EDUCATION ON MUSIC AND TECHNOLOGY:

A PROGRAM FOR A PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

Hans Timmermans, Jan IJzermans, Rens Machielse,
Gerard van Wolferen, Jeroen van Iterson

Utrecht School of the Arts, Utrecht School of Music and Technology,
PO-BOX 2471, 1200 CL Hilversum, The Netherlands.

Presented by Marcel Wierckx
2 May 2010, Linux Audio Conference in Utrecht
1. Introduction
2. Vision and Mission
3. Composition for the Media
4. Music Production
5. Research
6. Conclusion
1. Introduction

• Utrecht School of Music and Technology (part of Utrecht School of Arts)

• Professional Education in Music and Technology
Degrees offered:

• Sound Design.
• Composition for the Media.
• Composition for non-linear Media.
• Composition of Electronic Music.
• Composition & Music Production.
• Composition & Music Technology.
• Music Production & Performance.
• Music Technology & Performance.
• Audio Design, Music System Design.
• Audio Design, Recording and Production.
• >= 450 students, 45 teachers

• bachelor, master and research degree programs

• some programs emphasize Arts, others are more technical. However there is some overlap between them

• 92% of graduates have a healthy career within 2 years of finishing MA

• 90 new students per year, 80-85 of which graduate
  - policy is to maintain active contact with alumni
  - feedback from alumni used to redesign curriculum where needed
Our mission:

• educate students towards professional career in Dutch and international contexts

• emphasis on:
  - personal development of the student
  - outlook on a professional career
  - lifelong learning skills to keep up with rapidly changing field
History:

- started as part of the Utrecht Conservatory in 1985
- current program started 1987
Curricula:

• major changes in past 6 years:
  - introduction of new area: composition for non-linear media
  - recent research emphasis on applications of music technology for both adults and children with special needs
  - research integrated into curriculum

• every 4 years curriculum evaluated and adapted in light of context
2. Vision and Mission

• central focus on teaching students how to keep up in ever-changing field

• to this end, various teaching methods are employed:
  - lectures, workshops, projects, study groups, industrial placement, external projects, interdisciplinary projects
• primary characteristics of the program:
  - students learn by doing
  - students learn to be their own teacher

• importance of self-reflection, professional independence, development
3. Composition for the Media

• common elements of various contexts in media
  - speed and unpredictability of development
  - prosumerism
  - individualization of consumer
  - mechanisms for measuring effectiveness of product
• role and function of music in the media industry
  - virtual orchestration
  - use of 'temp track'
  - emancipation of sound

• consequences for education:
  - broader approach
  - contextual awareness
  - relationship context-design-production
4. Music Production

• fundamental changes in industry brought about by technological innovations
  - 'disruptive' technologies
  - shift centralized -> decentralized tools
  - shift physical -> virtual product
    - recorded music -> live performance
    - intellectual property issues
    - rise of non-linear music
• consequences for education:
  - problems for traditional approach
    - technical focus
    - implicit or explicit preferences for genre
    - how to integrate innovation?

• our program seeks to balance:
  - technology
  - design strategies
  - development, including new contexts
  - innovations in product and distribution
our approach to music production comes from three overlapping strands:
  - the 'engineering producer'
  - the 'organizing producer'
  - the 'composing producer'

an individualized approach towards the student
5. Research

- curriculum adapted yearly to reflect ongoing changes in the field
  - focus on higher-level tools for designing adaptive music systems

- need for research from both mono and multi-disciplinary approaches

- growing need to combine research with production
• results from research important to both students and teaching staff:
  - application to new fields, such as adaptive systems
  - leads to improvements in music design processes for the creative industry
  - leads to improvements in music education in support of social themes such as inclusion, inter-culturality, and new contexts
6. Conclusion

- since 1985 we have succeeded in developing a continuously adaptive educational program which prepares students for existing professional practice

- both the program and teaching staff are adapted to ongoing developments in the field

- mechanisms which guarantee ongoing development, taking into account quality standards and a real view of the field of study
Thank you!

Questions?