



MUSIC

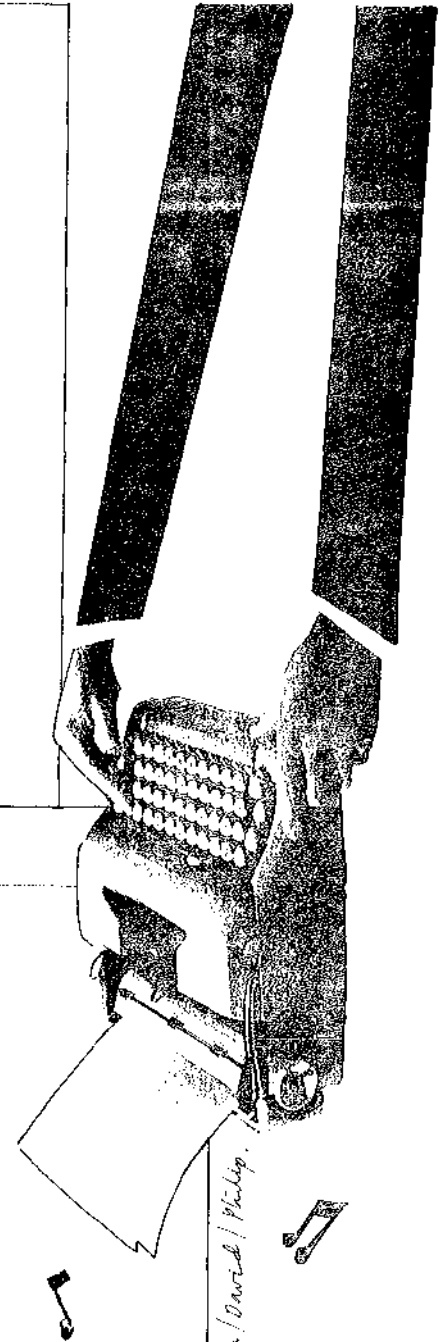
1980 Number Two

NEW MUSIC

1980 Number 2

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Editorial

The Clifton Hill Community Music Centre has started up a magazine, aptly titled 'New Music.'

As you might/probably already know, the Clifton Hill Community Music Centre, first started in 1976, is a venue for new and experimental music/etc. The centre's co-ordinator is David Chesworth (48 3005) and anyone who contacts him can perform at the Centre, whether it be for a single piece or a full concert. No-one is refused the right to perform and admission to all concerts is zilch (free), although there is always a lonely donation jar sitting in the foyer.

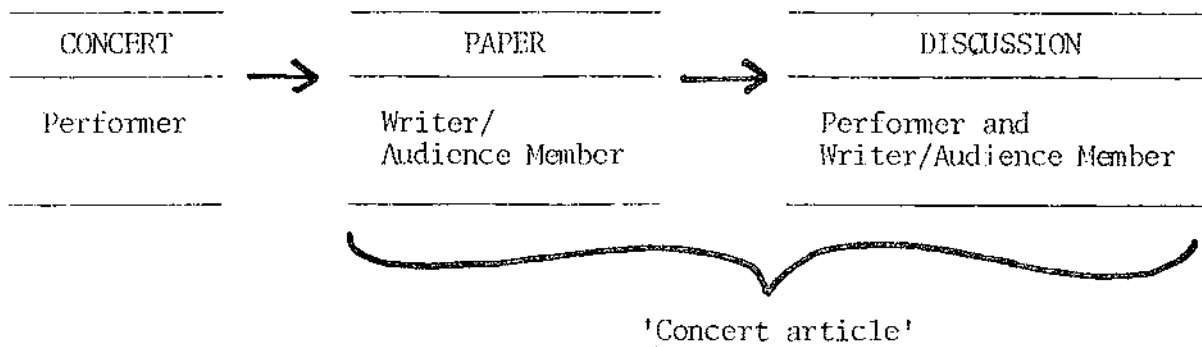
The magazine 'New Music' revolves totally around the Clifton Hill Community Music Centre. This is to say that it is not a journal on new and experimental music in general or in terms of national or global coverage. Although the magazine (and even the Centre) might be tagged 'cultist'/'elitist' or even 'provincial', the fact remains that there is enough happening right here at the Clifton Hill Community Music Centre to warrant a magazine giving its full attention to just that. Community music and its related ideologies is not concerned with stifling notions of worldly importance and artistic recognition. ('Hey! there's this incredible guy - a real artist, y'know - from New York, and he picks his nose while improvising on tortoise shells which he blah blah blah etc.') 'New Music' does not at all reject or condemn global or national communication with whatever is currently happening. The magazine simply devotes its energy to matters closer to home. It does, though, publish a comprehensive 'What's On' guide to what is happening around Melbourne in new and experimental music. Even so, there is always 'The New and Experimental Music Programme' on 3CR (8.40 A.M.) every Thursday from 10.30 p.m. till midnight, which plays current music from all over the world.

Throughout a year the Clifton Hill Community Music Centre has at least 4 concert seasons, each season comprising of, on the average, 9 concerts. Each season is separated by a 1-2 week break, with a slightly longer Christmas break. Each single issue of 'New Music' will be totally devoted to the coverage of a single concert season. This means that, for example, the magazine issue covering the 1st concert season will be available at the start of the 2nd concert season, and so on. This is because the magazine's format will be concentrating on critically covering the concerts after-the-event, as opposed to supplying programme-type notes as a concert supplement before-the-event.

The format of the magazine itself is just as ridiculously complex as its distribution. 'New Music' is devised and co-ordinated by Philip Brophy (489 3798) and David Chesworth (48 3005) and its staff of writers is organised in the same way as performers for the Clifton Hill Community Music Centre are organised - i.e. speak up and the job is yours.

The writer, like the performer, is essentially an eager and enthusiastic volunteer, and not someone writing another review in a perfunctory or pedestrian fashion. The Clifton Hill Community Music Centre is interested primarily in providing the performer room for the intention to attempt a performance. Who cares if it doesn't work? Such an experimental situation rejects expectations. In the exact same way, the volunteering writer simply has to indicate a desire to write. Both performer and writer, being amateur yet dedicated, are free of the pressure of 'succeeding' and are merely people who have something to say.

