opportunity to play unrepeatable music and provides us ephemeral experiences.

Everyone, regardless of age and sex, can play music easily with “ephemeral melody”. You just need to turn a handle to play music. We can feel transience by not only acoustic sense but also visual when bubbles disappear. In addition, the interface is like a handle of music box and also the device looks like a harp, this work offers us to experience such as playing instrument intuitively.

3 Conclusion

More than 500 people played with “ephemeral melody” at the 3 exhibitions in the university. Through those exhibitions, “ephemeral melody” looks to keep players interested for a long time because it is able to play unrepeatable music. Also, it amuses people not only young people but also children and elderly people. This is attributed to the fact that it is exciting for human to feel only once happenings through this work. We could offer people unrepeatable experiences through the “ephemeral melody” that depends on the environment.



Figure 2: Two devices for “ephemeral melody”

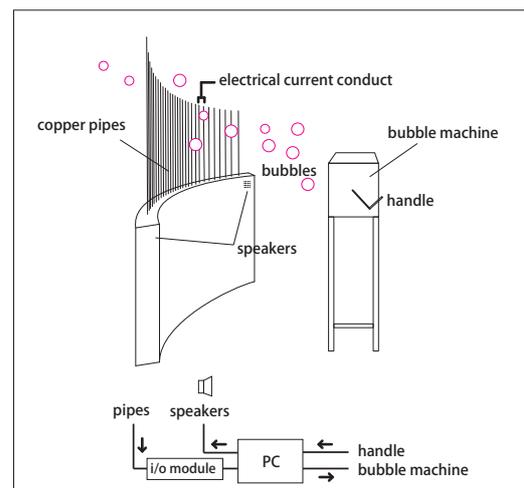


Figure 3: System Diagram