Christopher Hopkins is the instructor for the Honors Seminar that produced this showing of visual music. He is an associate professor of music at Iowa State, where he teaches courses in composition, interdisciplinary graduate studies, and musical applications of technology. He is also on the faculty of the Human-Computer Interaction program and conducts research in the Virtual Reality Applications Center. His musical compositions have been performed at international festivals in Basel, Ghent, Grenoble, Hong Kong, Honolulu, London, Melbourne, New York, Tanglewood, Toronto, Vienna, and Zurich, with broadcasts over the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Österreichischer Rundfunk, Radio Canada, WNYC, and Public Radio International. His work is recorded on the Innova and SEAMUS labels. His artistic and research interests include dialectics of historical and contemporary styles in composition and performance practice, descriptive phonology of music, and interdisciplinary research creating 3-D virtual environments for control of sound synthesis for music and virtual engineering.

Honors Seminar 321N - Evaluating Creative Imagery in Electronic and Visual Music
The Fall 2011 Honors Seminar explored how visual imagery integrates with musical imagery to create the genre of visual music. Participants explored how a visual animation can be organized as music, by developing criteria for critical evaluation of visual music toward curation of this evening's screening, which is the final event in the 2011 Lipa Festival of Contemporary Music here at ISU.

The Lipa Festival of Contemporary Music is funded in part with support of the C. Buell Lipa Memorial for 20th Century Music, the Louise Moen Hamilton Fund for Excellence in Music, and the Alvin Edgar Fund for the Performing Arts - a part of the Iowa State University Foundation.

Donations to the C. Buell Lipa Memorial Fund may be directed to:
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INTRODUCTION

Visual music is the art of introducing musical gesture, form, and accompaniment to film or other visual graphics. The audio or visual components each may be able to stand alone, but in visual music the two are necessarily unified into an artistic whole.

Visual music behaves like an abstract art, and, as with all art forms, the style of visual music can vary greatly. From primarily abstract visuals to more composed video, visual music is an art with distinctive variety. However like any other forms of music, visual music has structure and development into sections with a known beginning, middle, and end, each with contrasting characteristics.

This evening's showcase features works of visual music selected by participants in Honors 321N “Evaluating Creative Imagery in Visual and Electroacoustic Music” and is one of the featured events for the 2011 Lipa Festival of Contemporary Music.

PROGRAM

cameraless animation and prerecorded music

Liquid Lasers (2011) film by Dax Norman
music by Neil Anderson-Himmelspach
animation and video and music

Oceanes (2011) Jean Piche
computer graphics and electroacoustic music

Idrioema - nitea (2011) Idrioema
computer-generated graphics set to electroacoustic music

repetition in the audio is represented visually as well with the repetition of the same visual.

The entire piece is made up visually by a geometric pattern and rounded shapes. These are reproduced throughout the piece with different colors or movement, but remain essentially the same. The same kind of idea occurs in the music as well. Some portions are easy to pick out, like the pattern at the beginning of the song. The audio has multiple layers that repeat and build on themselves, but never actually change. The changes in the piece are marked in the visual and audio by layers coming in and out of the whole.

— Kelsey Kremer

CONTRIBUTORS

Rachael Farhat is a senior in Nutritional Science and Global Resource Systems, with a minor in Spanish. Originally from Omaha, Nebraska, she has lived in Ames for four years and hopes to spend time traveling around the world after graduation next winter. Her interests include sustainable agriculture, community development, being outdoors, photography, music, dance, good food and good company.

Kelsey Kremer is a junior in journalism and mass communication with a minor in communication studies. Kremer is a photo editor at the Iowa State Daily and an intern in the ISU Athletics Communications office. Her activities include playing alto saxophone in concert band, serving as publicity chair of the honors student board, and acting as co-president of the Society of Professional Journalists. Kremer is a Girl Scout, golf enthusiast, and visual communicator.

Emmet Knapp is a freshman in Undeclared Engineering. He is a member of the Student Union Board, working specifically with musical acts coming through the Maintenance Shop. Music has always been a part of his life, and he hopes to keep learning about, listening to, and playing different types of music for as long as possible. In addition to music, his interests include environmental science, attending concerts, and enjoying time with friends.

Curtis Ullerich is a junior in Computer Engineering with a minor in Music Technology. He has been very involved in the music department and cross-disciplinary studies relating to sound and music. He has played in the marching, symphonic, basketball, and hockey bands at ISU as well as various independent ensembles. His interests include volunteering, photography, and running.
This piece is divided into several visual sections, which are accompanied by slight variations of the audio as well. The first section is characterized by a recurring motion from the right side of the screen to the left, complimented by the repetitive nature of the audio melody at this time. The second section is transitory, only lasting twenty seconds, and is not characterized by any distinguishable movements. When the third section begins, the next recurring movement begins and is characterized by a steady movement from the right, then back in a particular jutting pattern. This section proceeds for a while with small variations coordinating with unique moments in the music. The fourth section then begins with a spinning on the screen that is unparalleled previously in that point. Then, at almost 4 minutes, the visuals return to the same right/left movement found in section three, coordinated with a whole new audio sound. This section lasts until the end of the piece, giving it an overall ABCDC pattern. — Rachael Farhat

Jochen Kraußer's Wind Sei Stark consists of live action film with electroacoustic music by Hans Tutschku. Two very apparent themes of circular motion and drifting are present in the piece, both centered around a windmill. The theme of "Wind is Strong" is apparent in the repeated clips of the windmill, brought to a climax as the windmill is uprooted and flies through the sky. It is interesting that the common theme of circular motion is portrayed across disparate film segments, with the windmill contrasted notably against dancers on a stage performing choreographed, abstract dances. Their introduction is a rather abrupt turn from the outdoor scenes shown up to that point. Without noting these common thematic elements, the inclusion of the dancing segments can be jarring or confusing to the viewer, so as you watch, be attentive for other such parallels among seemingly dissimilar sections.

