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Ppali, Sophia, Branch, Boyd, Covaci, Alexandra, Wohl, Bea and Lalioti, Vali (2022) *A Workshop on Designing the Performances of the Future at IMX 2022*. In: *Performances'22 : A Workshop on Designing the Performances of the Future at IMX 2022 - ACM International Conference on Interactive Media Experiences: IMX 2022*. . pp. 159-162. , Aveiro, Portugal

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Performances'22 : A Workshop on Designing the Performances of the Future at IMX 2022

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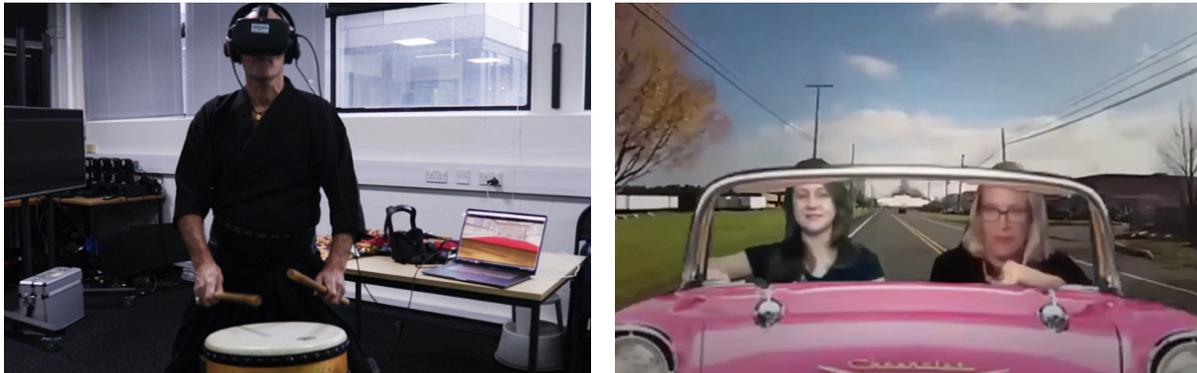


Fig. 1. Performances of the future. A musician playing music in virtual reality [7] (left) and actors improvising online [1] (right)

This workshop aims to start a conversation as to what the performances of the future might look like by inviting both researchers and practitioners to present their work in this domain. It will explore the interception of technology and performance, with a focus on how technology might be leveraged to enhance performances and the process of developing performances, provide new ways to reach and interact with audiences, as well as how it can create new ways of performing.

Additional Key Words and Phrases: performances, audiences, artists, immersive technologies

1 BACKGROUND, SCOPE AND AIM

In the wake of the pandemic, more artists than ever are exploring technology as a means of reaching and interacting with their audiences. Over the past two years, actors and musicians have been shifting their creative energies to experiment and explore the possibilities of streaming live performances and bridge the gap between physical events and online participation. Streaming trends throughout lockdown have shown that it is essential for artists to integrate new and alternative forms of media into their routine, and that audiences want to connect with them through more immersive and visual content. More data has since emerged that suggests hybrid and virtual events are here to stay, with many expressing that they would keep attending them after restrictions were lifted¹. Therefore, it is necessary to delve into how digital technologies can be leveraged to enhance existing performances and create new methods of performing.

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¹<https://unitedtalent.app.box.com/v/UTACOVIDConsumerStudy>

Emerging technologies (e.g., Mixed Reality, transmedia storytelling, Internet of Things, multisensory devices etc.) enable unexplored types of experiences in live theatre and music performances. As it has been shown in similar contexts [3, 4, 6], these technologies have the potential to transform the perspective of the audiences who can physically participate and interact through innovative interfaces. At the same time, they can also offer performers new ways to manipulate mediated spaces in real-time, enriching their range of possibilities for artistic expression. Research in this direction has looked into using immersive technologies for enhancing artists' rehearsals and stimulating their creativity [1, 5, 7], engaging opera audiences [8] or understanding the audiences' motivations for mediated performances [2]. However, despite this emerging interest, there have been few opportunities to survey these developments from a distance, and to have artists and audiences share their observations.

With this workshop, we aim to start a conversation between emerging digital live arts pioneers, technologists, developers, researchers and audiences to explore together the potential avenues for live performances. We invite both researchers and practitioners to present their work, experiments, insights, successes, and failures, as well as their fears and visions for this domain. We will explore together the interception of technology and performance, with a focus on how technology might be leveraged to enhance performances, performance preparation, provide new ways to reach and interact with audiences, as well as create new ways of performing.

