

The Music Animation Machine on KRON TV 4, March 5, 1991

Emerald Yeh: Music enjoyment is taking on a whole new dimension; now you can see as well as hear the sounds. How? As high-tech reporter Richard Hart explains, the Next Step in Music is a device that turns sounds into pictures on TV.

Richard Hart: You're listening to something by Johann Sebastian Bach. Now, if you're a performer, this sheet music means something. But if you're a listener, even if you look carefully, it's difficult to tell the relationship between the instruments, and the structure. Now, watch this. This is a new form of music notation called Music Animation. It operates on an IBM-compatible computer, and was developed by a music educator at the University of California.

Stephen Malinowski: If you asked a scientist to sit down and design music notation, they'd probably come up with something like this --- which wouldn't be good for performers at all. For one thing, this doesn't have a way of figuring out which pitch is which; you can't look at it and say "I know that's a middle C."

Richard Hart: But it's fun and educational for music listeners, and that's for whom the Music Animation Machine was designed. When virtually any kind of music is played back through the machine, it appears on a television screen as a field of dashes; the longer the note, the longer the dash; the higher the note, the higher the dash; the faster the tempo, the faster it all scrolls by. It all seems so simple. Each color can represent a different instrument. Here, you don't hear the blue notes yet, but you know they're coming... ..and here they are. The new system will never replace sheet music --- performers still need that --- but those of us who like to listen might take note. In Berkeley, Richard Hart; News Center Four.

Emerald Yeh: Yes, it's active listening.

Pete Wilson: It seems silly, but you start watching it, and it's mesmerizing.

Emerald Yeh: Yes, because it matches what you're hearing.