As it stands, we have worked out a flexible structure for the way in which each magazine issue relates to its pertinent concert season. Just as a concert season has, on average, 9 concerts, so does the magazine have, on average, 9 articles. But what are these articles exactly? Obviously, it is our intention, and most probably our readers' desire, to avoid journalistic tedium and critical crap ('the critic reviews the performance'). It would also be incongruous for the Clifton Hill Community Music Centre to endorse a system that would unnecessarily elevate the performer to a mystifying, elitist level ('the critic interviews the artist'). We have resolved this dilemma by simply letting these two ugly, problematic sides - the review (critic-as-hero) and the interview (artist-as-god) - fight it out together. This means that the volunteering 'writer' of the article first sees the concert. Next, the writer writes a 'critical' account of the performance in anyway whatsoever that the writer deems appropriate. Then the writer gives the written paper to the actual performer(s) to read, from which ensues an 'interview' (a transcript from a tape-recorder, or whatever) which is actually a discussion, between writer and performer, about how the concert, the performer, the paper, and the writer all interact. This discussion can clear up basic misunderstandings between writer and performer; present scope for re-evaluation of the thoughts of both writer and performer; or turn into a heated debate between the two. It should here be pointed out that just as no-one is refused the right to perform at the Clifton Hill Community Music Centre, so there is no editorial censorship on either the written papers or their proceeding discussions. Thus, the basic format of a concert article is:



(The magazine will also publish whatever programmes or scores that went with the appropriate concert, as well as printing photographs of the actual performance.) Furthermore, this basic format for concert articles (which is an ideal complement to the Clifton Hill Community Music Centre's set-up) can be rejected by either performer or writer if either can come up with a feasible alternative. The magazine's co-ordinators are all ears.

But mostly, we are all ears to anyone who wants to have a go at writing about a concert and discussing it with the relevant performer(s). You might be motivated by rapture, hatred, or bewilderment - it don't matter. Why not give it a go? First in - first served.

The intention of 'New Music' is (i) to provide a ground for interaction, discussion and feedback between performers and audience members; (ii) to allow performers the (somewhat painful?) opportunity to assess, evaluate and articulate what they are doing or attempting; and (iii) to advertise the Clifton Hill Community Music Centre and whatever is happening here. Whether one agrees or doesn't agree with The Clifton Hill Community Music Centre set-up or the magazine 'New Music', one cannot dispute the fact that some type of publication is needed to at least document what truly is a massive amount of new and experimental music currently being performed in Melbourne. The time is right for 'New Music'. See you at next week's concert.

Philip Brophy
David Chesworth.



MUSIC



Benefit concert

ESSENDON
AIRPORT.
INSTITUTE
FOR DRONAL
ANARCHY.
LAUGHING
HANDS.



*Sat. May 24th - 8:30 pm
Guild Theatre/Melb Uni*

Here I am, just walking around and I start seeing all these bright yellow posters advertising a 'New Music' benefit concert, with all these bands or whatever with the most ridiculous names I've ever heard in my life - Laughing Hands; Institute for Dronal Anarchy; Essendon Airport, and →↑→ This I got to see ...

So here I am sitting in the foyer of the Guild Theatre, waiting for this benefit concert to start. As I go to the entrance, I nearly get knocked over by a huge yellow sign saying \$3 admission. \$3! Anyway, I pay it wondering who the hell this concert is benefitting. There's all these posters all over the place, some about the Clifton Hill Community Music Centre - which I've been to a couple of times - and some about this magazine called 'New Music'.

The Clifton Hill Community Music Centre is a wierd sort of place where you can see all these people try out their wierdo ideas on an audience that sits there seemingly prepared for anything that could possibly happen. I don't know what makes me more uncomfortable: the stuff that I see happen on the stage, or the way the audience embraces everything happening on the stage. I guess its one of the few places around where both the audience and performer don't know what the hell is going on, though they are both ready to accept whatever the outcome is. I guess I could get more used to it in time, but right now I still find it pretty disorienting. Anyway, some of the stuff I've seen there has been pretty interesting.

This 'New Music' magazine I haven't seen before. It looks pretty interesting, but I don't think I'd be inclined to fork out some money on it. Really like the poster, though. I wonder if they'd let me have one?

Inside the theatre is pretty packed. Looks like about 100 people. Not bad considering most people like myself, are still trying to figure it all out. The audience seems to be made up 50/50 of arty types and non-arty types - and as I think that to myself I can almost hear everyone else thinking the same thing. Suddenly the music starts on stage. Its Laughing Hands; checking the programme, they describe themselves like so:

"We are young, single and 45% polyester. We specialize in spontaneous composition, i.e. we don't know really what we're going to do until it happens, and then we don't believe it until we hear the tape. Our first L.P. - "LEDGE" on Adhesive Records - is currently available. We are now completely unprepared for the recording of our second L.P. ."

I guess they must do some type of electronic improvisation or something. There are three of them in front of a mass of gadgetry, equipment and musical instruments. They all seem to be enjoying themselves, and in the light of them 'composing spontaneously' they're holding it all together pretty well. Sometimes, it does feel as though it might all fall apart - which is how most of their songs seem to be ending - but I guess that sort of tense fragile feel is all part of it. I reckon you could even dance to some of their more funky numbers. Sounds like their album could be worth checking out.

As soon as Laughing Hands start to leave the stage, these three guys walk onto the stage and announce themselves as being the 'Institute for Dronal Anarchy'. The programme says:

"The Institute for Dronal Anarchy is a performance ensemble interested in visual & theatrical effect; the development of new + increasingly wonderful musical instruments; + the relationships people develop through art. Tonight, I.D.A. performs a rhythmic voice piece of four-letter-words, an improvisational trio on home-made wind instruments, and some accompanying free vocal improvisation within this structure."

And before you know it, they're sitting on the ground reading out aloud in unison all these silly sentences, made up entirely of four-letter-words, in time to the beating of a metronome. Its great! I never knew that you could tell such a vivid, wild story using only four-letter-words. And the sort of chanting they were doing in reading it out sounded really good. On finishing it, they registered considerable applause from the audience. I guess the entertainment of it shocked us all. Suddenly, they ship out the most stupid 'instruments' I've ever seen. They're not going to 'play' them, are they? They look like mutants from an apprentice plumber's workroom. Anyway, they sit down and start jamming (?) with these weird instruments, making equally weird noises. I try to keep up my concentration on the sounds, but after a while I tend to get less interested and start wondering if there is going to be an interval. They finish making all their gurgling noises to an amount of uncertain applause and we are told that coffee is available in the foyer. After all that improvising, I could do with a drink.

