

Rick's Place

Notes, Thoughts, and Random Musings on the Online Experience
by Rick Hein, AMIS web master

The 58-year-old has transformed the songs on his latest album, *Greendale*, into an opera that plays in every medium but PowerPoint (so far). There's a CD and a bonus DVD; a live concert tour, which boasts three stages filled with 30 lip-synching actors; a Web site that streams every song on the album; and finally, a movie opening in Los Angeles...*Greendale's* scope may seem like overkill. But that might be just what it takes for an aging rocker to survive in the MP3 era.

Ted Greenwald, "The Reinvention of Neil Young, Part 6"
Wired, March 2004

Neil Young has been a force in popular music since the 1960s. Many of us will remember the early years with Crazy Horse; the reflection of the Los Angeles riots in "What's Going On" with Buffalo Springfield; partnership with David Crosby, Stephen Stills, and Graham Nash, and his work on Farm Aid and "Rust Never Sleeps".

His early tools include words and a guitar. As, to misquote another icon of the twentieth century, "the times, they are a changing" his tool box expands to include electric guitars, drums, pianos, synthesizers, other musicians and other ideas. Through the 80s and 90s he continues to reinvent himself as he explores film, multimedia, and theatrical extensions of his music. Now, as we enter the 21st century, he brings all of the areas he has explored together with the power of the Internet and creates a performance that expresses many paradoxes.

The performance takes place in a physical location; it is filmed and added to an archive that exists in a virtual space that can be explored in any order at any time, from any place in the world by the viewer. Yes, viewer is the right word, as the work is perceived through the eyes as well as the ears. The performance online also includes chance elements, as sections of the site are 'discovered' by clicking on various objects. The progress through the performance can also be ordered by the programmer, not the original performer, in that the hidden links may appear after another link is found, or they may have changed as a result of the path the viewer has chosen.

Any of these elements sound familiar? Shall we loosely bring in Cage, Scriabin, Wagner, and Gluck? What about Warhol, Hitchcock, and Bergman? Should we start thinking of Mozart and his operas that had premieres in beer halls? What about Ellington and his symphonic works having their premiere on the bandstand of a club in Harlem? How many musicians can we *not* name because their music did not change with the times?

What have you done to move with the times? Are you using music technology to create teaching materials? Did you read Pete Lutkoski's article in the last issue of AMIS Update and install that package you bought last summer? Have you written out a series of warm-up exercises to help your students make the connection between the written page and the ear? Have you written out that folk song arrangement you toyed with last summer? Have you organized your general music lessons to include on cds with the edited examples you wish your students to use, the collection of worksheets and reference materials you wish them to study?

If you haven't, you are probably in the majority. AMIS is offering three great professional development opportunities next year - IB Music and Teaching for Understanding; Music Technology including hands on film scoring, sequencing, notation, and ear training and music theory software; and Tips and Tricks for the Elementary Teacher. These are being taught, respectively, by Jim Yarnell, Gary Cramer, Evelyn Smith and Ian Thompson. These are people who have learned these skills through their work as a teacher and as a student seeking to confirm their classroom experiences with others in a community of learners. You know that these people, like Neil Young, have changed with the times. They are excited about what they have learned and want to share it with others. Catch their enthusiasm and share it with your community of learners.

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