

Utter (2016)

for flute, narration,
synthesized audio, live processing
and six iPads projecting image and sound

Anne La Berge

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Utter maps out the emotional and linguistic complexities of mother/child communication. It tells the story about Syd and Joe, musically and visually. The Utter story invites the audience to examine their own theories about how we all learn to talk and how that influences us as individuals and as a species. Language is a means to extend ourselves and form community. It is a tool for positioning ourselves among others and to self-reflect. Utter is directly related to archetypal communication roles we play in our lives; past, present and future.

The creation of Utter began with Anne La Berge's research into the origins of human language. After a couple years of research, she decided that the basis of Utter would be a short, 42-line, story with supporting musical environments where she would improvise using her interactive electronics instruments and the flute. The development of the visual component was an ongoing dialogue between visual artist Isabelle Vigier and Anne La Berge, primarily focusing on the core ideas from the original text.

Media programmers Marcel Wierckx and Mark Marijnissen developed the Interactive Slides App specifically for Utter. It is designed for the iPad and iPhone where images and videos are played and manipulated in real time using the program Max on a laptop connected to 6 iPads via a wireless network. Marcel Wierckx also created video clips where La Berge plays the flute with multiple copies of herself. These videos have their strategic playback moments in the piece.

The Utter project was funded by the Creative Industries Funds NL and the Performing Arts Fund NL.

This score includes the Utter Story text, screenshots of the Max and Kyma System Programming and a storyboard style listing of the order of play for the performer, Max, Kyma and the iPads.

The Utter Story:

0. Syd got up.
1. She walked around.
2. She had to run to catch her prey and escape her predators.
3. She bore Baby Joe.
4. Syd could not carry Baby Joe while she worked.
5. She put the baby down on the ground.
6. Baby Joe felt abandoned and was not happy lying there all alone.
7. Syd sang to Baby Joe.
8. They sang to one another.
9. They kept each other company during those long days of work.
10. Then Baby Joe stood up.
11. Joe liked to run around.
12. The songs of Syd and Joe turned into conversations.
13. HmMMM. Hmmm. HmMMMMMMMM. HmMMM.
14. They talked about now and later and before.
15. Syd kept talking more and more and more and more.
16. She filled up space.
17. She filled up time.
18. Syd's voice took up all the air.
19. Joe didn't want to hear Syd talk like that all the time.
20. Joe wanted to hear herself too.
21. Joe's ears got tired.
22. There were no rests.
23. Syd had lost the on and off switch way down inside of her.
24. Joe took it upon herself to find that switch and fix it.
25. She put the first two fingers of her right hand into Syd's mouth.
26. Pushed past Syd's tongue down to her vocal chords.
27. She felt Syd vibrate. HmMMM.
28. Joe dug for something deeper in Syd.
29. That thing beyond Syd's voice.
30. That Joe had felt when conversations were young.
31. Joe slowly pulled Syd's vocal chords apart.
32. She stretched them so far that they snapped and fell to pieces.
33. Joe reached her fingers further down into Syd's throat.
34. She pushed and shoved her hand at Syd's guts.
35. Then Joe heard that Syd was silent.
36. Still.
37. No conversation.
38. No Hmmm..
39. Joe drew her fingers out of Syd.
40. She wiped the bloody guts off her hand.
41. HmMMM. Joe sang. HmMMM
42. Conversation.

Information about Utter can be found on this webpage:

<https://annelaberge.com/projects/utter/>

It also includes the Web Story page published by Unsounds:

<http://unsounds.com/stories/utter/>

The musical composition of Utter was made using the Kyma System for both synthesized audio and live processing and a set of instructions for the performer including narration text.

The Kyma System score is a Timeline containing the audio material, including the processing patches. The performer can cue this material to play by using a trigger pedal that sends information from an Arduino to a Max patch to the Kyma System.

<https://www.arduino.cc>

<https://cycling74.com/products/max>

<https://kyma.symbolicsound.com/about-symbolic-sound/>

The onstage setup is:

Anne La Berge, flutist and narrator

A lavalier microphone amplifying the performer and sending audio to the Kyma System.

An Arduino with 2 trigger pedals:

one to cue the sections of Utter and one to control the volume of the audio.

Kyma System Hardware connected to an audio in/out device and to a laptop.

Laptop running Max and the Kyma System software.

