UWE Music Research goes on International Tour with Pop Star Ariana Grande

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The mimuGloves, a gestural music interaction system based on original research by Dr Tom Mitchell at the University of the West of England (UWE Bristol) will form an integral part of Ariana Grande's eagerly awaited Honeymoon tour. The 80 stop international tour will begin its UK leg at the O2 Arena in London on the 1 June 2015 before moving on to Wembley, Manchester, Glasgow and Birmingham. The tour is in support of Grande's second studio album, *My Everything*, which debuted at no.1 in the Billboard 200 in August 2014. Hundreds of thousands of fans throughout North America, Europe and Asia will be treated to a breathtaking performance in which Grande will use the mimu gloves to manipulate her voice and control complex lighting effects live on stage.

Dr Mitchell, a senior lecturer in the department of Computer Science and Creative Technologies, has been working with the start-up mimu, which was formed in 2014 in order to develop the research into a sophisticated glove-based composition and performance system appropriate for use by technology-savvy musicians. Dr Mitchell said, "Collaborating with mimu and helping to develop this interdisciplinary research into a product has been a remarkable experience. The talented team of musicians, designers and technologists have elegantly managed the challenges of developing wearable technology for the arts. The project also represents an outstanding example of knowledge exchange between academia and the creative economy. I am genuinely excited to see and hear how Ariana will be using the gloves within her performance."

The mimu Gloves incorporate a range of motion sensors and artificial intelligence algorithms that enable musicians to compose and perform entirely with hand gestures. Since the debut of the prototype system at TED Global in 2011 by musician and mimu founder Imogen Heap, the gloves have featured in a host of demonstrations and performances, including Wired, the AHRC's Digital Transformations Moot, DaraO'Brien's Science Club, Reverb Festival, Wear It Festival, SXSW and Ars Electronica.

"Each performance has provoked a huge wave of interest and requests from musicians like Ariana asking when they would be able to obtain a pair of their own." Dr Mitchell said "It's fantastic that we are now able to talk about this prospect realistically, taking cutting edge Human Computer Interaction research and technology out of the lab and into stadium performances on this scale."

Dr Mitchell initially developed the gloves with Imogen Heap after winning a UWE Bristol SPUR grant for early career researchers. Following on, he continued to fine tune the technology in collaboration with a Bristol embedded technologies company, x-io Technologies, who developed a key component of the gloves called x-OSC, with support from theMicroeletronics iNets, a European Regional Development Fund led by UWE Bristol.

The development team has grown dramatically over the last few years and includes; Kelly Snook – former NASA scientist; Seb Madgewick – engineer and director of x-io Technologies; Hannah Permer-Wilson – a DIY e-textile expert; Adam Stark – researcher, computer scientist and musician; Rachel Freire – designer and artist specialising in leather and stretch materials; and singer songwriter Chagall van den Berg.

mimu are currently making preparations for further manufacturing runs of the gloves which will become available towards the end of 2015. Please sign up to their mailing list for future updates.

To follow the story from their initial concept see news releases from 2011 to 2014 here

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