

## ELECTRIC CIRCUS ANALOGOUS

David Rosenboom

1968

Private industry seems the only group today that recognizes the merits, or at least potential, of “new” art. Private business depends on the buying public. So, it seems, the buying public is, unknowingly, far in advance of “establishment” art. Maybe artistic expression is really for the masses after all.

The young are always infatuated with technology and technology helps create new media. The outcropping of new media forms is usually associated with significant changes in art and expression, new “ages” in feeling and form. Until the media change, “development” or quasi-change in art is often that of increasing saturation of the old media, the cyclic growth of *feulliton*. Again and again we see the inception of idea, the growth to conception, the culmination of logical technique, imagination, and ingenuity and the decline through *feulliton* of the most obvious properties of the materials of a particular medium.

This might point to the term, people’s *avant-garde*, (or *avant-groove*?).

The Electric Circus is a people’s *avant-garde* medium in America. It is a medium on a particular level, an environmental level. It is concerned most basically with general environmental forms, wrappings, and artistic architecture. Environments are forms, not content. They are shapes for content. If you are creating containers you have rocketed yourself to an ever-increasing level of difficulty in making a creation that lasts, something which outlives its initial impact. Congratulations are deserved the Electric Circus for creating a media environment that has lasted as long as it did.

The fact is that it did last but it died as well. No environment can last forever if the level and center of perception is on the environment instead of the content. Imagine how long the concert hall would have lasted if everybody went just to look at the architecture and the ceiling décor. It is no fault of misdirection, therefore, but that of inherent qualities of the medium that the Electric Circus now drastically needs revitalization. In addition the Electric Circus is a performed medium: light show – sound – chances to react to and with the perceiver-participants, the buying public. Also, inherent in the media, there is the fact that the performers and operators themselves have tired and are responsible for the extremely embarrassing light show, never changing format, and tiring acts. I was excited when I first saw the Electric Circus and a fire eating act and then shocked when I returned several months later and saw the same show in exact detail. This certainly is not a stimulating situation for musical groups to enter into and to try to do something with. Thus, the level of change, of the so necessary significant newness, which gives something universality must be found, its activation designed in a way that allows for practical implementation, and included in future construction. As it exists now there is no level of significant newness: post-mortem: it died a natural death!

We are now embarking on a new renovation. In an article I wrote for publication in the journal of the Association of Independent Composers and Performers, *THE CONTINUUM*, I explained how the current trends in environmental thinking correspond to the paradox of generalization in methodology and how work from this viewpoint leads only to meaningless saturation of media. I tried to hypothesize upon a viewpoint from which environments can be constructed which merit extended involvement and more in depth perception by participants on any intelligibility level.