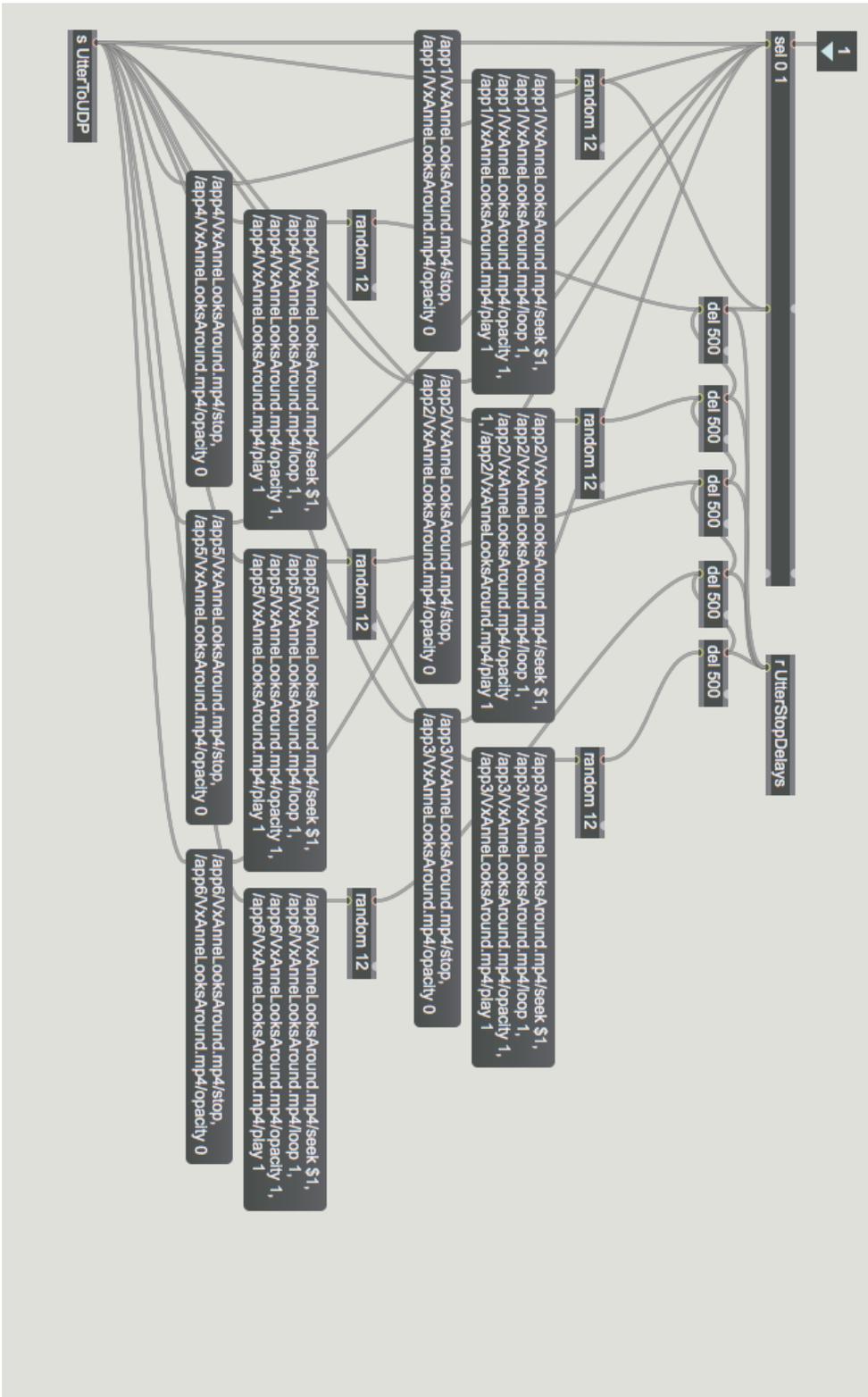
6 iPads that show images, videos and play audio locally clipped to 2 microphone stands.

