LIVE
MOVIES

A Field Guide to New Media For the Performing Arts

edited by

Kirby Malone and Gail Scott White

Documenting Multimedia Performance Studio's New Stage Technology Project

MULTIMEDIA PERFORMANCE STUDIO

MULTIMEDIA PERFORMANCE STUDIO (MPS)

Multimedia Performance Studio is a "research and professional producing/ presenting unit" of the Department of Art and Visual Technology (AVT), College of Visual and Performing Arts, George Mason University. MPS was founded by Kirby Malone and Gail Scott White as a studio and laboratory for new technologies in the performing arts. MPS currently maintains an evolving ensemble of actors, singers, musicians, composers, designers, writers, directors, stage and production managers, multimedia artists and animators, sculptors, inventors, dramaturgs, historians, mad scientists, technicians and engineers.

With animated digital projections, digital sound and innovative sceno-graphy, MPS stage shows combine elements of cinema, music and theater to create "live movies" for today's multi-sensory young adult audience. A central object of MPS projects is to develop and extend technologies for performance while maintaining a critical eye toward these same technologies, and our technosphere in general. MPS productions include opera, performance art, music theater, dance and theater design, indoor and outdoor multimedia installations. and other new performance and exhibition forms for the 21st Century.

MPS is committed to creating innovative, thought-provoking productions which bring together collaborative teams of guest artists, resident faculty artists and student artists. This interdisciplinary work is carried out in the belief that it is just such a combination of talent, energy and commitment that led to many of the ground-breaking developments in music theater and performance, in new opera and dance theater, in the 20th Century, in centers of experiment such as the Bauhaus and Black Mountain College.

As MPS's focus is the collaborative creation of "live movies," the company's work employs digital projection and sound technologies, and filmic narrative techniques (such as flashback, lip-synch and slow motion), to construct moving stage pictures and sonic theater, in which live actors interact with animated performers, and emerge from or vanish into projected environments, settings and dreamscapes. This work is based on the premise that the audience of our new century desires a new live stage form which draws on and responds to global, contemporary, media-saturated existence. The artists who make this work engage with new media and new technologies, turning them in on themselves, to cast light on the way they shape and re-configure our world.

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Kelly Wilson (Elektra), MPS/Cyburbia's *Time Traveler Zero Zero*, 2004.

Multimedia Performance Studio & Poetry Theater present

Cyburbia Productions'
SILENCE & DARKNESS
a workshop production
April/May 1999

Fine Arts Gallery | Center for the Arts
George Mason University, Fairfax VA

Cast: Charles Holley, Sarah Maxwell, Drew Myers, Chris Parson, Karen Rivera, Rebecca Wilbur, Amelia Winger-Bearskin

Directed by Kirby Malone

Written by Kirby Malone
with contributions by Jackie Donaldson, Marilyn Moran, Karen Rivera & E.M. West
& passages from Jean Baudrillard, Guy Debord, Heiner Müller & Roger Waters

Scenic & Lighting Design: Kevin March
Score & Sound Design: Martin Wright & Ziggy
Costume Design: Stephanie Lundy
Video Design: Greg Stein & Thomas W. McGuire
Projection Design: Karina Braszo, David Danner, Kirby Malone and Gail Scott White
Scenic Artist: Thomas W. McGuire
Slide Animators: Karina Braszo, Gary Comerford, David Danner, Marcela Lopez and Doug Vazquez

Production & Stage Manager: Stephen Balazs
Asst. Stage Manager: Michael West
Asst. Director: Michael Sherman
Asst. Scenic Designer: Doug Vazquez
Production Assistants: Ben Ashworth, Mike Ittner, Autumn Pike

Documentary Photographers: Gretchen Hilmer and Thomas W. McGuire

Produced by Kirby Malone and Gail Scott White

Multimedia Performance Studio & Poetry Theater present

AUTOBODIES: DIGITAL POETRY THEATER
November 1999

A Collaboration between 14 Writing Program and
17 Visual Information Technologies (VIT) Graduate Students

Fine Arts Gallery | Center for the Arts
George Mason University, Fairfax VA

Directed by Kirby Malone
Multimedia Design by Gail Scott White
Set and Lighting Design by Kevin March
Sound Design by Martin Wright
Costume Design by Wajma Sultani

WRITERS
Jackie Donaldson, Rebecca Dunham, Carolyn Forché, Tony Gagliardi,
Susan Gardner Dillon, Rebecca M. Knotts, Marilyn Moran, Mel Nichols,
Lee Riley-Hammer, Kaia Sand, Lesley Smith, Peter Streckfus, Emily Tuszynska,
Elizabeth A. Weiss, Joan Wilcox

DIGITAL ARTISTS
Karina A. Braszo, Sig Bruner, Neicy Buster, Chris Compy, Jon Goell, Kirsten T. Hallum,
Maryam Kasmai, Valerie Kritter, Yolanda Mayers, David Mazanec, Deborah McFarlin,
Sherri Norton, Cate Rodriguez, David P. Rueckert, Mauricio Sanchez, Wajma Sultani,
Andrew Weyrich, Gail Scott White

CAST
Alecia Gower, Charles Lee Holley, Mike Ittner, Tacie Jones, Chris Parsons,
Maria Rio, Turtle Wegrzyn, Rebecca Wilbur, Amelia Winger-Bearskin

Stage Managers: Allison Bodwell, Micah Stromberg
Sound and Light Operators: Brian Allard and Rachel Gertz

Documentary Photographer: Mary Upton
Produced by Jackie Donaldson, Kirby Malone and Gail Scott White

Trumpet Vine Theatre Company in association with Multimedia Performance Studio
and Cyburbia Productions presents

MARISOL
by José Rivera

Rosslyn Spectrum, Arlington VA, April 2000

Keith Waters, artistic director / producer
Tom Mallan, director
Kirby Malone and Gail Scott White, multimedia designers
Ian Claridge and Ayun Fedorcha, lighting designers
Adrianna Daugherty, sound designer
Ina Claridge, Tom Mallan and Gail Scott White, set designers
Timm Burrow, costume designer
Micah Stromberg, stage manager

CAST
Bruce Holmes
Samantha Kearney
Maura McGinn
Vera Soltero
Yasmin Tuazon

MULTIMEDIA ARTISTS
Frank Blankenship, Karina Braszo, Kirsten Hallum,
Negar Nahidian, Lee Vaughan, Gail Scott White

MULTIMEDIA PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS
Alecia Gower, Davide Lorenzi, Suzanne Scott, Kelly Sleyman
Photographs by Mary Upton

Multimedia Production Studio and Cyburbia Productions co-produced Trumpet Vine
Theatre Company's production, *Marisol* by José Rivera, in April 2000. *Marisol*, written
by a Puerto Rican playwright in 1992, is a tale of urban, millennial apocalypse. Kirby
Malone and Gail Scott White worked as multimedia designers, in collaboration with a
team of AVT undergraduate and MFA students, and the play's director, Tom Mallan, to
create a cinematic component of the production with full-stage, digital slide animation,
depicting settings, character transformations, strange weather, and other special and
peculiar effects.

