

February 2001

IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

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### **Listen In: February 2001**

Harvestworks is pleased to announce the following event for February 2001:

Tuesday, February 20, 8 p.m.

*The Technophobe & The Madman*

NYC: NYU Frederick Loewe Theater, 35 W 4th St. (free)

Troy: IEAR Space (DCC 174), Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (free)

*The Technophobe & The Madman* is the first Internet-2 distributed musical. This new networking technology offers several technical advances that make it possible to deliver full-bandwidth high-quality video and audio in a synchronized way, unlike the current version of the Internet.

Featuring performers Maya Azucena and Tyrone Henderson, and directed by Valeria Vasilevski, this work will combine music, video, text and interactivity by artists Nick Didkovsky, Tyrone Henderson, Quimetta Perle, Don Ritter, Neil Rolnick, and Robert Rowe. For further information log on to <http://www.academy.rpi.edu/projects/technophobe> or <http://www.Harvestworks.org/events.html>. This work was commissioned by Harvestworks with funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a public agency. It is co-sponsored by New York University and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

### **About the Work**

The artists were commissioned in June 2000 through a call for proposals and a panel review process. Besides realizing elements of plot, music, video, animation and performance in a collaborative fashion, the project has explored a variety of features on the net including

- An expanded time frame of over six months
- Non-linearity or multiplicity of narrative
- Interactivity with multiple users
- Interplay of programmed and live performance
- Collaboration on all aspects of the project via web and Internet2 conferencing

- Specific use of the capabilities presented by Internet2 broadband technology

By creating a single large scale multimedia piece over six months and by developing the piece both with the distance performing paradigm in mind and planning numerous rehearsals where the artists are in two places at once, the producers and collaborators are exploring new and meaningful ways in which they can uniquely use this new medium.

The structure of the work comes from the confluence of two stories: "Confessions of a Technophobe" by Quimetta Perle and "The Madman" by Tyrone Henderson. Tyrone and Quimetta, working closely with Valeria, have combined the stories into a text for this project which address issues of our relationship to technology on a very personal level. From another perspective, it questions how we love, what that love is, and mediates that view through the technology.

Don Ritter has designed a video environment which takes advantage of the I2 connection, makes the players present both in Troy and in NYC, and carries the actors, the images, and the story over the distance.

The musical score created by Nick Didkovsky, Robert Rowe, and Neil Rolnick will be performed live by two musicians in Troy and two at NYU, in addition to the Technophobe in Troy and the Madman at NYU.

### **Artist Bios**

*NYU Producer:* Dr. Robert Rowe is a graduate of the MIT Media Lab. He is composer and winner of the Bourges Competition, 1990. He is also the author of the book *Interactive Music Systems: Machine Listening and Composing* (MIT Press). Dr. Rowe has also introduced the biannual Interactive Arts Performance Series at NYU which unites computers, video, music, and other arts in live performance.

*RPI Producer:* Neil Rolnick is a composer, performer, and educator. He is currently the chair of the Arts Department and director of the IEAR studios at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY. His current projects include *The Rise and Fall of Isabella Rico*, a full length musical currently in development with the Director's Company and an artist in residency at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the Interarts and Technology Program.

Nick Didkovsky is a guitarist, composer and computer music programmer. He programs interactive music software, teaches computer music at NYU, and composes for various ensembles including the Fred Firth Guitar Quartet and Dr. Nerve, the latter of which he co-founded. Currently, he is working on developing JSML with Phil Burk, the Java successor to the algorithmic music language HSML.

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Tyrone Henderson combines the spoken word with music to create his own unique style. He was a Master Poet in the three-year project *Mass for the New Millennium* under the auspices of Meet the Composer. Mr. Henderson has performed at such New York venues as the Performance Garage, the Knitting Factory, the Kitchen, Nuyorican Poets Cafe, the Whitney Museum, and P.S 122, as well as the John Keats Poetry Festival and the Black Live Arts Festival in Great Britain. His CDs include *Strawman Dance* on Konnex Records and *No Comment* on Atonal Records.

Quimetta Perle is a visual artist and writer working in digital formats. Recent works include *Things*, a narrative CD-ROM with original music as well as an audio CD, a series of digital images output as Iris prints and book of the same material; *Demon-Slayer*, both a book published by Women's Studio Workshop and a series of Iris prints; a performance with dramatic readings, dance, vocals and percussion at Teatro Galeria Manny Maldonado; and a solo exhibition of large format inkjet prints at Polytechnic University in Brooklyn.

Don Ritter has been creating large-scale installations and performances which use interactive technologies. Using his custom designed software and sensing systems, interactive video and sound are controlled by musical instruments or the body motions of viewers. His work has been exhibited extensively at festivals, museums and galleries in the USA, as well as Canada, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Germany, Austria, France, Thailand, and Japan. Mr. Ritter holds a Masters of Visual Studies from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and has worked professionally with interactive technologies since 1979. He is a Professor of Computer Graphics & Interactive Media at Pratt Institute in New York City.

Valeria Vasilevski wrote and directed the European premiere of the opera *The True Last Words of Dutch Schultz* composed by Eric Salzman with vocalist Theo Bleckmann. This year she received a Cary Trust Grant with composer Randall Woolf to write and direct four new works for pianist Kathleen Supové. With Mr. Woolf she also wrote the text for: *BYOD* which premiered with the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble; *The Trick Is To Keep Breathing* which will premiere with the Sequitur Ensemble and *Limbs Akimbo* for pianist Anthony de Mare. She received a NYSCA Director's Commission for *This Is Virgil Thompson's Shoe* which she is creating with composer Jed Distler. Her article on concert theater, "Pioneering a New Form or Putting a Dress on a Tree" appears in *Yale Theater*. She is a cyber virgin. Was.

### **About Harvestworks**

Harvestworks Digital Media Arts Center is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1977 to cultivate artistic talent using electronic technologies. Harvestworks' programs provide the artist with production studios, grant opportunities, education, communal practice, and distribution. Harvestworks, located in Soho, offers a creative environment where artists learn new technologies, create art, and exhibit new works in a new way. Funding for this program was provided in part by the New York State Council on the

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