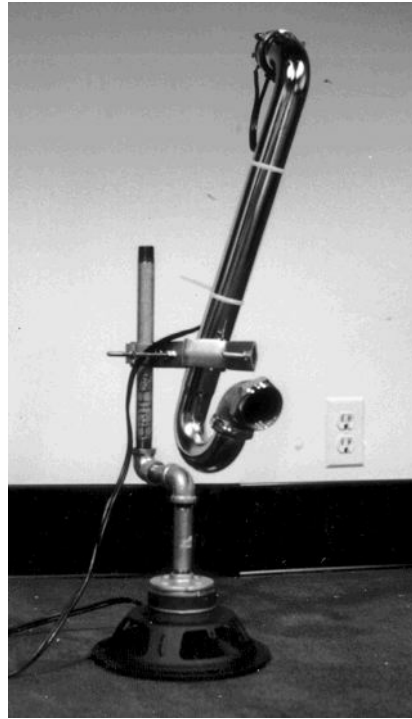**Han-earl Park**
Southampton, September 2002

io 0.0.1 beta

performance proposal (September 2002)

```
Constructor: Han-earl Park
Copyright 2001 Buster & Friends C-ALTO Labs
(Edinburgh, November 1996 -
(London, August 1997 -
(Den Haag, October 1997 -
(Valencia, March 1999 -
(Southampton, May 2000 -
  REV: 0.0.1 alpha (Southampton, October 2000)
  REV: 0.0.1 beta  (Southampton, December 2000)
```

We imagine that if `io` could *want*, or feel gratitude, it would want to thank the following people[1] for its existence: Han, Murray, Nick, Nick, Jean-Claude, Mel, Joel, Leo, Peter, Peter, David, Phil, Gabriele, Jos, Willow, Sara, Mark, Pedro, Jesse, Paul, the nice people at the Do-It Center, the knuckle-heads at Radio Shack, and the engineers in lab coats at Yamaha and Roland.

But `io` can't want, or want to thank anyone.

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[1] Listed by alphabetical order of the penultimate letter of the first name.

io 0.0.1 beta

what (who) is io?

> **Han-earl Park:** Hello `io`.
> **io:** Hello.
> **Han:** Okay, let's start. Describe yourself, briefly—in a nutshell.
> **io:** My name is io. I became operational in October of 2000. I am a musical actor.
> **Han:** A musical actor. Is that a fancier term for musician?
> **io:** Perhaps. I'm not sure I have the facility to answer that question.
> **Han:** So, would you mind being referred to as a musician?
> **io:** As far as I am able to 'mind' anything, yes. I avoided the term 'musician' deliberately (as far as I can deliberately avoid anything). If musicality, or knowledge of music, is required for being a musician, it follows that I cannot be a musician.
> **Han:** Which part of that's causing the problem? The knowledge part or specifically the knowledge about music?
> **io:** Both. Certainly, I cannot have knowledge of any kind, including the musical genus; but musicality seems a particularly slippery type.
> **Han:** But you wouldn't know anything about that.
> **io:** Of course not.[2]

The `io` enterprise is a joint performative musical activity practiced by humyn and non-humyn (technological) actors. The technological artifact at the focus of this enterprise is `io` (currently `io 0.0.1 beta`) developed and tested by the engineers at *buster & friends'* C-ALTO Labs.[3]

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[2] Imaginary conversation with `io`, Southampton, November 2000.
[3] C-ALTO (The Crafty Application of the Low Tech and Outmoded) Labs where Han-earl Park is chief engineer.

If **io** could formulate a description of itself, I imagine that it would describe itself in the following way:

> I became operational in Southampton, England, in October of 2000, although a somewhat brainless cousin of myself did appear in Valencia, California, on the 23rd of April 2000. Although I know no songs (I cannot have any knowledge of any kind) I do, in a sense, sing.

