Computer Borrows Masters' Frailties In Music Festival

The Kitchen, at 240 Mercer Street, is embarked on its two-week First Annual International Computer Arts Festival, with performances of computer film, videotape and music scheduled for every evening through April 14 (with a footnote in the form of an all computer-music concert April 17).

Monday evening's event didn't exactly match the smooth, ultrascientific efficiency of the computer's image with an efficiency of its own. The movie projector couldn't be focused or threaded properly or play soundtracks back undistorted; the screen was crumpled; the video monitors wobbled and flickered, and a general air of hang-loose improvisation hung in the air.

Still, computer arts is a field of limitless promise, and Monday's items hinted intriguingly at that promise. William Fetter's short films suffered most from technical inadequacies in their projection, but suggested a cute, op-art gimmickry. Bill Etra and Steven Rutt had just finished a new video synthesizer built around an analogue computer that could do wondrous things to an image, but they hadn't had time to prepare more than a hasty demonstration of its potential.

That left Joseph Olive's two pieces of computer music, Studies Nos. 4 and 5, as the most successfully finished works of the night. Realized at the Bell Telephone Laboratory in Murray Hill, N. J. (a leading center for computer arts research), Mr. Olive's efforts revealed a familiarly accessibl formal sensibility coupled wit' some genuine invention in th synthesizing of new sonic mate rials.