A trailer can be seen here:

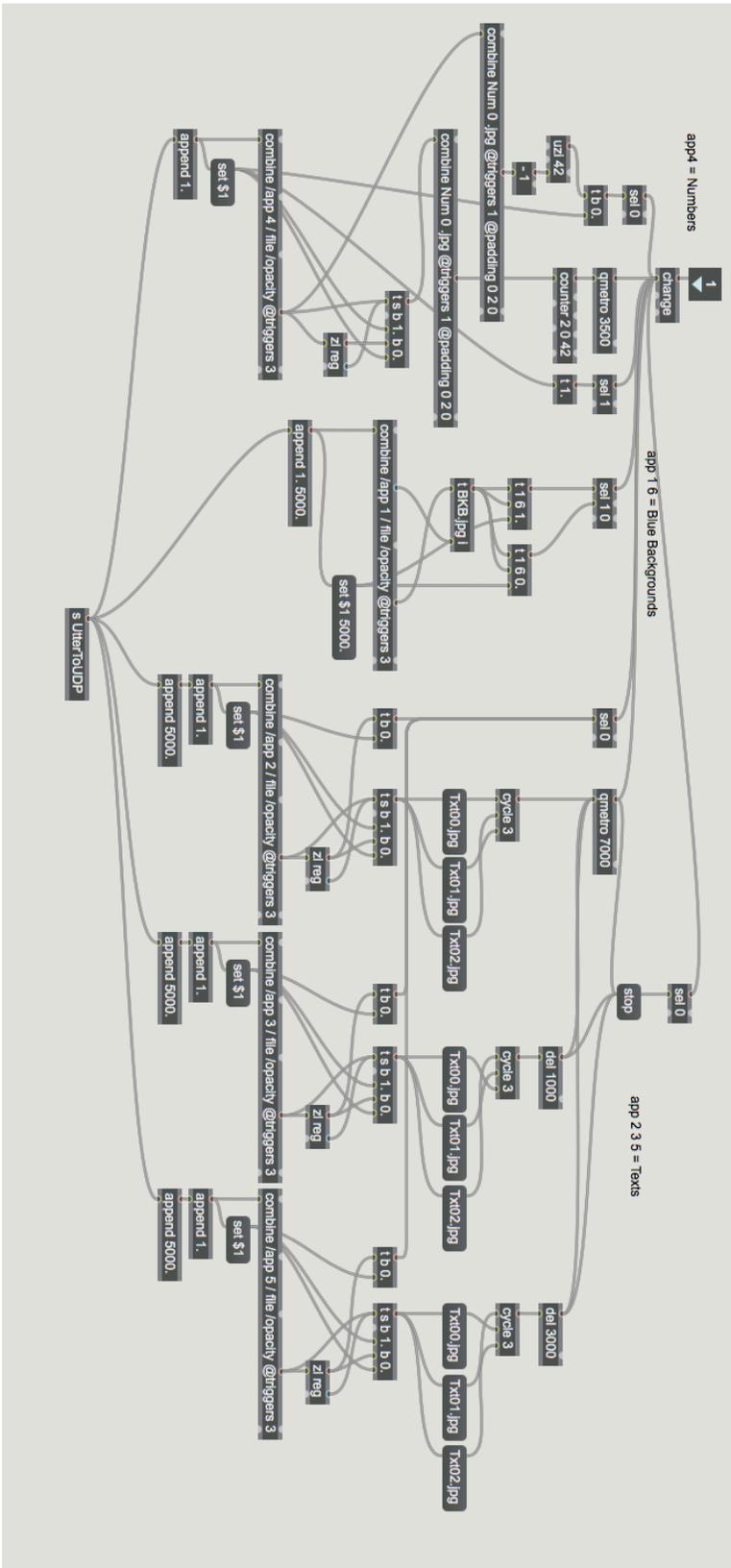
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NbQQ-EzyNQo>

Following are screenshots of the main programming for Utter.

