Conversations with my Voice

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Conversations with my Voice, is an exploration of the sounds and the unspoken memories of a singer performing.

She stands in front of a microphone, contemplating a world in which the synthetic and the virtual are being heard above the natural. Her inner voice speaks to her - in ‘virtual-vocoded-techno’ speak. Techno-voice is represented by a ‘nasendoscopy’ projected video image of her vocal folds in action.

“Why can’t I hear myself?” – “Can you hear me?” – “Am I too loud?” she asks as she is answered by this seemingly disembodied techno-voice. Is this her inner voice or is it the voice of a future threatening to silence her?

Throughout this performance we see her working with technology – principally, a microphone - continually attempting to enunciate genuine emotion. During this process she revisits her past. We hear her sifting through a range of spoken and sung voice types. Some are accommodated by the technology - some are not – some sound sweet - some distorted – some exploit the sound of the virtual, some are constricted and constrained by it. The experience is an exploration of the voice from ‘plain speaking’ through to virtuosic singing. All the while the audience is seeing and hearing two presentations of the voice – one techno that speaks through the images of the vocal folds the other natural but mediated and processed through the microphone.

As an interactive multimedia performance for soprano and projected moving image Conversations With My Voice explores the topic ‘the voice as identity in a technological age’. Pre-recorded non-processed and processed singing, captured through ‘nasendoscopy’ imaging, are used to frame this live performance. Other technologies used include sound enhancement and an ‘Ableton Live’ looping program. The images projected are the documentation of a series of nasendoscopy investigations - a small camera is inserted through the nose in order to film the vocal folds in motion while engaged in vocal utterances, speaking and singing (Heather Keens). The sonic aspect of the performance is disseminated through a sound system enabling the real time digital manipulation of vocalisations mixed with pre-prepared materials. On a single screen installation we see a visual dialogue between the real (vocal fold images) and the technically represented (3D spectrographic images) – while hearing a conversation between a virtual and a real voice. The musical soundscapes that underscore and features in the work include: techno, dubstep, hip hop, doo-wop, blues, ballad, music theatre and opera.