

THE DEMO

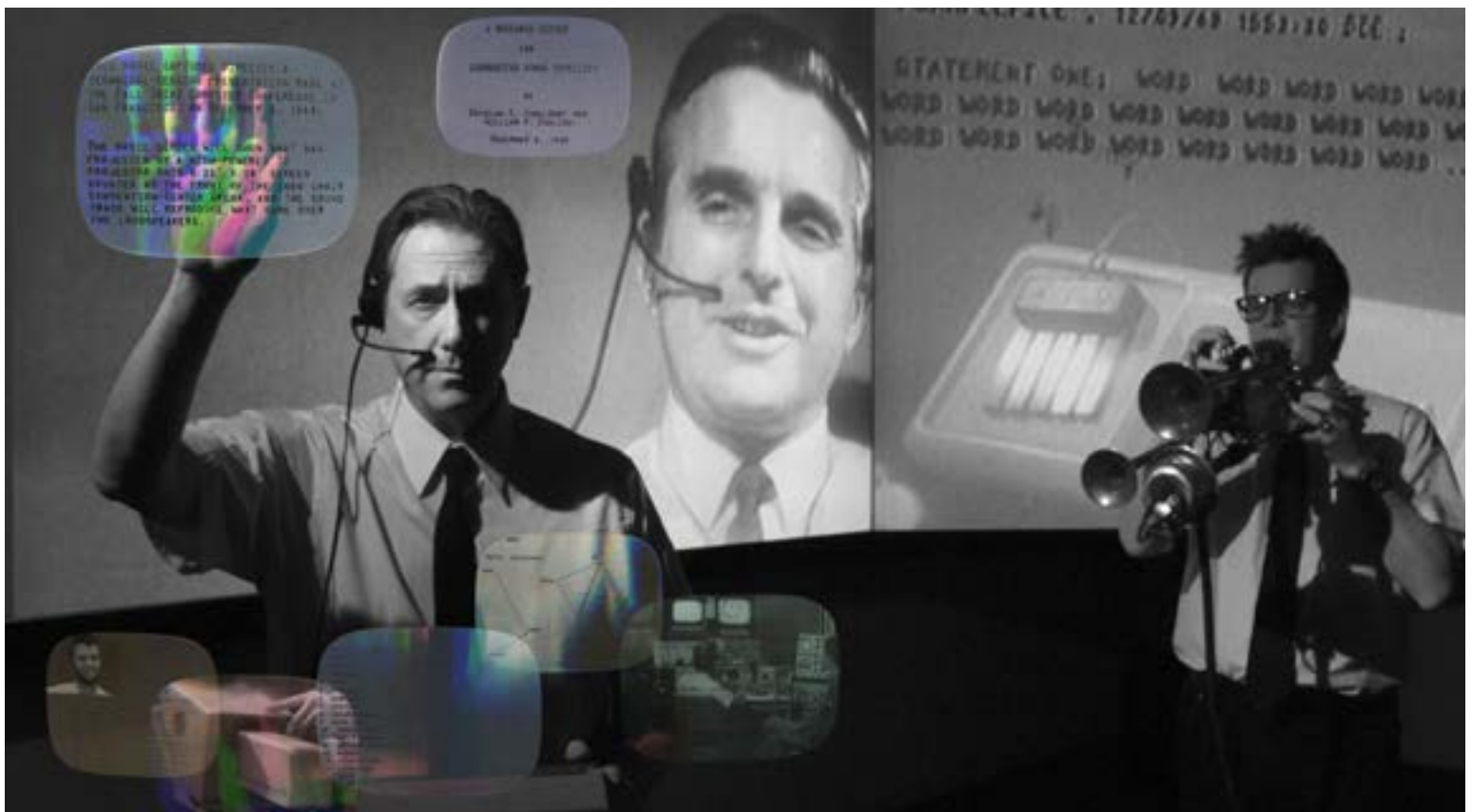


New York City

MIKEL ROUSE & BEN NEILL

2014-15 Touring Prospectus

ArKtype / Thomas O. Kriegsmann,
Producer and Touring Representation






THE DEMO: AN OVERVIEW



The Demo is a music theater work written by composer/performers Mikel Rouse and Ben Neill based on Douglas Engelbart's historic 1968 demonstration of early computer technology. Engelbart's 1968 demo rolled out virtually everything that would define modern computing; videoconferencing, hyperlinks, networked collaboration, digital text editing, and something called a "mouse," laying the ground work for the future of our society in a mere 90 minutes. Directed by Bob McGrath, *The Demo* re-imagines Engelbart's historic demonstration as a technologically-infused music theater piece, a new form of hybrid performance.



