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What Is Performance Multimedia?
And Why Is It Impossible To Record Performance Multimedia?

Performance multmedia is a live, in the moment, real-time experience for the performers and the audience; it defies the limits of recorded documentation. It is a large multidimensional theatrical event unlike the small personal-size desktop multimedia bundle found on a CD-ROM

A person in the audience at one of my performance multimedia events can choose to pay attention to any one of many elements happening simultaneously. They can look at the live musroans and/or dancers performing on the stage. They can watch me in the pit in front of the *stage* working with one or more of a collection of multimedia instruments including synthesizers, a laser animation system, computers, a video camera, a video gen lock, video monitors, and an audio mixer. They can observe my small monlters and follow *my* decision-making process as I mix one of my precomposed video steams with my camera images of the live performers as they are digitized and processed by the computer. They can view the resultant mixed images on the large projection screen or any of the multiple large video monitors on each side of the projection screen. They can focus in on any one of those elements, view a number of them simultaneously, or alternate their focus and perspective at will.

Freedom to choose your own focus and perspective thereby creating your own personal experience of the event is an importam aspect of witnessing a perfomnance rnulrrnedra event. No recording medium can come close to recreating the richness and excitement of that personal experience. People often ask to see video recordings of my multimedia events. Video rs s,mply not up to the task of capturing the fullness of perfomnance multimedia. At best a video reconling provides a small fixed window on a large multidimensional experience. The video window can *move* around the experience but it is always *small* and it is always fixed. A video tape's greatest liability is that it is canned. There is no freedom in watching a video tape; it's linear and it's fixed in focus, perspective, rhythm, and dimension.

In the laser segment of my multimedia shows the laser animation imagery fills the projection screen to overflowing. The 4:3 aspect ratio of video is completely out of character with the unbridled evolving fonms of laser imagery. The lively sparkle of laser light pales on the video monitor. Laser animation simply doesn't translate to video tape.

Even if there were a perfect recording medium for my performance multimedia events, it would only demonstrate what that one particular recorded event was like. It would miss making the point that every perfomnance rs unique. (ollaboratlnq with local artists in local spaces means that every performance has a different setting and different musicians, dancers, visual artists, and theater artists; the direction of every event is consistent with my perspective, but each realization is unique.

My real-time video work is based on perfomnance modules that I adjust tn performance with local artists. Local artists select their own accompanying videos from an extensive collection of *my* preromposed video animations that have a broad expressive range. My music-based laser animations are also not absolutely fixed pieces; rather they are perfomnances based on malleable modules that I've been sculpting and fine tuning since 1975.

It bears repeating: each performance multimedia event is unique to the sponsoring locale and far beyond the limits of *any* recording medium or combination of recording media.