

Star Networks At The Singing Point

Star Networks At The Singing Point is a performance working within the world of sounds deriving from a single circuit design.

The instrument on which the work is played is made of unusual found electronic parts, and of amplifiers from discarded tube and transistor equipment. These components are arranged so that they may readily be connected, using colored wire sets, to form sound-producing circuits.

In performance, the connections within each of six network circuits are progressively altered. The specific arrangement of each network thereby evolves through a series of variations, and the sounds produced by each evolve through a number of characters, each representing a facet of a single underlying design.

The title is a description, in the terminology of electronics engineering, of the generalized circuit design on which the work is based.

Star Networks At The Singing Point has been presented at

The Kitchen Center For Video And Music, New York, NY
Mills College, Oakland, CA
80 Langton Street, San Francisco, CA
KPFK-FM, Los Angeles, CA
California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, CA
Palomar College, San Marcos, CA
Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT
Media Study/Buffalo, Buffalo, NY

It is the subject of a new videotape by the Yugoslavian filmmaker and videomaker, Andrej Zdravič.

Critical Response

"Part of the fun of electronic music is that it can wreak havoc on your associations and force you to reconsider how you recognize certain sounds. For example, the performer can turn a dial to change the bandwidth, and the voice of a seagull becomes the pounding of industrial machinery. Radio static becomes running water. These were the kind of fascinating transformations that occurred in Ralph Jones's composition, Star Networks At The Singing Point.

Jones is surely a virtuoso at sound synthesis. More than one listener was unsure whether, during the performance, a truck really did rumble down Wooster St. Jones assured me that all of the noises in his composition had been produced electronically, although they sounded as real as the pneumatic drill tearing up the sidewalk outside my window as I write."

-- Soho News, 9/78

"Star Networks At The Singing Point provided us with numerous percussive-type sounds, some as abrasive as a ratchet, as well as electronically-produced animal images and birdlike calls and flutters, perhaps inspired by Jones's extensive work with ultrasonics, developing microphones that allow us to hear communications between insects that are beyond the range of normal human hearing... It is a very present-tense sound experience, but based on extensive research and experimentation and development. It requires absolute dedication on the part of the participant. In Jones's case, each performer had to construct a new circuit according to certain design instructions. These new circuits then form the basis for the sonic exploration and we as an audience can get a sense of discovery as the functions and personalities of these new instruments reveal themselves, along with the performers who created them."

-- HIGH FIDELITY/musical america, 1/79