The foyer is jam-packed with everyone guzzling coffee and spreading around the usual foyer talk. I go up to the table where the magazine is on sale, and before I even touch it the buy behind the table asks me if I want one dozen or two dozen. Funny codger, I think to myself. I then recognize him from the Clifton Hill Centre. It further clicks with me that he's from $\rightarrow \uparrow \rightarrow$. I ask him if he's involved with the magazine and he says he's up to his neck in it. Asking him what he means by that, he starts a long and elaborate spiel about how this benefit concert is primarily to bring the centre and the magazine into the eye of the public to let them know that it exists. I figure that to be fair enough, considering such small-time cult ventures' sphere of contact. I must have been showing too much interest or something, because he then asks me if I'd like to write a 'sort-of' review of this very concert for the next issue of the magazine. I think to myself of the torture involved, and realize it wouldn't be such a good idea, so I compensate by buying a copy of the magazine. He didn't mind though, and said that he hates writing himself. The foyer lights flick on and off, so I wish him luck and take my place back in the theatre. Its now Essendon Airport:

"Tonight we will be presenting some music from our 'Sonic Investigations of the Trivial' set. These pieces are slightly minimal, where the musical interests lie in the permuting rhythmic and pitch structures and finger snapping fun. If you want to hear more of our stuff, then go out and buy our E. P."

So goes their little blurb in the programme. I'd actually bought their EP just the other week and found it quite enjoyable. Their stuff isn't really all that powerful, but there still is a lot of rhythm in it. Each song registers a decent amount of applause, so I guess everyone is finding them quite enjoyable. They really look the right part: nice, clean boys playing nice, clean music. Not wimp y - just nice. I think that they're even a bit shocked by the way they're going down

with the audience. I really liked their sense of restrained humour. Sort of like politely being witty by doing things like playing the theme from 'Voyage To The Bottom of The Sea' in the middle of a song called 'How Low Can You Go?' Great stuff. They finish, thank the audience, and quietly start loading their gear off stage. Next on is $\rightarrow \uparrow \rightarrow$
A friend told me that they were doing something tonight that I probably wouldn't have seen before. I check the programme:

"Tonight we are performing "KABBOOM." We first did this in August 1978, and it is just as entertaining now as it was then. Without getting too theoretical or didactic, "KABBOOM" deals with the problematics - and the humour - in dissecting a constructed object (a Hollywood melodrama film - "Above And Beyond" (1942) starring Robert Taylor + Eleanor Parker) and reconstructing it in a multiple-media framework. Who said semantics wasn't fun?"

Nope, I haven't seen it before. Could be interesting. I think. Then the guy who I was talking with during interval starts asking everyone to check the back of their seats to see if there is masking tape on it, and that those who have, would have to shift because they are in the way of the slide projectors. For some strange reason, every time I see I feel as though I'm being battered around in some way or another. Could this be going too far? Everyone seems to take it all in good humour, what with that guy smirking and all. I remember reading an interview with him in Ram and he sounded like a loud-mouthed fuck-wit. Who knows? If all this isn't enough, I find him sitting next to me - in the audience - ready to operate the slide projectors. Its dark, so he can't see me. 'Kaboom' starts.

I haven't seen the movie 'Above and Beyond' but 'Kaboom' appears to be like just watching the movie but with an extra narration that makes everything look either stupid, strange or illogical. Yet at the same time I can follow the plot and everything. The 'actors' are merely miming to a sound tape of the film, hopping their heads and switching torches on themselves to let us know that they are 'acting'. The slides are mostly all these Roy Lichtenstein paintings, which give the visual counterpart to the actors dialogue. I wonder if Lichtenstein saw the movie? They fit perfectly. There are great twists like dropping the atomic bomb on Hiroshima (the film, I think is about that) and showing slides of a hand wiping a wall clean, and a leg of lamb. The film sounds like it is that tacky anyway, with lines like: 'Don't drop that bomb in some old rice paddy'. There is music from $\rightarrow \uparrow \rightarrow$ on the tape to real, cornball stuff. The recording isn't that good, though, as are the slides, all a bit crooked and things like that. Perhaps some more sort of realistic acting might be better, too. Anyway, its a lot of fun. 'Kaboom' finishes - complete with bowing actors taking curtain calls. At this stage I realize that there has been a guy on stage miming all the music, because he, too, takes a bow. Their humour certainly isn't restrained: they shoved it onto us. The audience react favourably.

The lights come on and the guy next to ^{me} - Peter or Phillip or something like that - says hello. As he packs up his slide projectors I tell him that I really enjoyed the whole evening. I did too. I ask him if he's found anyone to review the concert. He says that he's still stalking his prey, but if he can't find anyone enthusiastic to do it, he'll probably do it himself. I look at him for a bit and he says that someone has to do it. Which, I guess, is fair enough.

Philip Brophy

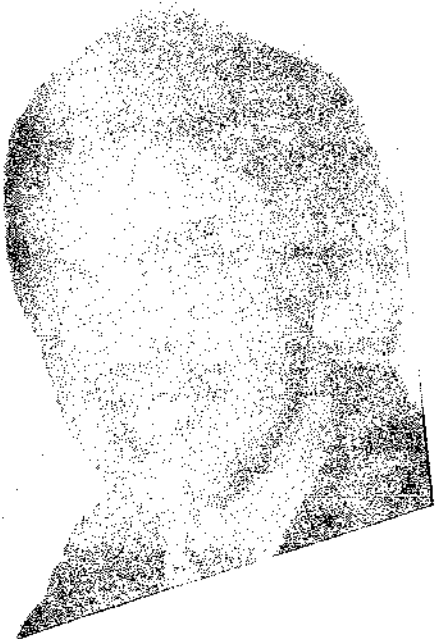
WEDNESDAY MUSIC

CLIFTON HILL

6-10 Page St. C/Hill
(ph. 483005).

- ① WED. 21st MAY: "THE THREE" plus "BRYCE/PHILIP/MELISSA"
- ② WED. 28th MAY: "A MIXED BAG" - Mark Pollard/Rainer Lintz/Brian Parrish/Cathy Semple/Graham Gerrards
- ③ WED. 4th JUNE: "AD HOC"
- ④ WED. 11th JUNE: "I.D.A." - no cassettes whatsoever!
- ⑤ WED. 18th JUNE: "LAUGHING HANDS"
- ⑥ WED 25th JUNE: "L.I.G." - Alone and Together's improvisations for familiar & non-familiar instruments.
- ⑦ WED 2ND JULY: "PAUL SHUTZ + CHRIS WYATT"
- ⑧ WED 9th JULY: "THE CARRINGTON GROUP" from the Dorian to Gallicienne music society plus "BRUNO BARGUETTO"
- ⑨ WED 16th JULY: "DAVID CHESWORTH" - does quite a few things

All concerts start at 8.30 p.m. & are FREE.



THE THREE

Tonight's performance by the Threo (their first) served as a fitting introduction to a new series - I find there's nothing better than to arrive at a concert not knowing anything about the performers or what on earth they're going to present. This one I found a refreshing surprise.