Multimedia Performance Studio & Cyburbia Productions present

SPLIT: Hive Mind

Halloween Beach Party, November 2000
Concert Hall Lawn | Center for the Arts
George Mason University, Fairfax VA

an outdoor architectural multimedia installation
by Kirby Malone and Gail Scott White

featuring animated video projections onto two sixty-foot
concrete towers with live music

a collaboration with David P. Rueckert, Sean Watkins,
and the band Grommit

SPLIT: Hive Mind featured dual six-story high projections onto the Concert Hall's twin towers, bathing the architecture in animated multimedia imagery ranging from brains to bees to bats and dolls, automata and geometrical forms. This project clearly demonstrated, and served as a model for, new uses and applications of projection and animation technologies for architectural and environmental settings and public events.

An earlier version of *SPLIT: Hive Mind* was featured in the Ocular Interactive Festival in 1998. This earlier work featured six computer-programmed slide projectors, while the 2000 version featured dual digital video projections.

SPLIT is available for touring as an outdoor or indoor installation.

Documentary Photography: Chris Ciccone/Trinity Tongg Osborn

Multimedia Performance Studio presents

Cyburbia Productions'
SILENCE & DARKNESS, a live movie for the cell phone age
a workshop production
March 2001

Harris Theatre | Center for the Arts
George Mason University, Fairfax VA

CAST
Sarah Hochkeppel, Charles Lee Holley, Joshua McCarthy, Drew Myers, Chris Parsons, Nicholas X. Parsons, Maria Rio, Turtle Wegrzyn, Rebecca Wilbur

GROMMIT
Nelson Cuellar (guitars), Mauricio Sanchez (guitars), Greg Stein (vocals, bass & guitar), and Joseph Stephens (drums), with Sarah Hochkeppel (vocals) and Rebecca Wilbur (vocals)

Written and Directed by Kirby Malone
Produced by Kirby Malone and Gail Scott White
Stage Manager: Nicole McClain
Multimedia & Set Design: Gail Scott White
Lighting & Set Design: Kevin March
Costume Design: Stephanie Lundy
Video Design: David P. Rueckert
Sound Design: Kevin Jerome
Prop Design: Jill Buxrud
Master Electrician: Rob Hencken
Sound Engineer: Grafton Cole
Company Manager: Marilyn Moran
Assistant Directors: Jeremy Frank and Julia Laxer
Asst. Sound Designer: Jill Buxrud
Asst. Costume Designer: Alecia Gower
Video Operators: Jill Buxrud and Dan Sharnoff
Documentary Photographer: Trinity Tongg Osborn
Production Assistants: Scott Rowan and Alexei Samsonovich
Stagehands: Chris Ashton, David Bjerke, Valerie Curry, Alecia Gower and Julia Laxer

MULTIMEDIA ARTISTS
Gail Scott White, David P. Rueckert, Chris Ashton, David Bjerke, Karina Braszo, Jill Buxrud, Nami Hashemizadeh, Maryam Kasmai, Dan Sharnoff, Greg Stein, Lee Vaughan,

The Cyburbia towers and fly-throughs are based on paintings by Thomas W. McGuire.

Jane Franklin Dance presents

IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE

Dance Place
Washington DC

November 2001

During the summer of 2001, Gail Scott White collaborated with Jane Franklin, to provide multimedia design for a new dance work, *In the Blink of an Eye*, which premiered in a concert by Jane Franklin Dance at Dance Place. The work has subsequently become part of Jane Franklin Dance's touring repertoire, and has appeared at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center and other venues.

Produced with the assistance of the Multimedia Performance Studio.

CHOREOGRAPHY: Jane Franklin

DANCERS
Nicole Bradley Browning, Jennifer Rivers Pittman, Nicole Pouliot, Stefanie Quinones, Malcolm Shute, Amanda Smith

MULTIMEDIA DESIGN AND VIDEO: Gail Scott White

COSTUMES: Allen Smith

VIDEO PERFORMERS: Jane Franklin and Miss B

TODDLER WRANGLERS: Katie Chase and Rebecca Chase

MULTIMEDIA ADVISER: Kirby Malone

Video produced with the assistance of MPS, with additional support from the College of Visual and Performing Arts, with special thanks to Dan Hobson and Julie Thompson

Multimedia Performance Studio presents

Komar & Melamid's *NAKED REVOLUTION,* *an op*era

November 2001
Harris Theatre | Center for the Arts
George Mason University, Fairfax VA

Throughout the first half of 2001, Kirby Malone and Gail Scott White worked with Russian artists Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid, and composer Dave Soldier, to plan an experimental multimedia staging of their opera *NAKED REVOLUTION*. This production garnered national press in the digital arts magazine *ARTBYTE* and a review in the Washington POST. The opera was performed by eighteen singers and an orchestra of eleven, interacting for seventy-minutes with full-stage digital video animation.