The message Kraußer indicates his audience should grasp from this piece is one of reaction to forces. The wind in the case of the windmill, and the mind in the case of humans. He relates these two ideas with a common element of rotation: The cogs of the human mind to match the obvious example of the windmill's turning blades. — Curtis Ullerich

In Slipstream engine by Texas artist, Dax Norman a strong connection between the audio and visual components is made apparent. A feeling of repetition is made present in the beginning and reintroduced at the end to conclude the piece with a sense of completeness. The opening

Synchromy No. 4: Escape (1938) Mary Ellen Bute (music by J. S. Bach 1685-1750) animation on film

Barastylahyyoe (2011) Jean Detheux computer graphics and traditional folkloric music

Wind Sei Stark (1989) film by Jochen Kraußer music by Hans Tutschku live action film with electroacoustic music

Slipstream engine (2011) film by Dax Norman music by Dave Merson Hess animation with traditional music

**NOTES ON THE PROGRAM**

Union Job was created using camerless animation. A constant collage of different video clips and audio tracks, the unique approach to the visual aspect of the video, demands the viewer’s attention. With video varying from clips of live acting to colorful, abstract art, the visuals keep the viewer guessing continually. Recurring scenes, however, offer the viewer some amount of familiarity. These scenes, primarily consisting of live action footage, bridge the gaps between otherwise largely abstract images. The relation between the audio and the video is not one of obvious coordination, seeming improbable to exist together. However, the relationship does a great job to evoking feeling in the spectator, as the emotion of those on screen is visible and well complemented by the music. From the smooth vocals provided by Zephyr played over images of many people in different situations, to more strictly rhythmic textures provided by Yume Bitso, played against evolving images of immaterial objects, the video is left open for interpretation, while simultaneously leaving the viewer entertained. — Emmet Knapp
Liquid Lasers is constantly moving. The visual shapes on screen repeatedly evolve and morph into new images, while the music is just as upbeat, changing numerous times throughout the video. This energy draws one into the video easily. Near the beginning of the video, the geometric patterns on screen are very organized. But eight seconds into the video, the symmetrical movement is temporarily abandoned and replaced with less organized visual movement, overlaid on recorded footage. From that point on, the random visual movement on film is interchanged with the symmetrically organized geometric patterns until the end of the video. While the music is upbeat and changing just as often as the visuals, the coordination between the visuals and the audio are minimal throughout the video. This can be attributed to the layering of the audio, with the visual corresponding to only certain parts of the audio.

— Emmet Knapp

Oceanes by Jean Piche is a piece of visual music that exemplifies ideals of visual music as a larger metaphor for something else, and the expectation of musical development through a visual and audio connection.

References to the ocean are made throughout the piece, in both auditory and visual representations. The video gives one the sense of the ocean through the water-like, liquid appearing motion on the screen. The piece has a feeling of oscillation, movement, and, similar to an ocean—waves. There are other visual items throughout that make a less obvious connection to the ocean, for example small squares that cut through the flowing visual. This added visual is also developed by the sound and could represent fish swimming through the ocean.

The audio in this piece was created without using samples or recordings of the ocean, but rather independently synthesized.

Three main movements are present within the video, exemplifying musical development. The introduction of the small square shapes marks a new musical idea and section each time. In the final selection the piece forms a different "color" visually with a slight change in hue and saturation, which is also represented musically with a slow developing change in the over tones of the piece. This piece of visual music also has a sense of constant movement, much like an ocean, in the visual and in the undertones and darker tones of the audio that seem to drone through the entire moment.

— Kelsey Kremer

Idrioema - nitea
This video is constantly in contrast. The screen is split simply in black and white, and though the dividing line is not static, it is unyielding. Throughout the piece, the action-reaction relationship between the visual and audio music is especially pronounced. In silence, there is nothing. Then, whether as a product of the sound or the movement, at 16 seconds there is the initial crack that sparks all the rest of the movement in the video. This same sound that starts the initial peak recurs at intervals throughout the video, amongst other ambient and constant sound. The video continues in constant waves of motion for about 2 minutes, and then returns to the initial stark contrasting still silence for a dramatic finish.

— Rachael Farhat

Synchrony No. 4: Escape is a work from 1938 by American experimental animation artist Mary Ellen Bute. The quality and style of the animation is very impressive for the time period in which it was created. Equally impressive is the relevancy the work maintains over seventy years later.

The piece displays three clear sections. In the first, a cage formed of sets of parallel black bars appears and morphs into variations of itself. In the second, an orange triangle is shown inside this cage. In the third, the triangle escapes the cage and exhibits a variety of gestures.

While not intensely anthropomorphized, the triangle's movements demonstrate clear emotion and feeling as it sometimes trembles inside the cage, while frantically moving about at other points. The cage often responds clearly with broad movements, choreographed to a powerful low brass section, displaying dominance and confidence.

Within the realm of visual music, this piece is very accessible. The viewer may notice striking similarity to the introductory segment of Disney's original Fantasia.

— Curtis Ullerich

Jean Detheux's cosmological piece Barastylahyyoe is an interesting blend of very traditional Siberian music with a fairly modern art form, created in this case from a DVD-video sketch. Traditionally, this music is intended to have a somewhat celestial or trans-existential tone, and in this case the visuals capture a very similar feeling. The colors and the constant movement seem to create a music all of their own. While you can visualize the heavens opening to the audio music, you can imagine you are gazing into the portal of the very universe unfolding while watching the visuals.