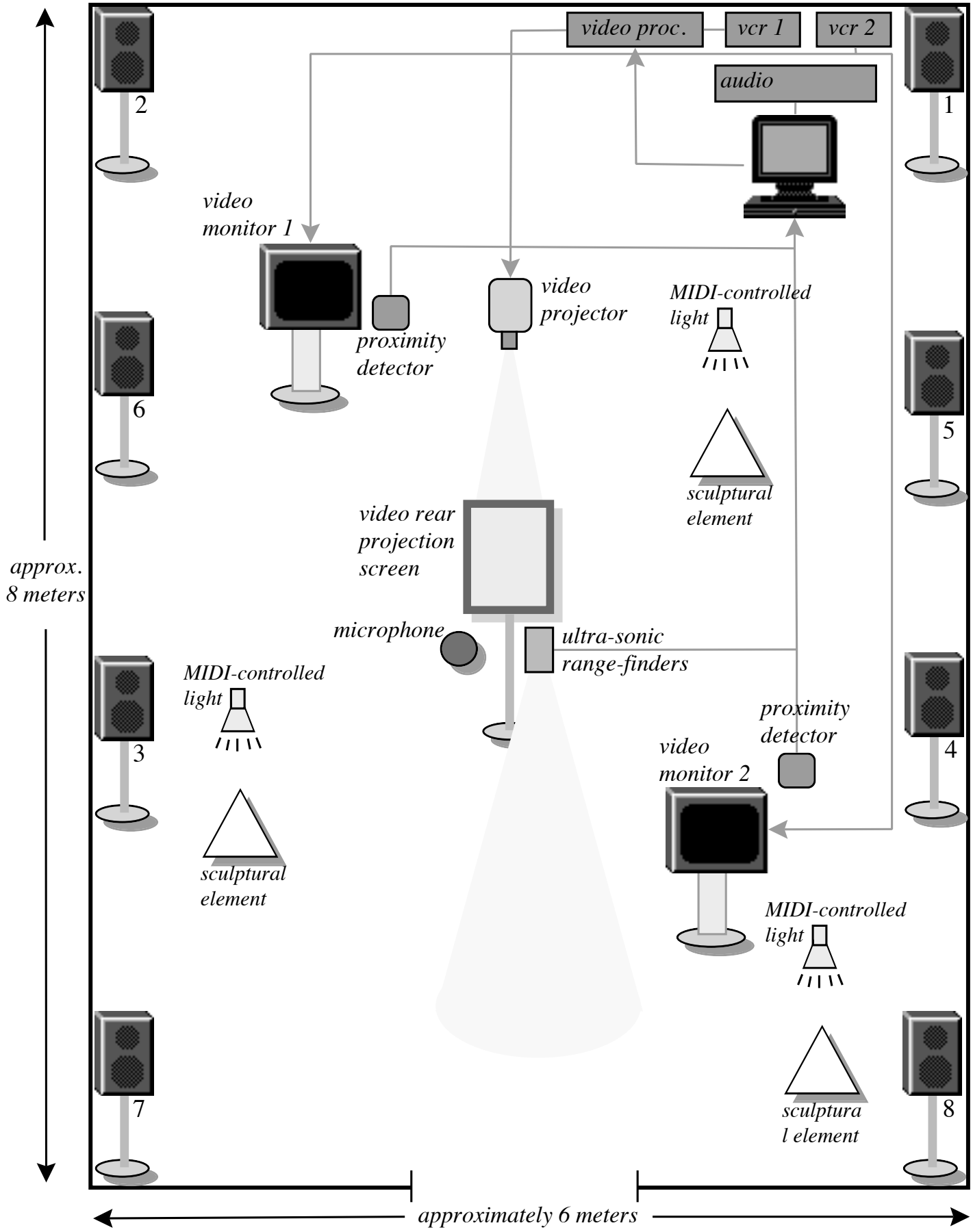
