

JOHN OUGHTONSLIDE MUSIC / IAN STEWART
at The Music Gallery 9/25/78

One combination of music and visuals I remember happened on a flight out of Buffalo. Flying in to the sunset, over those weird little air-hose earphones they rent you on American flights, seven channels of music played. As orange and red unrolled I found a suitably stirring symphony and the two-sight and sound--started to accompany each other. It wasn't too hard to imagine cellists playing, hidden in the cumulus clouds, or a grand piano with biplane wings gliding along beside.

And you get synchronicities, as William Burroughs uses the term, coincidences of events and associations around you, quite often with recorded music. Play an old Dylan song on the stereo and a friend with the name in the song may call. A Roxy Music album and then you see in the paper a movie you've wanted to catch, at the Roxy Theatre (no longer a 99¢ wonder, alas).

But light and music being both wave forms, they can also cancel each other, or you concentrate on the visual and lose the sound level. Movies tend to do this, the music, like Muzak, having been implanted just below normal conscious level so it influences emotions without being critically listened to, analyzed, having expectations applied to it. Method to drive your least-liked composer (or critic) crazy: lock them into a room with only concealed speakers. Play-theme music from forgettable movies endlessly, even for just an hour. All those false climaxes, pointless diversions, and endless thrashings of the idee fixe....

Of course the other operates; manipulations of light to serve as a background or accompaniment. In the 'fly now, pay later' 60s any old vegetable oil or water-colour dye could suddenly find itself heated and projected by lights over the heads of cell-

snapping rock and roll fans. A light show. Laserium is a descendant. If you're Martin Scorsese, you can accompany a favourite sound track, the Last Waltz concert, by lining up Hollywood's best technicians and equipment and rolling.

For us, on a scale of less expensive technology, Ian Stewart's 'Slide Music' was instructive. I didn't know what to expect from the title, maybe people playing slide whistle, Delta blues guitar, trombone in front of slide-lit backdrop. But the only live portion of the evening was Ian changing the carousels of slides, starting the tape recorder or turntable for sound. The music on tape sounded improvised. Instead



of a 'Greatest Hits' assortment of impressive images as most photographers would tend to show (myself included) Ian had edited a series of considered looks at various objects or scenes. There were some sequences of rapid change, images seen only once, but the first series seemed determining for the rest in method.

