



*The Human Voice in a New World*  
Jessica Schmitz, February 17, 2009  
<http://arts-electric.org/index.html>

The human voice is one of the earliest instruments of musical expression. It is a singularly organic instrument capable of unique and dynamic communication. Our current musical landscape of technological exploration, however, also offers unparalleled expression through sound: from techno-matic instruments to motion-synth sensors, new technologies are created everyday that take music where it's never been before.

So what happens when you partner a primordial instrument with modern cutting-edge electronics? Such a crossroads is exactly what *The Human Voice in a New World* will explore. This festival, produced by Electronic Music Foundation, will reveal new levels of expressivity and meaning for the voice through technology.

The festival begins on Monday, February 23, with the North American premiere of *Messa di Voce*, a state-of-the-art multimedia production at Frederick Loewe Theater, produced in collaboration with the NYU Interactive Arts Series. Created by Tmema (Golan Levin and Zachary Lieberman), *Messa di Voce* features master vocalist-improvisers Joan La Barbara and Jaap Blonk performing with dynamically-generated sound visualizations that can be manipulated to control acoustic playback. This cutting-edge interaction truly answers Levin's question: "If we could see our speech, what might it look like?"

The festival continues on Friday, February 27, at Judson Church with premieres by Joel Chadabe, Richard Kostelanetz, and Trevor Wishart. The evening begins with the world premiere of Chadabe's *Micro Fictions*, a setting of Richard Kostelanetz's minimalist composition in which each paragraph is a single word. Chadabe describes: "I understood my task to be that of composing musical settings that would complement the words, enhance the narrative, and expand the experience of each word with the sounds that I composed."

Trevor Wishart is next on this program in a rare American appearance performing the NY premieres of *Vocalise* and *Globalalia*. *Vocalise*, an improvisation for amplified solo voice, first appeared on the famed 1979 release *Trevor Wishart & Friends*. According to Wishart, *Vocalise* explores the transformation between different kinds of sounds and the potential of the voice "when in a tight corner." *Globalalia*, for fixed media and voice, processes the syllables of twenty-six different languages sampled from radio and TV broadcasts from around the world to reveal "the universal dance of human speech spoken in tongue."

Saturday, February 28, the closing event of the series, features Bora Yoon and David Moss. Vocalist, multi-instrumentalist, and composer Bora Yoon has been described as "...operatic and intense, genre-scrambling and iconoclastic..." by Noise Art Magazine. In Saturday's concert, the dynamic Yoon will "explore where sound connects to the subliminal" through timbre languages of the voice, found sounds, new and antiquated instruments, and electronic devices in her work ( (( *PHONATION* ) ) ).

Extreme vocalist David Moss ends the evening with the world premiere of the English version of *Voice Box Spectra*—a work examining "FTL (faster than logic)" communication through new songs, scrambled text, tangled stories, personal electronics, and odd objects. Moss writes: "In our data-streamed meta-morphing in/out world, there must be a rhythm that drives the human genetic package. Is it a pulse, a beat, a chant buried somewhere in the depths of our memories, neuron chains and chemical hieroglyphics? ...Sometimes, what is being

communicated can't be expressed in any grammar or speech system, only in music and song – modified, mediated and manipulated by technology's babbling boxes – and the muscles, blood, and air that fuel the voice."

*The Human Voice in a New World* is an unparalleled event—a particular concentration of state-of-the-art technology, vocal talent, and cutting-edge creativity has never been presented in New York. For more information please visit <http://www.emfproductions.org>