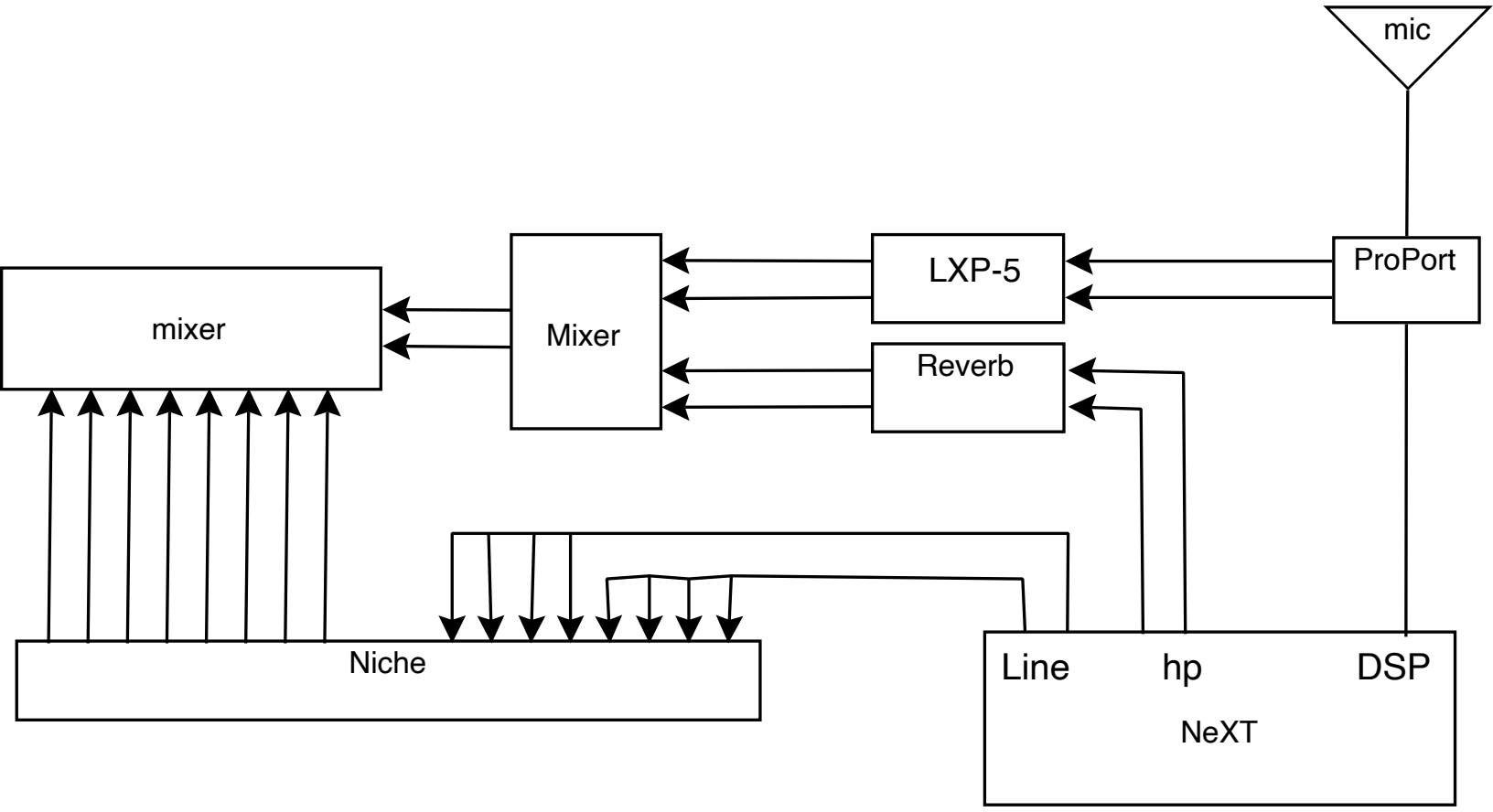
Suggested Installation Plan