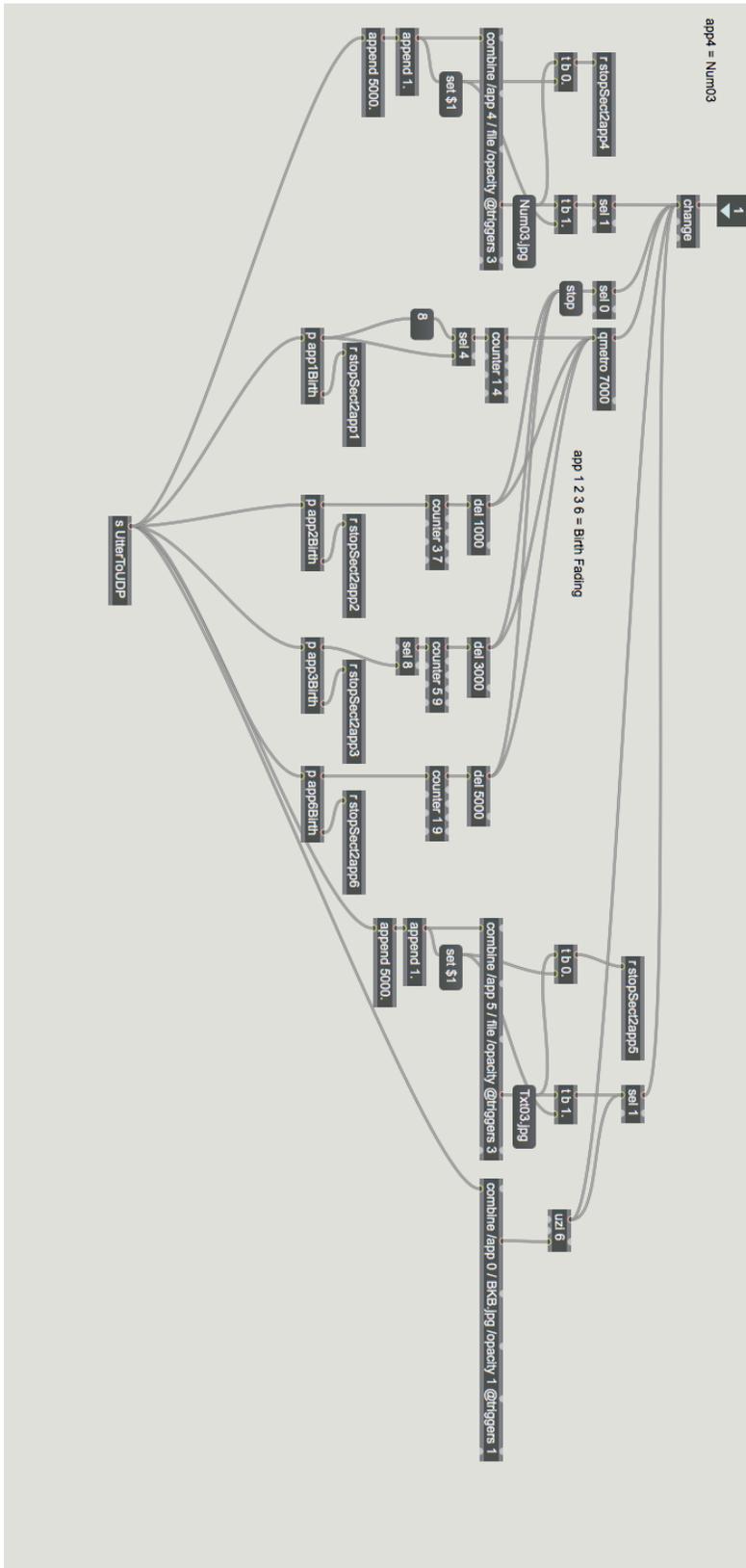
This is an example of one of the subpatches. This is the introduction that plays videos of Anne La Berge playing the flute on all the iPads.



This is the first section where each iPad is displaying a series of numbers and texts at random timings.



This is section 2 where the iPads are displaying numbers, texts and images.