monday afternoon
december 9
3:45 p.m. / arena
Chairman:
DR. D. C. ENGELBART
Stanford Research Institute
Menlo Park, California

a research center for augmenting human intellect

This session is entirely devoted to a presentation by Dr. Engelbart on a computer-based, interactive, multiconsole display system which is being developed at Stanford Research Institute under the sponsorship of ARPA, NASA and RADC. The system is being used as an experimental laboratory for investigating principles by which interactive computer aids can augment intellectual capability. The techniques which are being described will, themselves, be used to augment the presentation. The session will use an on-line, closed circuit television hook-up to the SRI computing system in Menlo Park. Following the presentation remote terminals to the system, in operation, may be viewed during the remainder of the conference in a special room set aside for that purpose.

THE EVENT: ENGELBART'S 1968 DEMO



On December 9, 1968, Douglas C. Engelbart and his team of researchers (including technical assistant and future computing legend William English) at the Augmentation Research Center at Stanford Research Institute in Menlo Park, CA presented a 90-minute live public demonstration entitled "A Research Center for Augmenting Human Intellect," which demonstrated the online system NLS, which Engelbart had been working on since 1962.

The public presentation was a session of the Fall Joint Computer Conference held at the Convention Center in San Francisco, and attended by about 1,000 computer professionals.

What became known as "the mother of all demos," Engelbart's presentation was the public debut of the computer mouse - but the mouse was only one of many innovations demonstrated that day: including hyper-

text, object addressing and dynamic file linking, as well as shared-screen collaboration involving two persons at different sites communicating over a network with audio and video interface.

Instead of standing at a podium, Engelbart was seated at a custom designed console, where he drove his presentation via the NLS computer - which resided 30 miles away in his research lab at Stanford Research Institute - onto a large projection screen overhead, flipping seamlessly between his presentation outline and live demo of features.

THE PERFORMANCE



Douglas Engelbart is the most influential figure in the early history of computers and the Internet. His unique vision turned the computing world on its head in the 1950s and 60s and he is responsible for inventing many of the tools that we now take for granted in our daily lives. The legendary event and Engelbart's life journey are re-imagined as a multimedia performance in The Demo.

Mikel Rouse portrays Engelbart in The Demo, while Ben Neill plays his technical assistant, William English. Using the video of the original 1968 demo in its full 100-minute form, The Demo is built on the formal framework of this historic event. The Demo is being created collaboratively with the eDream Institute at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA) at the University of Illinois (where Rouse is their first Visiting Research Artist) and will include re-enactments of the demonstration, live vocal and electronic music, interactive video, computer-based voice processing and triggering, and Neill's interactive electro-acoustic instrument, the mutantrumpet. The typed text of the original demo serves as the libretto for the vocals, performed by Rouse and others, repurposing the technical jargon as opera supertitles:

STATEMENT ONE: WORD WORD WORD WORD WORD
STATEMENT TWO: WORD WORD WORD WORD WORD
STATEMENT THREE: WORD WORD WORD WORD WORD
STATEMENT FOUR: WORD WORD WORD WORD WORD
STATEMENT FIVE: WORD WORD WORD WORD WORD

INSERT BRANCH

1 SOUP
2 PRODUCE
2A CARROTS
2B BANANAS
2B1 SKINLESS

2C ORANGES
2D APPLES
3 NEWS
4 LETTUCE
5 FRENCH BREAD
6 BEAN SOUP

3F (MNCTRLO MAIN CONTROL)
3F1 CODE (NLS, MNGTRL, ;XBJHNZ)
3F2 DOCUMENTATION
3F2A (TREE, SPLR, ;XBHNZ)

Video scenes that evoke important elements in Engelbart's personal journey, including the epiphanies that set him on the course that would ultimately result in "the mother of all demos," are interspersed throughout the piece.

The work culminates in a futuristic ending which projects Engelbart's technological vision into the future. Engelbart has been described as a gentle, dreamy character with a utopian idealism. The Demo will create a sense of dreaming forward and backward through music, performance, and digital video within the frame of the original 1968 presentation.

The production will re-envision the original demo as it happened in San Francisco in 1968 and potentially a live recreation of the remote site in Menlo Park where members of Engelbart's team interacted with him live during the 1968 demo. A variety of new audio and video performance technologies are being investigated by the artists with the team at eDream/NCSA. The Demo will use new interactive systems to tell The Demo's story, a reflection of Engelbart's impact on the contemporary world.

