2022

DIGITAL DERVISH + FLAMENCO SONIC

MAY 6-7 MARKET HALL
PLYMOUTH, UK

DIGITAL DERVISH

SEPTEMBER 1-5 ALGONQUIN POND
PETERBOROUGH, CANADA

SEPTEMBER 9-10 MARKET HALL THEATRE
PETERBOROUGH, CANADA

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DIGITAL DERVISH

A MULTIMEDIA PERFORMANCE WORK BY HEDY HURBAN





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UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

Story

Digital Dervish is a story about a Dervish who is in a dream and wakes up to birds and the sounds of nature- he begins to meditate and perform his *Sema*. He becomes enveloped in a storm of chaos as he whirls wildly and then collapses where he becomes dormant again until he eventually rises to embrace the mayhem. This is a story about landscape, earth, love and life that encompasses music, imagery and physical movement.

Digital Dervish is a performance art project that was inspired by live performances of Mevlevi Dervishes and their sacred turning practice called *sema* in Istanbul, Turkey. The *sema* of the *Dervish* blurs the lines between dance and meditation. This ritual turning practice of the Mevlevi Sufi Order dates back to the 13th century to Muhammed Celaleddin better known as *Mevlana*. *Digital Dervish* augments traditional movements that are specific to how a Dervish turns with sound and tactile vibrations- long established actions which are key features of the practice can be emphasised by attributing specific sounds to movements. *Digital Dervish* can also collaborate with other global performance styles that may have attributes and similarities such as motion and movement based on symbolism and metaphysical meaning. One current version of the performance work is linking Spanish Flamenco dance with the Dervish to create new movements, styles and ideas. The gestures which are specific to these dance traditions are being highlighted and augmented with an original wearable device called a *Sound Drop*.

The *Sound Drop* is a small device that is attached to the body via a strap on the wrist or ankle. It is designed to track certain movements from the performer to which sounds and LED lights are mapped. The dancer uses the device as an extension of the body- a musical instrument that can provide layers to the separate pre-recorded music composition.

Music Composer, Wearable Tech Designer and Choreographer: Hedy Hurban

Hedy Hurban is a designer of costumes and composer of electronic/electroacoustic music. She showcased her collections at DSYN 04 (Delhi, India) and has designed the costumes for the Operas *Lampedusa* (Plymouth, UK) and *The Mother of Fishes* (Pittsburgh, USA). Hedy is music composer for several short films such as *Dead Body*, *Grand Theatre and Picture Palace*, *Bees Mecanique*, the TV episode *Green and Blue* and the feature films *Salaat* and *Deccani Souls*. Her interest in interlacing sonic and digital art with traditional folk performance practices led her to create a prototype body instrument inspired by the Whirling Dervishes of Turkey called Dervish Sound Dress (2018) that combines music, wearable body technology and live performance. She has a ResM in Computer Music from the University of Plymouth and is currently associate lecturer in Digital Art and Technology.

Filmmaker and Production Designer: Kaz Rahman

Kaz Rahman is a Visual Artist and Filmmaker whose work has played in film festivals and venues such as Anthology Film Archives (New York City), National Film Board of Canada (Toronto), India Habitat Centre (New Delhi), Salar Jung Museum (Hyderabad), Andy Warhol Museum (Pittsburgh), The San Jose Museum of Art (California), Bogazici Film Festival (Istanbul), SUFICINE Festival (Konya) and broadcast on TV24 (Turkey) and has been featured in publications such as The Times of India, The Hindu, The New Indian Express (India), Daily Sabah and Star Gazette (Turkey). His style explores themes such as time, memory and narrative dreams as well as the convergence of fiction/documentary. Rahman has an MFA in Media Arts (writing/directing) from City College (CUNY), New York City and has taught at universities and colleges in Hyderabad, Pittsburgh, Istanbul, Plymouth and Canterbury (UK).

Dervish: Seyit Sercan Çelik

Seyit Sercan Çelik is a contemporary Dervish from Istanbul who began performing Turkish Folkloric dance when he was 9. He is also grounded in the historical sacred traditions and rituals of the Turkish Mevlevi which he has been performing over the last decade. His own interpretations both with groups and solo have been performed extensively in Turkey, Eastern Europe, Russia and the Balkans, as well as Spain, Japan, India, Malaysia, and Bangladesh. He has performed as a dancer in the opening and closing ceremonies of several major organisations through the International Olympic committee of Turkey. Çelik graduated from Sakarya University State Conservatory (Turkish Folk Dance) in 2014 and has conducted workshops in universities and conservatories in Turkey.

Flamenco Dancer: Mercedes Romero

Mercedes Romero is a professional Flamenco dancer, teacher and choreographer. She graduated from the Conservatory of Alicante, Spain (Spanish Dance and Flamenco and Classical Ballet). She has performed and taught for over 25 years in Spain, Mexico, France, Italy and England with various dance companies such as Ballet Teatro Español de Rafael Aguilar, Ballet Español y Flamenco Martin Vargas, Ballet de Carmen Mota, Ballet titular Teatro de la Zarzuela and Teatro de la Maestranza. She is based in Plymouth and has performed at venues throughout the region with her group Flamenco Vivo as well as Flamenco Amigos.

Dervish Performer: Mayez Rahman

Mayez Rahman is a student at Lipson Co-operative Academy in Plymouth. He has lived in both Pittsburgh, USA and Istanbul, Turkey where he first encountered the traditions of the Whirling Dervishes. His interests include designing video games and all aspects of computer programming.

Visual Effects Editor: Barış Çelik

Barış Çelik's work in visual effects and as a colourist reflects his interest in graphic design and illustration. He has a BA in Cinema from Istanbul Sehir University and his work has been part of award-winning short films both within Turkey and internationally. He is currently Video Editor at Bonte Digital (Istanbul) and Charminar Films (Canada/UK) and is associate lecturer in film editing/montage at Istanbul Medipol University.