Conceived by Komar & Melamid
Composed by Dave Soldier
Libretto by Maita di Niscemi
Conductor/Music Director: Sybille Werner
Stage Director: Kirby Malone
Choreographer: Emily Berry
Multimedia and Set Design: Gail Scott White
 — (based on paintings and collages by Komar & Melamid)
Lighting Design: Rob Hencken
Costume Design: Stephanie Lundy
Sound Design: Brian Keating
Producers: Kirby Malone and Gail Scott White

SINGER/ACTORS
Peter Joshua Burroughs, Loretta Giles, Eric Greene,
Alex Helsabeck, Anna Hurwitz, Nick Spanos,
Terri Erchul Malone, Jennifer McGinnis, Andrea Schewe,
John Boulanger, Mark Cobb, Adam Hall, David Humphrey,
Susan Lloyd, Meaghan Rymer, Dennis Michael Stroud,
Steve Tipton and Kelly Wilson,
with Charles Lee Holley and Chris Parsons

Opera Coach/Music Preparation: Stephen Brown
Associate Music Director: Joel Lazar

ORCHESTRA
Julie Angelis (percussion), Joseph Blumka (accordion), Lawrence Bocaner (clarinet/bass clarinet), Zsuzsanna Emödi (violin), Ken Hall (guitar), Sonya Hayes (violin), Jonathan Kalbfleisch (synthesizer), James Nalley (piano), Matthew Nix (bass), Zoltan Racz (accordion),

Production Manager: Dan Hobson
Production Stage Manager: Kira Hoffmann
Stage Managers: Lori Devonshyre and Ashleigh Stevens

Multimedia Artists:
Mark Alyea-Cheu, Elise Berenson, Jill Buxrud, Rafael Chargel,
Jesse Cowan, Andrew Green, Maryam Kasmai, Dan Sharnoff,
Jeni Sarkilahti, Steve Schwartz, Lee Vaughan and Gail Scott White

Storyboards: Gail Scott White and Kirby Malone

Scene Shop Supervisor: Ethan Osborne

Assistants to the Stage Director: Maryam Kasmai and Chris Parsons

Wig Stylist: Monica Simons

Assistant Costume Designer: Alecia Gower

Dramaturgy: Beverly Blois and Maryam Kasmai

Opera Advisor: Carla Rae Cook

Choreography Advisor: Suzanne Carbonneau

Documentary Videographer: Paul Seymour

Documentary Photographer: Evan Cantwell

STAGE DIRECTOR'S NOTE
NAKED REVOLUTION is a history dream opera. Shards of dreams materialize, inhabited by the likes of George Washington and Vladimir Lenin. Are they escapees from a wax museum diorama, singing statuary, or flesh and blood? Before we can decide, they vanish. Librettist Maita di Niscemi has fashioned the Russian artists (now American citizens) Komar & Melamid's concerns with monumental propaganda into a fragmented depiction of the historical forces wrought by revolution and political upheaval, and how these forces often leave a trail of corpses in their wake. To counter the juggernaut of ideologies, this opera conjures artistic revolutionaries Marcel Duchamp and Isadora Duncan, whose idiosyncratic world views embrace and celebrate the importance (and the freedom) of the individual, the dreaming citizen. The opera's score, by Dave Soldier, swoops through and weaves among an array of musical styles, combining strings, woodwinds, keyboards, percussion, accordion, and electronics. Komar & Melamid's paintings and collages of eerie visions and juxtapositions from the dreams of a Russian immigrant are animated in this production of NAKED REVOLUTION in a style that might be called "fantastical realism." The images come to life, and frame and interact with the singer-actors in a sort of "live movie." Washington, Lenin, Duchamp and Duncan gyrate in an operatic time-warp of revolutionary lyricism, on subjects political and artistic.

— Kirby Malone

Encompass New Opera Theatre
with the assistance of Multimedia Performance Studio presents

APPROACHING INFINITY
an operatic double bill

THE END OF A WORLD
Composed by **Hans Werner Henze**
Libretto by Wolfgang Hildesheimer (trans. Wesley Balk)

A FULL MOON IN MARCH
Composed by **John Harbison**
Libretto by the composer (based on a W.B. Yeats play)

March 2003
Connelly Theatre
New York City

Nancy Rhodes, artistic and stage director

Joseph McConnell, managing director

Kenneth Hamrick, music director

Sarah Lewis, stage manager

John C. Scheffler, set and costume designer

Izzy Einsidler, lighting designer

Kirby Malone and Gail Scott White, multimedia designers

Laura Sue Nova and Amanda Ward, multimedia operators

SINGER-ACTORS

Alison Davy

David Dorsey

Brannon Hall-Garcia

Désirée Halac

Kevin Hanek

Dominic Inferrera

Jean Marie Miller

Pedro Porro

Derek Lee Ragin

Kerry Stichweh

Christopher Vettel

Wilma H. Wever

ORCHESTRA

Kenneth Hamrick, conductor & harpsichord

Jack Chan, bassoon

Richard Cohen, clarinet

Joan Dawidziak, oboe

Jon Holden, piano & keyboards,

Don Hulbert, flute

John Kneiling, cello

Brian Lang, viola

Daniel Mallon, percussion

Mark Wade, double bass

MULTIMEDIA ARTISTS

Mark Alyea-Cheu, Jesse Cowan, Corey Hall, Ricardo Real,
Andrew Stubbs-Johnston, Anita Salinas, Tate Siev Srey, and Gail Scott White

Photographs by Gail Scott White

Multimedia Performance Studio presents

Cyburbia Productions'
TIME TRAVELER ZERO ZERO — *A Story of John Titor*

a workshop production

April 2004

Harris Theatre | Center for the Arts
George Mason University, Fairfax VA

Written and directed by Kirby Malone

Music composed by Amelia Winger-Bearskin and Sean Lovelace

Multimedia and Set Design by Gail Scott White

Lighting Design by Rob Hencken

Costume Design by Paul K. Stolen

Hair and Make-up Design by Kathy Kachelries

Sound Design by Bryan Burket

Documentary Photographers
Kelly Carr-Shaffer, Ioulia Kouskova, Noah Heller, and Gail Scott White

Documentary Videographers
Scott Cunningham, Jason Kott and Shawn Taylor

Web Design and Development
Pat Kelly, Clairvoyant Media

Actors, Singers and Musicians
Howard Brown-Santos, Bryan Burket, Viraj DeSilva, Craig Garrett, Emery Britton Haefeli, Alison Krayer, Janel Lepin, Sean Lovelace, Joshua McCarthy, Matt McGarraghy, Brianna Moran, James Murphy, Chris Parsons, Maria Rio, Prince Rozario, Mike Solo, Jeff Wall, Kelly Wilson, Amelia Winger-Bearskin and Tristan Winger-Bearskin