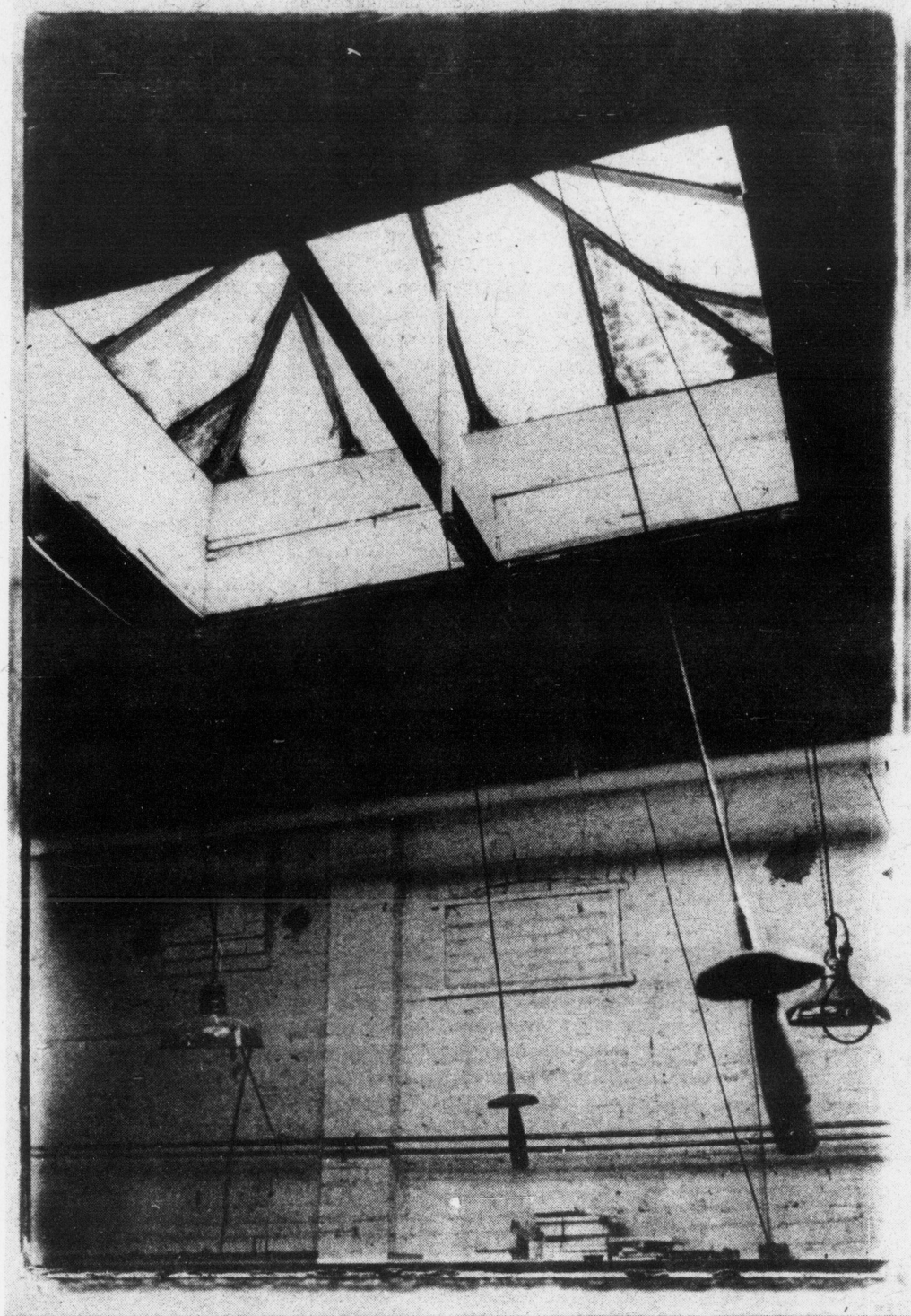
An old RESTAURANT sign, a strange, jagged piece of antique/futuristic metal, used to hang outside Le Select on Queen St. Ian said afterward he had wanted to shoot it for a while, but saw a pickup truck carrying it off one day. So he followed the truck to a parking lot and there shot many images of it standing bound by rope in the back of the black truck. Many of the slides throughout the evening were made with a soft diffused look at the edges (Vaseline on the outer surface of a filter) which concentrated one sharp focus at the center. The

word 'AURA' emerged from the name, bits of the parking lot environment came and went, the camera walked around the truck.

The music throughout this part was a small jazz group with sax, guitar, percussion, some spaces and quiet sections in it. I found my attention fairly regularly swinging from music to new slide and back. The changing of the slides (varied somewhat, not on a regular timer) established a verying beat, the noises would sometimes change very appropriately with a new vantage point on the screen and sometimes be totally unrelated. Which is a function of attention, not the sources alone. At the end, Ian played a record of a bird calling in the woods while he watched a picnic with a young mother and child in summer sunshine. The record had a fascinating internal synchronicity: it was well-used, and the track in question was a call of about five notes, silence, then the call again. The pattern of scratches in the 'silences' seemed to repeat the rhythm of the call.

To steal from Burroughs once more, somewhere he points to the hunger of the human brain to make connections, to see reasonable cause and effect chains where in fact there may be none. His example: take a filmed sequence of commuters running to catch a bus in London, superimpose sounds of machine guns and people yelling. The viewer would assume the people in the sequence are being fired on as they run away from. . . ?

Thus everyone probably had different and unique associations from 'Slide Music'. There was a tentative quality about the presentation, but some effects seemed to give structural weight--superimpositions of slides as one projector took over from another, the timing of various slides. What the performance accomplished best was not imposing too much on the audience, not saying 'Remember this flash effect' but more 'Here's this and this. What happens with them?'



