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THE GLOBAL JUKEBOX

In 1989–1995, the performance style studies were brought together in a multimedia platform called the Global Jukebox, which used the computer and an animated globe to explore the distributions and associations of song, dance, speech and culture discovered in the course of this research. Some 7,000 coded performances were linked to sound and film clips, photographs, descriptions, and a discography and filmography. The Jukebox contained all of the databases of the performance style studies, the coding handbooks and interactive teaching systems, an instrument gallery, and guided tours of some of the more spectacular intercultural connections envisaged by the project. It also housed the Urban Strain, a study of twentieth-century popular song and dance that charted the interchange of African and European styles in the hit parade and related novel popular styles to ancient traditions. The original development team included Alan Lomax, Michael del Rio, Forrestine Paulay, Roswell Rudd, Andrew Kaye, Christopher Pino, Carol Kulig, and Gideon D'Arcangelo. The Jukebox exists as a robust prototype.

The Global Jukebox was designed as a research tool for the exploration of the performance style datasets. The Cantometrics, Choreometrics, Parlaments, instruments and orchestration, Phonotactics, Minutage, ethnographic, and other data stored in the Jukebox could be manipulated and displayed in numerous ways. The Jukebox could call up profiles of single performances as well as modal profiles of the styles of cultures, areas, or regions. A special program translated these profiles into prose summaries of any style. The statistical capacities of the Jukebox included several types of factor analysis, including correlational, multivariate, and componential analysis. A sophisticated user could segregate samples from a single dataset or a combination of datasets, manipulate individual variables and clusters of variables, and render numerous distributions, clusters, similarities, and associations in the form of charts, graphs, and mathematical expressions.

A similarity wave application, originally designed for the Urban Strain, ranked individual songs, and songs within a culture or an area, against all others in the sample, displaying with live bar graphs degrees of similarity and difference in each variable for each case. For example, the Ona song style from the southernmost tip of Argentina would pull up Arctic Asia (Samoyede, Tungus, Sami) as the next most similar style cluster, which suggests that the earliest American settlers from Northeast Asia may have been pushed progressively southward until they reached Patagonia. Comparison of the Guinea Coast sample with all other sub-Saharan African and Afro-American data showed a wide belt of similarity across Africa, with precisely described continuities extending throughout the African American Diaspora.

The Jukebox was also intended to bring the most accessible findings of performance style research to a general audience. With a tiny airplane one could fly around a spinning globe watching dances and listening to songs and conversations. The map could display the distribution of any stylistic variable selected by the user. Every item of media was connected to a discography and filmography so that all the data sources were immediately retrievable. Alternatively, one could enter the database through the teaching systems for Cantometrics, Choreometrics, and Parlaments, and code new examples with interactive coding sheets. Descriptions of each coding line and scale were revealed by movements of the cursor and exemplified by audio and video samples. "Guided tours" illustrated the kinds of connections that one could make by using style analysis, such as the similarities between the blues and the solo singing of the Mediterranean region and parts of Asia. An instrument gallery displayed the world's musical instruments classified according to type.

In its last year of development (1994–95) the Jukebox was adapted for use in multicultural high school programs with funding from the National Science Foundation. The goal was for students to absorb some of the basic principles of science and math as they explored connections between the expressive traditions of their own backgrounds and that of the world at large. The experiment was classroom tested, with encouraging initial results, under the supervision of New York City's Office of Multicultural Education.

Beyond its intended uses in research and education, the Global Jukebox was meant to be an egalitarian showcase for the expressive arts and aesthetic values of all cultures. It is a functioning prototype that could be redesigned for the Internet.

View the Global Jukebox demonstration video (coming soon)
 Read Alan Lomax's *Multimedia Dream* by Michael Naimark

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