



Pressemitteilung

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„Darwin Rocks!“: Computer game and music video for Darwin’s 200. Birthday

Evolutionary biologists in Tübingen present their project of the creativity contest “Evolution Today” funded by the VolkswagenFoundation

Darwin Rocks! Also in Tuebingen, and even more so at the occasion of the Darwin year 2009. “Darwin Rocks!” is also the name of the project developed by evolutionary biologists under leadership of professor Nico Michiels. It focuses on what really counts in evolution: Reproduction, or simply “love” and uses a music clip to illustrate it. Especially for this purpose a computer game was developed which allows the user to generate tunes through an evolutionary process. Based on such tunes, a rock song and accompanying video clip were produced under the name “Struggle for love”. Game and clip have been publicly available online from the 3rd of April 2009 onwards.

The concept was developed as a contribution to the creativity contest “Evolution Today” advertised by the VolkswagenStiftung in 2007. The project obtained around 100.000 Euro funding. The core team of biologists cooperated closely with partners from the Tuebinger bioinformatics center, a music label in Heidelberg, the film academy HFF in Munich, the pop-academy in Mannheim and many others.

The game has been made available as a stand-alone, user-friendly application. It starts with a randomly generated, primordial tune. During the game, tunes behave like evolving living organisms. They reproduce and inherit traits such as the instrument(s) or rhythm. Offspring expresses traits of their parents, but can contains new elements, generated by mutation. The player listens to the different tunes within a generation and decides what he likes and what not. This rating affects the reproductive success of those individuals. Well rated ones reproduce better. Depending on personal preferences (“the selective environment”) tunes develop more in the direction of e.g. reggae or more of jazz.

The song and the music video with the title “Struggle for love” are about love, fight, and the right mix in evolution. The video is available from the project website as well as at various video sites such as *YouTube*. As a bonus, self-selected tunes can be downloaded as a personalized ring tone.

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