Subtle alchemy or dangerous chemistry?

• *alchemy (n)* {1. alchemi;} ‘transmutation of metals’; of doubtful origin possibly fr. *Khemi*, Egyptian for Egypt, therefore meaning the art practised by the Egyptians.
My half hour...

• Can we really make music and sound interactive for a general audience?
• Sound & music to be ‘altered’ by the viewer - destroy the art of the composer?
• Will a mass audience ever be creative?
• Can music 'make' itself? Truly generative
• First generation iTV DTV examples & creation software (if time)
The ‘audio’ audience is changing

- **Peer to peer** A&R - democratization for music makers
- Audiences expect **personalization**, their own compilers
- **Mobility** - portable storage and connectivity
- **Alternate streams** standard on DVD - multi stream DTV
- **Quality** - Home cinema surround ubiquitous, digi radio
- **On Demand**, broadband very soon (DSL, Cable, PDR)
- **Creation tools** very accessible (on PC at least)

Opportunities for interactive audio:

- Enhancement & choice
- Creativity
- Audio navigation
- Immersion
Do the tools lead the music or is the music in control?

Interactive audio interfaces...
• Representational vs Simulated Instruments
• New instruments or toys?
• Non-linearity. ‘Sonata form’ becomes ‘Sample farm’
• The game environment - the new ‘film soundtrack’

Issues
• Will the new tools ever produce emotion or meaning
• Limited storage for delivery or limited bandwidth produces small, bite size ‘packets’ of music
• Is the sense of risk lost - pre-defined patterns of sound
• Is it really structural or pure chance
Toys or serious instruments?

For example from mousejam.com
“MOUSEJAM is an interactive music jam, no talent is required, just click like a MAD PERSON.”

Step 6 of instructions:
6 Your job is to click on the controllers that are above the RHYTHM SECTION controller (as you click the music will mix itself).
Music is already interactive?

A listener will
• Simultaneously **reconstruct** music during its linear progression
• Have a **non-linear empathy** with the composer
• During live performance will be carried along with the excitement that **everything exists in the future**
Improvisation in the hands of the audience

• Professional tool migrating to audience.
• Click me through to serious art (generative at first)
• The improvisational aspect will be missing from most interactive works on first generation systems
• The winners in the battle of the digital channels will be those that provide, meaningful, creative tools to its audience
The future?

What 'works' not what is cool?
• Where is the individual ‘voice’, where are the voices?
• Progress or hiatus
• Where is feel - traditional instruments vs midi 128 velocity eg.

• The 'cool' factor - limited life span
• Moving beyond toys?
• Re-mixing an art form - can everyone be artists.
• Will the 'palette' we supply be rich enough?