Animators and Multimedia Artists
Tate Siev Srey, Noah Melnick, Mark Alyea-Cheu, Chris Andrews, Howard Brown-Santos,
Sal Castaneda, Scott Cunningham, Ahmet Dillice, Thomas Dyman, Carlos Foxworthy, Jen Haefeli,
Meredith Harris, Solomon Jagwe, Pat Kelly, Rebecca Kimmel, Jason Kott, Hye-kyung Emily Lee,
Meredith Lydon, Brenden Moran, James Murphy, Ricardo Real, Prince Rozario, Mike Solo,
Shawn Taylor and Gail Scott White

Stage Managers: Liz Welke, Kira Hoffmann
Assistant Stage Manager: Laura Rozmeski
Production Manager: Dan Hobson
Technical Director: Allison Bodwell
Scene Shop Supervisor: Ethan Osborne
Audio Producer: Chris Andrews, The Basement Recording Studio
Audio Engineer: Mike Leach
Lighting Operator: Mike Novakowski
Video Operators: Jill Buxrud and Beth Logan
Costume Assistants: Jen Haefeli and Rebecca Prater

Dramaturgs
Tom Dyman, David Gouldsmith, Rebecca Prater, Mike Solo

Mad Science Advisers
Alexei Samsonovich and Karl Simanonok

Production Assistants
Ben Ashworth, Jill Buxrud, Kathy Kachelries, Melissa Kurabatchew, Beth Logan,
Adriana Lubenova, Susan Serafin, Noah Smith

Director's Note
With multiple video projections, a cast of eight singer-actors, and an eight-piece band, *Time Traveler Zero Zero* presents an apocalyptic critique of consumer culture, and a chilling vision of a near-future dystopia brought about by a growing police state. A team of more than twenty multimedia artists created state-of-the-art animations and video montages for the innovative scenography which depicts time travel and the worlds of 1975, 2000, 2015 and 2036, in this tale of John Titor, a mysterious figure who posted voluminously on the Internet for six months from late 2000 to early 2001. Was he a time traveler from thirty years in the future, or a hoax? Was he a crackpot or a prophet? Was he science fiction or living proof of the latest theories of quantum physics? With a score that features original songs and soundscapes, and also draws on a dialectical blend of industrial music, trip-hop, rap, country, opera and Bengali singing, *Time Traveler Zero Zero* is part rock opera, part hybrid cinematic/theatrical performance, designed to provoke thought, and provide listening and viewing pleasure, for young adult audiences of all ages.

— Kirby Malone

For more Information on John Titor:
www.johntitor.strategicbrains.com
www.johntitor.com

Time Traveler Zero Zero will be available for touring in 2007.

Multimedia Performance Studio presents

Cyburbia Productions'
SILENCE & DARKNESS, *a live movie for the cell phone age*
SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2004

Harris Theatre | Center for the Arts
George Mason University, Fairfax VA

> It does not matter if the war is not real, or when it is, that victory is not possible. The war is not meant to be won.
> It is meant to be continuous. The essential act of modern warfare is to destroy the production of human labor.
> — George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-four*

Written and directed by Kirby Malone
Multimedia and Scenic Design by Gail Scott White
Lighting and Scenic Design by Dan Hobson
Costume Design by Terral Bolton
Associate Costume Designer: Stephanie Lundy
Music composed by Sean Lovelace, Kelly Wilson, Matt Cain,
Matt McGarraghy, Grant J. Wylie and Robert J. Friedman
Sound Design by Sean Lovelace
Automaton Designer/Sculptor: Robin Hernandez

Cast
Taylor Coffman, Viraj DeSilva, Jen Haefeli, Joshua McCarthy, Chris Parsons, Prince Rozario, Mike Solo, Kelly Wilson, Grant J. Wylie, and Alexander Graham Bell automaton

Musicians
Matt Cain (turntables and conga), Sean Lovelace, (laptop, samplers and other electronics, conga), Matt McGarraghy (electric guitars)

Production Manager: Dan Hobson
Stage Managers: Kira Hoffmann and Liz Welke
Assistant Stage Manager: Laura Rozmeski
Harris Technical Director: Allison Bodwell
Assistant Director: Chris Parsons
Music Director: Kelly Wilson
Assistant Multimedia Designers: Rebecca Kimmel and Eric Brody
Multimedia Advisor: Ruppert Bohle

Animators and Multimedia Artists
Chris Andrews, Soo Jeong Bae, Eric Brody, David Danner, Ahmet Dillice,
Young Gi Hong, Won Hee Jung, Pat Kelly, Rebecca Kimmel, Jayeun Ko,
Ioulia Kouskova, Hye-kyung Emily Lee, Hyeki Min, James Allen Orr,
Jin Hee Pak, Sunyoung Park, Prince Rozario, David P. Rueckert, Mike Solo,
Tate Siev Srey, J Stutt and Gail Scott White

Master Electrician: Mike Novakowski
Production Assistant: Viraj DeSilva
Prop Master: Renee E. Giamette
Paint Charge: Laura Rozmeski
Audio Engineer: Jason Roberts
Video Operator: Eric Brody
Lighting Operator: Mike Novakowski
Electrician: Micah Stromberg
Set Construction: Ethan C. Osborne, CVPA Scene Shop Supervisor
Christian Hershey, Master Carpenter
Documentary Photographers: Ioulia Kouskova and Gail Scott White
Web Design: Pat Kelly, Clairvoyant Media

> Come here. I want to see you.
> —Alexander Graham Bell

Director's Note

Silence & Darkness uses cyber-tools to depict, dissect and critique cyber-culture. The show cinematically unfolds a world in which humans attempt to connect in the flesh, enmeshed in a technosphere of cell phones and satellite dishes, chat rooms and web servers, spy cams and predator drones. In the form of a "live movie," a fragmented space-age love story of digitized desire is punctuated by passages from Jean Baudrillard's *Simulations*, Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle*, and Heiner Müller's *Hamletmachine*.

Malfunctioning animatronic simulacra of Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas Alva Edison, and ghostly prom queens gliding and twitching like high-voltage music-box automata, swirl in an audio-visual time warp, and gyrate to cybernetic songs and soundscapes. Carbon-based lifeforms intertwine with silicon beings, as performers blur from stage to screen and back again — images, words and voices encoded in bits and atoms.

