Telecommunication

The Telecommunication Events

Exchange is sought over long distances; the picture phone joins the audio phone; processing techniques of data transport are providing new expressive potential in the search for the human substance. Images blend with sounds of technology and nature–the beep and the rooster's crow.

The intention is to preserve subjective, private, discrete, expressive messages from the contemporary flood of standardized information and mass media–soul electronics versus systems supremacy.

The SKY ART Conference

The conference is held in two parts: Its first day is devoted to sky art, the second to telecommunication. What sky art attempts in the all-physical environment–to convey expressive messages, signs and symbols in large dimensions involving large audiences– telecommunication attempts via "immaterial" transport of the electronic kind, using its characteristic "third scale" of wide (worldwide, "worldswide") distribution, resulting, mostly, in intimate-size displays. The personal, subjective character of the messages of sky art is the specific business of sky artists. Reflecting the contemporary need for role-distribution and skill sharing, sky artists want to collaborate and must collaborate with scientists and engineers.

The presentations and panels convey personal accomplishments and a wealth of experience, ideas and intentions as well as perspectives of collaboration with existing and future systems, implements, research and organizations. Space administration and media management and business are partners with which sky and telecommunication artists will work as well as exchange critical observation.

Telecommunication Events
Charlotte Moorman /Nam June Paik: "Concert"
Elizabeth Goldring/Edward le Poulin: "International Alarm"
Aldo Tambellini /Sarah Dickinson: "SKYGRAM" (for Marconi)
Horst H. Baumann: "LASER VIDEO"–in collaboration with Nam June Paik

Charlotte Moorman
"TV Cello" and Paik Collaboration

Paik came to America in 1964. He and I became partners the very day we met and have been collaborating on performance pieces since July 1964. What I'd like to do in Linz is the "TV Cello" that he made for me in 1971. It's an old work but the Germans have built us another cello–you know they use the PAL System, 620 scan lines to the tube whereas in America our system is something like 535 scan lines to the tube–so to bring the American TV cello to Europe would be silly, I wouldn't get a picture. The Graetz TV factory made me a gorgeous TV cello similar to the one I have in America. I want to play that Paik piece in Linz and slow the performance scan back to Chicago where the American TV cello is on exhibit at the Museum of Contemporary Art. I'd like for that to be played in America while Paik and I are playing the German TV cello in Linz.

Elizabeth Goldring
"International Alarm"

International Alarm Tobago, Linz: 1981, 1982; Paris, MIT: 1983, 1984; Elizabeth Goldring with Edward le Poulin

Roosters of Tobago and Linz announce roosterization of earth and moon.

INTERNATIONAL ALARM

utilizes a mixture of electro-acoustic music, digital signal processing of sound (Music 11) and real-time digital synthesis from an AP400 array processor (Music 400). Three fundamental signal processing techniques are used to compose, and to contour dialect modifications on the sound data, linear predictive analysis and synthesis, speech synthesis, and interactive digital reverberation.

The Troy-Horse aliased to the chicken.

March 7th, 1982, edward le poulin

EDWARD LE POULIN

I am a composer, and gradute student at the Massachussets Institute of Technology and have been commissioned to compose a short piece for the city of Linz, Austria. This composition is an anti-nuclear gesture to the people attending the music festival Ars Electronica where 60,000 people are expected. I request permission to record the 200 children attending the summer day camp to help me make this statement in my composition on Tuesday the17th or Thursday the19th of August.

Program Notes for INTERNATIONAL ALARM

In the sense of traveling within our global environment, simultaneous sonic events are moved in a spatial dialogue representing a link between the physical ambience (rooster calls) of nature, and the existence of a very particular threatening (nuclear exchange) presence. In noticing the danger of this link, the sounds of chickens (and other animals) move through the streets, beckoning peaceable gestures, in an exercise activating a critical mass of fellow species. While calmness (played by politics) sits in this threatening presence, the communication of this alarm network spreads recursively in an anticlimax of alarms, which is heard as continuous reflections of conceptual war by children. Hearing this alarm, the subliminal sounds of childrens' voices penetrate an international transmission, communicating a final gesture of peace, with reference to action. In awakening other children, a choir of international children announces its presence to a new days morning, to change the state of being in their new world.

To allow your child to participate, place sign below:
The words I would like them to sing are:
"save" as to save a penny or save a place to sit.
"world" as in the globe
"peace" as in a time when you go to sleep

I hereby give Edward le Poulin permission to conduct a short recording session at MIT for his composition International Alarm using the above 3 words sung by my child.
Signed by the parents
of
dated
Thank you very much.