Note: audio and lighting cabling, small photocell sensors, and sculptural elements not shown


mic
ProPort
LXP-5
Reverb
Mixer
mixer
Niche
Line
hp
DSP
NeXT

of the highlights of the concerts. It was easy to admire the musicianship, professionalism, and focussed negotiation of musical control that Mari Kimura brought to the stage, for example. Yet interactivity does not feature in the structural design of ICMC in general. Rather compressed papers with little time for questions will of necessity continue in the main body of the conference. Panels are a very valuable idea, but whoever is put on them, there will be a great many talented researchers and creators on the audience side of the podium. Why not expect attendees to have read position statements by panel members beforehand, so that the issues can actually be discussed in some depth? At the moment, we tend to get a succession of statements, proclamations, or platforms that do not generate the aesthetic or intellectual synergy of which such groups are I am sure capable. Careful guidance by a moderator so that discussion achieves continuity is very important.

JAPANESE ECOLOGY

Notes on Japanese human ecology, from a very limited base of observation. Inspiration: the toilet. Water usage in Tokyo is highly efficient, with 2-setting toilet flushing common (also increasingly the norm now in Australia, but I believe not in the U.S. or Europe), with an extra sink on top to allow the same water to wash the hands before proceeding to wash away the toilet contents. Bath water is shared by families and also used in the first rinse cycle of the family washing machine in many cases, due to the separation of soaping and soaking. Overpackaging is rampant, on the other hand. Infrared (I think) proximity sensors in the male urinals made certain that they were autoflushed. Remote controls were everywhere.

JAPAN'S CULTURE OF ACHIEVEMENT

Several Japanese researchers said to me that even today Japan feels inferior to the West because it is not creative, only excellent at development and application. This oft-stated belief did receive some empirical support perhaps when one looked at the papers from Japanese contributors. There were significant exceptions, though, and I make no personal conclusion. Others said that the Japanese attitude to the West is a mixture of inferiority and superiority. This rang true. Some said to me that change toward a different lifestyle will come, but others said that the vast majority of people have absolutely no desire for an increase in creativity in educational practices and that change of that kind will never come. In any case, I was greeted with uniform and marvelous helpfulness in trains and other situations where it was obvious the poor *gaijin* had lost his way. Other Asians, I am told by the Japanese, are not treated with anything like this warmth of response.

JAPANESE SYNCRETISM

Cultural mixes were sometimes astonishing. Italian food was very popular, and this was based, I was told, on the similarity of sound of the Japanese and Italian languages, and the shared ardour for noodles in the two countries. In any case it was possible to get spaghetti plus everything from egg to beefsteak to curry sauce to bolognaise to sashimi. At a concert on the national holiday Old Peoples' Day (a rather un-Western idea, that) traditional taiko (drum) ensembles of male, female, and mixed gender performed. Mostly the performances were of unison or 2-3 part drum patterns played on from 3 to 8 drums to pretaped traditional instrumental melodies or song. Several companions and I were astonished to hear in the midst of this the 1950s (or was it 1960s?-experts please speak up here) pop tune "Calender Girl" by Neil Sedaka as the tape piece which was then accompanied by complex taiko syncopations. It was clear this sort of thing wouldn't have got past the ICMC piece selection process (nor am I suggesting it necessarily should), but it was something that brought the feeling of astonishment to me, something that happens with extreme rarity in listening to music after all these years. The audience made no sign that this piece was in any way out of place in the day's performance. With apologies for self-indulgent excesses that may make it past the editor's careful eye. (Jeff Pressing)

particularly striking to me: physical models can develop all the more as analysis techniques are used. Space and spatialisation seems to develop, good! Very elaborate sensors are used (e.g. paper 1A2)... but for uninteresting and bad usage (e.g. play primitive midi percussion from a Shakuhachi !!!!!!!??????!!!

We need better tools for the control of synthesis than patches with +,* and midi. (Xavier Rodet)

Exotic... and uh, umm, very formal. (Robin Bargar)

I wanted to add one little thing to my comments, which is that I thought the presentation on the shakuhachi was absolutely fascinating. It was a real treat to get an in-depth look at an instrument we don't normally encounter in the West, and even more of a treat to be immersed in something that had absolutely nothing to do with computers for an hour. (Rick Bidlack)

No one was really technically on top of things at one of the concerts. (anonymous)

I think that the schedule is a little bit too tight, and also I know that all the papers are very technical. If possible, I would like to have translators for every paper session and demonstration. (Eiji Murata)

If I hear one more piece that sounds like garbage cans being thrown off a roof, I will run out of the hall screaming. (anonymous)

I was impressed by the technical quality of many papers, but it seems to me that few systems really work in a practical sense, and few developments get a real workout. That's partly what you should expect from cutting-edge research, but with the representation of many composers, doesn't the ICMC represent a good amount of applied technology? If so, where is it? Perhaps the funding isn't there to take research past the concept stage. Perhaps ICMC is not presenting applied work that's out there. (Roger Dannenberg)