Full-stage, multi-screen, animated digital video projections construct a poor man's virtual reality, a scenographic montage of global environments, disembodied characters, implanted memories, and strange weather. This "live movie" crosses the machinic-organic divide and examines human myths, tools and consciousness illuminated by the glow of synthetic fire. Cell phoners travel from their corporate barracks, through frenzied streets, to electro-cash markets, cyber-bedrooms, data cubicles, and transhuman clubs, filled with an insatiable desire to "be there now," ensnared in the beeps and flashes of a world that is no longer ever silent or dark.

> — Kirby Malone

Silence & Darkness is in part a "sampling" script, or "synthetic fragments," and contains passages from: Jean Baudrillard, Alexander Graham Bell, Guy Debord, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Thomas Alva Edison, Donna Haraway, Arthur Kroker and Marilouise Kroker, Heiner Müller, George Orwell, Roger Waters, and Hank Williams

The script includes some material written in collaboration with Jackie Donaldson, Marilyn Moran, Chris Parsons, Karen Rivera and Mike Solo.

Silence & Darkness is available for touring.

Multimedia Performance Studio (MPS)
Department of Art and Visual Technology (AVT)

Other Presentations, Co-Productions and Collaborations

Rose Caruso's *Shamanism in New Jersey*, Smallbeer Theater
Directed by Lynnie Raybuck with Multimedia Design by Kirby Malone and Gail Scott White
Theaterspace, Center for the Arts, Fairfax VA, June 1998

Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, Theater of the First Amendment
Directed by Rick Davis with Multimedia Design by Kirby Malone and Gail Scott White
Theaterspace, Center for the Arts, Fairfax VA, November 1998

Langston Hughes: A Global Citizen of the Arts: provided multimedia design for this
Centennial Celebration Concert, produced by George Mason University, in collaboration
with the Duke Ellington School for the Arts and George Washington University,
Center for the Arts Concert Hall, Fairfax VA, February 2002

Technocracy, a multimedia performance showcase by
AVT's **InterArts Performance Studio**, produced by Kirby Malone, Dan Hobson, Gail Scott White
Created by Gregg Deal, Craig Garrett, Dan Joyce, Rich Lankford, Loren Livick, Will Prutzman,
Sabrina Santiago and Lee Vaughan, with Bilal Awan, Jill Buxrud, Emily Berry, Renee Brozic,
Rocky Carlson, Sean Gaetjen, Charles Lee Holley, Jon Laine, Chris Parsons,
Dan Sharnoff and Rebecca Wilbur
Harris Theatre, Center for the Arts, April 2002

Star Path: multimedia design for choreographer Elizabeth Price,
GMU Dance Company Concert, Center for the Arts Concert Hall, May 2002

Flesh-Bot, a multimedia performance showcase by
AVT's **InterArts Performance Studio**, produced by Kirby Malone, Meg Hoyecki, Dan Hobson
Created by Darren Biggs, Phillip Buggs, Bryan Burket, Jeremy Frank, Rob Hencken, Kristin Henry,
Jason Kott, Adriana Lubenova, Brenden Moran, Brianna Moran, Rachel Sarrano,
Bethany Thompson, and Amelia Winger-Bearskin, with Milka Mekonnen, Nicholai Usack,
Stephen Lopez, Laura Rozmeski, Sylvia Lee, Emory Kristof, Julia Wiedeman, Sarah DeWitt,
Liz Welke, Nick Rykert and Alexis Glenn
Harris Theatre, April 2003

AVT InterArts Performance Showcases produced by MPS

Stupid Frailty, three performance works by Laura Zam
Harris Theatre, September 2004

Mind Over Matter Music Over Mind = MOM²,
Cosmic tones and animated soundscapes by Bobby Hill, Thomas Stanley, Chris Downing
Harris Theatre, April 2005

Endangered Species, an experimental / documentary / dance film centered on
the tour-de-force solo by Philadelphia-based hip hop pioneer, Rennie Harris.
Producer: Carmella Vassor-Johnson, Co-producer: Suzanne Carbonneau
Harris Theatre, April 2005

LAURIE A. MEAMBER

ON THE MULTIMEDIA PERFORMANCE STUDIO'S LIVE MOVIES: A SENSORIAL EXPERIENCE IN AN AGE OF SIMULATION
(Part 1)

Introduction

The Multimedia Performance Studio (MPS) was started in the Department of Art and Visual Technology (AVT), College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA), at George Mason University by two new media artists, Kirby Malone and Gail Scott White. MPS has been and continues to be an innovative research and presenting/producing unit of this "entrepreneurial" university. MPS explores the creation and application of multimedia technology in performance. Recognizing the importance of such artistic experimentation, the National Endowment for the Arts awarded MPS a prestigious "New Stage Technology Project" grant. The grant funded investigations that blended new technologies for the stage (e.g., video projections, 2D and 3D animations) in combination with live performers — i.e., the live movie format. Over the last six years, in addition to original productions, MPS has developed multimedia scenic designs and outdoor projection installations for works that have been shown in the New York and mid-Atlantic region. In 2001, members of MPS worked with visual artists Komar & Melamid to create and stage a groundbreaking multimedia performance of *Naked Revolution, an opera.*

Cyburbia Productions is Malone and White's professional multimedia performance company. Cyburbia Productions developed and produced two full-length original performance pieces in conjunction with MPS — *Silence & Darkness, a live movie for the cell phone age*, and the workshop production of *Time Traveler Zero Zero: A Story of John Titor*. Both of these pieces utilized state of the art performance technology in order to comment on our technologically mediated consumer culture within a "cyberpunk" aesthetic. *Silence & Darkness*,

as a performance piece, did not rely upon a conventional plot structure, but consisted of a series of fragmented scenes. The show was unified by the following elements: a recurring visual narrative (images of "cyburbia" = cyber suburbia), reappearing sets of characters, and a premise — two lovers who are unable to connect emotionally or physically in Cyburbia. Each of the scenes made a distinct statement on cyberculture. In contrast, *Time Traveler Zero Zero* followed a more traditional narrative structure. The story was anchored upon a man sent from the future to retrieve a computer from his grandfather in order to save his future world. While in the past, he posted information on what his life was like in the future and remarked upon events that may occur in the future.

This essay is organized in the following manner. First, I will describe each of these three shows: *Naked Revolution*, *Silence & Darkness*, and *Time Traveler Zero Zero* as experienced by me as an audience member. Next, I will write on the experience of these pieces using alternative theatre as a framework. I will then discuss the work in terms of postmodern performance, postmodernism and its critique of a cyber-consumer culture. I will end by commenting upon the live movie experience as a catalyst for social change at the level of the individual.

