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Poetry in Motion: the Flying Words Project

January 24, 2008

Poetry readings aren't always quaint recitals of rhyming text. And for the performance artist team of Peter Cook and Kenny Lerner, being in the same time zone isn't even a requirement for them to practice together.

Using high-speed videophone technology perfected just a few years ago, Cook, of Chicago, and Lerner, who teaches history at Rochester Institute of Technology's National Technical Institute for the Deaf, will be practicing together - although miles apart - for their Feb. 2 "Flying Words Project" performance at RIT as part of the Caroline Werner Gannett Project.

Cook, an internationally known poet who is deaf, uses American Sign Language to recite poetry. Lerner, who is hearing, usually vocalizes out of view, resulting in a unique and dynamic performance. The pair met when Cook was a student at RIT in 1986. They began to perform around Rochester, then, with a state grant, across New York and elsewhere.

After 1990, it was hard to them to add new parts to their performance because Cook moved from Rochester. But in 2004, videophones allowed Cook and Lerner to update and practice their show, which they perform several times a year around the country.

You can see the Flying Words Project at 7 p.m. Sat., Feb. 2 at RIT's Webb Auditorium, Booth Building, 7A. Admission is free.



Kenny Lerner (left) and Peter Cook perform in the Flying Words Project.
[See full-size photo](#)

Rochester Institute of Technology

National Technical Institute for the Deaf

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