Artist examines contradictions of Kosovo war

‘Yugoslavia Suite’ blends video games, bombing footage and Army training films

By DAVID DALEY
Courant Staff Writer

Bob Ostertag dropped out of music school to play with famed jazz iconoclast Anthony Braxton of Wesleyan University and then walked away from New York’s bustling downtown experimental music scene in 1980, just as he was building his own reputation. He spent the rest of the decade in Nicaragua and El Salvador, organizing and events for leftist rebels and then covering the civil wars for international newspapers.

In the political sensibilities have colored Ostertag’s work since he returned to America in 1989, and embarked on a series of recordings that explored another new wave of activism

In the first movement, called “War Games,” Ostertag blends video games, bombing footage and video footage from the first place that this was a cause that we thought was worth fighting for but wasn’t worth American lives. We’ll kill a lot of people, just as long as not one American dies. That’s incredible! That we’d have no gall about going before the world and laying that out. “Seems to me a matter where you come down on the Kosovo wars, that’s something that’s worth talking about.”

“Yugoslavia Suite” is making its world premiere at Real Art Ways, 56 Arbor St., Hartford, Friday at 9 p.m. It is repeated Saturday at 9 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m. Tickets are $5, $5 for students, seniors and RAW members. Information: 222-1001 or www.realartways.org.