2 CONTEXT AND TOPICS

This workshop will offer an interdisciplinary forum for idea exchange, co-design exploration, networking and discussion for researchers, technologists, designers and performance practitioners interested in research on designing the performances of the future. Researchers from both academia and industry, designers, performers and people with an interest in technology-enhanced performances are invited to submit pictorials or demos. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Methods of designing hybrid /extended reality/ multisensory performances
- Human - machine performances
- Sensor and robotic integration to performances
- New ways of engaging and interacting with audiences
- Technology-enhanced performances created using co-creation/participatory design methods
- Opinion pieces on what the future of performance might hold.

We expect our workshop to:

- Connect a community of researchers and practitioners who are interested in the future of live performances
- Investigate the challenges, needs & opportunities of designing technology-enhanced performances
- Outline guidelines for designing technology-enhanced performances

3 ORGANISERS

The co-organisers of the workshop bring multiple perspectives and expertise from computer science, engineering, performance, extended reality and digital innovation.

Sophia Ppali is a research fellow at the Creative Computing Institute, University of Arts London, undertaking research on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on professional artists and how digital technologies can help them recover. She is also a PhD Candidate at the University of Kent. She holds an MSc from Imperial College London, an MA from the Royal College of Art and a BA from the University of Kent.

Boyd Branch is a technologist for XR and live performance and a lecturer in digital media at Coventry University. He is the creator of Virtual Director, a software platform for creating remote theatre, and founder of the Improvisational Media & Performance Lab, which explores how improvisational pedagogies can be utilised to create accessible, adaptive, and supportive technologies.

Dr Alexandra Covaci is a researcher in the field of virtual reality and currently a Lecturer in the Digital Design course at the University of Kent. Her research activities lie at the confluence of VR, multisensory media, human computer interaction and psychology. She is particularly interested in creating a systematic understanding of multisensory experiences for interactive technologies. Her approach is driven by a mix of human factor studies and creativity.

Dr Bea Wohl is a research associate at the Creative Computing Institute, University of Arts London. They hold a PhD in Digital Innovation from the HighWire CDT at the University of Lancaster. They have worked in consultancy and communications for over a decade, focusing on the creative and cultural sectors. They have an MA in Media and Communications and an Advanced Certificate in PR.

Dr Vali Lalioti is the Programme Director of the Creative Computing Institute, University of the Arts London, and the Director-Founder of The Innovation Consultancy. She has been a professor and innovator in the field of VR/XR for 25 years. She has led BBC's first AR production that received the British Television Society judges award 2003 and the InnovateUK funded VR Rehearse & Perform in 2021. She holds a PhD in Computer Science, an MBA and an MRes in Design.

4 PROGRAMME

The programme of the workshop is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Detailed programme for the workshop. The schedule is set in Western European Summer Time, Portugal, UTC +1.

14:00 – 14:15	Welcome and introductions
14:15 – 14:35	Keynote I - Shannon Harvey - <i>Creative Alchemy One</i>
14:35 – 14:50	Design activity I
14:50 – 15:30	<i>Paper and demo session I</i>
	<i>a. Agora _ a community podium, Dr. Stavros Dendrinou, George Larkos</i>
	<i>b. Exploring the potential of mobile projectors as body-instrument for performance, Mayank Loonker, Rocio von Jungenfeld, Christos Efstratiou</i>
	<i>c. Coding Two, James Gibbons - MacGregor</i>
	<i>d. Performative Journeys: Ensuring the Relevance of Grassroots venue experiences, Alexander Newson, Sebastian Ervi</i>
	<i>e. Email from beyond reality, Alex Pavelescu</i>
	<i>f. The abductive wisdom of dance as an empirical method, Hunter Brueggemann</i>
15:30 – 15:40	Break
15:40 – 16:10	Design activity II
16:10 – 17:10	<i>Paper and demo session II</i>
	<i>a. Miso kitchen, Jackie Walduck and Chloe Cooper</i>
	<i>b. Come Hither to Me, Sahar Sajadieh and Hannah Wolfe</i>
	<i>c. The Severance Theory: Welcome to Respite, Deirdre V. Lyons</i>
	<i>d. Survivor's Way, Alex Oliszewski</i>
	<i>e. Quickly Photographed and Released Unharmful, Pandelis Diamantides</i>
17:10 – 17:30	Keynote II - Alex Kane - <i>Volta XR</i>
17:30 – 17:45	Final discussion and concluding remarks

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank the organisers of the ACM International Conference on Interactive Media Experiences for the opportunity to host this workshop. The project reported in this article was supported by HEartS Professional, a project funded by the United Kingdom's Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) to investigate the health, economic, and social impact of COVID-19 on professionals in the arts, Grant no: AH/V013874/1.

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