The Live Movie Experience

This section describes my experience of four MPS productions: *Naked Revolution*, *Silence & Darkness, a live movie for the cell phone age* (2001, 2004), and *Time Traveler Zero Zero, a Story of John Titor*. I was fortunate to see *Naked Revolution* twice during its run. I also witnessed *Silence and Darkness* (2001) on two separate occasions. I was privileged to attend an early reading of *Time Traveler Zero Zero*, to watch a dress rehearsal, and attend the performance. Finally, I watched a rehearsal of *Silence & Darkness* (2004) and also went to two performances. While I do not equate my own responses with those of the entire audience, I, as an audience member, critic, and writer on consumer culture, offer one reaction to the work. In writing this account, I relied on my notes taken during and after the performances, upon newspaper reviews/feature articles, program notes, and still images provided to me from the performances.

Naked Revolution

The opera, *Naked Revolution*, was conceived by the legendary artists Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid, and composer Dave Soldier. The opera was staged twice prior to the 2001 presentation offered jointly by MPS and George

Mason University's College of Arts and Sciences. The production involved thirty-five members of the Mason community, and twenty-five guest artists. The performance, while being 75 minutes in length, was rich and satisfying in terms of visual, musical, and political content. Billed as a history dream opera, the subject of the show was political evolution. The piece presented examples of how political ideologies and resulting revolutions have been recycled over and over throughout history. Historical figures, including leaders George Washington and Vladimir Lenin, artists Marcel Duchamp and Isadora Duncan, were portrayed by animated figures and live actors. The recognizable characters anchored the ideas and made them tangible for the audience. The performance consisted of a series of stage pictures, opera, and dance.

The performance took place in four acts. Act I took place in New York City. The action concerned the dismantling of an equestrian statue of George III. During the beginning of the act, George Washington appeared and reflected on his career. Eventually, the statue's head rose to the sky and George III grieved his loss of power. Act II was placed in Russia. It began with the reading of an important historical document. A student and his female muse spoke to a crowd of revolutionary minded peasants. Act III focused on the student's younger brother, Lenin, who gave a speech that concerned his loss of his brother and his power. Act IV returned to NYC. Two statues of Washington came alive. Lenin appeared on stage to ask the Washington duo to help appease Isadora Duncan. Lenin boasted of his superiority, and Marcel Duchamp entered the scene and introduced Isadora Duncan to the other characters. Isadora Duncan wanted support for her ballet school (symbolic of the individual, of freedom, of the artist), but she did not find assistance from the Lenin and the Washington figures. Towards the end of Act IV, the images of George Washington began to multiply, as Duchamp and Duncan danced a waltz around the stage. Lenin hailed a taxi.

Images for the multimedia projections and set were based on the visual art of Komar & Melamid. Artworks by Komar and Melamid were placed on both sides of the stage, forming a frame for the performance space. Visually, the work was abstract in nature. Images floated in and out and around the stage. The production encouraged the audience to experience the work as a dream, although the liveliness of the aesthetic did not lull them into a dreamlike state. In addition to the projections, visual elements included the live performers — a cast of nine, plus other singers. The performers, wearing colorful costumes, played the historical leaders who strutted around the stage, or were carried on wagons, all the while they struck archetypal poses. In Acts II and III, citizens/ peasants/workers raised their fists symbolic of protest and revolution. Often the images were combined with projections of the leaders serving as backdrop for the performers who "embodied" the characters (see Figures 1 and 2). Visual

elements were recycled and updated to portray the march through history. For example, a set of concrete housing towers were "branded" at various points in the performance. The branding consisted of projected images of the hammer and sickle, dollar signs, and Western corporate logos on the exteriors of the buildings. In a shocking ending, the towers eventually succumbed to fireballs – imagery that appeared to be reminiscent of the destruction of the World Trade Center towers that had occurred one month prior to the run of the performance.

Figure 1: Nick Spanos (Lenin) and ensemble, *Naked Revolution*, MPS, 2001.

Figure 2: Alex Helsabeck (Gen. Geoorge Washington), Eric Greene (Citizen George Washington), Nick Spanos (Lenin), *Naked Revolution*, MPS, 2001.

Musically, because of the strong voices, and twelve instrumental musicians, the work was very powerful. Instruments and instrumental styles were intermixed to create a surreal musical experience that felt both nostalgic and contemporary.

As an audience member, I found the staging of *Naked Revolution* to juxtapose surface with substance. The aesthetic worked to engage the ear, eye and mind. I was fascinated by the use of projected images that worked in concert with or against the live action. The double images of the historic figures as projections and live performers, who, despite the costumes did not always resemble the images, made their essence stronger. I experienced the performance as a postmodern play of surfaces; the representations on stage were engaging – simultaneously humorous and disturbing, yet pleasurable. On the other hand, the message underneath the entertainment was rich and thought provoking. I had a deeply moving experience, and I found myself thinking about issues such as the centralization and diffusion of power in society long after the performance ended.

Silence & Darkness, a live movie for the cell phone age

Over a period of five years, *Silence & Darkness*, evolved from a studio presentation associated with a digital theatre class in 1999, to a full-fledged multimedia production in 2001, to a tighter, fast-moving, richly layered 90-minute presentation in 2004. Because of its subject matter and the future advances in stage technology, *Silence & Darkness* is a piece that, as it is restaged, will continue to be updated and will never truly exist in a finalized form.

The subject matter of *Silence & Darkness,* in all its incarnations performed to date, centered on communication technologies (including cell phones, e-commerce, genetic mutation, prosthetic implants, the Internet, and Virtual Reality experiences) and their influence on our lives and society. The show consisted of a series of fragments, thoughts or images, designed to encourage audiences to consider the state of their present lives and their potential future existence. The performance was organized into the following sections labeled as: Static, Fever, Internal Combustion, Panic, and Frenzy.

