Morton Subotnick
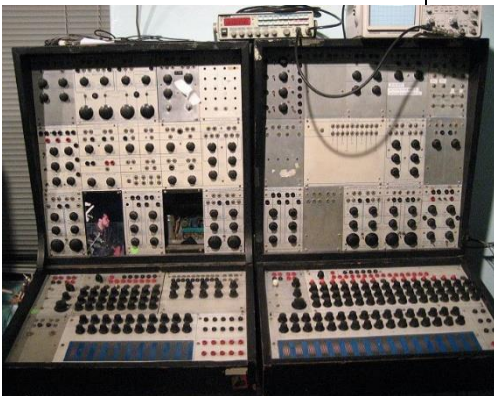### Born April 14, 1933;

Los Angeles, California

Subotnick's 1967 album, "Silver Apples of the Moon" is considered a milestone in electronic music, being the first record to feature a voltage-based analogue synthesizer [May 23], the Buchla 100, developed by Don Buchla with suggestions from Subotnick.

A Buchla 100 synthesizer. Photo by Bennett. CC BY-SA 2.0.

The Buchla 100 was designed in a modular fashion, combining boxes that each served a specific function, such as an envelope generator, oscillator, filter, and amplifier. By mixing and matching the different modules, a composer could affect the pitch, timbre, amplitude, and spatial location of the sound.

The formal name for the synthesizer was the "Buchla 100 series Modular Electronic Music System," but it was often just called the "Electric Music Box".

ICOT Formed
April 14, 1982

The Institute for New Generation Computer Technology (ICOT) was set up to guide Japan's ten-year research and development program, the Fifth Generation Computer Systems (FGCS) project. The term "fifth generation" referred to the era of machines following vacuum tubes (1st gen), transistors and diodes (2), integrated circuits (3), and microprocessors (4).

The aim was to create an "epoch-making computer" with supercomputer-like performance based around massively parallel processing. It would provide a platform for future developments in AI by utilizing ideas from logic programming [May 15].

The machine would have a performance of between 100M and 1G LIPS (Logical Inference Per Second). At the time, typical workstations were capable of about 100K LIPS.

Unfortunately, the FGCS project failed to be a commercial success for reasons similar to the failure of the Lisp machine [Dec 25] initiative in the US – their specialized computer architectures were eventually surpassed in speed by more standardized, cheaper hardware (for example, Sun workstations [April 9] and Intel x86 boxes [April 10]). However, the project did produce a new generation of Japanese researchers, and encouraged like-minded research around the world (e.g. SCI [Oct 28] in the US, Alvey [Aug 30] in the UK).

Except for the director, Kazuhiro Fuchi (1936 - 2006), all the researchers at ICOT were under 35, and in some cases well under that. Fuchi pointed out that revolutions weren't made by the elderly, and coined the word "Young8", meaning "young and excellent."

JenniCam Live
April 14, 1996

Jennifer Ringley (1976 -) hooked up a camera in her dorm room at college and set it to upload a picture to her "JenniCam" website every three (or perhaps 15) minutes. Over the lifetime of the site, she moved into an apartment and increased the number of camera to cover her entire living space.

The site remained online for more than seven years, and at its peak drew seven million hits a day. Of course, when she started out, her most successful competitors were a coffee pot [Nov 22] and a fish tank [Aug 00].

JenniCam is widely considered to be the first successful example of "lifecasting," although Steve Mann [June 8] was probably the first "lifecaster", having started in 1994.

Ringley claimed that the site was an attempt to document her life, but it also generated a great deal of controversy for its voyeuristic nature.

Ringley shut her site down on Dec. 31, 2003, after PayPal [Feb 15] stopped processing donations due to its new anti-nudity policy. Since then she's largely shunned public attention, even as "reality TV" has gone mainstream.

A famously disastrous lifecasting experiment was "Quiet: We Live in Public" [Dec 3].

Squeak Released
April 14, 1996

The Squeak language was derived from Smalltalk-80 by a group at Apple that included some of the original Smalltalk developers, including Alan Kay [May 17] and Dan Ingalls [Oct 12].

It supported a more modern color graphics model and an experimental user interface called Morphic, adopted from an old project at Sun [Feb 24]. Morphic replaced Smalltalk's influential Model-View-Controller toolkit.

Squeak's development was taken up later at Walt Disney Imagineering, but still headed by Kay who was by then a Disney fellow. One outcome was Etoys, a child-friendly computer

environment based around scripted objects, which motivated further refinements to the Scratch language [Jan 8]. Namely, Etoys revealed some limitations of Morphic, which led to the creation of Tweak by Andreas Raab [Nov 24] in 2001. Tweak added concepts such as islands, asynchronous messaging, costumes, and tile scripting.

Some larger Squeak projects include Open Cobalt (a 3D virtual workspace), and parts of the now-dormant Nintendo ES OS [Sept 23].