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InterPlay uses technology to enhance performance

By **Scott Iwasaki**

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For the past 25 years, Jimmy and Elizabeth Miklavcic, co-artistic directors of Another Language Performing Arts Company, have combined performance with technology.

In 1995, the two founded the "InterPlay" series that uses technology to present two or more performances from different places (usually cities) to one or more audiences.

To do this, the Miklavcics have utilized a system where the images are captured on video, mixed, digitized, encoded and streamed onto a network.

This year's performance — "InterPlay: Event Horizon" — will, as Beth Miklavcic said, "present expressive performance in a multilayered experience."

This year's performers are Elizabeth Miklavcic, Utah-based guitarist/composer Lexie Levitt, California-based flutist Diane Hsu, Alaskan actress/writer Carrie Baker and computer animations by Miho Aoki, who is from Tokyo.

Jimmy Miklavcic will create a live digital mix of the video streams from the artists.

"We have access to these new (technological) tools," said Beth Miklavcic during an interview with the Deseret News. "Being able to use a new tool is important. Artists throughout history would go for it when they had a new tool to present their work.

"The fact that we have them, and we can use them and we can find something to work with is why we use it."

Miklavcic said using technology wasn't a conscious choice when she and Jimmy began choreographing and producing multigenre shows before they formed Another Language.

"We did these experimental shows that incorporated different artists, dancers, musicians, writers, and they would each do their own thing, but we could never find space." They would seek out different venues and perform at the Unitarian Church, in ArtSpace and the Utah Art Center.

"The venue was always a challenge, and I think that fostered the concept of 'What is a venue?' and 'How are we going to present the work that we want to create?'"

Miklavcic said there were other aspects that added to the necessity of finding new ways to present their work.

The Miklavcics used videos to enhance but also present their works for a while, and then Jimmy decided to go back to school to get a degree in computer science.

"That was really a big jump in the technology area," Beth Miklavcic said. "He started talking about using a Web site as a venue."

Back in 1995, most people didn't know what a Web site was, said Miklavcic.

"He spent a couple of years studying video streaming," she said. "It was basically the size of a postage-stamp."

Since few people back then had access to computers and couldn't see the Miklavcic works, they lost all their art funding.

"Eventually that came back, but it took a long time," said Beth Miklavcic.

Nowadays, the infrastructure of the networking and connection at the Intermountain Network and Scientific Computation Center on the University of Utah campus has made it possible for the Miklavcics to realize their projects.

"Having the equipment and Jimmy's work with the access grid, we started putting it all together into these technologically intensive performances," said Miklavcic.

Miklavcic said while the performances rely heavily on technology, that doesn't mean the performance is about technology.

"Technology is the paintbrush," she said. "We really want people to see the art of it."

Miklavcic said the reward isn't the performance, but, instead, the creation of the multilevel piece of performance art.

"The reward is the exploration," she said. "For me the reward is the fact that we are able to do this and have the ability and opportunity to explore is pretty amazing."

▶ If you go

What: "InterPlay: Event Horizon," Another Language Performing Arts Company

Where: Intermountain Network and Scientific Computation Center, 155 S. 1452 East, University of Utah

When: March 26 and 27, 7 p.m.; March 28, 4 p.m.; April 2, 1 p.m.; April 2 and 3, 7 p.m.

How much: \$7

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