

A PROPOSAL FOR CONTINUED FUNDING:

THE KITCHEN FOR ELECTRONIC MEDIA

The Kitchen for Electronic Media is a theatre utilizing an audio, video, and electronic interface between performers\* and audience. Presently located in the Mercer Arts Center, The Kitchen grew out of an initial \$15,000 grant from the New York State Council On The Arts assigned to Perception, a group of artists working in experimental electronic media. Essentially it has become a unique theatre for the creation and presentation of live and pretaped audio and video works by a growing number of experienced artists to an increasingly wide and varied audience. Its uniqueness derives from the fact that The Kitchen is the only theatre actively presenting such a diverse range of innovative works in electronic media.

The activities which have taken place and which we wish to continue at The Kitchen fall into the following basic categories which are enumerated in detail on the pages following:

- 1) THE KITCHEN VIDEO/INTERMEDIA PROGRAM
- 2) SEMINARS ON CYBERNETICS AND PERCEPTION
- 3) LIVE AND ELECTRONIC CONTEMPORARY MUSIC CONCERTS
- 4) VASULKA VIDEO
- 5) ACTORS VIDEO WORKSHOP
- 6) MIDNIGHT OPERA COMPANY

Most of these above programs operate on a continued weekly basis.

\*including actors, musicians, composers and kinetic visual artists.

## THE KITCHEN VIDEO/INTERMEDIA PROGRAM

Director: Shridhar Bapat

The Video/Intermedia Program will function according to three basic approaches:

- 1) The Kitchen will continue in its role as the only regularly functioning media theatre on the East Coast. This will involve weekly presentations of live and/or taped works in video and video related intermedia by guest artists both established and developing. The nature and content of the presentations will be completely flexible and draw upon the unique intermedia and space resources of the Kitchen. Priority will be given to presenting the broadest possible range from the purely documentary taped half-inch video to live interactive video environments. Thus far Intermedia Events have involved videotape makers with contemporary electronic musicians, dancers, singers, poets, light artists. In terms of pure video, plans include a large scale video festival during May and June of this year representing the work of over thirty abstract video artists.
- 2) Over the course of the year, there will be live video events involving experimental extension of the possibilities of live (performed) as well as taped half-inch video. These will combine all the techniques of electronic image manipulation with new concepts in such areas as laser-video interface, biofeedback; and interactive information environments which utilize, in synthesis, elements of ~~in~~ human feedback, mutually generated sound and video, modulated laser works, together with non-abstract information.
- 3) Under the direction of Dimitri Devyatkin, the Kitchen will continue to present its vital Wednesday evening open screenings. The latter serve an essential role in the continued development of half-inch video as an alternate medium by providing the only existing guaranteed outlet for any and every tape made. These performances are open to every artist on a first come, first show basis. They provide a permanent information flow within the community of media artists as well as linking the artist to his audience.

## SEMINARS ON CYBERNETICS AND PERCEPTION

Director: Dimitri Devyatkin

This series concerning the cybernetics of auditory and visual perception began in March of this year. It has as its goal to establish an on-going systematic exchange between media artists and scientists working in the fields of perception. The participants consist of a mix ranging from musicians, filmmakers, and video artists on the one hand to cyberneticists, neurologists, and architects on the other. A partial listing of people involved in this series includes:

Maxwell Matthews, musician, Bell Laboratories.

Lillian Schwartz, computer graphics, Bell Laboratories.

Jud Yalkut, filmmaker.

Nam June Paik, video artist.

Members of The Dance Theatre Workshop, NYC.:

Art Bauman  
Wendy Summit  
John Moore

Alphonse Schilling, artist involved in 3 dimensional studies and motion.

PROPOSAL:

A SERIES OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC CONCERTS

For the past few months, The Kitchen for Electronic Media has been presenting a Monday evening concert series consisting primarily of electronic music. These concerts are offered to the public at no charge and have been attended by an average of one hundred persons per performance.

Both unknown and known composers have presented their works through The Kitchen. Those whose pieces have already been performed include: Rhys Chatham, Dmitri Devyatkin, Emmanuel Ghent, Jesse Miller, Laurie Spiegel, Woody and Steina Vasulka, Lamonte Young and Marian Zazeela. A list of those who are scheduled to perform is appended.

It is important for an artist to have a means of communicating his work to an audience. The chief benefit is feedback; that is, to ascertain how much of the intended effect is actually being communicated.