The Threo turned out to be Robert Goodge, Roxanne Boughen and Peter Simondson, who occupied the first half of the concert, presenting a series of short pieces for assorted instruments, electric and acoustic, treated and non-treated. The pieces appeared to be loosely pre-arranged with varying degrees of individual freedom permitted during performance.

The pre-arrangements included preparation or mechanical treatment of instruments, which may have involved the use of a wide range of kitchen appliances, alligator clips, electric razors, or any other item of domestic equipment the resourceful group could lay their hands on. Some pieces involved partial melodic arrangements, but these were not necessarily of primary importance, for instance in 'very small saxophone' which featured a loose jazz-like bass and piano duet (intriguing enough in itself) which had to be frequently stopped in mid-stream in order for one of the players to get up and switch off the totally out-of-context feedback guitar that gradually built up dominance. A sense of visual performance was implicit but never of primary significance - it was used simply as another parameter by which the piece could be framed. In 'very small saxophone' Robert used two guitars balanced on his lap, for no apparent reason other than to heighten the anarchistic effect of his contribution, and Roxanne's unexpected walks across the floor to switch off his amplifier served the purpose of adding an extra dimension to the general effect of incongruity.

My immediate reaction to the music was to compare it to the 'Naive' school of art - the essence of its charm lies in the very simplicity and straightforwardness of its presentation and its spontaneous and unaffected quality. The product is to a substantial degree a reflection of the personality of its creators - rather than a deliberate presentation of an ideology or an attempt to make a specific point or present a 'message'. I venture to say that the music of the Threo is the most genuinely 'innocent' product I've encountered at CHCMC because (it appears) it is constructed without specific intention. In other words, it seems that many players of new music have arrived at their form of music as a direct result of their musical philosophy, whereas the attitude of the Threo appears to be basically 'let's try this out and see what happens' or 'I like this noise - what can we do with it?' A basic framework or set of constraints is all that goes into the music beforehand and the result will work itself out.

I may well be completely off the mark with my impressions, but perhaps an angry refutation will put the matter right. My only feat at this point is that an elaborate explanation of musical ideologies may spoil for me the things I appreciated most about the performance - namely it's freshness, candour and entertainingness.

Gordon Harvey

K: Robert Goodge (Kanga)
R: Roxanne Boughen
P: Peter Simondson
G: Gordon Harvey
PS: Paul Schutze

K: Yeah, I think it's basically pretty accurate as far as the way the music was written because as three people we'd never written music

together before, and what we did was get together and sort of talked about what the sources were available, what sounds we could make, and just put it together probably in a sort of spirit of improvisation. Only one of the pieces I think was specifically written by one of us - 'triplet' - that was written by Peter, but all the rest was just sort of worked out between us all. So they were the results of all of us, you know, interacting.

R: Somebody would come up with the basic idea and we'd mould it a bit....

G: Did you go through them a bit before you played or was it the first time you'd actually done them?

K: You use the words in the review - loosely...

G: Pre-arranged.

K: The way we wrote the music . . . they weren't improvisations, they were, sort of, pieces but the way we wrote them it wasn't like we had specific ideas in mind or anything like that. It was more in the spirit of experimentation with what we had.

P: 'Chord' is a good example because that was very democratic - we all chose a chord each.

K: Yeah. But I think you're just about exactly right with your description though.

R: Also another thing to bring up is that we got together quite a few times and Peter and Kanga got together before I came into it, and as time wore on, the more we got together, the more the ideas started coming, and then we'd head on. The first few times we did it we were so dry, we'd just start and nothing would happen.

K: I think actually most of it was written in the last weekend.

R: We came up with numerous ideas and we had lots of ideas for more pieces then, didn't we?

G: You've got to get yourself into a frame of mind... I get the feeling that it's not a natural part of human nature to be that experimental, to really think about the possibilities that you've got. You usually restrict yourself to a limited framework that you can tackle and the implications of trying something like playing your guitar with a razor are a bit boggling because it might lead on to too many things.

K: Probably what I didn't make obvious about how we wrote them all, besides about one or two that were sort of process ones - what we did was, like one of us got a sound on a certain instrument and we said 'Okay, what can we put with this?' and the other person would figure out his part of it, so it wasn't each one of us consciously writing things, it was more like improvised pieces but the improvisation happened before the concert.

PS: In other words the technique for constructing the pieces was improvisation.

K: More or less.

G: I really liked that one with the alligator clips... Well, did you know how that was going to sound before you did it?

K: Not before we tried it out here. We just had an idea, we'd like to

- use... We tried for a lot of variation, I think, in a whole concert.
- P: That started off as a riff of Kanga's before it was just a tune then we turned it into a prepared guitar piece, when we put alligator clips on.
- K: Yeah, when we set up we sort of said, 'What would sound good with this?' and we tried a lot of different things and we finally decided - I don't know if that fits in with your definition of improvisation but it does mine because all three of us - no one person decided 'Okay, you play this' or 'You play that', we just decided all this ourselves.
- G: That was decided before you actually played.
- K: Yeah, yeah, like the concert was not improvisation by any stretch of the imagination - it's just that we used an improvisational sort of thing. We didn't know each other really before we decided to have a concert together. We just said we'd like to do something so why not do it?
- R: I don't think we ever intended it really to be heavy. We always wanted something fairly light hearted and easy to be approached by anyone, even those not used to experimental music or new music.
- K: Yeah. We definitely tried to be entertaining in our choice of variation between the songs.
- R: And there was that touch of theatrical performance -
- K: - In the humour we tried to put in. Whether it succeeded or not. . .
- PS: It was really well structured, I mean the contrast between the pieces was really good.
- K: Just sort of going off at a tangent, just from what I remember of the article it said there was a lot of room - I can't remember the exact words but sort of like room to move for each of us in the pieces. That's basically true for most of them - not all of them but, we had an idea of the thing and it didn't matter if we performed it slightly different.
- P: Like that prepared guitar piece.
- K: Yeah. We didn't say definitely what each one had to play, like 'don't play this note here, it's going to be wrong'. We just make sort of rhythmic structures.
- G: So if you did that one again it might sound completely different?
- K: Well, not completely different, but slightly different.
- G: It would still be rhythmic but then -
- K: Yeah, it'd be rhythmic but it might have completely different timbral things. It all depends on where we put the alligator clips on the night.
- PS: That was random, was it? Like when you did treated guitar for example, the placement of the clips, was that random or not?
- K: Not in all the pieces. The one with the razor wasn't because obviously if you didn't put it in that particular place we would get the sound we wanted.

