

Guest artist invents instruments

Ryan Brink - Issue date: 2/5/09

Talented instrument creator and musician Tim Kaiser took the stage at the Performing Arts Center Monday evening, as the guest artist for "First Monday New Media Series."

Taking place in the recital hall, a small amount of the student body got a firsthand experience with Kaiser.

There was recently a segment about him on public television, which gave a couple of music professors the honor of bringing him to campus for a performance and Q&A.

The show was an extremely impressive visual and auditory experience. Kaiser, for a job and hobby, makes his own instruments.

Not an average instrument, but complex little (or not so little) gadgets. He had them all plugged in and the sound would travel through unique mixers to create an original and interesting sound.

He put on an artistic performance and said, "The sculpture element is very important to me."

His music devices were organized around him in a small area, and he sat next to them on a stool no taller than 12-inches. Small LED lights were strategically attached to all his toys.

Everything was stacked on the hard cases he kept them in, and around him were three oversized red lights, which would slowly blink.

The backdrop contained a psychedelic moving image that appeared as if one were looking into a petri dish through a microscope and seeing colorful germs and molecules.

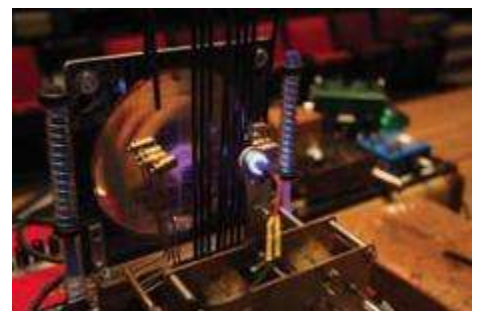
"So much of what I do is building it all," Kaiser said.

The performance consisted of eerie and ambient noises, space-age bleeps and bops, interesting bells and chimes and old samples from broken and refurbished tapes from the 1960s.

Each of his eight or nine instruments contained a bizarre and original noise, which he made into a 30-minute set, with no rhythm, beats or reason. It was sheer creativity and interesting in auditory terms.



Media Credit: Jakob Gilk
Tim Kaiser performed Monday night in the Performing Art Center for the New Media Series, which takes place the first Monday of each month.



Media Credit: Jakob Gilk
Tim Kaiser played instruments that he make himself.

"Melody is very, very overrated," he said.

As if The Flaming Lips spaceship landed on Les Claypool and slowed down to an extreme degree, one would have a similar experience to one with Kaiser.

It was eerie, yet ambient, with an appearance of being on Mars with church bells.

Kaiser would dissect thrift-store-found toys, Fischer Price gadgets and different random things one would find at a second-hand place.

Then he would recreate them in completely new ways to resonate the sounds from it in an entirely new matter.

He said he has not always been this bizarre.

"I started out as a normal musician, listening to Yoko Ono and The Plastic Ono Band, Talking Heads and King Crimson," Kaiser said.

One instrument was a similar idea to a theremin, where his hand would be near this small cutout of a black metal box.

It would release different pitches and notes according to how far or close his hand was without actually touching anything. He made this one with parts of an old television receiver.

Another gadget stood about four-and-a-half feet tall and had stretched springs from top to bottom.

As Kaiser swept a violin bow across it, an unnaturally deep growl would grow and depending on how hard he was with it, the bass got loud and haunting.

He also had sampled sounds re-crafted from old tapes.

One in particular was the voice of an eerie man speaking slowly and saying, "like a circle, what comes around goes around," on a continuous loop, with Kaiser in the middle of it making sounds like digital bells, ocean waves and high pitched ghostly noises.

The show ended with some questions from the audience and many interested listeners wondering how and why everything sounded the way it did.

http://media.www.universitychronicle.com/media/storage/paper231/news/2009/02/05/Intermission/Guest.Artist.Invents.Instruments-3615066.shtml#cp_article_tools

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