"Static" concerned the inertia of the current age — the way in which technology promotes endless and sometimes pointless conversational strategies. The piece started with characters that acted as if they were under the influence of technology and out of touch with their feelings. Other scenes portrayed the collective worship of corporate life and consumer culture, and humans becoming part machine. "Fever" was rich with material on the environmental consequences of consumer culture, feelings of isolation, and the consequences of being a "connected" society — including: identity theft, electronic voting, and electronic surveillance. "Internal Combustion" started with an introduction to Baudrillard's three orders of appearance, and continued with the themes of loneliness, mediated conversations, and consumer identity premised upon brands. "Panic" was a frenetic section of the piece, replete with cyber-acronyms, more praise of multinational brands adapted from text found in Heiner Müller's *Hamletmachine*, and camera surveillance. "Frenzy" showed the impossibility of face-to-face communication in the midst of technology that interrupts every attempt for humans to connect with each other. The piece ends by acknowledging the unending nature of technological development, of immateriality, and virtual reality.

Throughout the show, figures, both historical and fictional, attempted to interact with each other in ways that were both amusing and disturbing at times. The pieces were held together by the figures of Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas Alva Edison, who, as malfunctioning animatronic figures, witnessed how their inventions were extended to create a future that was noisy (i.e., the end of silence) and never turned off (i.e., the end of darkness)

(see Figure 3). Other character dyads were central to the show – a set of prom queens (modeled on Patti Page) who acted as interpreters or commentators, and the two lovers, Zeta and Alpha. Three businessmen (in addition to Alpha) also reappeared throughout the show (see Figure 4).

Figure 3: Nicholas X. Parsons (animatronic Alex. Graham Bell) and Joshua McCarthy (animatronic Thomas Alva Edison). MPS/Cyburbia's *Silence & Darkness*, 2001.

Figure 4: Charles Holley (Alpha), Chris Parsons (Delta), Drew Myers (Gamma) and Turtle Wegrzyn (Beta), MPS/Cyburbia's *Silence & Darkness*, 2001.

Audience members, including myself, were able to relate to scenarios and themes in the show. This happened to me when two of the businessmen who were physically present with each other at a restaurant were unable carry on a conversation because they were simultaneously speaking to others on their cell phones. Another occasion that received a hearty laugh and some head nodding from the audience members occurred when two of the businessmen repeated the same dialogue in succession and the audience was asked to consider which individual was speaking on a "hands-free" cell phone and which was mentally ill. Audience members may also have been able to project themselves into the future when experiencing a scene where the two lovers, Alpha and Zeta, settle back in their VR chairs, plug into the VR headsets (projections) and attempt to have cybersex (see Figure 5). The couple began speaking to, and sometimes out of context with, each other — using phrases that expressed longing for human contact — "Can you feel me?" "Do you remember?" "I'm gone." Their exchanges were punctuated by commercial interruptions for the JawPhone (phone implanted in the jaw) and Tatvert (advertising message implanted on the forehead) (see Figure 6). The themes that resonated strongly with me were loneliness, longing, and desire — the desire for authentic relationships in the midst of a (consumer) culture that attempts to fill that desire by offering to us technological products and the promise of technologically mediated interaction.

Recurring images placed the audience into an altered state of heightened visual acuity. Some of the techniques utilized in the show were digital projections, and film techniques such as flashback, lip-synch, and slow motion. The succession of images was almost too much for my eye to take in, but so mesmerizing, it was difficult, if not impossible, to look away. For example, at the beginning of the show the audience experienced moving images of a cityscape (Cyburbia), a world that is instantly familiar, and yet as the images continued I became uncomfortable. These

Cyburbia images depicted a sterile world, a future without human presence. Other haunting images for me included: metal worker robots with rabbit heads that multiplied and marched with their wrenches and suitcases; and likewise, praying mantises that grew in number and size as they typed on computer keyboards. These images reinforced the notion of humans as corporate drones. Peeping eyes popped out of holes in every direction reminding me that we are often under surveillance. An antique talking doll was configured and reconfigured out of body parts; later, a naked woman's body is covered or obliterated by machine parts (see Figure 7). Both of these sequences commented on the human-machine relationship. In another scene, a doctor treated a patient whose insides appeared to be on fire (a projection of images — boiling sky, volcanic explosions, and storms on a live performer). The doctor encouraged his patient to "behave" by entering "the shopping zone." The doctor's cure forced the patient to respond passively to the television screen, and then to become overstimulated and agitated, alternating continuously between these two states (see Figure 8). In this scene the audience was confronted with the notion that they are consumers who exist in a consumer society.

Figure 5: Rebecca Wilbur (Page), Sarah Hochkeppel (Zeta), Amelia Winger-Bearskin (Patti), Charles Holley (Alpha), MPS/Cyburbia's *Silence & Darkness*, 1999.

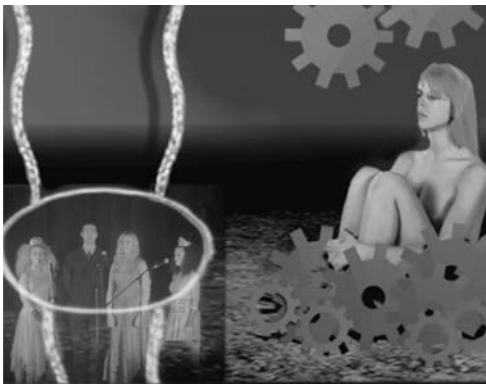Figure 6: Mike Solo (Beta), MPS/Cyburbia's *Silence & Darkness*, 2004.

Figure 7: Taylor Coffman (Patti), Grant J. Wylie (Delta), Kelly Wilson (Zeta), Jen Haefeli (Page), MPS/Cyburbia's *Silence & Darkness*, 2004.

Figure 8: Joshua McCarthy (Edison) and Chris Parsons (Alpha), MPS/Cyburbia's *Silence & Darkness*, 2004.

The aural elements of the performance combined original dialogue, some of which was performed live and some of which was recorded, with snippets of writings by prominent thinkers such as Jean Baudrillard, Guy Debord, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Donna Haraway, and George Orwell; historical figures such as Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas Alva Edison and playwright Heiner Müller. Soundscapes and sound effects also supported the live action sequences.

Original music was also a prominent element in the show. The tunes were often discordant in nature, and had titles like "Silicon Altar" and "Pleasure Under Pressure." The music beckoned the audience, even summoned the audience, to be cognizant of their mind-numbing, media-saturated lives. The dialogue, as spoken by the live performers was often exaggerated or bereft of emotion, with the actors often sounding like machines. The voices in the songs were haunting, beautiful, and blended with the images and live action to engender what was for me, a slightly uncomfortable, insecure sense of being.