R: Didn't you pick up the comic element of any of the pieces, like, didn't you -

G: Oh yeah, I did. I didn't say anything about it in the review but I mean that's what I found entertaining about it.

R: I mean when we were practising it, like that one where I get up and turn Kanga off, I just enjoyed practising that, I thought it was terrific, I had a ball.

K: Yeah. Like the way we got that one together, Peter and Roxanne just started playing and everyone looked at each other and said 'Hmm, that sounds really good, just keep doing that, do something similar on the night', like there was no 'play this specific chord passage' or anything, it was just the idea of it, and then we just said 'What can the guitar do' and we thought we could make it a humourous sort of thing.

The only thing (in the article) I wouldn't go along with is to say they've been constructed without specific intention. I can go along with all the other things about the loose construction idea but there were specific intentions in each thing.

G: What I meant was that it didn't appear to be constructed in order to demonstrate something that you wanted to put across. In other words, I read the review of Essendon Airport in the last edition of New Music, and I didn't realise until I read that, that there was a specific statement that you were putting across in the second half.

K: Yeah, it's just that it sounds misleading -

G: Yeah, right, it's too late for me to reword that, but - well can you tell me exactly your intentions?

K: They had intentions like there was, okay, we want to make this piece different to the other piece - we want to make this piece a little bit humourous.

PS: Intentions didn't extend beyond the idea of putting on a performance, did they?

K: There were no specific structural principles.

R: Yeah, there's no great philosophy behind it or anything.

K: Because we've never played together before there's no specific ideas concerning the way we think things should be constructed. We're open to a lot of things and in the concert nearly every piece was structured on different principles. There was structure... We thought about what we were doing.

PS: When you're communicating ideas to each other do you all have a sufficient grasp of notation and whatever to actually just say to each other 'I want E flat minor inverted fifth played backwards' and you'll know what the other person's talking about?

K: I don't think we worked with principles like that.

PS: You don't have the kind of approach where one of you comes in and says 'let's pretend we're all trees blowing in the wind'?

K: I think it's more arranged on ideas of timbral sort of things, like what things sounded like, and also on, I don't know the right words to use here, like that theatrical piece, things like that.

G: So can we expect to hear more of the Threo? K: Perhaps. P: Maybe. .↑.

P&K: A definite maybe!



**BRYCE
PHILIP
MELISSA**

I was immediately impressed on seeing the stage set-up for Bryce, Philip and Melissa. One side of the stage was a massive construction of wooden boxes and various bits of electronic equipment, the other side a bare floor with a few mysterious props lit from above. We were introduced to the opening piece as 'Death of a Wombat' which began with amorphous synthesizer risings and fallings while on stage left the 'dramatis persona' (Bryce) emerged from a tunnel-like cloth womb wearing a mask which completely covered his head, and acted out a silent drama which struck me as a blend of dance, mime and calisthenics. Using a long pole with a small wheel at each end he developed his movements along with the music, building up in intensity to a full and dramatic peak. Not being an authority on drama or mime I wouldn't like to comment on the performance's worth or its intention (which is not to say I know any more about music - only I'm more prepared to stick my neck out). The performance was, I thought, well choreographed and impressive, though I can't say it had any great impact on me - if it had something particular to say, the message eluded me. Or perhaps I eluded the message. Some other people I spoke to found it evocative and expressive.

The remainder of the evening consisted of longish pieces of what appeared to be a basically improvisational nature, apart from brief passages in which a pre-arranged theme or melody was stated before launching off again into an extended improvisation. In this section the instrumentation included two synthesizers, string synthesizer, double bass and trumpet, plus some use of pre-recorded cassettes. The music had an open-ended feel to it, with elements of a diverse range of styles. The use of double bass, in particular, is an unusual addition to otherwise cold, largely electronic tones.

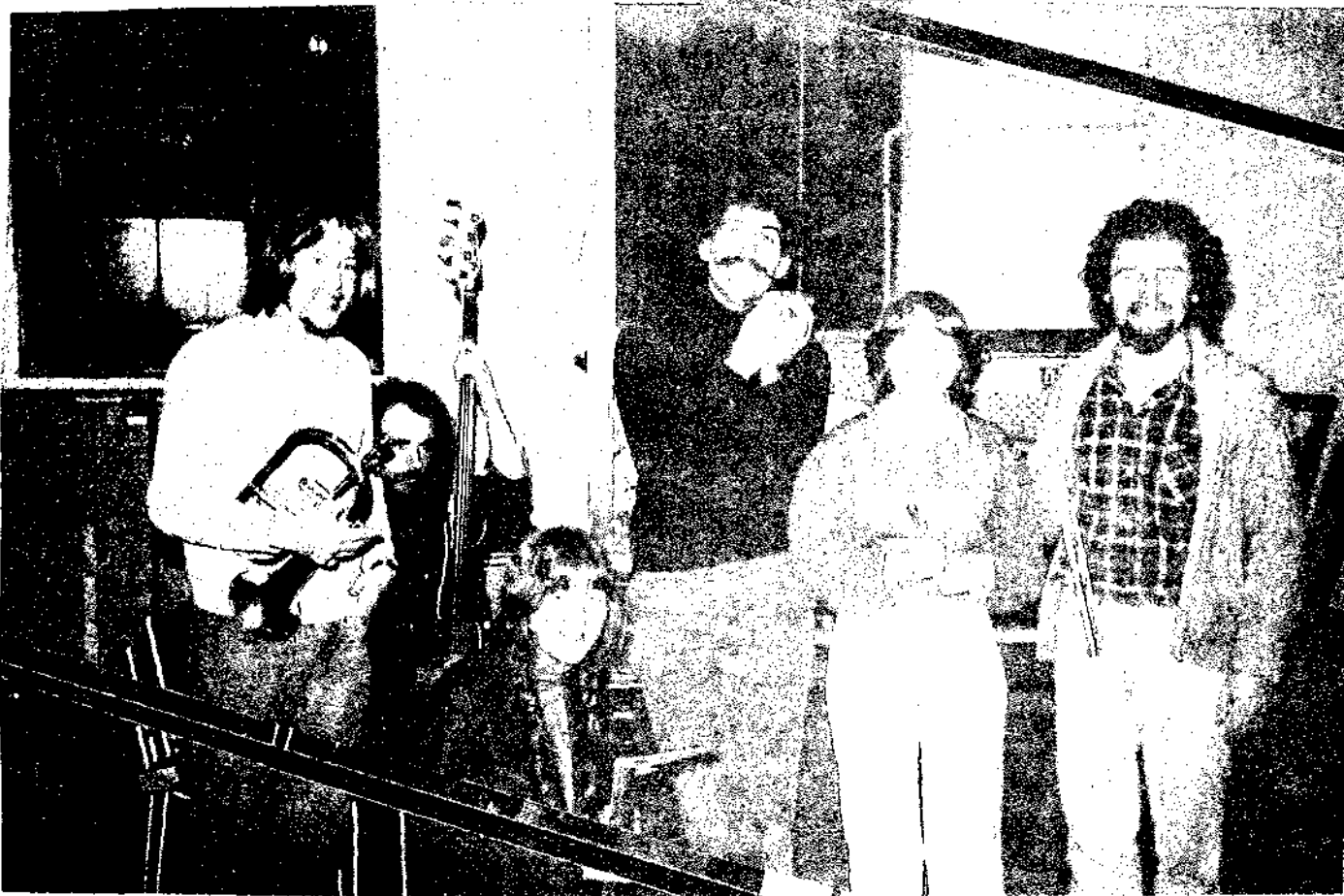
Despite the diversity of influences I think the loose structure and full sound directed the music towards a homogenous 'atmospheric' flavour, meant to be listened to for its overall effect rather than the individual contributions of each player (this isn't a fault of course), although I felt there was a tendency for the players to take a 'soloistic' approach to their particular instruments - the old problem of listening to one's own playing but not being aware of its relationship to the others.

