

# Darwin Laptop Orchestra (DLOrk)

The Darwin Laptop Orchestra (DLOrk) is an orchestra of musicians, composers, technologists, and others interested in making and sharing music using the laptop computer and related devices as the platform. It is inspired by the Princeton Laptop Orchestra (PLOrk), Stanford Laptop Orchestra (SLOrk), and other laptop orchestras around the world.

Why a laptop orchestra? Dan Trueman, in his discussion on laptop orchestras, observes that “making music with laptops and performing with them is by now commonplace and seemingly here to stay” and that laptop orchestras can contribute to “creating communities where once again experimentation and music-making can thrive.”<sup>1</sup>

DLOrk seeks to explore ways of making and sharing music using contemporary digital technologies, which offer many possibilities for innovation and invention in music-making through an inclusive and community-based structure that allows musicians of various backgrounds, training, and skill levels to participate.

DLOrk has three main activities:

- Making musical instruments using the laptop and related devices;
- Composing and improvising music using instruments made by members;
- Perform the music made by members, or other pieces for other laptop orchestras.

The technologies it uses include:

- Free and Open Source Software;<sup>2</sup>
- Low-cost hardware;<sup>3</sup>
- Off-the-shelf as well as bespoke devices;<sup>4</sup> and
- Conventional musical instruments.

Its artistic practice will include:

- Individual and collaborative composition;
- Scored and collaborative improvisational performance; and
- Live and recorded performance.

Membership is open to all members of the community committed to its program of activities.

For more information, contact Bong Ramilo, [eo@darwincommunityarts.org.au](mailto:eo@darwincommunityarts.org.au).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://plork.princeton.edu/papers/WhyALaptopOrchestra.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> DCA has used Linux and other Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) for almost 10 years, because: FOSS's community-based software development approach resonates with DCA's community-based arts approach; FOSS is financially more effective for DCA (as most software is free of cost); FOSS makes less demands on hardware resources, so that older machines work for longer; FOSS is relatively more secure than other systems; we can distribute FOSS to as many users as we wish, legally. The use of FOSS is thus community-friendly and sustainable, among other things.

<sup>3</sup> The use of low-cost hardware increases accessibility and popular use among communities.

<sup>4</sup> We will use webcams, joysticks, and other off-the-shelf devices but will build other devices as needed using Arduinos and other components.