

Montanaro Danse Médias Intégrés and the Institute for Studies in the Arts at Arizona State University

present

Time in the Eye of the Needle

Time in the Eye of the Needle is a work which deals, on a personal level, with the experiences generally associated with the migration of peoples and cultures. Through the collaborative process we sought to explore life's common ground on which we all walk by examining the emotional, psychological and physical forces that are at the root of this migration. We discovered that in examining these forces, persecution, renewal of spirit, thirst for a better life and even death were in essence a celebration of life and the human spirit. That memory tends to treat all of lives joys and hardships as lessons in living, and that although we have not yet developed our ability to learn from our triumphs and mistakes, we have at least come to a point where we can recognize them.

Interactive Sensing System

This performance takes place within a virtual stage environment where lights, music, video, graphics, and robots are controlled through video cameras. Video is input into a computer and processed to sense the positions and motions of the dancers within certain locations in the video field. The number, location,

and types of sensors within the video field are different at any given time in the performance are choreographed to provide responses to dancers actions within particular time frames. Information is extracted from the space and represented as impulses which are manipulated and communicated to media controllers on other computers. Media controllers act as agents for the sensing system and operate according to a set of instructions which tell them how to behave when controlling particular media (lights, sound, video, etc.). These behaviors are seen by the viewer as mediated responses, from lighting changes, to computer graphics interactions, to complex interacting musical scores.

The First Encounter

The performers enter along a lit pathway passing over invisible cultural boundaries. Marked only by sound, these boundaries become apparent when crossed by the performers on their journey to meet one another. As their interactions build they meld and then separate into three distinct entities with common ancestries. Dissatisfied by their shared heritage, represented by the sounds of a heartbeat and breath, they once again close in on one another. They meet under the flag of aggression, they clash then divide and in a cacophony of sound, death becomes their savior.

The Monk

From the shadow of death a monk like figure emerges. We have now entered a domain in which light, sound, insight and memory are created and controlled through 12 gestures. He uses these movements to demonstrate his power. The monk can move the stars, call forth lightning, and change earthly events. But for now he offers only a gentle nudge.

The Memory Pool

The monk's light has revealed a woman standing at the edge of a pool of water. This is no ordinary pool of water but neither is the landscape which surrounds it. Each location, each object, triggers different memories. As she walks across her reflections bamboo chimes splash in response. Moving around the reflecting pool causes other memories to come to mind as we hear the distant sounds of children at play and birds singing. A piano plays, the melody responding to her motion, stopping once in a while to watch her and then picking up again as she moves. She eventually catches sight of a large trunk in the distance. She moves towards this Pandora's box thinking that it may hold the key to her future. But as the trunk is opened past, present and future become one and the same.

Duet Through History

The monk once again makes his presence felt by causing the oceans rise from a single photograph. A couple is seen standing on a dock and in turn each one enters the water. Soon they are joined by others and as each person moves from the safety of the dock a tone sounds announcing their passage. Just as each individual life changes history all those who have chosen to leave their home by entering these waters subtly changes the repetition of the ocean waves as they crash upon the shore.

The Train

In time's lottery, two are chosen. They must now withstand the realization that leaving home does not always guarantee a future. Passengers on their own personal journey ride the rails, the same rails that will be used to carry millions to their deaths. A woman stands unquestioning as she is dragged through the misguided glory. Others must live with the horror that she has chosen to ignore.

The Mirror

A woman in a straight jacket is tormented by her inner turmoil. Surrounded by a cage of light and sound she tries to escape but as she moves so does the light and sound. The more she fights the more she is overwhelmed. Three invisible forces measure her motion, two track her location, six others respond with sound. We realize instantly that these powers cannot possibly belong to the monk.

The Prison

The tormented woman now enters a space of past, present, and future. Each of three locations on stage imprison their people, recalling the common themes of the three spaces of The First Encounter. As she approaches each cell, past present and future call out to her increasing in volume.

The Death Bed

A woman dies, yet she lives, in memory, in after life. She dances as a spirit with the one she remembers most and who remembers her. Their two spirits are revealed as a flock of birds as they move as far away from their individual realities as they can.

The Cemetery

As quickly as they had appeared the memory and the woman are gone. Left alone the man wrestles with his destiny. Four women in mourning dance in a pantheon and among the graves. Just as all things in life are seen from our own personal perspective the gravestones move in harmony with their hesitant partners.

The Circle

Our travelers now find themselves back at the beginning, changed forever by what they have seen and experienced. Lost in the symmetry they once again begin their journey into the future, a future as uncertain and filled with mystery as the past.

Choreography and Original Concept: Michael Montanaro

Musical Composition
& Arrangement: John D. Mitchell

Visual Concept: Paul Ahad
Visual Realization: Paul Ahad

Conceptual Adaptation: Andre Houle, Paul Ahad

Lighting Design &
Production Coordination: Andre Houle

Artist Technologist: Robb E. Lovell

Real Time Graphics: Robb E. Lovell

Lighting and Intellabeam Systems: Robb E. Lovell

Interactive Environment Design: Robb E. Lovell, John D. Mitchell

Costumes: Kathy Pawl
Costume Assistants: Pamela Erwin, Daniel Hollingshead,
Maureen Smith

Senior Technical Director: George Pawl

Technical Director
Special Projects: David Lorig

Masters: Kelly Phillips

Video Editor's Assistant: Patricia Clark

Laser Disc Programmer: John D. Mitchell

Text: T.S. Elliot (extract from the poem Burnt Norton)

Melody/Song Men's Duet: Eric Cadesky

Lyrics: Lise Boyer

Video Shoot/Camera: George Pawl, Gene Cooper

Video Editing: D1 system Provided by KAET TV

Editors: Jim Rush, Ben Avechuco

Video Systems Support: Steve Bailey

Performers

Montanaro Danse: Sandra Lapierre, Alison Crawford, Ron Ladd, Lise Boyer, Isabelle Poirier, Tom Casey

Other: Julia Wyncoll, Laney Abernethy, Polly C. Mitchell, Meagan Shalk

Live Vocals: Lise Boyer (Montanaro Dance)

Video Performers

Evolution: Isabelle Poirier, Tom Casey

Little Girl: Brooke Reading

Painter: Tom Casey

Couple: Sandra Lapierre, Ron Ladd

Old Woman: Sandra Lapierre

Spirits: Lise Boyer, Marq Frerichs, Richard Loveless, Robb E. Lovell

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Managing Director: Gregg Parks

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