So did I like it? Well . . . my tastes lean toward variety and definition and the performance overall struck me as rambling and muddy where I would have preferred something a little more concise and clear. The electronics I thought were a little hackneyed and lacking purposeful relationships with each other. But that's only my opinion. Maybe I missed the whole point. What I'd like to do now is find out what Bryce, Philip and Melissa have to say about the evening (or anything else).

Gordon Harvey

Well, unfortunately the anticipated meeting seems fated not to eventuate. The restrictions of time made it difficult for Bryce, Philip and Melissa to meet me all together. I have had a few brief talks with Bryce, although the group feeling seems to be that they see no essential necessity to discuss the performance; the attitude being that the night was an experiment and there is no need to explain or justify it all - the group is not worried by the possibility of adverse reaction. As to the idea of talking about music generally or some equally broad topic, no real interest was shown. This is their prerogative and so long as they are happy to have the above article printed as it stands, I'll be content with it as well.

A MIXED BAG



In this concert we heard pieces from four people. The first, and the largest piece (in terms of length and instrumentation) was by Graeme Gerrard. It was scored for flute, flugelhorn, lute, piano, electric piano and electric bass. It lasted about twenty minutes. From what I could hear the piece was sectional, the format being as follows: A B A1 B1 (B2 A2)? The first A was a short, lively piece (in pitch and rhythm), which involved the whole ensemble with no single instrument predominating. After a pause the longer B section commenced. This sounded like an improvisation based on material from the A section. The music in this section was very slow with little instrumental activity. Timid sounding contributions from the various instruments, consisting of quick gestures and long held notes, were juxtaposed. Occasionally more confident directional playing came from the flugelhorn and flute. Some musical ideas/developments seemed to arise on the spur of the moment with varying consequences to the rest of the music. Some were picked up for a short time, others were not. Other sections were similarly related and similarly treated, though in each section there was a noticeable change in musical emphasis. For example A1 and B1 showed a tendency toward pointalism; and in B2 the flugelhorn played slow melodic phrases around which the other instruments hung.

I was interested in the way each person applied him/herself to the musical task at hand and by the theatrics involved as each person tried to find the right cue and the right reason to play. The tension and excitement generated by the player's apparent alienation and intimidation regarding this task was the most intriguing aspect of this piece. Unfortunately the musical result inevitably suffered as a consequence of this.

Kathy Semples flute solo was the next piece played. This piece was notated, non-tonal and quite long - as flute pieces go. It sounded lyrical, though not on a banal level, for at no time did the piece become predictable or sentimental - which was very pleasing. Brian Parish played the flute. His competent, controlled, down-to-earth performance well suited the music I thought.

Next came two piano pieces from Mark Pollard. The first, a twelve tone piece, was very descriptive. It was as if the music was intended to accompany some visual narrative. The music varied between anticipation (ie. repeated notes) and surprise gestures (ie. note flurries). Of course, more detailed analysis may reveal more about the organization and intent, but for me this was not encouraged due to the overt stylistic nature of the music.

Marks first piece used twelve notes, his second piece used only three. It was performed by two players - four hands on the piano. This piece combined the notes A,B,C, in different ways and so different relationships evolved between the three. A major stylistic device used here was the rhythmic repetition of notes. Whether or not it was intended, the performance of the piece seemed over played and very emotional. The presence of so much subjective interpretation tended to hide what I thought was the original intent of the piece, which was to illustrate the varying aural results of combining a minimal amount of syntactical information.

Rainer Linz finished off the evening with a music-theatre piece (well, why not categorize everything), which involved a casually delivered verbal description of the history and function of the piano. During his talk, Rainer was tying down the sustain pedal, and getting members of the audience to push it against the wall and generally man-handle it about the room. As well as being quite witty, if a little drawn out, the piece presented the piano in various contexts: piano as object, as historical subject, as furniture, as producer of various unique sounds, as a huge, strangely shaped resonating box of strings that makes a good sound when rammed against a brick wall. The piano, throwing its own weight around is quite an incongruous thing, indeed.

David Chesworth

D: David
G: Graeme Gerrard

D: Have you anything to say about the review?

G: It was very accurate I thought, though there are a couple of minor things I should point out, I didn't actually write the piece with those instruments in mind. Those were ^{the} instruments that were available.

D: So the piece could be performed on any group of instruments?

G: Yes.

D: And on any number of instruments?

G: No. That piece was for six players. It could have been played by five or seven players, but I guess seven is the largest amount possible because of the way I organised the pitch structure and so on.

D: Did you see any problem with your choice of instruments - the fact that you included electric piano and flute alongside trumpet?

G: Yes, there was a problem with balance. I mean the trumpet tended to dominate. Also there was the duplication of electric and acoustic piano. But timbre didn't really concern me. I think part of the problem with the piece, like you mentioned in the review, was that we hadn't played together before, except for a couple of us, and I wrote the piece pretty quickly for this performance and we only had about two or three rehearsals. It seems to me that for improvisation purposes it's a good thing if people have played together a fair bit - so that they know each other pretty well, though it doesn't always have to be that way.

D: What about the sections in the piece?

G: All I really had was three written out sections where the pitches and rhythms were specifically defined and were sort of pointalistic as you said, and they sort of sandwiched sections where people could improvise. So where the short sections were rather rigid, I thought that in the improvisation sections more idiomatic playing would emerge, for even though the pitches and rhythms you could play were defined, the players had choices of what they could do.

