

Swift - 2021
for the Utopa Organ
and improvisers

Anne La Berge
with a video score by Timo Hoogland

The composition Swift was premiered on 23 February 2021 at the Amsterdam [Orgelpark](#). It was created for the Utopa Organ and the [MAZE](#) ensemble which can be played from a computer using OSC.

Specific pipes of the organ are amplified using a combination of contact and condenser microphones while a Max patch plays the organ via OSC. The organ is set to use very little wind which results in soft percussive sounds since the pipes are not receiving enough wind to create tones.

6 microphones amplify the organ's mechanical and pipe resonance sounds while the audience is surrounded by a quad system as if they are sitting inside the organ.

One of the inspirations for this piece is the Common Swift, a bird that in its lifetime flies about two million kilometers and can shut off one half of their brain to go into unihemispheric sleep while flying. Except when nesting, they spend their lives in the air, living on the insects caught in flight. They drink, feed, and mate and sleep on the wing. They are the swiftest of all birds in level flight and are able to fly 170 km per hour or more. Swifts mate for life and the females and males look alike.

The musicians from MAZE were spread around the church. Their score was an interactive video projected on the floor created by [Timo Hoogland](#). The visuals are generated via an intricate pixelfeedback system that is seeded with the sound from contact microphones connected to the organ pipes and inspired by the flight patterns of the Swift.

More information can be found here: <https://annelaberge.com/swift-for-maze-and-utopa-organ/>

A trailer of the performance is here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcRw0-heJbc>

This is the article that I wrote as part of a research team that proposed electro-acoustic possibilities for the Utopa Organ: [Proximity and Communication with the New Baroque Organ](#).

Swift was a commission from the Amsterdam Orgelpark and co-funded by the Orgelpark and the Dutch Funds for the Performing Arts.

Amplification

Neumann KM 184 taped above the Prestant L

Neumann KM 184 taped above the Prestant R

Sanken Cos 11 hanging above the 16' trumpet

Sanken Cos 11 hanging above the Vox humana

Contact mic stuck with puddy and tape to the Fagot L

Contact mic stuck with puddy and tape to the Fagot R

Registrations used

36 - Burdun

47 - Fagott

51 - Unda maris

56 - Waldflott

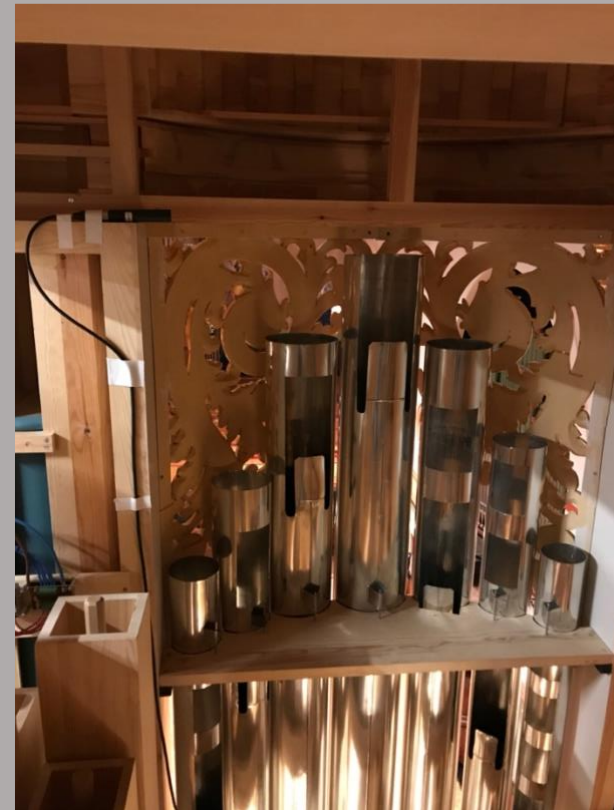
59 - Sufflott

61 - Vox humana

62 - Principal

63 - Subbass

66 - Posaune



The structure of Swift is divided into a timeline of 17.00' where the Max patch runs through 20 presets that include different combinations of registers, pitches, rhythms, air pressure, staccato with occasional playback of recordings of processed organ. A full spreadsheet with more details is [included](#).

Following a period of experimentation, I structured the sections to alternate between sparse with limited timbres, rhythmic with diverse timbres and chaotic.

	Preset	Stops/ Preset:	Routines	Air
00.00				
00.05	2	6: 62	O	X: 1
01.00	3	4: 47	O	X: 1
01.55	4	2: 47, 56, 59, 62, 63	X	O: 2
02.15	5	2: 47, 56, 59, 62, 63	X	O: 2
02.35	1	Silence		
02.39	6	5: 51, 56, 59, 61	X	X: 2
03.20	7	7: 36, 47, 59, 62, 63	X	X: 2
04.00	8	9: 63, 66	X	X: 2
04.10	9	1: 36, 51, 56, 59, 61	X	X: 3
05.00		Swift 3 audio		
05.19	1	Swift 3 audio		
06.20	10	3: 63, 66	X	O: 2
07.00	11	7: 36, 47, 59, 62, 63	X	X: 2
08.20	12	7: 36, 47, 59, 62, 63	X	O: 2
09.20	1	Silence		
10.00	13	6: 62	O	X: 4
10.20	14	6: 62	O	X: 4
11.00	15	6: 62	O	X: 4
11.40	16	6: 62	O	X: 4
12.20	1			
12.30		Swift 1 audio		
13.20	17	1: 47, 51, 56, 59, 61	X	X: 3
13.40		Swift 2 audio		
14.10	1	Swift 2 audio		
14.30	18	6: 62	O	O: 3
15.00	19	8: 47, 62	O	O: 5
16.00	20	6: 62	O	X: 1
17.00	1			

Timo Hoogland used the audio from the contact microphones to trigger the pixel feedback system in his Max patch for the live video. He also steered the visual activity live during the performance, which is preferred to using a stand-alone patch.

This is the set of instructions for the musicians which we arrived at during the rehearsal period. They were asked to divide their attention between the video being projected on the ground and improvising with the organ.

Swift - Score for MAZE

Performers respond to the video and organ.

	<u>contact mics</u>	<u>instructions</u>
00.00		
00.05		listen to organ
01.00	on	single airy sounds
01.55	on	lots of silence
02.39	on sometimes	denser
05.00	Processed audio	tacet
05.19	Processed audio	
06.20		sparse
07.00	on	then bursts
08.20	on	listen to organ groove
10.00		listen to organ
10.20		ppp low pitches
11.00		
11.40		
12.20		
12.30	Processed audio	tacet
13.20	on	busy/free leave space for organ
13.40	Processed audio	tacet
14.30		identify with shapes
15.00	on	airy gestures
16.00		sparser / listen to organ
17.00		ppp/very sparse
until end		follow shapes