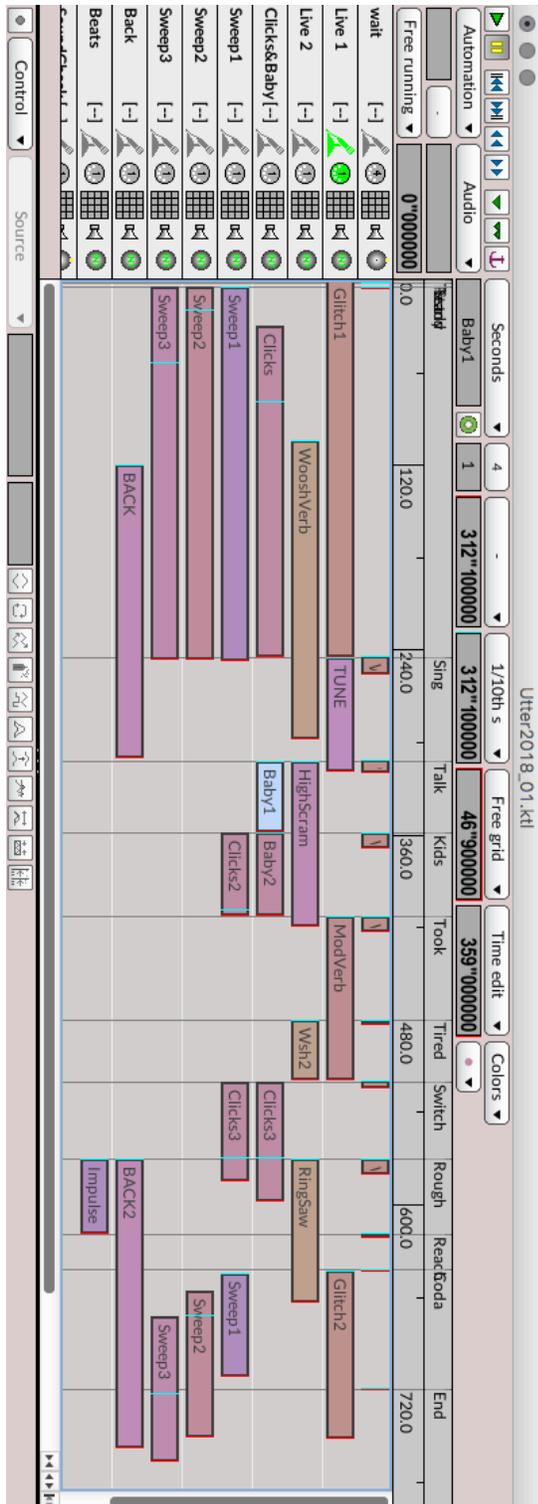


This is the Max Patch that interprets the Arduino trigger data and sends it to the Kyma System to change sections in the Kyma Timeline software and then via an ethernet connection from the laptop to the Kyma Hardware.

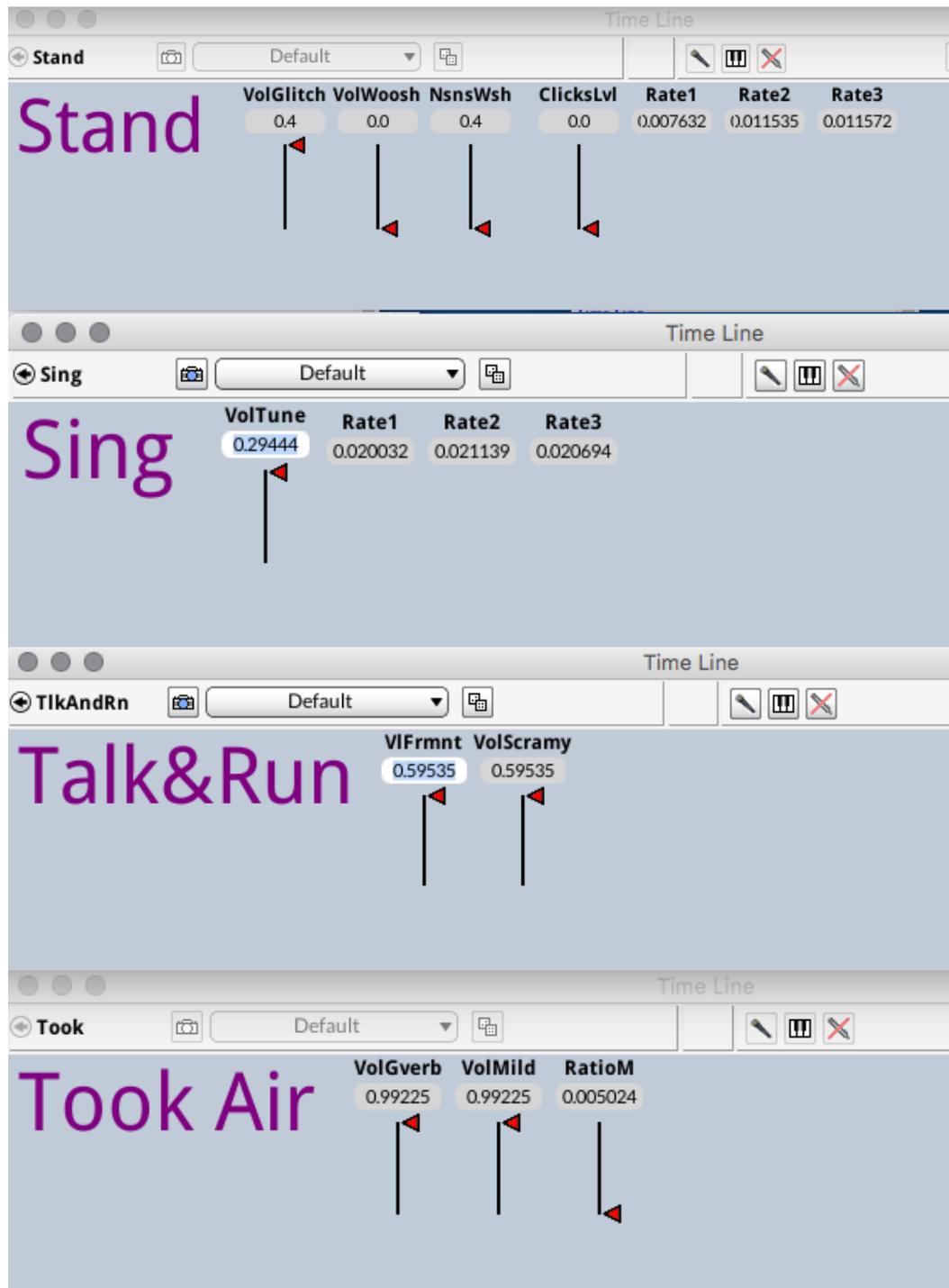
The screenshot shows a Max/MSP patch window with the following elements:

