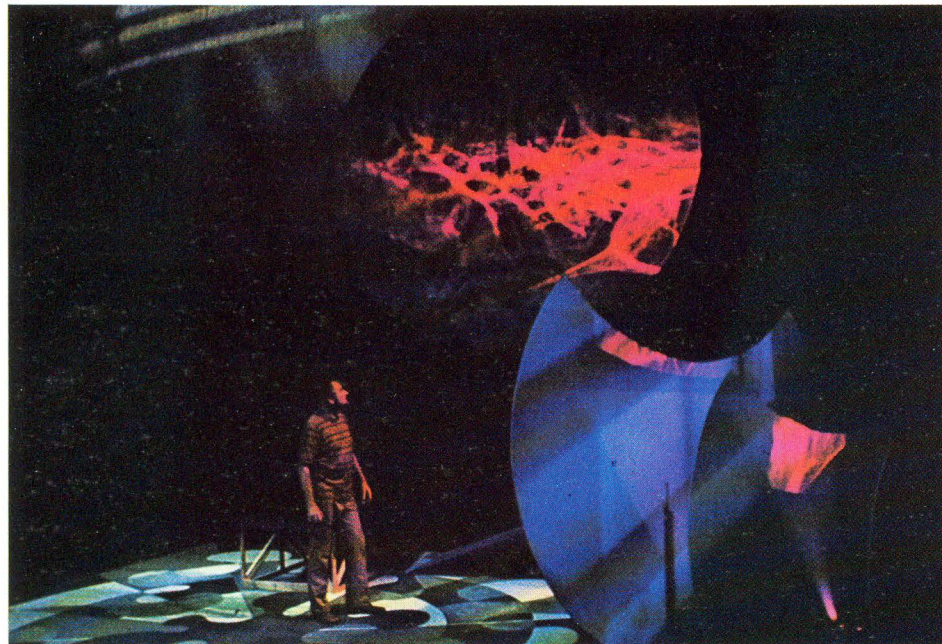


Creating images from sound using synthesisers.



The author working with red Laser on his set for Janáček opera "Excursions of Mr. Brouček".

space for a split second. My immediate reaction was: this is superb, can you give me several thousand specks of light at a distance of say, a kilometre, changing 24 times per second? – "Oh", he replied, "That will take a few years".

Varese was dreaming in 1920 of sounds which he could not then produce – he had to wait 30 years or so to realise his dreams. Giving light a form is basically no different from giving paint a form, or piano a sound form – it depends entirely on the artist, his ability, his quality to handle the brush, the keyboard, or whatever medium he has to express his SOUL.

Mr. Bentham is suggesting in the second half of his article a survey of the possibilities of a combination of lasers and incandescent light. I have already done this, in 1968. It works well. It also helped me to use colours then not available in lasers. I would be very careful however of his statement . . . "Don't force everthing onto the laser" . . . Well, if the laser is capable of doing everything that incandescent light can do, and more – why not? One can apply the same argument to the "humble batten":- why force everything onto modern stage installations – why not unleash some more full-blooded emotions from kerosene and parafin lamps that preceeded modern lamps.

There is nothing wrong with the precision quality of the laser, to answer the note of disapproval by Mr. Bentham, and I cannot see why a method could not be developed whereby a "wash" of light is produced – and it may be produced without the use of the cycloramas or holograms. Judging from observations I was able to make at Bell Laboratories ten years ago – the ideas seem to be, given time, practicable.*

In handling 'designs' using lasers, I have found the theremin of great use. I used the theremin for the first time during my Synchronos Concert at Sydney Conservatorium in 1972. The theremin, responding in frequency and pitch to the hand movements produced corresponding, pre-programmed designs at wish. The flexibility and ease with which I could execute the designs has enabled me to realise a minute portion of my 4D project. Since 1972 I have used the Theremin-Laser combination in several projects – all worked quite satisfactorily.

*Since writing this article I have conducted several experiments at Quentron Optics Laboratories in South Australia and have succeeded in producing a 'wash of light' using lasers. It was on a small scale and under laboratory conditions only, but the idea seems to work.

During the 20 days of exhibiting and playing the Laser-Chromasonic Tower Mk.2, I had countless enquiries from students, lecturers, musicians, electronic engineers, sound engineers, artists, technicians and numerous people just interested in making images using or translating music and sounds. It was a pity that not a single local stage lighting operator turned up at the control booth which was opened to the public. They could learn in one hour more than they could learn in one year in the theatre. But then, creative and experimental lighting in theatres here is practically non-existent. With proper training of artists and technicians, we could enjoy the superb style of Bayreuth's Wagner executed mostly with lights instead of that for me, stodgy unimaginative 19th century Italiante "Aida" as presented recently.

I feel that with the help that technology is giving us, and the artist's greater awareness of its potential we have advanced somewhat from A.B. Klein's "Colour-Music".

J.S. OSTOJA-KOTKOWSKI, born in Poland 1922., arrived in Australia in 1949 after studies under O. Vetesko in Poland and at Dusseldorf Kunst Akademie in Germany; attended National Gallery School of Arts in Melbourne under Sir W. Dargie and Alan Sumner in 1950-51.

He has received several awards in painting, films and photography including a Churchill Fellowship in 1967, and a visiting Artist Fellowship, Ministry of the Arts, Melbourne, 1976.

A dual interest in arts and technology, led him to use sounds for forming shapes and colours (chromasonics) which he introduced in Australia at the Argus Gallery in 1965.

Ostojka used laser for the first time on stage in Australia in 1968 in his Sound & Image experimental theatre. With the help of the A.N.U. School of Physical Sciences the first Laser-Chromason was designed and built in 1972.

In bringing us right up to date on Laser progress in Australia Mr. Ostojka expresses his belief that laser chromasonics can and will become a form of art as important and expressive as painting, sculpture and music.