D: Were the rhythms and pitches in the improvisation sections derived from the shorter sections or were just some pitches extracted?

G: They were kind of the same in spirit, but they weren't actual duplications. Intervals or pitch classes were given certain durations. So, for example, if they choose to play a certain interval, the durations would be specified. The tempo wasn't specified, so that everyone could play at their own speed. It was a pretty simple outline but I thought that this was necessary for it—allowing a lot of freedom as far as improvisation goes. It's just a matter of expression.

D: Yes, I was going to say that that sort of formula would work, given practice.

G: Yes, even though I played in it, I didn't want to say too much about how I wanted it to happen. Maybe I should have, because as you say, people were pretty intimidated about the situation anyway.

D: Have you played the piece anywhere else since?

G: No, but I've made quite a few changes to it. Because in a way, it

was just like an experiment with what I was working with at that time. The piece enabled me to try a few things out so that I could see what worked and what didn't.

D: You're doing something at CHCMC later on this year. Have you any ideas as to what it will be?

G: No. Not a clue. I kind of like the idea of writing a piece and doing variants of that piece and adapting it to situations. You know, like being at La Trobe University, and all that sort of junk, and doing academic type pieces that suit the University. I like to adapt those pieces to other situations, so a couple of pieces I'm doing at the moment, we'll probably do those, but within a much freer..er concept. Probably they won't be improvised pieces.

D: David

K: Kathy Semple

K: I thought the review was very tame, and kind towards us.

D: Oh really ... well I don't know. I didn't set out to criticize. I didn't want to say: 'This is a bad piece, this is a good piece', though I did enjoy some more than others, and your's was one I enjoyed.

K: Well, I was surprised actually because it wasn't played very well.

D: Yes, I was under that impression, but I think presentation had a lot to do with my enjoyment. Like, there was no messing around, and no ritual like so many solo pieces. The piece may have been played badly but it didn't come over that way.

K: Oh, that's good. I mean the piece itself doesn't deal with theatrics - it was originally written for a very reverberant environment. The piece is part of a suite of solo flute pieces, each being played in a different environment and being played throughout a day and on consecutive days.

No, I was disappointed because I know Brian can play a lot better, but I think the programming on the night was unfortunate because Brian had just finished playing for about twenty minutes.

D: Yes, on flugal-horn and trumpet.

K: And then all of a sudden he had to launch into the flute piece.

D: How would you describe the way in which you put the piece together?

K: Well, it was intuitive, and was written in sections, each, I guess, had contrasting moods.

D: It seemed very controlled. To write intuitive music of that length, I thought, would be very difficult. Were you reusing material in different parts of the piece or anything like that?

K: Not consciously although it does sound like a recapitulation at the end. But I just wrote what I felt needed to come next. I don't really think the piece is that long, I mean it's only four and a half minutes or so, and it's fairly slow.

D: Yes ...

K: It's very old now, its almost a year since I wrote that piece. My compositional techniques have changed.

D: What sort of stuff are you doing now?

K: Academically acceptable stuff, unfortunately.

D: You play flute, so why didn't you play the piece?

K: I don't like playing very much. I'm not a very good flutist. I like to get to know as many instruments as I can. I've played flute, oboe and guitar, and now lute and I've done a bit of piano.

D: Have you written for the lute?

K: Yes, I've done one piece. Its a lute and tape piece. Its a hard instrument to play well. In concert it goes out of tune so easily, especially when spot lights are involved. Its a very intimate instrument because you can really feel the belly vibrate when you strike the strings, maybe sensuous is a better word.

D: Are you going to attempt anything at CHCMC on the lute?

K: It depends. I'll probably play that four channel tape piece if I get it finished, but I'll have the lute part as one of the four channels. I've only just got a new lute, the one I played in Graeme's piece was dreadful.

D: David
M: Mark Pollard

D: Hi Mark, how are you?

M: Hi David.

D: What did you think of the review?

M: Mmm ... I thought it was okay. In the first piece you dismissed the analytical approach. For me that piece served its purpose because the analytical side of it coincided with the actual gestures you described. There's a whole concept to that piece and the pieces I'm writing now. With serial music and multi-serial music in particular there's too much of an information overload for the listener to comprehend.

D: By multi-serialism you're talking of serialized rhythms and dynamics and instrument usage?

M: Yes, in this particular piece it was important to serialize things that you can hear. Gestures, repeated notes, grace notes patterns, sudden attacks^{all} belong to certain pitch sets and have a relationship from an analytical point of view as well as from an aural point of view.

D: So it was your intention to be expressive?

M: Well it was, for at that time I was working 15 hours a day, six days a week for money, and writing the piece inbetween time. To me it was very emotional, because when one is very tired and upset you write those sort of pieces. But also it was my interpretation of what serialism should mean. It should have more interaction with the body, you should be able to hear what is happening.

- D: So you did that by having the serialized structure coincide with the gestures?
- M: Right, I worked out what the particular relationships the matrix of 12 tones had, and by working out a few gestures that I thought would coincide one to one with the relationships that are inherent in that particular row.
- D: Then do you see the pitch relationship in the row as having any sort of emotional value? Like for example, a particular tetrachord as being suitable for a certain type of interpretation?
- M: To begin with, it was a linear piece. If one thinks of combinatoriality which is a term which describes pitch things that happen vertically and horizontally in the music. In this particular piece I deliberately chose a row which was linear and so the pitches, for example in chords, occur sequentially from the row. For each chord I would then choose a suitable rhythm or gesture which coincides with that chord.
- D: So rhythmic structure wasn't serialized?
- M: Overall there's four gestures and each one corresponds to a particular treatment of a row; inversion, retrograde etc. So the listener can re-associate what he heard previously in the piece with what he hears later on in the piece. So with me it's important to leave this one to one relationship with this sort of thing.
- D: Well, moving on to the other piece. Was it called ABC?
- M: Yes, I would describe this piece as being the exact opposite to the first piece. To me it still has that emotional thing - depending on who's playing it of course. It was written at a time when I'd just finished a semi-multi-serialism piece and was about to start another one and I was a bit pissed off with serialism at the time, so I thought I'd write a piece using only three notes and explore everything that was possible.
- It's mostly improvisation. When I played inside the piano I hadn't tried that before.
- D: The thing that struck me about the performance was that it seemed to start off in a quite orderly fashion with you presenting the three notes, and then there was more interpretation from the players which seemed to clog up the intention of the piece. That original idea of juxtaposition was put aside and the piece turned into two people expressing themselves with a little bit of information.
- M: Well, that's what it was about more or less. The idea of the piece was that each player would only sometimes listen to what the other player was doing. So each player would follow his own path. So even if the two players sound similar, that just happens by coincidence. Also pedalling was decided by one player, so the other wouldn't have any idea when the sustain was going to be pressed.
- D: So really you've got two things. You've got a piece with a lot of restrictions in that you can only play three notes, but then paradoxically the same piece has no control what-so-ever, because each player's actions are undetermined.
- M: To me, I think of improvising effects around those three notes, rather than improvising with pitch and rhythm.
- D: It's sort of like an improvisation system with interruptions built in, where the other player might do something which interrupts the relationship that you're dealing with.