COLLABORATIVE TEAM



Mikel Rouse
Co-creator, composer and performer
(playing Douglas Engelbart)

Ben Neill
Co-creator, composer and performer
(playing William English, Engelbart's assistant)

Bob McGrath
Director

Jim Findlay
Set Designer

Jeff Sugg
Projection Designer

Christopher Ericson
Sound Designer

ArKtype / Thomas O. Kriegsmann
Producer

Rebecca McBride / Krannert Center
for the Performing Arts, University of Illinois
Producing Partner

Donna Cox / eDream Institute, University of Illinois/NCSA
Producing Partner

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



MIKEL ROUSE, CO-CREATOR

Mikel Rouse leads our time with his powerful presence as a composer, filmmaker, performer, director, and visual artist. Critical acclaim and popular following have brought him to the forefront of international attention with his modern operas, recordings, and films. His formal education in both music and visual art developed his sense of wholeness about the role of art in his life and in our lives.

A quick review of Mikel Rouse's biography will provide a snapshot of his accomplishments. A trilogy of operas, books of string quartets, two feature-length films, awards from leading funding organizations, and at least one recorded album every year for the past 20 years. Mikel Rouse is an artist of our time. He blends tradition and technology with an artistic voice that resonates in contemporary thought.

Recognized as a leader in his use of digital technology, Mikel Rouse taps both the despair and the hope of life in the 21st century. He delights in every step forward made possible by each new development in computers, cameras, recording equipment, and musical instruments because he uses technology as a means for human expression—a digital look at an analog world.

Mikel Rouse's works based on pop culture are proving themselves artistic masterpieces long after the moment of "popularity" has passed. He is, according to *The New York Times*, "a composer many believe to be the best of his generation."

BEN NEILL, CO-CREATOR

Ben Neill is a composer, performer, producer, and inventor of the mutantrumpet, a hybrid electro-acoustic instrument. He has been called "a creative composer and genius performer" (*Time Out NY*), "the mad scientist of dancefloor jazz" (*CMJ Journal*), and "a musical powerhouse, a serious and individual talent" (*Time Out London*). Neill's music blends influences from electronica, jazz and minimalism, blurring the lines between DJ culture and acoustic instrument performance.

Neill has recorded nine CDs of his music, and his music has also been featured on numerous compilations. In 2010 his music theater work *Persephone* was presented at the BAM Next Wave Festival. He has performed extensively around the world and began developing the mutantrumpet in the early 1980s. Initially an acoustic instrument (a combination of 3 trumpets and a trombone combined into one), Neill integrated the instrument with electronics in the mid 1980s when collaborating with the synthesizer inventor Robert Moog, and in 1992 Neill made the mutantrumpet fully computer interactive.

Neill has composed original music for two films: *Guest of Cindy Sherman* and *911-911*, and is also active as a sound and installation artist and has been presented widely in venues such as The Tate Modern London, The New Museum New York and PPOW Gallery New York, and was featured in the PBS documentary *Imagining America*.

PROJECT TIMELINE & TOUR DETAILS



TIMELINE: CREATION AND PREMIERE

2012

Rouse and Neill compose music

January 13-27, 2013

Rouse and Neill in residence at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts to complete the first realization of the musical score, develop libretto, video, and explore technologies for performance with National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA)

February - March 2013

Rouse completes composing vocal sections and records singers for performance

July 13-27, 2013

Residency for collaborative team at Ramapo College, finalizing projection, set, lighting, sound design and rehearsals

Fall 2013

Video production completed, rehearsals in New York City

February 23-27, 2014

Build/rehearsals at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, Urbana, IL

February 28, 2014

World Premiere, Krannert Center for the Performing Arts

Spring 2014 and onwards International touring TBD

TOUR DETAILS

Personnel: 6

- 2 Co-Creators / Performers (Mikel Rouse / Ben Neill)
- 1 Video Designer / Operator
- 1 Sound Designer / Operator
- 1 Lighting Supervisor
- 1 Production Manager

Seeking co-commissions and presentations for Spring 2014 and 2014-15.

Weekly fee TBD plus housing, local transportation, and freight.

Running time: 100 minutes (the duration of the original 1968 demo)

CRITICAL PRAISE FOR MIKEL ROUSE

"A composer many believe to be the best of his generation."

-The New York Times

"Dennis Cleveland is the most exciting and innovative new opera since *Einstein on the Beach*..."

