

Sound expert works with Imogen Heap on musical gloves project

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UWE computer music expert Dr Tom Mitchell is part of the team working to make musician Imogen Heap's pioneering Mi.Mu gestural gloves more widely available. The team has recently started a Kickstarter campaign to develop the gloves.

The musical [gloves](#) allow Imogen to play her [music](#) live on stage, in a way she had previously only been able to do in a studio, using just her hands and arms. There was a huge response after Imogen demonstrated the prototype gloves at festivals such as the TED Global Conference in 2011.

The development team includes experts specialising in motion capture

technology, fabric/textile-based electronics, music technology and fashion design. Tom is a computer scientist, researcher and electronic musician lecturing in computer music at UWE.

He said, "The gloves form the interface to a live [music performance](#) system which is entirely controlled by gestures. Sounds can be recorded, synthesised and manipulated live on stage by the performer using intuitive hand movements.

"The impetus for the campaign was the reaction after people saw her demoing the gloves. We got loads of interest and requests asking if we could make them a pair. Since then the gloves have undergone some major enhancements."

The biggest difference is that the gloves are now individually contained and wireless. They form a wireless network to which your computer can easily join, enabling the wearer to roam around freely.

The Kickstarter campaign aims to make the gloves more affordable and available to musicians that want to experiment with them. Already over £65,000 has been pledged on the campaign which runs till 3 May 2014. The money raised will be used to finalise the design of the gloves and make them easy for non-experts to set up and use, so any musician could take advantage of them and adapt them to their own music.

Imogen said, "Being able to distance yourself from the computer while interacting with its software, whether writing or performing, is something which just feels so fantastically natural.

"It's not very expensive for the system when you consider all that it does but it's much more than we want it to be eventually. That's why we're looking for collaborators at this stage who just want to get stuck in and see the potential now, getting involved early on. The hope is in the

future, to reduce the cost of our Mi.Mu Gloves to the price range of a Kinect, Leap Motion or Korg MicroKontrol."

The gloves have so far raised a third of their £200,000 Kickstarter target, with 17 days left to go. Supporters can donate as little as £1, or if they want to own a glove they can pledge from £1,200, or £2,400 for a pair. For musicians or technologists who have been following the development of the Mi.Mu gloves closely, there's also the option of becoming a collaborator on the project.

Tom said, "Gestural data interfaces have been around for decades and has been used for many different applications. We are not the first to attack this problem, even for music, but we have a unique approach that's already more affordable than others and tailored for the thing we care about most - music!

"We dream of this technology soon becoming accessible to all musicians everywhere. Getting from here to there will take quite a bit of work, but we've already made great progress and look forward to a leap forward with this Kickstarter."

Tom's interests include many aspects of adaptive sound design and interactive music performance and composition. He enjoys working with artists and has a genuine passion for developing technology that enables new modes of interaction and expression. His recent work includes the interactive dance and music multimedia installation and performance system danceroom Spectroscopy.

More information: www.kickstarter.com/projects/m...mimu-glove-for-music

Provided by University of the West of England

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