

Excerpts from “FORMAT. Los Angeles 2005: Valdes, Ruben Ochoa, Lori Shindler, Joel Tauber, Kaz Oshiro, Adria Julia”, a 30 minute documentary produced by Swedish Television. On October 18, 2005, scenes from “The Flying Project” and “The Underwater Project” as well as an interview in “the cave” were broadcast on Swedish Television and aired in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland.

*Scenes from Joel Tauber’s “Searching for The Impossible: The Flying Project.”
Tauber flies overhead beneath 40 helium balloons, while playing the bagpipes.
Cut to Tauber jumping off a rock, trying to fly.*

“Joel Tauber: Ett Med Musiken”

FLYING PROJECT: On November 15, 2001, I tried some new flying strategies. I spent more time on each attempt preparing myself mentally to fly, and I leapt from greater heights than I had previously. A small but deep pond cushioned me after each failure, but I was not comforted. By the end of the day, I could not try anymore. I broke down and cried, as I realized that I could not fly without mechanical assistance.

TAUBER IN THE CAVE: I made a decision that flight was not just about physics or science. Maybe it was about something beyond physics. So, I started looking at a bunch of people who I consider to be fools. But, I think being a fool is a good thing. Fools don’t take conventional thinking to heart. They try to explore other things.

FLYING PROJECT: I found inspiration in a drawing by Pierre Blanchard made in 1781.... It is the musical inspiration that can drive the machine. Only by entering the holy space of music, the space that is beyond the physics of the ship’s construction, can the pilot take his boat on the metaphysical voyage of flight.

TAUBER IN THE CAVE: That must be it. Music is the key to flight. Music is a metaphysical tool. [Blanchard] made a drawing... I decided to actually make it happen.

FLYING PROJECT: I wanted to fly with helium balloons, but I wanted music and breath to power this flight. My theory was that breath plus music plus forty 6-foot helium balloons would equal flight. The bagpipe was critical for this equation to work. The bagpipe is the only instrument that I am aware of where you can make music by squeezing a balloon.... I had to learn to play the bagpipe. Not only that.... I had to learn to play it horizontally....

I did not just inflate the balloons with helium; I inflated the balloons with

music....

I was scared that I would not be able to fly. I was also scared that if I could fly, I would not be able to come down....

It was the most amazing experience of my life, but I have not yet completely succeeded in flying like I dreamed.

A number of scenes from "The Flying Project" accompany the narration, culminating in Tauber's flight.

Scenes from Joel Tauber's "The Underwater Project: Turning Myself Into Music"

TAUBER IN THE CAVE: In my flying project, I was trying to explore the sky, trying to do that in my own particular way. In my underwater project, I tried to explore what was going on underwater. At the same time, I was also intrigued by the power of music. If music made me fly in my flying project, it has to be a really powerful thing. If it's that powerful... I decided to see if I could actually become music. That's a kind of metaphysical dream. [It's] an idea of transcendence. It's about turning my physical body into something ephemeral. Turning myself into sound waves.

Scenes from the "The Underwater Project: Turning Myself Into Music"

TAUBER IN THE CAVE: But, making those sound waves music, and not just noise... That would be my ultimate dream, to become music. Maybe that's what happens when you die. I don't know.