-Kyle Gann, *The Village Voice*

"And Rouse's music, the overlapping rhythmic patterns in strings and winds and electronic keyboards are pure sonic encouragement, lifting us all to a higher plane."

-Mark Swed, *Los Angeles Times* on "Funding"

"But for now, we have Rouse's works as living proof that complexity need not keep listeners at a distance, and that pop music can sustain serious interest with the right person at the helm."

-Ken Smith, *Gramophone* on "Cameraworld"

"A revelation, a rarity."

-Robyn Archer, *Melbourne Festival News*

"Opera deals with higher truths. And the particular path that Rouse is exploring has much promise for the advancement of a new and, in its own right, distinctly American art form."

-Mark Swed, *Los Angeles Times*

MIKEL ROUSE: SELECTED PERFORMANCES & TOURING HISTORY

GRAVITY RADIO

Gravity Radio is a song cycle interspersed with actual radio reports taken from the AP Newswire and is inspired by physicist Raymond Chiao's experiments with superconductors and gravity waves—which exist in theory but have eluded detection. The songs meld Rouse's affecting vocals and guitar with his band, a string quartet, shortwave radio frequencies, and spoken radio reports performed by Claire Kenny.

LUMINATO Festival, Toronto, Ontario, June 2011

Contemporary Art Center, New Orleans, LA, January 2010

Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, NY, December 2011

Center for the Creative Arts, Cleveland, OH, December 2010

Halbritter Center for the Performing Arts, December 2010

Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, Urbana, IL, January 2010

Walton Arts Center, Fayetteville, AR, January 2010

MIKEL ROUSE: SELECTED PERFORMANCES & TOURING HISTORY

THE END OF CINEMATICS

The End of Cinematics - commissioned by The Brooklyn Academy of Music to be presented at BAMs Next Wave Festival, made possible by a grant from The Mary Flagler Charitable Trust and The Meet The Composer/Reader's Digest Commissioning Program, in partnership with The National Endowment for the Arts and the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund.

LUMINATO Festival THE OPERA TRILOGY, Toronto, Ontario, June 2008

Irvine Barclay Theater, Costa Mesa, CA, 2007

Carolina Performing Arts Center, Chapel Hill, NC, September 2006

Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, NY, October 2006

University Of Florida Performing Arts, October, 2006

Liverpool City of Culture, Liverpool, UK, November 2006

Carnival Center for the Performing Arts, Miami, FL, December 2006

Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, Urbana, IL, October 2005

DENNIS CLEVELAND

Dennis Cleveland is a multimedia opera that is set entirely on a television talk show in the late 20th century. It is the second opera in a Trilogy that consists of *Failing Kansas* and *The End Of Cinematics*. The host, Dennis Cleveland, is the catalyst and provocateur of the opera, and though the guests appear to be telling their own stories, stories of lost love, obsession, crimes and regrets, what soon becomes clear is that they are telling the story of Dennis Cleveland as well. We follow Dennis Cleveland through a myriad of encounters chronicling the promise of salvation through popular culture and it soon becomes apparent that the audience exists in Dennis Cleveland's future: that of the ultimate voyeur, the T.V. talk show host.

LUMINATO Festival THE OPERA TRILOGY, Toronto, Ontario, June 2008

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, New York City, May 2002

Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, Urbana, IL, November 2001

Perth International Arts Festival, Perth, Australia, January/February 2001

Orange County Performing Arts Center, Costa Mesa, CA, November/December 1999

The Kitchen, New York City, October/November, 1996.

FAILING KANSAS

Failing Kansas is the first full length work to explore the technique of vocal writing that Rouse has termed Counterpoetry. Put simply, Counterpoetry is the use of multiple unpitched voices in strict metric counterpoint. *Failing Kansas* is based on the events surrounding the murder of the Clutter family in Holcomb, Kansas and inspired by the examination of those events in Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*.

LUMINATO Festival THE OPERA TRILOGY, Toronto, Ontario, June 2008

Sydney Opera House, Sydney, Australia, May/June 2006

George Mason University, Fairfax, VA, February 2005

New Zealand Festival, Wellington, New Zealand, March 2004

Melbourne International Arts Festival, Melbourne, Australia, October 2004

Dublin Court Festival, Dublin, Ireland, March 2002

MIKEL ROUSE: SELECTED PERFORMANCES & TOURING HISTORY

FAILING KANSAS (CONTINUED)

Perth International Arts Festival, Perth, Australia, January/February 2002
Orange County Performing Arts Center, Costa Mesa, CA, November 2000
Legion Arts, Cedar Rapids, IA, June 1998
Steinberg Auditorium, St. Louis, MO, March 1997
New Music London, London, UK, February 1997
The Kitchen, New York City, February 1995.

