Max Almy
"Drake's Equation" – "Fc"

A VIDEO MUSIC WORK FOR TELEVISION BY MAX ALMY
MUSIC COMPOSED AND PERFORMED BY HAROLD BUDD

For Ars Electronica in Austria, I have chosen to work with the "Fc" section of the equation that refers to a civilization's development of technology. As man has pursued scientific knowledge, the unknown in each era has taken on spiritual or magical attributes. In "Fc", I am exploring this metaphor of the magic of science and technology and the wonder of reaching out to the future and the stars.

As in my past video work, I will depict this section of the equation with a combination of live action video, digital video effects, computer graphics and animation.

The music for "Fc" is by the internationally well-known composer, HAROLD BUDD. Budd is a highly acclaimed New Music composer who has had an important impact on contemporary music. His numerous albums include collaborations with Brian Eno and original works known for their mesmerizing beauty.

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A Video Music Work for Television

A fascinating question that man has long asked himself is the question of intelligent life elsewhere in the universe. The implications of a positive answer are profound, as are those of a negative answer. Soon after the development of radio astronomy made possible tremendously expanded exploration of space, a group of scientists met at the National Radio Astronomy Observatory in Green Bank West Virgina to discuss the possibilities of other life in the Universe. Their work was expressed in a mathematical equation which allows us to calculate the possibilities of communication with other civilizations.

$N^* \times Fp \times n_e \times Fl \times Fi \times Fc \times Fl = N$

The first three terms of Drake's Equation have to do with formation of the Stars, the Planets and the evolution of a Planet that can sustain life like Earth. The next two terms involve the development of Life and Intelligence. The final two terms involve the development of Technology and the desire and the length of time a civilization attempts Communication.

As an artist who is fascinated with communication, technology, science, politics, and psychology, I was immediately interested in the equation as a question which also held the potential for asking many more questions about our own civilization on Earth. Each element of the equation has wonderfully evocative qualities for visual and conceptual interpretation. From the first second after the Big Bang, to travel in space, and from Carl Jung's analysis of man's need to look to the stars for salvation, to Carl Sagon's concern about our chances for survival past our technological adolescence, the equation provides a wonderful structure for creative development.