The Monday evening concert series provides public access to, and exposure of, musical pieces and styles of composition which, until now, have not enjoyed wide circulation. Most of the pieces performed have been electronic in nature, ranging from relatively simple interfacing of acoustic instruments (e.g., violin) with sound synthesizers to more sophisticated hardware such as feedback networks, specialized synthesizers, and Markov type stepping systems.

The Kitchen provides a working and performing space for these composers. They have full control over duration, lighting, and the use of space for performance. Furthermore, the video facilities of The Kitchen are available to any artist who wishes to incorporate them in his compositions. Technicians are supplied to facilitate operation of this equipment.

We at The Kitchen have tried to demonstrate that there is an audience for the type of material that we are presenting. It is important to recognize that the benefits that accrue to such a project do not consist solely of artist-audience gratification or the attendant cultural rewards. Other important aspects are the dissemination of the artistic technology and the fact that The Kitchen functions as a clearing house for artists working in electronic media.

## VASULKA VIDEO

Directed by Woody and Steina Vasulka

The weekly programs presented by the Vasulkas will emphasize three major approaches:

### 1) LIVE VIDEO PERFORMANCES

As opposed to pre-recorded videotape presentations, live video performances involve the generation, synthesis, and processing of images during actual performance time. Frequently these visuals simultaneously generate a corresponding sound structure.

### 2) ELECTRONIC IMAGE COMPOSITION THROUGH VIDEO KEYING TECHNIQUE

A basic compositional method utilizing the effect of video keying to explore the internal order of multilayered electronic images.

### 3) EXPERIMENTS IN PERCEPTION

Rapid alternations of video color fields and bi-modal (left/right) coding of 3-dimensional information are two of the elements employed to challenge learned perceptual processes. Other techniques used in these investigations include the effect of image delays and the impact of rapid travelling video images.

## ACTORS VIDEO WORKSHOP

Directed by Philip Perlman

The Actors Video Workshop (AWW) is an ongoing process of discovery emphasizing the interaction between theatre and modern media forms. Among various aspects of AWW are studies in time dimension in dramatic structures through video instant information storage and feedback systems as well as in depth analysis of the elements of the actor's craft. The basis of the AWW, consisting of intensive workshops geared towards theatre performances within live video environments, has already been established, and the initial exploratory phases have resulted in a number of video pieces including the following:

- 1) A Methodological Exploration of the Origin of Ritual using theatrical forms in a video environment.
- 2) An investigation of Retrogressed Time: A Wedding In Reverse. Beginning with the tossing of the flowers, three actors perform the ritual in reverse ending at the entrance to the church.
- 3) His Last Tape. The life of a fictitious video artist illustrated through synthetic realism.

Participants in AWW include actors from the Stratford Connecticut Shakespeare Festival, The La Moma Troupe, and The Blue Dome Theatre among others.

## The Midnight Opera Company

The Midnight Opera Company is directed by Cia Lozell and Michael Tschudin, and located at 240 Mercer Street. It has been developed in a space called The Kitchen, which has a floor area of 1200 square feet and a 16 foot high ceiling, equipt with lighting grid and a stereo sound system.

The Midnight Opera Company is currently engaged in the following project:

### Project:

"The Cosmic Opera", an intermedia experience. The term "intermedia" signifies a combined use of different art forms. The format of the Opera will be briefly described.

### Format:

The art forms apparent are:

Dance, singing, music, acting and video art.

The Opera is based on a libretto, which describes how the various forms will work together. The main characters are triple cast; being portrayed by an actor, singer, and dancer, simultaneously, as well as being portrayed on the video screen.

### Dance

The style of dance ranges from classical, symbolic movement, to modern and jazz steps directly inspired by the music.

We wish to afford a skilled choreographer who will bring with him his own company of dancers. About ten dancers

would be an ideal size company for the space available.

### Singing

Using classically trained voices, the music transcends specific melodies and explores pure tonality. Through the use of electronics, the human voice shall be at times pure, then gradually filtered and subtly re-processed and re-channelled to become many voices in harmony, or a duet with itself. At least ten singers are needed to form a suitable chorus.

### Acting

In the workshop situation from which the opera is born, each actor has a chance to explore his own capacities through the use of various theater techniques and under the guidance of capable directors. The acting parts in the opera demand a spontaneity that each actor will be challenged to find within himself. And they call for an awareness of movement and, in many cases, mime. To this end the actors, with the dancers, will be choreographed rather than blocked, in the standard sense. There are twelve speaking parts, not counting video characters.