- A close button (X) next to the title "Controls OnOff".
- A message box object containing the text "port 'from Max 1'".
- A close button (X) next to the title "Arduino to Kyma Volume".
- A numeric box object displaying the value "-2" in green, with a "preset" label to its right.
- A "t toggles" object connected to the numeric box.
- A close button (X) next to a large digital clock object displaying "12:18".
- Text at the bottom left: "Arduino: 1 toggles Max & Kyma, 6 toggles volume".

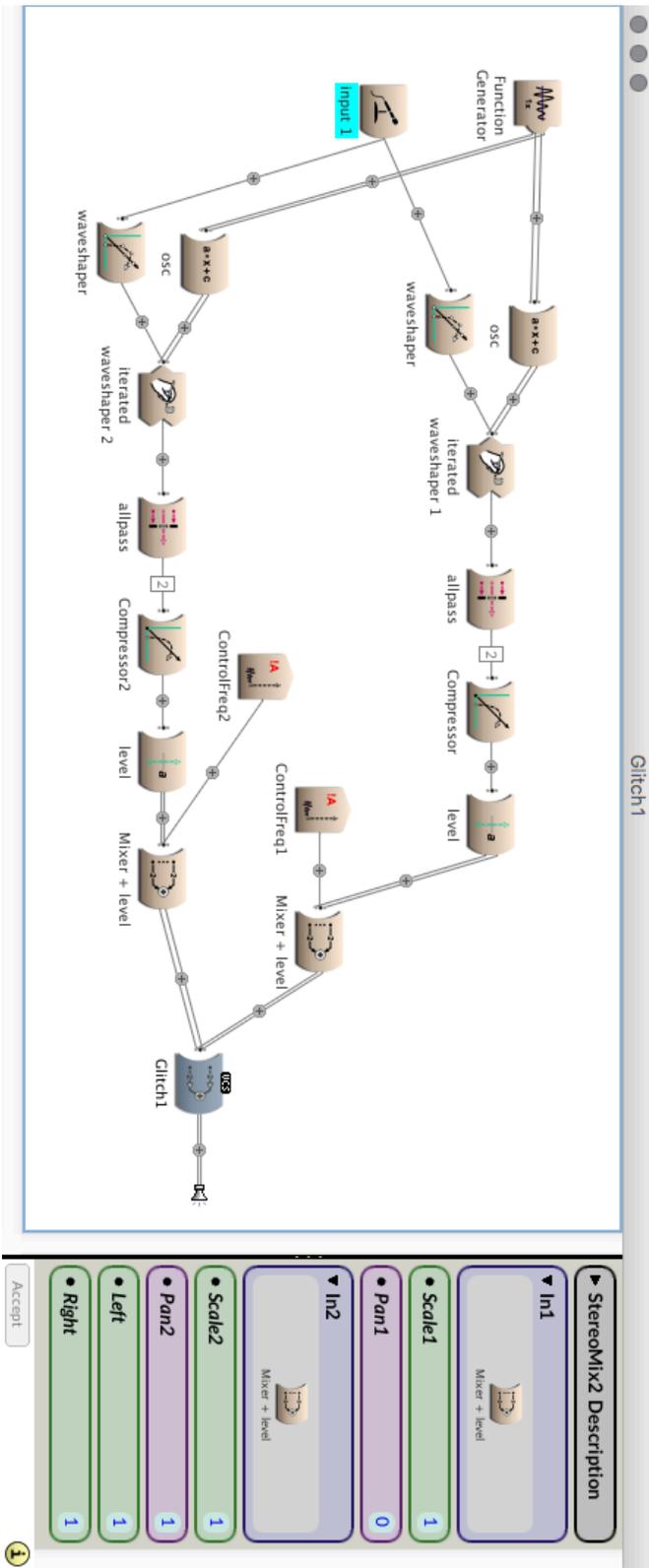
Kyma Software Timeline where all the sounds are housed. They are triggered sequentially by the performer. The Timeline does not reflect real time since there are WAIT moments in the programming that allow the audio and the processing to continue until the software receives another trigger to move on to the next section. This play and wait programming gives the performer the freedom to perform Utter with a somewhat flexible timing.



