Pony Says | SPECs of our Setup

Nota bene:

We are an electro-acoustic Trio consisting of Keyboard, E-Drums and E-Guitar.
This is our main-instrumental Set-Up and we would like to stick to it.
We do exceptions of that rule, but it ALWAYS needs to be discussed with us right from the start, and we need to be convinced by the aesthetical idea.
Our main interest shifted or better: got sharpened since when we started, and it now lies in the idiomatic approach to our instruments, where an instrumental kinetic-haptic playing intertwines with the layer of the electronics in a way, that it is clear why and how we play our instruments. In simpler words: you can create the craziest, most amazing sounds with a laptop and an USB-Drive, which is cool, but for that you don't need a highly specialised instrumental trio. We want to play our instruments, and we want to play them as a trio in a chamber music setting.

Always valid: GET IN TOUCH WITH US if there are any doubts; we prefer working with you during the process and have tryouts and exchange of material over receiving a "finished" score after some months of silence and then trouble shoot instead of rehearsing.
ponysaysmail@gmail.com

performative actions:
only possible within a very limited spectrum. We do not act, sing, speak or anything alike on stage. As mentioned above, we focus on an electronic chamber music setting and idiomatic playing of our instruments. Under certain circumstances we agree on involving minimal performative actions as you can see here. Most importantly, if you are planning to involve those kinds of actions it needs to be clarified with us in advance.

video/light:
is possible. Cues can be triggered by MIDI from keys or drums. Be aware that those cues are playing actions too and need to be embedded reasonably in a part. In other words from the keyboarders perspective: if I have to play complex phrases in a very high register plus hitting the video cue in a much lower register on the last septuplet I can't guarantee that I get it right. We also like compact technical "plug-and-play"- solutions which contribute to the probability that the piece will be performed more times.

Felix (Keys) _ felixnagl@icloud.com

- Clavia Nord Stage HP 76 keys incl. sustain-, volume- & control pedal (assignable to lots of the instruments parameters) & modulation-wheel, pitch stick and aftertouch
- software: Ableton Live 12, Max4Live, MaxMSP
- virtual instruments: Arturia V Collection & Pigments, Equator, Surge, Dexed
- playing position: seated
- stereo output

sound-design:
The Clavia Nord Stage HP 76 is my main instrument and I prefer to use it as the main source of sound-synthesis although it also works as a MIDI-keyboard. If you are by chance a Nord-Nerd you can send me programs which I can retrieve on my instrument. If not you can send me sound references or text-based descriptions like “harsh detuned square-wave sound with airy trails” or “broken piano with percussive arpeggiator”. You can also send me Ableton Live-Sets with prebuilt instruments if you want to integrate very specific sounds or structures but the sound-engine of the Nord reacts much better to velocity and is truly latency free. A good compromise could be a hybrid version of DAW/software + Clavia Nord Stage HP 76.

tuning:
alternative tunings are achieved best with virtual instruments. With the Clavia Nord Stage HP 76 it’s technically impossible to create alternative tunings but it is possible to “hack” pitch on a monophonic basis (more info upon request)

aesthetics:
I personally prefer compositional strategies, that let me allow to play my instrument in an idiomatic way, where in the end it makes sense that I have keys under my hands, and not just an object that could randomly be exchanged by any other instrument. I am all in for drones and soundscapes, but I would love to maintain being a pianist/keyboarder as well.

Lucas (E-Drums) _ lucas.gerin@hotmail.fr

- Roland V71 (e-Drums Module)
- It is essential to have a call with me before you start composing in order to clarify the instrumental specifics.

Thilo (E-Guitar) _ thiloruck@gmail.com

- FM3 Fractal Audio Multieffekt und Amp-Modellling, I highly advise downloading the manual, research for specific effects or strategies on YouTube (very good online tutorials), or have a call with me (very happy to!) The most important: 1-2 footswitches freely assignable per preset (e.g. for effect on/off or for creating a ramp/fade in of an effect over maximum 10seconds; function is momentary or latching mode)
- 1 Expression Pedal (left Foot)
- 1 Volume Pedal (right Foot)
- 1 Freeze Electro Harmonix Pico (left side)
- 1 DD6 Boss delay (for mini loops or stutters, mono, left side)
- Optional: trigger cues in Max/Msp via Pedal (left side) or MIDI-Controller (on Stand); those cues can cause MIDI-Events that control many parameters of the FM3, in complex behaviours (eg at the same time, different values…); like that there is a lot more possibility than only using one expression pedal. There are many options, but please let the guitar as such come out as well (see below).
- i switch sounds with the most left footswitch of the FM3; switch between SCENES one tap, quickly possible, no gap in reverb or delay; switch between PRESETS takes

longer, i need a pause in the score for that. Difference Scene and Preset: Per preset there are 8 Scenes, they have the same effect chain, but i can use different values of those effects in different scenes; you can think of them as snapshots of an effect chain; Presets are one entity of an effect-chain; this can be completely changed from one preset to another. (Scene small difference, Preset big difference, but more time needed).

- Creating Sounds: you do not have to completely specify my effect chain in a technical manner; possible approaches: **A) you can send me reference sounds**, that i try to recreate, **B) or you can send me a rough outline**, e.g. “distortion (bright), delay, lots of reverb, pitch shift on expression pedal”,**C) or even a text:** “should sound like a broken guitar: detuned, fuzzy, with holes in the sound”. The more info I have the better, the less I have the more you need to live with the result ;)
- Guitar: Electric Guitar! PRS Custom, 24 frets, Floyd Rose tremolo; scordaturas are very problematic, detuned sounds I prefer by using pitch shifters, chorus, or manually (bending by left hand); 2 Humbuckers, 5 Positions; very high or sharp sustained Flageolett/Harmonics need the bridge position, which will affect the WHOLE sound. I cannot play a warm, polyphonic passage with at the same time high harmonics beyond the 4th fret;
- Playing a high flageolett/harmonic and then afterwards switching the pickup while there is still sustain also doesn’t work, since this is hearable (it can be - of course - on purpose and used as material, then we are talking!).
- Input cable: optional cable with kill switch, in order to hard cut the input signal (stuter-like interrupted input like Tom Morello, but: I need the right hand for it, so only for sustained chords/notes or left-hand-only actions).
- **E-bow:** please don’t overuse it; I have other possibilities for sustained notes; the handling is always annoying and we heard it a lot already…
- **Bottleneck:** Bottleneck Slides are far more complicated than one might think, since it depends on the guitar and the shape and setting of the neck; with my PRS, BN-actions do not work well, and also: like the E-bow, we heard it a lot by now. Try to be creative with different solutions, or get back to me with your idea, maybe we find a different solution!

Aesthetics:

- I personally prefer compositional strategies, that let me allow to play my instrument in an idiomatic way, where in the end it makes sense that I have a guitar in my hands, and not just an object that could randomly be exchanged by any other instrument. I am all in for noise, drones, soundscapes and scratchy stuff, but I would love to maintain being a guitarist as well.

Tech specs:

- Stereo Output XLR from FM3
- I play with a monitor in front of me
- Ipad on iPad Stand, turning pages with pedal
- I prefer sitting on a drum stool