### Music

The musical score ranges from purely acoustic, classical instrumentation to synthesized, pure sound, achieving a new meeting ground between the two musical extremes. Correspondingly, we make use of a divergent selection of musical instruments from the acoustic violin, contra bass, woodwinds, etc. to newly developed electronic instruments, such as the Putney Synthesizer, Musser Modulon vibraharp, and other audio devices.

## Video

Within the framework of the opera, video serves a threefold purpose:

- 1) As "moving scenery" and background for the sets, using, at different times, real, semi-abstract, and pure electronic images. This enables us to keep the stage free of scenery, allowing maximum space for dance.
- 2) For the presentation of "flash backs". Video allows us the freedom to explore the past and present simultaneously while uniting them to expose a coherent pattern. Here, the video screen represents the character's mind, which the audience is permitted to view openly.
- 3) To create an added visual dimension, through taping what is occurring live from different angles and running the tape simultaneously with the action, or with a slight time delay. The effect is to create a "living cubism" of movement with the dance and mime that takes place, utilizing all spacial directions.

In the workshop, moreover video serves as an unsurpassed tool for actors and dancers to view themselves, developing objectivity and the ability to be self-analytical.

## Aims

- 1) To unite the aforementioned art forms in a single, dynamic and cohesive structure, seeking within the framework of the opera, to bring the arts closer together. An harmonic interaction of the separate forms is as equally important as any of the individual mediums. From this union is born a totally

new form of creative expression.

- 2) To bring new art forms, such as video images and electronically synthesized music, together within a classical format --- opera. (one of the oldest multi-media experiences). In this way we can achieve a freedom that can grow only within a framework of discipline.
- 3) To give birth to a company of performers strong as a whole, and as individuals. The work will be geared to explore the potentials of each performer and to make use of those potentials. Individuality will be stressed, rather than conformity to a pattern. To further this end we will work as a company under the counseling of competent teachers such as Woody and Steina Vasulka - video techniques, Omar Shapley - improvisation technique, Gene Frankle - acting, directing, and set design, Margo Sappington - dance, Roland Gagnon - vocal training.
- 4) To remain potentially mobile. It is our aim not to be tied to any particular locale, so that we can travel outside of New York to other less media conscious environments for the exchange of ideas and generation of further interest.
- 5) By means of a disertation prior to the actual performance, we will acquaint the audience with the media we are using. The opera is an opportunity to introduce media, heretofore familiar to only a few, to a wider public.

Facilities on Hand

- 1) a working libretto, with guide lines for video and choreography.
- 2) a full musical score; with musicians to perform the same.
- 3) tape cassettes of the music.
- 4) video tape of the experimental portions of the opera.
- 5) a 30 minute color film sequence of experimental portions of the opera.
- 6) 6 video monitors - (one color set)
- 7) 2 V.T.R. decks
- 8) 2 black and white video cameras.
- 9) rehearsal and performance workshop space.
- 10) instruments: Hammond electric organ with two speaker cabinets, Steinway grand piano, Musser electric vibraharp, violins, one sound system, percussion instruments, Putney Synthesizer, other audio accessories.

BUDGET

EQUIPMENT

|  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| Color TV Monitors and/or Sony Video projectors                                     | \$4200               |
| 2 1/4" VTRs  | 2200                 |
| 2 TV Cameras   | 2000                 |
| 1 Shintron G1-360 Special Effects Generator  | 900                  |
| 1 Shintron GL-311 Video Keyer  | 200                  |
| Microphones  | 450                  |
| Audio Equipment<br>(amplifiers, preamplifiers, mixer, audio recording decks, etc.) | 3500                 |
| Lighting Equipment<br>(Quartz Iodide Fixtures)                                     | 500                  |
| Audio Synthesizer  | 1000                 |
| Design and Construction of Specialized Electronic Equipment                        | 5000                 |
| Tools and Maintenance equipment<br>(including test equipment and hand tools)       | 350                  |
| Audio and Video cables   | 450                  |
| Video Tape Stock   | 3000                 |
|  | total <u>\$23750</u> |
| RENT (including utilities)   | 7000                 |
| ADVERTISING AND MAILING  | 2500                 |
| SALARIES   |                      |
| Six Program Directors at \$100/wk per.   | 31200                |
| One Coordinator/Manager at \$200/wk  | 10400                |
|  | <u>\$74850</u>       |