Michael McNabb's installation was very interesting and innovative - many of the human interface issues were carefully thought out and, in retrospect, the work left a memorable impression. I also liked the shamanistic quality of Iwasaki's piece for processed voice. Ethnomusicologist Ellen Koskoff has said that a shaman may be expected to go through as many as seven or eight hundred personalities in a single ses-

The Forever Field

Description (1993)

"The Forever Field" is a continuously-running walk-in multimedia installation, which premiered at the 1993 International Computer Music Conference in Tokyo, Japan. It consists of an 8-channel audio environment in the form of two quadraphonic sound fields, plus two or more video monitors, video projection, and supporting sculptural elements. Recorded and processed sounds are performed and realistically moved in space in real time by a NeXT computer and MIDI-controlled signal processors, using synthesized azimuth, distance, and doppler processing. Sonar and optical sensors and a live microphone react to the presence of visitors by changing the content and real-time processing of sounds, warping the spatial sound fields, adjusting the video projection level, and selectively illuminating the sculptural elements.

Artistically, "The Forever Field" is a meditation on the ways that our lives and identities are inescapably defined and transformed by time. Sounds which evoke the memories of childhood, thoughts of relationships, and impressions of old age swirl together in space in constantly-rearranging and never-repeating patterns of association, representing non-linear psychological time, or memory. Simultaneously, the video monitors display computer-processed images of distance, erosion, travel, and natural forces, representing historic or geological time, and entropy. The projection screen displays processed images of carousels in motion, punctuated by fleeting clouds, representing our subjective feelings of the immediate present. The projected images are seen in vertical format within a classical picture frame and are projected only when a person is near the screen, emphasizing the intimate and personal nature of our concept of time. Any sounds made by visitors near this screen are picked up, processed into musical material, and redistributed along with the pre-recorded sounds, adding a "memory" of the visitor to the work itself.

Requirements

This work requires a quiet darkened area between 500 and 1000 square feet in size, 8 discrete channels of audio amplification, 8 small speakers on stands or otherwise mounted at ear level, two large screen (minimum 27", preferably 32" or greater) video monitors, a video projector capable of projecting a 40" diagonal image when turned on its side, two auto-repeat

VHS, SVHS or 3/4" U-MATIC video players, a NeXT computer, and audio and video cabling. The artist will supply and install the custom video projection screen, sensors and other audio and video signal processing equipment, and the NeXT computer and sound system (if necessary). Minimum setup time is one full day. Estimated strike time is 1/2 day. One part-time assistant would be appreciated for audio, video, and sensor cable construction and routing.

Biography

Michael McNabb is a composer, performer, and installation artist specializing in computer applications to those pursuits. He has received awards from the Prix Ars Electronica, the U.S. National Endowment for the Arts, the Bourges Electroacoustic Music Festival, and the League of Composers /ISCM. Two CD releases are available on the Wergo label, "Invisible Cities" (Wer 2015-50), and "Dreamsong" (Wer 2020-2), whose title piece New Yorker writer Andrew Porter termed "a classic of the genre", and the San Jose Mercury News named as one of the best works of the last 40 years. His many international performances and installations include the Almeida Festival in London, the SISEA conferences in Groningen and Minneapolis, the Computer Music Conferences in Venice, Glasgow, Tokyo, and San Jose, and collaborations with dance companies (including ODC/ San Francisco and Liss Fain Dance) and film and video artists.

McNabb holds a doctorate in Music Composition from Stanford University, where he studied at the Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics with John Chowning and Leland Smith. In 1991 and 1992 he managed the Sound and Music Group at NeXT Computer. Articles and essays by McNabb appear in the books "The Language of Electroacoustic Music" (Macmillan Press) and "The Music Machine" (MIT Press), and in the Computer Music Journal and Leonardo Journal. His current work focuses on media-enhanced electroacoustic musical performance and interactive installation art.

"The Forever Field" Generic Installation Layout (site-specific arrangements anticipated)

Note: audio and lighting cables, and small photocell sensors not shown
Computer equipment may be located in an adjacent room.