

ABSOLUTELY NOTHING MORE LONELY

An Exploration of time-like separated events

When asked to write an actual paper about the collaboration of myself, composer, musician, and impresario Deidre Huckaby, visual and multi-media artist Kate Buratha, and composer/electronic performer Dan Dehaan, it made me think of a few things regarding the performance itself and perhaps I have now crossed a line by talking about it to the group just as an observation of a quantum particle destroys or changes the state of the particle itself!

Absolutely Nothing More Lonely was conceived out of a chance encounter in which I was interested in performing with Dan on a festival that Deidre was curating. She indicated that the “theme” of this festival was “Powerpoint” and that we needed to find a way to incorporate a powerpoint presentation into our performance and we started to brainstorm.

The result became a collaboration between she and Katie Buratha who organized a powerpoint presentation filled with images and videos from the past as well as sound recordings of some improvisations Dan and I had done in the studio at Columbia College in Chicago.

The audience is presented with a computer setup in front of a projector and speaker system on the stage. This is all they see. In the meantime, Dan and I are hidden somewhere off stage, usually actually in another room, playing at our regular very loud volume level which hopefully feels distant to the audience. We have no way of seeing what is happening on stage and at random, engage in silences, duets, solos, somewhat related to our past performances only through the fact that we use similar instruments or synth settings to begin our live performances as we used in the studio.

The performance generally starts with the audience advancing the powerpoint. They are instructed to do so as they wish and can move as many slides forward and backwards as they wish so they are generally creating the main shape of the performance by navigating the past. (perhaps the past “light cone” as described in the email that concludes this paper).

The intersections between the powerpoint and what is being performed live in the remote location are intended to be completely separated so that all intersections are intentionally un-intentional. Not a new idea, but one we feel (or at least I feel) in this context has a somewhat new intention (see below).

Having for the first time performed this piece in an actually physically remote location last year opened the idea that this piece could indeed travel far and wide without the need to fly to the location of the performance but only the need to transmit the powerpoint to the venue and “live stream” the remote performance in. In this way, the work has a potential for using the idea of “network” performance in a unique way. To allow for telepresence to be intentionally only one way. This is something we often

experience in network performance un-intentionally due to network or other failures at the time of performance. This work uses a one way communication from the past (powerpoint) and the future/present (transmission of the live performance from another location).

I sent some thoughts to my collaborators in an email recently which I think sum up what to me is a kind of intentionality. The beauty of this kind of work is that every perspective (including that of the collaborators) reveals another potential intention. So I must apologize to my collaborators in advance for presenting only "my" perception of some kind of intentionality. I am sure this description will evolve over time as we have more conversations and in fact, would be really interested to see what kind of description of the work others would come up with based on their perceptions. As we conceived of the piece in a way that attempted to fit a particular logistical situation rather than from a concept, the concept itself can evolve in many directions.

Email sent 11/4/2018 from Ryan Ingebritsen to Katie Buratha, Deidre Huckaby, Dan Dehaan.

Hey all.

I just a few weeks ago took part in a networking conference in Krakow where I presented a kind of "paper" remotely on Absolutely Nothing more Lonely and then had a performance of another piece. Both ended up being complete misunderstandings but also, both worked out in a very beautiful and unexpected way.

For the "paper", I simply sent the current powerpoint and the audience interacted with it after I gave a bit of background on what we do. It was weird because it really felt almost like we were doing a mock performance where I sent sounds to alternate between those sounds and the slideshow at random. Kind of presented it as a re-mix.

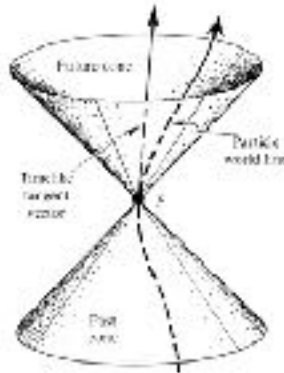
I was afterwards asked to submit my "paper" but had nothing written down in the first place as really, what I delivered was an off the top of my head kind of a description.

But some recent ideas regarding telepresence, or the lack of presence got me thinking about a few things that I wanted to propose to you all so I thought that perhaps my "paper" should take the form of an email to all of you regarding these thoughts with a proposal for future performances.

