

Creating New Ways for Audiences to Participate in Performance

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Music Professor Jason Freeman created Piano Etudes, a Web-based application that allows audiences to participate in the composition process.

According to Freeman, his Piano Etudes are not like traditional etudes that you might go and hear a musician play in a concert. In Freeman's Piano Etudes, everyone is involved in the process of composing the musical piece.

"You can go and listen to a musician play at the concert, but you can also get involved by going to the companion Web site," said Freeman. "On the Web site you're able to look at musical fragments, the little building blocks that make up the Etudes, and rearrange them however you want."

According to Freeman, by rearranging the fragments you're able to create your own unique version of the piece. Once you've created your own version, the Web site allows you share the piece with friends on many social networking sites. The music can also be downloaded as MP3 files or even as conventional musical scores that can be performed in concert.

"I developed Piano Etudes because I have grown increasingly dissatisfied with the distinctions that get drawn between people that compose music, people who perform music and people who only get to listen to music," said Freeman. "For me, these distinctions seem artificial."

Freeman said that his most fulfilling musical experiences are when he is able to compose, create and perform. “When I do all of those things, I listen to music differently,” said Freeman. “I’m more involved in it and it is much more fulfilling. I am hoping others will share in this experience through Piano Etudes and many of my other works.”

Freeman wrote Piano Etudes for pianist Jenny Lin, who challenged him to explore what a musical etude would be in a contemporary cultural environment.

“What a modern etude meant to me was the ability for the pianist and Web site participants to take part in the composition process,” said Freeman. “The performer’s task really becomes interesting then, because the musician must take all of these possibilities and make the piece his or her own.”

Jason Freeman: www.jasonfreeman.net/

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