MUSIC FOR MINORITIES

Music For Minorities represents a quiet departure from the direction and performance of larger multimedia works. Another chance to be solo on the road again; a guitar, a harmonica, a video deck. The piece is a reflection of Rouse's time spent in the Delta as a composer in residence through the Meet The Composer New Residencies program. It's also a kind of video memoir of film and theatrical works, life in New York, and friends old and new. A recorded soundscape of percussion and multiple guitars are the accompaniment to a live performance that incorporates stories, interviews and songs with synchronized video. The assemblage is an integration of film, music and performance, offering another approach to story telling in the media age.

Ingenuity Festival, Cleveland, OH, July 2008
Galway Festival, Galway, Ireland, July 2007
Contemporary Art Center, New Orleans, LA, November 2007
Cork Opera House, Cork, Ireland, October 2007
Sydney Opera House, Sydney, Australia, May/June 2006
UCLA Live, Los Angeles, CA, March 2005
On The Boards, Seattle, WA, March 2005
Melbourne International Arts Festival, Melbourne, Australia, October 2004
Legion Arts, Cedar Rapids, IA, June 2003

CAGE/CUNNINGHAM – various performances, installations, and projects

2013 – Video Wall Installation of John Cage's 4'33", which consisted of video performances contributed by Cage fans via a special YouTube site set up by Rouse.

2012 – John Cage On & Off the Air!, a film of light and shadows based around Cage's peripatetic *The City Wears a Slouch Hat* and performed by the celebrated Canadian-based percussion ensemble NEXUS.

2012 – John Cage Prepared Piano for iPhone™, iPad™ and Android™, utilizing the John Cage Prepared Sample Library conceived and produced by Mikel Rouse

2012 – Installation of Mikel Rouse's Realization of Cage's James Joyce, Marcel Duchamp, Erik Satie: *An Alphabet* and *The Soundtrack CD* for Cage's Satie

2006 – International Cloud Atlas, music to accompany Merce Cunningham's *eyeSpace* – an homage to Cage and Cunningham to have everyone listening to the score on iPods (set to shuffle, of course) as they watched the performance unfold.

2001 – Rouse realizes a score for Cage's radio-play-turned-theatrical-production James Joyce, Marcel Duchamp, Erik Satie: *An Alphabet*

MIKEL ROUSE: SELECTED PERFORMANCES & TOURING HISTORY

FUNDING

Funding follows five characters, Vivian, Roe, JJ, Ines and a mysterious French man through a 20 year musical memory of New York City. As people and places in their lives drift away, visual impressions meld with sound and narrative stories to reveal a complex yet moving tableau. As the characters recall their own personal histories, conflicting images reveal their past, present and future. Symbols of corporate America and its not so quiet invasion in our lives are distorted and abstracted into poetic blow ups that correspond to the ever shifting pulsations of the soundtrack.

Bruno Walter Auditorium, New York City, December 2010

International Minimalist Conference, Kansas City, MO, September 2009

Perth International Arts Festival, Perth, Australia, January/February 2002

Eclectic Orange Festival, Costa Mesa, CA, October 2001

GRANTS, AWARDS, COMMISSIONS, FELLOWSHIPS & HONORS

- USA Artist Fellowship nomination (2011)
- Alumni Achievement Award from the Conservatory of Music at UMKC (2011)
- New York Public Library for Performing Arts at Lincoln Center announces acquisition of Mikel Rouse's archive, including analog recordings, films, manuscripts and correspondence (2010)
- Foundation for Contemporary Arts (December 2001)
- Fund for U.S. Artists at International Festivals (January 2001)
- Rockefeller Foundation MAPP program (July 2000)
- Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust commission (November 1997-April 1999)
- Edward F. Albee Fellowship (August 1996)
- Meet the Composer (numerous awards, including a Meet The Composer New Residencies Grant in Ruston, Louisiana (March 2001 through February 2004) and a commission from the Meet the Composer/Reader's Digest Commissioning Program (November 1995-April 1996)
- New York State Council on the Arts (October 1991-February 1992)
- ASCAP Awards (numerous awards, 1985-present).
- CalArts Alpert Award in the Arts nominee (1994, 1999, and 2001).

THE DEMO



SELECTED PRESS

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