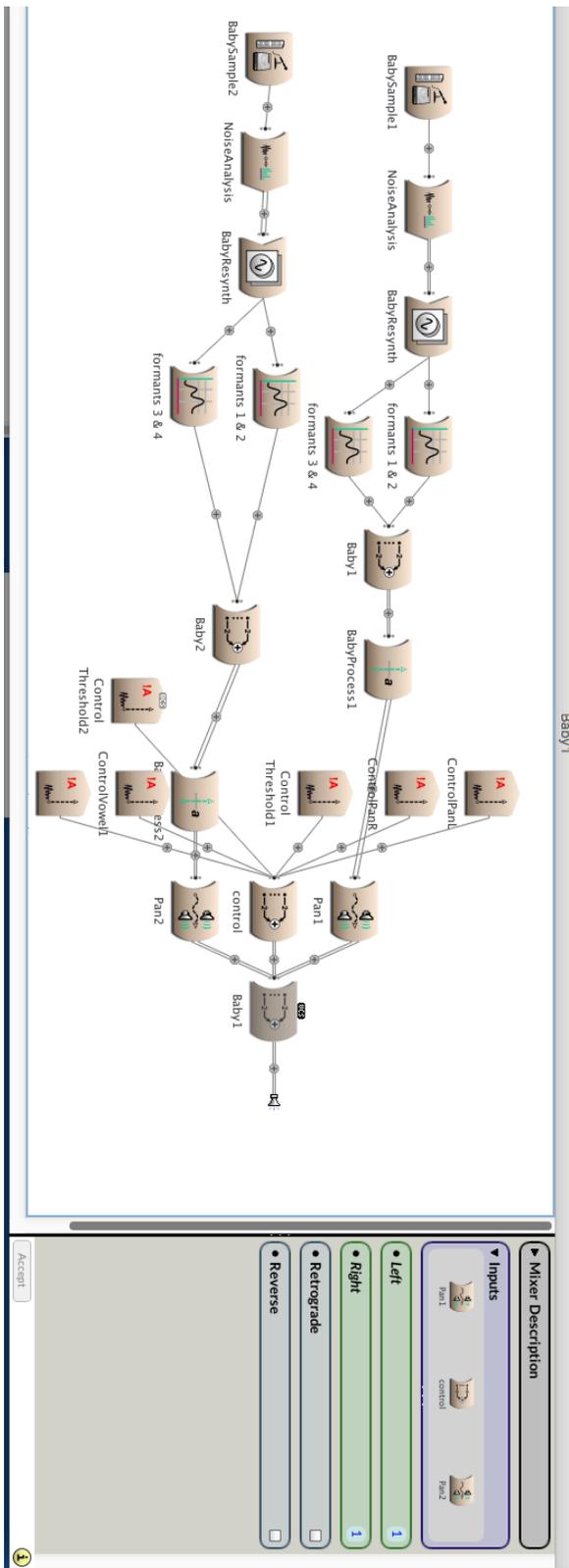
Although the performer is not looking at the laptop, the visual feedback for each section includes control parameters such as volume that can be modified for different performance settings.



An example of the Kyma System Programming for Utter is the Glitch Patch where the flute hissing sounds are processed live.



Another example of the Kyma System Programming is the Resynthesis of the Baby Samples.