Douglas Davis

Jamie Gambrel! Jamie Gambrel! I saw you in the cafeteria. I had just gotten here and I was looking for friends and I immediately jumped up. I realized I couldn't leave the table because my food and clothes were there. I said to myself, "Why don't you just call out her name? You know her as well as you know your own daughter–but I couldn't think of your name. By that time you had left the cafeteria and I ran a few steps but it was impossible. Then I thought of your name. That sometimes happens under pressure: you forget the names of people you know the best. I'm always forgetting the names of people at parties, particularly my own parties where I have invited 14 or 15 people from various parts of the world and they come together and I can't remember their names.

Actually what I am now talking about is not unrelated to what I am going to say to you in a far more mystical and less conventional manner. What I am talking about here is human flaws. I think that sometimes when we begin to talk about new tools and new horizons and new paths to walk down, to charge down or to fall down–the computer is a perfectly good example of this and telecommunications is another example–we forget that in the end it is not any of these tools that are making decisions and acting here, it's going to be us, with all of our built in liabilities and flaws. It's not going to be any easier working in telecommunications than it is making drawings or typing out words on a typewriter. It's all very difficult and it gets worse and worse as you go on. It gets more difficult, more and more difficult. I think that is forgotten sometimes. We forget to talk about that.

Now Otto comes in at the very moment when I'm saying something that he may not agree with (perfectly timed). I am talking about human flaws and how they persist, how human difficulties persist no matter how advanced or how exotic the tool or the new frontier that you're working at–like my forgetting names.

Arthur Clark wrote a paper in 1945 which was the conceptual beginning of the satellite system. It was entitled, "Extraterrestrial Relays". The proposition that he made he made very cautiously. "Many may consider this proposition far fetched", he said. He proposed a system of satellites 22 thousand miles from the earth. At this elevation it would take the satellite exactly one day to orbit the earth, therefore if placed above the equator, it would appear to stay fixed. Because of the weakness of the initial boosters, the first satellites had to hover very close to earth. But in 1965 SymCom 3 was launched for the Tokyo Olympics and Arthur Clark's prophecy was confirmed. He predicted at that time global radio and television: "This will be something quite possible, quite new in the world and we have no precedents to guide us. For the first time men will be able to speak directly to the people of another country, to project images into their homes, with or without the cooperation of the other governments concerned."

This is my first attempt to use the satellite, and it is for an audio message, spoken up from the floor of the Houston astrodome in Texas on December 29, 1976. The title of the work is "Seven Thoughts", which we tried to send to each country on earth. The performance

involved circling the field while the camera and the microphone which lead to the satellite was slowly coming down. Every country was told in advance by telegram that we were going to send a free, private message for each citizen. I don't know how many countries allowed us to get through. Of all the telegrams we sent, we only received one response. Just before the performance began, when I couldn't stop, there was a telephone call which reached the side lines from Bombay, India. They wanted to know what the "seven thoughts" were before they would broadcast them. We told them, because we didn't have any time, that it was a good will message for the new year. The political significance of blocking all the thoughts into the black box at the end was this: to provoke the public to ask later why it wasn't allowed to hear.

The most important experience won is that of an encounter, regardless of whether we are best advised to follow its lead or to contradict it in the interest of our own needs. (That refers back to Nam June Paik and Man Ray.) Certainly I was trying to contradict the whole concept of live and tape. Even stronger contradictions lie ahead of us. Most of all we must contradict the notion that telecommunication is someone else's property, beyond us, best left to profit-making organizations or all-powerful governmental structures… This is the decisive cross-cultural block that we all share about television, in the west and in the east. We do not instinctively assume that television is open to us in the same way as a sheet of paper or the clear white space of an empty gallery. None of the technological changes that are quietly reforming the television medium, which I've referred to on a number of occasions, will benefit us if we don't revise that notion. The challenge facing us in the eighties is attitudinal, not financial or technical.

Excerpt from "Artists' Telecommunication", lecture at "SKY ART Conference '81", September 26, 1981

Douglas Davis

Excerpt from "Sky and Space: Art, Information and Education", panel at 'Sky Art Conference '81 September 26, 1981

… I also believe that–and I say this quickly and romantically and I can't back it up with studies and facts–I do believe that the average viewer, like the average reader, like the perceiver of a drawing is in control of his own perceptions and emotions and makes his own decisions. Perception is always individual. We know this as artists; those of us who draw, paint, sculpt or make prints, are aware of the individuality of perception. Politicians are aware of it. I believe that those who try to program people through the television screen fail more often than they succeed. I could give you lots of examples from socialist countries I visited, where there is total domination and control of the communication system and the people don't believe anything that they're told in the official newspapers or on the television screen.

Look at solidarity, at what happened in Poland. I thought of that when someone used that scornful phrase "the masses". Look what the masses have done in Poland. Could you have predicted that, one, two or three years ago? Is it predicted by Marx? Was it predicted by anybody? No, it wasn't. Yet another example that perception is incurably individual. The great planners and world savers and world destroyers can never quite succeed at those ends.