

Nicolas Collins
Waggle Dance
(2007 - revised 2008)
For Laptop Marching Band (written for PLOrk)

Technical Requirements

- Five or more performers with Macintosh laptop computers running OSX.
- "Waggledance" program (runtime Max/MSP) and "crkl.mp3" audio file in the same folder, on each computer.
- A darkened performance space through which the performers can walk.
- No PA system needed.

Preparation

Run "Waggledance" program by double clicking its icon. DSP should turn on automatically; if not use button in top left of window. Click "status" to open DSP control panel:

- Set "Driver" to "Core Audio Built-in Output".
- Set "Input Device" to "Built-in Microphone".
- Set "Input Source" to "Internal microphone".
- Set "Output Destination" to "Internal Speakers".
- Set "I/O Vector" and "Signal Vector Size" as small as possible (16 or 32.)

Do not connect the computers to any external amplification/speakers. Make sure batteries are fully charged, then disconnect from the power supply.

Raise internal speaker level to maximum. Hit "return" a few times to randomize program values. You should hear a mix of feedback between the internal microphones and internal speakers and bursts of record surface noise. If there is no feedback you may need to increase the input scaling factor in the "GAIN" panel at the top of the screen.

When you are sure the program is working press the "g" key. This should call up a full-screen color panel (you can resize it from the lower right corner to fit your screen.) Hitting the "Return" key randomizes the sound parameters and the screen color. The "Space Bar" toggles a mute on and off when you wish to silence your computer. "Esc" removes the color screen.

Performance

Hold the laptop in front of you (screen facing your face) as you wander around the darkened performance space, in and amongst the audience. Periodically hit Return to randomize sound parameters and change your facial lighting. Hit the Space Bar to silence whenever you want to insert a pause.

The performance can be of any duration. To end the piece hit the Space Bar to silence the audio, then close the laptop to kill the lighting effect.