

saying the collaboration was great."

If this is just the beginning, the possibilities are impressive. What would come out if it was played with an aria? What sort of works will artists of the future create with this technology? There will be further performances in England in November (see <http://www.ultrasound.ws/> and <http://www.ica.org.uk/> for details).

Ars Electronica is at <http://www.aec.at/>. The centre has four floors of permanent exhibition (including a virtual reality cave with simulated time travel) and many other works exploring digital interface, haptics, music and more.

For the festival and the coveted Golden Nica of the Prix Ars Electronica, the exhibitions and installations have overflowed into at least four other venues.

In the Brucknerhaus, the electrolobby is filled with experimental works, including Trash Mirror, which reflects your shadow at you in a collection of lost bus tickets and packaging; and Switch, an interactive feature film from Denmark. In the Hauptplatz, an enormous climbing wall laid over big printed letters forms the TeleKletterGarten, a programming interface that requires bodily intervention.

Performances are scheduled twice daily, with coders relaxing on the couches below asking for the next letter through a microphone as climbers scramble across to the Enter key.

In the OK Centre, visitors can explore the winning works of the Prix, including the stunning animation Tim Tom, a student project from France (by comparison, last year's prize for animation went to Monsters).

This year's theme is Code, and Humboldt University-Berlin's Institute for Aesthetics music history and aesthetics professor Friedrich Kittler starts with a history of code, code as law, code as a set of instructions and code as language.

Electronic Frontier Foundation legal director Cindy Kohn discusses the legal implications of code as speech, and Smart Mobs author Howard Rheingold tells the audience "the battle over code is the battle over our ability to organise collectively".

"We need to take back the public sphere," he says. "We have opportunities for new technologies, new social forms, new cultural forms. It's important to stress that a smart mob is not necessarily a wise mob."

Around all this is woven a soundtrack of digital and analog music, from the cutting edge Blockjam, toy of the future, to Audiopad, a collaborative light interface for performance by James Patten and Ben Recht from MIT.

One Japanese work involves instruments that play themselves, including an automatic xylophone shaped like four flowers with moving petals.

Winner of the Golden Nica for interactive art is Blast Theory from the UK, which aims to be in Adelaide in February 2004, with a work called Can You See Me Now? It has real-world players chasing online players using GPS and WiFi.

*Tech Traveller is an occasional series.*