



ELECTROACOUSTIC BARN DANCE

Paper Session 2, HCC Room 328

November 12th, 9:30am



Vintage Machines Workshop presented by David Morneau

Abstract:

Vintage Machines is a series of pieces utilizing vintage video game systems to make music. New computer and video game systems are released at regular intervals, often before the full limits and possibilities of existing systems are reached. Communities of artists and musicians use these legacy systems to create new work. My own work with the Nintendo Gameboy began in 2006 through a collaboration with choreographer Boris Willis titled *Abandoned Revolution*—a dance work that incorporated video game story elements. I composed and performed a score that supported the dance and added emotional underpinnings to the story elements in his piece. My work since then has focused on the Gameboy as a performance and production tool. I have presented new work in concert halls, clubs, and on air, including an 8-channel surround sound piece that was premiered at Electronic Music Midwest and then presented at Stony Brook University and at Circuit Bridges in New York.

Often, the use of these gaming systems to make music is rooted in nostalgia. I try to explore beyond that impulse. Using a legacy system in the context of current and emerging media and practices embraces the limitations of the earlier technology in the pursuit of self-expression. Within these limitations—such as the Nintendo Gameboy's severely limited sound crafting capabilities—I find the landscape of possibilities inspiring and fertile, and capable of expressiveness.

To date, most of the projects have used original model Nintendo Gameboys running Nanoloop (a step-sequencer created by Oliver Wittchow). Others have used a variety of Commodore 64 Emulators. Future projects will explore Commodore 64 emulators and hardware, and possibly an original Merlin game.

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Presenter Bio:

David Morneau is a composer of an entirely undecided genre. Described by Molly Sheridan as a "shining beacon" of inspiration, his diverse work illuminates ideas about our culture, issues concerning creativity, and even the very nature of music itself. His eclectic output has been described variously as "elegantly rendered", "happily prissy", "impressive", "unusual, esoteric, and offbeat". His chiptune album, *Broken Memory*, "absolutely wrecks shop... For that, David Morneau wins."

Born in 1975, Morneau grew up in the mountains of upstate New York. His first experience making music came in fourth grade when he joined the school band as an aspiring trombonist. Under the guidance of a patient teacher, he discovered composition through the drama club at his high school. He was instantly hooked, going on to study music in college and earning a Master of Music from Western Michigan University and a Doctor of Musical Arts from The Ohio State University. Morneau has spent his life exploring music as a way to connect to people and ideas.

In 2008, Morneau received acclaim for *60x365*, his ambitious yearlong musical project for which he composed a new one-minute composition every day. This project caught the attention of NPR and was featured on *All Things Considered* with Robert Siegel. Selections from *60x365* have been included on the 2014 International Sound Art Festival Berlin, Sonoscop festival in Barcelona, the Spark Festival at the University of Minnesota, Electronic Music Midwest at Lewis University, in a collaborative dance performance with choreographer Kristin Hapke at Velocity Dance Center in Seattle, Washington, and on Jon Nelson's *Some Assembly Required* radio show.

Morneau's *Love Songs*, a collaboration with ten poets combining Shakespeare's sonnets with contemporary poetry in genre-crossing songs, was released on Composer's Concordance Records in 2013. He followed up in 2015 with the release of *Love Songs Remixed*, which enlisted 9 other composers and producers to create new music using the existing songs, expanding the idea of what a remix can be. Music from *Love Songs* has been featured on numerous concerts throughout the United States and in Brazil.

With *Vintage Machines*, Morneau is creating a series of pieces utilizing vintage video game systems to make music. The first such piece was composed in 2006 in collaboration with choreographer Boris Willis titled *Abandoned Revolution*—a dance work that incorporated video game story elements. Morneau explores beyond the impulse toward nostalgia, embracing the limitations of the Nintendo Game Boy in the pursuit of self-expression. Subsequent music includes *Broken Memory*, an album for *Immigrant Breast Nest*; *in8* an 8-channel deconstruction of Game Boy loops; and *Another Dimension*, a bustling meditation that stretches beyond 50 minutes (featured on Hans Tammen's *Dark Circuits* series).

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His current projects include Not Less Than the Good, a secularized morning prayer service based on Henry Thoreau's Walden, which is being composed for New Thread Quartet (a New York based saxophone ensemble) and will include field recordings made at Walden Pond and read excerpts from Thoreau's book; and Beatlings, a minimal techno performance environment for cellist Craig Hultgren.

In January 2016, Morneau co-founded l'Artiste ordinaire (l'Ao), a collaborative partnership with composer-performer Melissa Grey, that has launched electronic performances and Soft Series, a concert series dedicated to presenting soft premieres. Live electronic performances include 7[^]3 [M] (Benjolin synthesizer, Game Boy), Gadget Berry Dimple: A Glossary of False Translation (Benjolin, Merlin, Spoken Word) for Hans Tammen's Rakete bee bee? Rakete bee zee! 100th Anniversary of Dada at Spectrum NYC, and Hyperlocal 2.0 for Thomas Piercy (Bass Clarinet, Sine Waves, Beats). l'Ao is developing Photon Ecstasy, a concert-length performance project that engages music, sound, and science fiction to address the hubris of certainty, which will premiere at the University of Pennsylvania Special Collections Library in conjunction with the exhibition of artist Dan Rose's DNA-Photon Project (October 2016).

Morneau lives and works in New York.