

WELCOMING ADDRESS - 1977 International Computer Music Conference

Recently the media artist, Jud Yalkut remarked, "if the technology which is controlled by business and military interests was controlled by artists, the consciousness of this country would change." Yalkut's remark implies, of course, that the motivations of artists' interests are different from the motivations of business and military interests. Also, that somehow, the uses of technology affect human consciousness. This is no doubt true, but what would the quality of such a change in consciousness be? Artists themselves would also change. Would it be for the better, or would operating from such a technological power base corrupt aesthetic as well as moral and spiritual values? How much would it cost and who would pay for it?

Artists are human. They are subject to the same idealistic aims, as well as the same 7 deadly sins, as business, military or any other humans. What is often missing for artists is social support for, and access to the most current tools of technology, with the appropriate technical assistance. Artists should have the same opportunities as business, military or any other persons do, to seek through research and experiment, the most effective means of carrying out their work. Society, in its own interests, should be ready to support such work. The uses of technology by those who do control it are highly effective. The consciousness of this country as well as other countries is affected. Why wasn't a poet sent to the moon? What if Starwars, Robot RTD-2 were able to scan the world's arts for their strengths and weaknesses, making available its output after such scanning, to aid artists in their search for new aesthetic solutions. What if the Starwars translator 3PO could make translations for audiences in their bewilderment with new forms, translation from one kind of artist to another, or become go-between for scientists, technologists and artists? Would it help? Would it be of redeeming social value? The side effects of technology, such as the pollution of our planet and the danger of ultimate destruction are not solved. Technology breeds the need for more technology which breeds more side effects in a self-perpetuating binge. The necessary foresight for the solutions needed must come not only from the deepest of scientific thought, but also from the deepest of artistic thought. The artistic side of the scientist as well as the scientific side of the artist must continually be cultivated. The artistic scientist and the scientific artist has suffered sugjugation by those who have sought power and control at the expense of human and aesthetic values. The arts and music in particular are in the process of being liberated analogously to women and minorities. Music for instance has been enslaved by consumerism. Every new artistic experimental find has been exploited in some way by commercial interests for profit. It is above all necessary in its liberation for all art to be effective. Effective in the sense of the affirmation and renewal of human values. For without re-examination and embodiment of human values through artistic activity, we fall into a civilization without soul. It is time for a change. It is imperative for the well being of our society that the necessary integration of the artistic and scientific come about. This should not mean that any one interest usurps another, but that a revolution of collaborations occurs in the mutual interest of all.

We look forward to the proceedings of this International Computer Music Conference as another step towards such an integration. And with respect to Jud Yalkut's remark quoted at the beginning of this address, a change in consciousness for this country, but, for the benefit of all.

Pauline Oliveros