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HISTORIC COMPUTER DEMONSTRATION REIMAGINED AS NEW MULTIMEDIA WORK IN PREMIERE OF THE DEMO, APRIL 1 & 2 AT BING CONCERT HALL

Created by composer-performers Mikel Rouse and Ben Neill, the production examines life and work of visionary Douglas Engelbart

Stanford, CA, February 11, 2015—This spring, Stanford Live’s world premiere of The Demo, on April 1 and 2 at Bing Concert Hall, will reflect on a pivotal moment in Silicon Valley’s history with one of its most influential figures.

Douglas Engelbart’s egalitarian vision for how technology could expand human intelligence set the world on its head and, ultimately, led to many of the tools that we now take for granted in our daily lives. His 1968 demonstration of the fundamental features of personal computing and his life’s undertaking are now reimagined as a technology infused stage work—a unique hybrid of music, media and demonstration—by composer-performers Mikel Rouse and Ben Neill.

Long before the giants of the personal computer era emerged in the mainstream, Engelbart and his team of researchers (including future computing legend and Stanford alum William English) at the Augmentation Research Center at Stanford Research Institute in Menlo Park, presented a 90-minute live public demonstration entitled “A Research Center for Augmenting Human Intellect.”

What become known as “the mother of all demos,” Engelbart’s presentation was the public debut of the computer mouse as well as hypertext, dynamic file linking, shared-screen collaboration and other interfacing applications that have shaped modern technology. This demonstration was filmed, and the resulting video is now part of the Engelbart Collection at Stanford University.

Set simultaneously in the 1960s and today—with Rouse portraying Engelbart and Neill playing English—Stanford Live’s upcoming premiere of The Demo will include re-enactments of the demonstration, video projections, computer-based voice processing and triggering and Neill’s
interactive electro-acoustic instrument, the mutantrumpet. Rouse and Neill employ a modern sonic palette with a score that marries electronica with operatic flourishes and minimalist vocal techniques. The typed text of the original demo serves as the libretto for the vocals and showcases Rouse’s own technique of “counter-poetry,” in which voices are latticed in intricate, echoing and rhythmic patterns.

**LIVE CONTEXT**

*The Demo* is also the centerpiece of a new event series announced by Stanford Live’s Executive Director Wiley Hausam called *Live Context: Art and Ideas*. “We believe the ideas embedded in art can weave an even richer, unifying tapestry for the season and connect to Stanford’s unique intellectual life,” says Hausam. “To that end, Stanford Live will present contextual events that consider the unprecedented nature of Engelbart’s vision and his continuing legacy.”

Stanford Live and other campus partners will organize an array of classes, lectures and discussions. Ancillary events will include a conversation about the digital future between pathbreaking technologists and influential public thinkers Jaron Lanier and Sebastian Thrun and a closing panel event on digital technology and live performance. More details can be found on the Stanford Live site at live.stanford.edu.

*The Demo* was commissioned and developed by Krannert Center for the Performing Arts in association with eDream Institute (NCSA) at University of Illinois, Champaign.

**ABOUT THE CO-CREATORS**

Mikel Rouse is as a composer, filmmaker, performer, director and visual artist. A quick review of his biography will provide a snapshot of his accomplishments. A trilogy of operas, books of string quartets, two feature-length films, awards from leading funding organizations and at least one recorded album every year for the past 20 years. He blends tradition and technology with an artistic voice that resonates in contemporary thought. Rouse’s works based on pop culture are proving themselves artistic masterpieces long after the moment of “popularity” has passed. He is, according to *The New York Times*, “a composer many believe to be the best of his generation.”

Ben Neill is a composer, performer, producer, and inventor of the mutantrumpet, a hybrid electro-acoustic instrument. Neill’s music blends influences from electronica, jazz and minimalism, blurring the lines between DJ culture and acoustic instrument performance. Neill has recorded nine CDs of his music, and his music has also been featured on numerous compilations. Neill has composed
original music for two films: Guest of Cindy Sherman and 911-911, and is also active as a sound and installation artist and has been presented widely in venues such as The Tate Modern London, The New Museum New York and PPOW Gallery New York, and was featured in the PBS documentary Imagining America.

TICKET INFORMATION
Tickets for *The Demo*, presented by Stanford Live on April 1 and 2, range from $40-$65 for adults and are $15 for all current Stanford students. Tickets are available at the Bing Concert Hall Ticket Office, by phone at 650-724-2464 (BING) or online at http://live.stanford.edu. The box office is located at 327 Lasuen Street. Regular hours are Tuesday-Friday from 12:00-5:00 p.m.

VENUE INFORMATION
Bing Concert Hall is located on the Stanford University campus at 327 Lasuen Street on the corner of Lasuen and Campus Dr. Parking on campus is free of charge after 4:00 PM and on weekends at all times, and may be found in the Galvez Lot across Campus Drive from Bing Concert Hall. Maps and directions are available at http://live.stanford.edu/Venues/parkingmapsdirections.php.

ABOUT STANFORD LIVE
Stanford Live is Stanford University’s performing arts presenter and producer, committed to sharing, celebrating and advancing the art of live music, dance, theater, and opera. Stanford Live unites celebrated and emerging artists with the Stanford campus and greater Bay Area communities in a broad range of experiences that engage the senses and emotions, stimulate minds, and enrich lives. The organization values artistic vitality, learning and an inclusive community. In addition to its home in Bing Concert Hall, Stanford Live also presents performances at other campus venues including Memorial Auditorium, Memorial Church and Frost Amphitheater.
CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

What: Public Talk: Enhancing Humanity with Technology
When: Thursday, March 12, 5:00 p.m.
Where: Green Library, Stanford University
Tickets: Free
Description: Professor James Landay of Stanford’s Human-Computer Interaction talks about historical pursuits in “augmenting the human intellect” through technology and the capabilities that we now take for granted as a result.

What: The Demo (World premiere)
Mikel Rouse, Co-creator, composer and performer
Ben Neill, Co-creator, composer and performer
Creative Team: Jeff Sugg, Jim Findley, Chris Ericson and Hideaki Tsutsui
When: Wednesday, April 1 and Thursday, April 2, 7:30 p.m.
Where: Bing Concert Hall, 327 Lasuen Street, Stanford University
Tickets: $40-$65
Description: The Demo is a technology infused music and multimedia stage work based on Douglas Engelbart’s historic 1968 demonstration of early computer technology.

What: A Conversation about our Digital Future:
With Jaron Lanier and Sebastian Thrun
When: Thursday, April 2 at 5:00 p.m.
Where: Bing Concert Hall 327, Lasuen Street, Stanford University
Tickets: $20; Free for Stanford students
Description: Pathbreaking technologists and influential public thinkers Jaron Lanier and Sebastian Thrun pause to reflect on the realization of Engelbart’s pursuit of computer augmentation and to articulate the directions a digitally enhanced future might take.

What: Augmenting Performance:
A Creative Panel on Digital Technology and Live Performance
When: Friday, April 3 at 12:00 p.m.
Where: Bing Concert Hall Studio, 327 Lasuen Street, Stanford University
Tickets: Free
Description: A panel of contemporary artists and thinkers will address the ways that new technological developments are augmenting the ways we conceive and make live performance.

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