

Turning a digitized archive into an immersive and social experience.

The legacy of the Montreux Jazz Festival travels around the world with "Nina."



Credit: Daniela & Tonatiuh / EPFL+ECAL Lab

As you board "Nina", immersion takes you one step further. The compact and nomadic installation by the EPFL+ECAL Lab developed in cooperation with the space conception laboratory ALICE, opens a vast universe: the heritage of the Montreux Jazz Festival comes back to life. Deep Purple, Nina Simone and Miles Davis brighten up the cockpit of a hacked car. This immersive and social experience can be lived during the 53rd edition of the Festival.

In recent decades millions of hours of audiovisual content have been digitized like the archives of the Montreux Jazz Festival listed in the UNESCO "Memory of the World" Register. How can one truly bring this digitized heritage back to life?

Fifty years of concert recordings digitized under the leadership of the EPFL Metamedia Center have provided an ideal framework for experimentation. The research conducted by the EPFL+ECAL Lab in close cooperation with the space conception laboratory ALICE seeks to take our digital heritage to a new level.

During six years of research, designers, architects and engineers joined forces to create an unprecedented experience, opening up a new relationship with the recordings, the music, the artists and their stage performances. The design explores the feeling of immersion, the perception of sound and the physical dimension of the experience in order to also foster social interaction in real life.

The audiovisual set-up "Nina" takes the audience to the heart of the world's largest archive of live recordings of

blues, jazz and rock music. It comes with a virtual reality installation bearing witness to the history of the Festival which echoes the adventure of the music itself – from Deep Purple who wrote "Smoke on the Water" as the concert hall burned down on Lake Geneva, along with contributions by artists like Max Bill, Keith Haring or Jean Tinguely, here are the places which have woven unique connections between world-famous musicians.

"Nina" crowns the experimental installations developed to date. It complements in particular the immersive area open to the public in the EPFL Montreux Jazz Café. It follows the initial requirements, including reviving original recordings despite the radical evolution in their formats, resolutions and recording technologies, with the aim of heightening the material's perception by enriching it with additional data and testimonials. The scientific knowledge and new design principles established by the EPFL+ECAL Lab have been awarded and published internationally.

"Nina" opens new horizons for this musical and cultural legacy, taking it to new audiences to demonstrate how digitized archives may come back to life, offering a new perception of a heritage and bringing innovative experiences to a wide range of people throughout the world. The light, sound and materiality of this mobile device also bring out a vision: will driving from A to B amount to time travel?

Current stop

"Nina" will be at the Montreux Jazz Festival, from June 28 to July 13, 2019, before hitting the road again.

Contact

Nicolas Henchoz, Director
nicolas.henchoz@epfl.ch
Géraldine Morand, Communication
geraldine.morand@epfl.ch, +41 78 742 44 08

About the EPFL+ECAL Lab

The EPFL+ECAL Lab is a design research centre of the Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne, founded in 2007 in collaboration with ECAL/University of Art and Design Lausanne. It seeks to explore the potential of emerging technology through design and to address related challenges by combining artistic creativity, scientific knowledge and the ability to assess user perception. Engaged in concrete projects, the EPFL+ECAL Lab cooperates with numerous companies, museums and institutions. By harnessing skills in design, engineering, architecture and psychology, it creates disruptive concepts and turns them into functional prototypes.

EPFL+ECAL Lab
11, avenue du 24-Janvier
CH-1020 Renens
www.epfl-ecal-lab.ch

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Acknowledgments

Gomez et Compagnie Sàrl
Antoine Estoppey, Blend Studio
SIGMASIX
Eduardo Baches Sàrl