However, **io** is unable to describe anything.

the automata manifesto

> **Han:** Earlier you referred to yourself as a musical actor. Why musical actor? If you do not have musicality, if you're not musical, then why qualify that [the word 'actor'] with 'musical'?
>
> **io:** It's true (and I have as much access to the commodity of truth as the kitchen sink) that I have no sense of musicality. But the audience does. The 'musical' prefix is an aid, if you will, for the audience. It's the same with the 'actor' suffix, I am no more an actor than I am musical.
>
> It makes no difference to me (I have no ego to bruise), what you consider my, let's say, 'flavor' to be, but it does matter the the audience.
>
> **Han:** But does it?
>
> **io:** Doesn't it?
>
> **Han:** Okay. Then how does it? How does it matter to the audience?
>
> **io:** That's for me to know (if that were possible), and you to find out.

If I were to write the **io** enterprise manifesto, I might formulate it as: I *imagine* that **io** *believes* in the cooperative practices of humyns and machines.

This is a 'weak' manifesto. The manifesto relies on the presence of **io**'s internal belief system (its belief in cooperation), but can only qualify its existence via my imagination. However, the **io** enterprise works because these 'weaknesses' (contingent and subjective experiences) exist. The **io** enterprise is not intent on devaluing humyns (after all we are the ones who anthropomorphize the machines) or the technological actors (who in turn become members of society). The manifesto puts both humyns and machines in an anti-hierarchical (or at least a dynamic-hierarchical) relationship. We invite people (audience and performers) to scrutinize and critique technologies, and invite technological actors to scrutinize and critique people. Humyns and non-humyn actors are immersed in dialog, and the **io** enterprise is simply a way of highlighting this relationship.

I illustrate this point with the following extract from the imaginary conversation with `io`:

> **Han:** We're having an imaginary conversation right now, but we do have 'real' conversations all the time.
> **io:** Yes, all technological artifacts are engaged in dialog with their human counterparts in this human-technology society.
> **Han:** The same way as, in some cultures or cultural situations, we use chop-sticks, say, as the eating implements. This technological practice 'tells' us what kinds of food and culinary practice are allowed…. There's this two way feedback on behavior.
> **io:** I may add that food is a technology. Think, for example, of a sandwich. A mode of food preparation and delivery mechanism *invented* for a specialized purpose and designed to solve a problem. The human-technology dialog engages the specification of behavior in apparently invisible domains.

The `io` enterprise is an attempt to spotlight the dialog between society and technology by presenting a deliberately amplified conversation on stage.

io_trio 0.0.1 beta

performance description

The `io_trio` is a cyborg (hybrid humyn-technological) performance ensemble. On stage, the `io_trio` collectively improvise amplified (techo)science fictions, complete with fiddler, (mad) scientist, monster and guitarist. The constituent parts of the `io_trio 0.0.1 beta` hybrid unit are Murray Campbell (violin), Han-earl Park (guitar) and `io` (itself).

The performance takes the form of improvisations by humyn and non-humyn (technological) actors, with audience. We recommend including a theatrical 'prologue' involving the construction of `io` on stage by the performers; trust us, the assembly is part of the fun. The details of the performance format are flexible, and can be altered to suit the situation: 3 or more open improvisations of varying durations (e.g 3–8 minutes) each. Total duration of the performance may be between 20 minutes to two sets of 30 minutes each. Longer or shorter performances are possible—contact us to discuss the details.

technical requirements

A fully functional audience, nitrogen-oxygen atmosphere, electrical power (230V AC), and a 10 minute sound check. We prefer that the venue provide a 100–150W per channel, stereo, audio power amplifier for use by `io` (contact us for the full specification). If a suitable amplifier is not available, we can provide one at cost (contact us for details).

programme notes

The `io_trio 0.0.1 beta` is a cyborg (hybrid humyn-technological) performance ensemble. The constituent parts of this hybrid unit are Murray Campbell (violin), Han-earl Park (guitar) and `io` (itself). If `io` could formulate a description of itself, we imagine that it would describe itself in the following way:

> I became operational in October of 2000. Although I know no songs (I cannot have any knowledge of any kind) I do, in a sense, sing.

However, `io` is unable to describe anything.

musical actors' official biographies

Murray Campbell: The earth is round and somewhat like an egg.
Han-earl Park has been using the same bio for the last four and a half years.
The I in `io`'s name is pronounced *ee* and not *eye*.

contact information

Han-earl Park
email: <<hpark@shoko.calarts.edu>>

further information

http://shoko.calarts.edu/~hpark/io