

# **Self Generating Random Video Storytelling Program**

**Multi Media Performance**  
**Conor Boyle and L. Hunter Curra**

## **Collaborative Experimental Narrative Performance**

March 8, 2005

*Incident:* A group show of multi sensory works that investigated the quantum physics of new media art.

The show was hosted at the Afifi Amphitheatre by the Savannah College of Art & Design.

## **The Piece Description**

Authored and performed, with L. Hunter Curra, an experimental narrative. The performance featured a live amplified trio – bass, guitar, & drums - playing original and improvised music which directly affected a movie that was being controlled and modified by a fourth participant.

The Kick Drum: Every 4<sup>th</sup> kick would - by selecting from seven original movie clips - randomly trigger a new video. The drummer was not set into a tight groove, lending to an unpredictable movie selection. Repetition was present, as was probability and chance, which were important qualities of the piece.

The Bass: The dynamic range would directly affect the blue saturation of the movie. The louder the musician played, the stronger the effect.

The Guitar: The dynamic range would directly affect the red saturation of the movie. The louder the musician played, the stronger the effect.

*All three of these instruments affected the movie as it entered the computer, but the fourth participant was in control of the final outcome; i.e. what the audience watched.*

The Fourth Participant, or Engineer: Aside from being in complete control of the overall impact of the music on the movie, he could also control specific filters that would affect the appearance of the output. This included motion blurring and iconographic pixel manipulation that would replace pixels with pre-rendered images; such as stars, squares, triangles.

The seven original movie clips were inspired by “S.He”, a poem and video piece by Bill Seaman, a member of the Recombinant Poetics. His video was primarily composed of footage shot from a moving train of urban and industrial landscapes, and then slowed down to nearly 1/10 of the original speed.

For our piece, I wanted to reveal the limitations of digital video cameras which includes, but is not limited to, de-interlacing, compression, and the intelligence of CCD chips. The footage included shots of urban houses, roadways, and ghettos, all shot from a moving car. There were also elevators that seemed to meet and leave each other, a bird flying, a POV of a man ascending a staircase, and finally, two cats that engaged one another. This footage was chosen over other scenes because they all helped to revolve around the theme of relationships. All of the clips combined to create an experimental narrative about falling in love.

The audience was not given any pretense to this, so they were forced to put together the puzzle pieces themselves. This adds a third dimension to the piece, that being the reaction of the audience. Aside from the musicians triggering random clips at unpredictable moments in time, as well as changing the appearance of the movie, and the engineer controlling the look of the final output, the audience is also going to have a varied and unpredictable response to the piece. Thus, this piece helps to break the wall that traditional Hollywood movies have built for their audience.

*Exposing the nature of the image media - Marshall McLuhan*

The program that was running our performance was Cycling '74's Max/MSP/Jitter, for which we wrote a detailed patch to carry out all of the necessary actions. Three SM57's, one for the kick drum, one for the guitar amp, and one for the bass amp, were brought into a mixer, and then from the stereo out into the line-in of a Macintosh G5. The kick drum was panned left, and as a result the gate patch accepted only the left input, and the guitar and bass were panned right, so the RGB patch was accepting only input from the right channel.

To display for a small theatre crowd of about 100, we connected a projector as a second monitor for the G5. This allowed us to move our visualization window into the projector, so the engineer was able to see levels, manipulate settings, and control just about every aspect of the program live.

**The Technical Requirements and Description:**

#	Item
1	Drum kit
1	Electric Guitar
1	Electric Bass
1	Guitar Amplifier
1	Bass Amplifier
1	Audio mixer 4x2x2
3	SM57 dynamic microphones
3	XLR's
1	Macintosh G5 with dual monitor support and stereo line-in support
1	Projector (or screen for presentation)
2	Power strips
1	copy of Cycling '74 Max/MSP/Jitter software
1	Instance of patch; currently version 1.0.3.8.2005