Ian Stewart

MUSIC GALLERY

30 St. Patrick Street Toronto M5T 1V1 598 2400

The Music Gallery is a non-profit centre for contemporary music. Organized in 1976 in a renovated warehouse in Toronto, the gallery's first offerings were regular Tuesday and Friday night performances by the CCMC and a modest weekend programme of concerts by local musicians whose work was avowedly experimental.

Today the gallery provides a concert, rehearsal and recording facility which is in almost constant use. This year's concert series includes over seventy performances by Canadian and international artists with most events still originating in the Toronto community. Members of the gallery, who pay a \$20 annual fee, have access to the studio by appointment and can obtain guidance in the use of mixing and recording equipment. Concert revenues are split between the artist (80%) and the gallery (20%). The gallery looks after publicity and provides an audio technician and ticket-taker.

The gallery maintains an extensive archive of tape recordings and now houses a record company, Music Gallery Editions. Operating through private donations and loans, MGE has issued thirteen records of contemporary Canadian music. The records are produced co-operatively: profits are shared equally by the artist and the company. The distributor in Canada is P.J. Imports. Distribution in the U.S. so far is through New York, Chicago and San Francisco.

MGE continues to expand its catalogue. Forthcoming releases include an indigenous Canadian music series (among them Eskimo Katajak singing from Cape Dorset and fiddlers from Tadoussac, Quebec); a boxed set of the best recorded playing of Larry Dubin, recently deceased drummer with the CCMC; a cycle of pieces by Jim Montgomery; and C(agle)lebration Messagemix, an award-winning radio tape composition by Udo Kasemets in collaboration with Peter Anson and the Music Gallery.

Studio facilities at the Music Gallery include two half-track tape recorders (Revox A77 & Panasonic Technics), an 8-track recorder (Teac - 1/2") and a cassette recorder (Tandberg); two 8x4 mixing boards (Teac-Tascam) and a 6x2 mixer (Sony); fourteen microphones, dynamic and condenser (omni/cardioid/supercardioid); a Buchla electronic music system, two grand pianos, instrument amplifiers and numerous percussion instruments; and an exhibition space and listening library. The instrument collection and complement of recording hardware continue to grow and future plans include a computer music system with biofeedback interface.

The staff is five people: two full-time for the gallery and one for the record company; and one half-time person for each. Funding for all the activities has come from the Canada Council (Music Department, Visual Arts/Parallel Galleries and Explorations), the Ontario Arts Council, Wintario, the Samuel and Saidye Bronfman Family Foundation and numerous private donors. The gallery is able to carry on the range of activities that it does because of the countless hours of volunteer work that those using the gallery put into its maintenance. A special word of thanks to Andrew Timar and John Oswald who are undertaking the editorship of Musicworks magazine and to Victor Coleman whose valuable advice and technical experience help make this publication possible.

'ear it live**newton/flute-parker/sax-dr.brute/sax
waisvisz/cracklebox****Saw Gallery**

72 Rideau Street
Ottawa 613-236-6181 Admission free
Michael Waisvisz Sept. 27 8:30
Evan Parker Oct. 3 8:30
co-sponsored with Jazz Ottawa
James Newton Oct. 11 8:30
*Vincent Dionne Oct. 18 8:30
*Houle Steppien Duo Nov. 15 8:30

The Music Gallery of CCMC

30 St. Patrick St.
Toronto 416-598-2400. \$3 admission
Waisvisz Sept. 30 9 p.m.
Parker Oct. 7 & 8 9 p.m.
Newton Oct. 14 9 p.m.

St. Lawrence College

Portsmouth & King Sts. Kingston 4th Floor
Theatre 613-544-5400 Admission free
Waisvisz Sept. 28 8:00 p.m.
Parker Oct. 5 noon workshop concert 8 p.m.
Newton Oct. 12 8 p.m.
Dr. Brute Oct. 26 8 p.m.

Artspace

190 Hunter St., Peterborough
745-0976
1.00 non-members .50 members
Waisvisz Sept. 29 8 p.m.
Parker Oct. 6 8 p.m.
Newton Oct. 13 8 p.m.
Brute Oct. 27 8 p.m.