The 2001 performance featured nine live actors, a six person band (instrumentals and vocal), and eleven multimedia artists, in addition to the numerous production designers and operators. The 2004 show featured nine live actors, three instrumental musicians, twenty-two multimedia artists and animators, and a large production staff.

In terms of its representations of the present and future, the differences between the 2001 and 2004 versions were striking to me. In particular, the 2001 production featured two live performers portraying the inventors. The projected images, while effective, did not fill up the stage. In contrast, the 2004 performance used an animatronic Alexander Graham Bell that lip-synched to a recording of the actual voice of Bell. The projections were huge, encompassing the entire stage. Multi-screen digital projections created a juxtaposition of multiple images on the stage. One particular scene that involved projecting technological lingo (acronyms) as a sort of digital ticker tape with the businessmen on cell phones dressed in various women's undergarments and spouting off descriptions of themselves as hybrid, mongrel, half breed, and parasite, was effective as a commentary on our media-saturated society (see Figure 9). Overall, in the 2004 performance, there were more images presented in quick succession. The images were more precise and multidimensional — such as the peeping eyeballs (see Figure 10). The 3D animation and video was of the quality of animated Hollywood movies and therefore was extremely realistic. The entire production was synchronized around the movements of the performers. Both the 2001 and 2004 performances, because of the multimedia aesthetics, did not allow me or others to go "deep under" (a phrase used by Alpha and Zeta while in VR) and escape into a fictional world. Instead, the audience was kept alert, which allowed them to think about the effects of technology, of being consumers, and of being "Cyburbians" in an indeterminate future that was closer than they may have "dreamed" of previously.

Figure 9: Grant J. Wylie (Delta) and
Prince Rozario (Gamma),
MPS/Cyburbia's *Silence & Darkness*, 2004.

Figure 10: Kelly Wilson (Zeta), Chris Parsons (Alpha) Prince Rozario (Gamma),
Mike Solo (Beta), MPS/Cyburbia's *Silence & Darkness*, 2004.

Time Traveler Zero Zero

Time Traveler Zero Zero — a story of John Titor, was a tremendous leap forward
from my experiences of *Naked Revolution* and *Silence & Darkness* (2001) in terms of
complexity and sophistication of the live movie format. This show, which included
more 3D animation and video than MPS had presented previously, cycled through
four distinct time periods — 1975, 2000, 2015, and 2036, each constituting a unique
multi-sensorial audience experience. While this piece was driven much more
by narrative than the other shows already discussed, it was the spectacle itself
— a unique blend of storyline, live instrumental music, live actors/singers and
multimedia projections — that made the production so compelling.

The show asked the audience to "wake up" and look at the warning signs
or signposts as to where their future was heading. The message was delivered via
storyline that concerned a (real? fictional?) time traveler, John Titor, who was sent
from the year 2036 back to 1975. [In real life, a person calling himself John Titor,
posted on the WWW in 2000 - 2001. His postings were the inspiration for the script.]
John Titor's mission was to ask his grandfather, an IBM engineer, to provide him
with a 5100 portable computer that he could take back to his future. The computer
was needed to prevent a catastrophic computer code disaster that was to occur
in 2038. Before returning to 2036, John Titor visited his parents and young self in
2000, where he began to post and exchange information on the Internet. Among
other topics, he wrote about "Hell's Kitchen" (WWIII) occurring in 2015, and the
aftermath. His postings warned the citizens of 2000 - 2001 about their fate if they
continued on our path of unbridled consumerism, and continued to allow their
individual rights and freedoms to be taken from them. He told the Internet posters
(and thus the audience) that our time and history is not predetermined and that we
could alter our future. After six months, he left 2001 and returned to his timeline.

The show included genre-defying original music performed by an eight-piece
band. Individual pieces were a blend or pastiche of many musical forms including:

industrial, trip-hop, rap, country, opera, and some Bengali singing. Eight actors/ singers performed multiple roles (except for the actor who portrayed John Titor), demonstrating their flexibility and extraordinary talent in their ability to interact with each other, with the instrumental musicians, and with the multimedia projections.

The multimedia projections of *Time Traveler Zero Zero* were created by twenty-plus designers, animators and artists, working on individual pieces that were compiled for the performance. The effect of viewing the cacophony of formats — including 2D and 3D animation, video montages, and still graphics on a large, sixteen by twenty-four foot scrim — was stimulating, a feast for the eyes that never remained static for longer than a few seconds. As an audience member, at times, I was unable to discern what was created live and what pre-recorded, such as when the narrator, Noxi, and John Titor appear inside the "soft machine" as she sings (live?), and when John Titor chats online (his voice is a voice-over … I was never completely certain about the voices of the other netizens — real or Memorex?).

The scenes were unified via title projections. The prologue, with images and sounds representing biological and digital matter, introduced the audience to John Titor via a narrator (who represented the ghost of his former lover). The show began in the year 2036 with the projection of the time travel facility (TemporalRecon) and the technicians checking and assembling the time machine and loading it into a Chevrolet truck (circa 1970s) for Titor to use on his journey. Arriving in 1975, John Titor landed in a field and met hippies, and then continued on his journey from Florida to Minnesota. His progress was depicted on a map that showed a tiny Chevy driving from state to state. In Minnesota, complete with a lake background that changed as the sun set, and a wagon stage that served as the interior of the house, John Titor met his grandfather. He visited his grandfather's office and picked up the computer at the IBM research park, complete with projections of cubicles. He then time traveled to 2000-2001 to interact with his parents and 3-year-old self, and to post on the Internet. During this time period, the audience was presented with facades of urban dwellings that housed the "netizens," John Titor's web correspondents. Live performers portrayed the netizens inside their homes using their computers. These netizens emerged and vanished into their projected environments as John Titor corresponded with them. As John Titor discussed WWIII, the audience saw a glimpse of 2015 — Hell's Kitchen. Back at his parents' home in 2000, we got a taste of shopping servicescapes, and John Titor taking a bath. Returning to 2036 the audience witnesses John Titor landing at the exact moment he has taken off for the past. Memorable images included for me: the use of double-policemen hand puppet projections to exemplify the ever-growing police state that John Titor writes about in his postings, and the Hell's Kitchen images that included representations from Bruegel's *Triumph of Death*.