Utter Score 2017

Cues	iPads	Max		Storyboard Images	Anne	Kyma
		-1				
Kyma 1	10	0	Syd got up	Anne head clip	speak text 0 - 3	
	1		She walked around		hiss	NoiseWaves
	2		She had to run to catch her prey and escape her predators		hiss	
	3a&b	1	She bore baby Joe	pregnancy, babies	deeper hiss	NoiseWaves, Clicks, Granular
	4	2	Syd could not carry Baby Joe while she worked.	work	minimal music	NoiseWaves, Clicks, Granular
	5		She put the baby down on the ground.	work	minimal music	NoiseWaves, Clicks, Granular
	6	3	Baby Joe felt abandoned and was not happy lying there all alon sky & Joe, end of Part 1		speak text 3	NoiseWaves, Clicks, Granular
Kyma 2	7	4	Syd sang to Baby Joe.	hands, air videos	melody	TuneSynth
	8		They sang to one another.	hands, air videos	melody	TuneSynth
	9		They kept each other company during those long days of work	hands, air videos	melody	TuneSynth
Kyma 3	10	5	Then Baby Joe stood up.	playful kids	Multi-tongue	Baby resynth, Highs
	11		Joe liked to run around.	flicker kids and colors	Multi-tongue	Baby resynth, Highs
Kyma 4	12	6	The songs of Syd and Joe turned into conversations.	flicker colors & texts	Multi-tongue	Baby resynth, Highs
	13		Hmmmm. Hmmm. Hmmmmmmm. Hmmmmm.	flicker colors & texts	Multi-tongue	Baby resynth, Highs
	14		They talked about now and later and before.	flicker colors & texts	Multi-tongue	Baby resynth, Highs
Kyma 5	15	7	Syd kept talking more and more and more and more.	texts, numbers, plastic	VirtuosoFlute	choppy delay
	16		She filled up space.	texts, numbers, plastic	VirtuosoFlute	choppy delay
	17		She filled up time.	texts, numbers, plastic	VirtuosoFlute	choppy delay
	18		Syd's voice took up all the air.	texts, numbers, plastic	VirtuosoFlute	choppy delay
	19		Joe didn't want to hear Syd talk like that all the time.		VirtuosoFlute	choppy delay
	20		Joe wanted to hear herself too.		VirtuosoFlute	choppy delay
	21		Joe's ears got tired.		VirtuosoFlute	choppy delay
	22		There were no rests.		VirtuosoFlute	choppy delay
Kyma 6		8	musical and video interlude	Clips of Anne Playing	playVideo	pp reverb
Kyma 7	23	9	Syd had lost the on and off switch way down inside of her.	tool images,random numbers	Clicks,Story	Clicks
	24		Joe took it upon herself to find that switch and fix it.	tool images,random numbers	Clicks,Story	Clicks
Kyma 8	25	10	She put the first two fingers of her right hand into Syd's mouth.	numbers to texts, chicken	RoughNoise	Beats, SquareWaves/RingMod
	26		Pushed past Syd's tongue down to her vocal chords.	numbers to texts, chicken	RoughNoise	Beats, SquareWaves/RingMod

27	She felt Syd vibrate. Hmmmm.	numbers to texts, chicken	RoughNoise	Beats, SquareWaves/RingMod
28	Joe dug for something deeper in Syd.	numbers to texts, chicken	RoughNoise	Beats, SquareWaves/RingMod
29	That thing beyond Syd's voice.	numbers to texts,egg,shell	RoughNoise	Beats, SquareWaves/RingMod
30	That Joe had felt when conversations were young.	numbers to texts,egg,shell	RoughNoise	Beats, SquareWaves/RingMod
31	Joe slowly pulled Syd's vocal chords apart.	numbers to texts,egg,shell	RoughNoise	Beats, SquareWaves/RingMod
32	She stretched them so far that they snapped and fell to pieces.	numbers to texts,egg,shell	RoughNoise	Beats, SquareWaves/RingMod

Kyma 9	33	11	Joe reached her fingers further down into Syd's throat.	Texts, open mouth	readImages	RingMod, LowFilteredNoise
	34		She pushed and shoved her hand at Syd's guts.	Texts, open mouth	readImages	RingMod, LowFilteredNoise

Kyma 1	35	12	Then Joe heard that Syd was silent.	Text	CopyImages	Waves, Glitch, Back
	36		Still.	Peach, text	CopyImages	Waves, Glitch, Back
	37		No conversation.	Peach, text	hiss	Waves, Glitch, Back
	38		No Hmmmm..	Peach, text	hiss	Waves, Glitch, Back
	39		Joe drew her fingers out of Syd.	End	hiss	Waves, Glitch, Back
	40		She wiped the bloody guts off her hand.	Peach, text	hiss	Waves, Glitch, Back
	41		Hmmmm. Joe sang. Hmmmmmmm.	Peach, text	hiss	Waves, Glitch, Back
	42		Conversation.	Peach, text	hiss	Waves, Glitch, Back
Kyma 1	43	13	Conversation on all screens	Peach, text		End, Kyma winds down