So here goes,

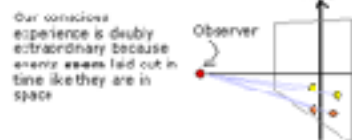
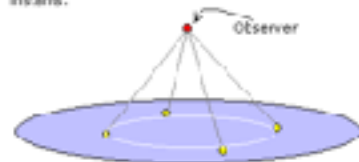
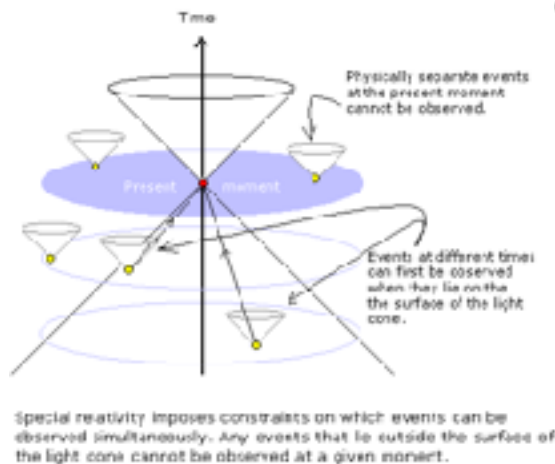
I have been doing lots of reading on modern physics and theories about consciousness that involve astro and quantum physical theories and realized that what we did with this piece, and subsequent performances, is very closely linked with an aspect of physical theories of time and space.

In general relativity, Einstein describes the way gravity bends space and time in terms of its effect on the relationship between events by using a representation of a "future" and "past" light cone for each event.

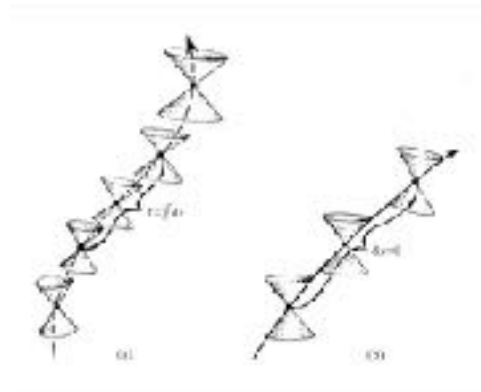


The representation is truncated dimensionally truncating the 3 dimensions of space into the circular area of each slice of the cone and time as the continuum of the vertical dimension. The "future" light cone includes all the future space/times wherein light from the event can possibly be observed. The "past" light cone represents the spacetime from which light emanating from other events can be observed. If two "events" lie neither in the future or past light cones of the other, it is said that they are "time-like separated" meaning no message (light, waves, etc) can be transmitted between them whatsoever.

Simultaneous events and the light cone



In general, these future and past light cones are represented vertically around the event. In Einstein's picture, the bending of space-time is physically represented as the bending of these future and past light cones one way or the other to represent a kind of "shift" of the future and past light cones and a subsequent distortion of the waves coming to an from various events. In this process, some events could actually pass out of or into one another's light cones due to a massive gravity field.



But one other interesting possibility is the idea that two space-time separated events could actually be observed by someone at a 3rd space-time location whose past light cone encases both of these events even though these two space-time separated events have no possible means of reaching one another. Given enough time (and likely the time scales for phenomena such as this would be quite huge) a message that could reach this observer from one of the space-time separated events could eventually be re-transmitted through some means of conscious intervention to the other which would maintain a time-separated dialogue between the two point. Of course the consciousness' at both space-time separated events would need to have the means to store and catalog information transmitted via this method over many millions (even possibly billions) of years, but theoretically such communication could be possible.

Our performances, though conceived as a means of fitting a live performance of drones into the context of a series on the theme of powerpoints, has a sense of this about it. When in the room performing, we have no contact with the powerpoint performance and in fact, as we are improvising, we are not only in the present moment, but in my view, mentally transmitting our presence slightly into the future as improvisation is a continual activity of projecting oneself into a potential unknown future and bringing back one's findings to share with the present moment. I also feel that the powerpoint itself is like a view of the past in that it has to be generated completely ahead of time and includes transmissions from our past (video clips, and audio excerpts of past improvisations). So it is like the audience is observing transmissions from two vastly different space-times.

It was not until we performed this piece in Krakow, while transmitting the live drones from Chicago, that I really felt this. Though we attempted to observe the "live feed" at

times, eventually the we lost connection and really felt no real compulsion to re-connect as the idea that we were completely separated from the performance space (which has always really been our goal I think?) was achieved completely.

So I have a more extreme proposal for future performances should they occur.

I think that we should completely cut off communication between the artists involved after the initial logistical conversations and the like. Whether it be a performance where everything is happening in the same space or through some transmitted telepresence. This way we never have any direct communication about content but only communicate about what happens in the space through our various contacts with the audience. This way, any time we do this, will be a singular situation influenced only by our 2nd hand perceptions from audience members. The work would then become a durational and non-linear work that would unfold over the course of its history becoming a singular practice that could have multiple participants over time but would share a thread of harvesting from the past (found material, past improvisations, etc) to create the presentation that the audience interacted with coupled with a live improvisation that is totally cutoff from the sound and vision occurring in the room. In this way, a remote "networked" performance wherein the remote performers are instructed NOT to observe the main performance space would be the ideal performing situation.

This kind of re-inspired me to want to re-visit the piece again sometime soon but I am currently buried under a sea of python (the programming language) and reading in addition to trying to live a normal life (likely the greater challenge).

Hope all is well wherever you are. And hope to hear back from you sometime before the human race goes extinct. :)