- M: Yes, one player usually adapts to what the other player is doing. At times you can hear that delay as one person adapts.
- D: Some of those adaptations seemed rather clumsy because they came so quickly after the change. It sounded like the piece should have shifted immediately to this new thing, but instead it sloped over as one person tried to imitate the change.
- M: Well that's part of the piece. The interaction between the two players.
-

R: Rainer Linz
D: David Chesworth

R: When you talk about the piece presenting the piano in various contexts, I see that as more of a sideline to the piece.

D: What do you see as being the main object of the piece?

R: Well, basically it was the text relating to the actions - like what I was saying I was actually doing. Talking about the Romantic repertoire of the piano and the very subtle nuances you can get out of the piano and also of the mechanism involved when playing the piano, at no time does the performer actually come into contact with the sounding process of the string. Like, when you press the keys down, a lever is moved and there is an actual disconnection somewhere. Something actually physically separates when the hammer hits the string. So actually hitting the keys has nothing to do with the sound of the piano.

D: It just initiates an on going process.

R: Yes, and that's exactly what I was doing. I was actually playing the piano once removed from it, which is to say, other people were doing it for me. These people who were doing the moving (pushing the piano around the room, and into a brick wall), had no idea beforehand that I would ask them to do that.

The other part about the text was that it was all fact. I thought that that was a very important thing. Presenting straight facts was sort of the antithesis of the idea of going to a concert and being sucked in by the whole process, you know, where emotions are being fiddled around with, and so on.

D: Right, so you weren't distorting, or re-interpreting facts. You were just taking them and using them.

R: Right . . . The piece was intirely improvized, like, I had it pretty well clearly in my mind before doing the piece, but being in that performing situation where people expect something, there is a lot that I didn't say that I had planned to say.

D: So you were responding to the situation as it developed.

R: Well, yes, and there was nervousness on top of that as well.

D: Yeah? You came over as being very relaxed, as though you would get through things in your own good time.

R: Well, that was again setting up a situation where nobody would know what was going to happen next. Like, the form that I see, is a sort of curve, and its travelling along in one direction and all of a sudden it bends when people start to realize that this is the piece.

D: Because the beginning of the piece wasn't defined?

R: Yes, right ... well, the piece did actually begin when I turned the paper. The audience would see the performance first as a talk that has nothing to do with the piece, and then after a while they realized it is the piece and they see it in a totally different light, and that's what I mean by 'it bends', and so the people's perception of the piece changes.

I kept talking about the piano as a percussion instrument, and during the piece the piano was being hit against the wall, and as I kept on, after a while somebody laughed and I thought 'its been realized, they know what I'm doing.' It was one of those little shocks you get during a performance, you don't expect it and it alters the way things go on after that. Anything could of happened. It vaguely happened the way I thought it would.





I.



D.



A.

'I.D.A. is a performance ensemble interested in visual and theatrical effect, the development of new and increasingly wonderful musical instruments. and the relationships people develop through art'.

(New Music, 1979-80, p.14)

First, Ron's piece (for computer, 'robots' and audience), 'Things are not so bad after all' . . . Perhaps so, when:

1. every member of the 'audience' is given the opportunity to help create the piece;
2. the manner in which this participation is solicited is quite non-threatening, 'Robots' (Graeme and Ernie) distributing computer printed scores is a nice irony - there is a general feeling of good humour;
3. the material given to the 'audience' provides both a degree of control and a degree of open-endedness - the result is somewhere between tossing coins and integral serialism, which is not such a bad place to be;
4. technology is but a part of the whole, not a monopolizer. Of particular interest to me are the long pauses in the computer-generated melody - the 'audience' can fill the gaps either by relating to this melody, ignoring it completely, or combining both options. So there is an opportunity for the 'audience' to manifest its musicality;
5. the 'entertainment/experience' contradiction (cf. the program notes) is up for examination, and turns out to be as unresolvable as ever;
6. the piece is, as I've hinted already, an assertion of community - a quasi-ritualistic game, where the rules are comprised of the shared musical and theatrical expectations of the people present (12-tone row as classical model).

Yet why were people so reluctant to use the texts (handed out along with the score)? There are obviously limits to the degree to which community can be asserted in a society like 'ours'.

Second, Ernie's piece (for voices and saxophones), 'Anthony Braxton says ...'

Well, what would he say after this? The question implies that I don't see the piece as the last word on the subject (though nor I imagine would I.D.A.). The subject is the alleged mystification etc. created by 'artistic' posturing etc. I say 'alleged' because it ought to be apparent that 'we' know only so much about Braxton. (Others of course are implicated - but my point would still be relevant.) A list of 'our' primary and secondary sources would show many gaps in our understanding. So while I'm certainly not saying that a piece like this shouldn't be attempted, I am wary of possible distortions - even though I share Ernie's wariness about posturing and opportunism.

Anyway, as the piece proceeds I become less interested in this issue and most interested in the sax playing and the performance. The three performers rotate two saxes - a very democratic performance process (not without its own tensions).

Third, 'Ono nota nutha' by Ernie. A spoken chant, similar to the four-letter words piece performed by I.D.A. at the New Music benefit concert. Several different elements however:

1. the three unison voices are in unison with three tapes (reel-to-reel!) voices;
2. recitations from a tape recorder user's manual create an occasional counterpoint.

But both of these elements seem to me to be (musically and theatrically) somewhat unnecessary elaborations - supplementary to the fundamental process and, if not detracting from it, at least contributing nothing of significance.

So essentially, the two pieces have much in common. Both texts are concerned with ironic observation of the obvious. Both also propose the idea of music-making as a 'fun' activity - an idea which seems to be consistently advocated by I.D.A. Unison chants exemplify it very clearly - one only has to recall the place of chant in children's games (and note here also the association of 'fun' and 'learning'). Yet the detachment of the texts in both pieces shows 'fun' to be problematic. Here Brecht and Weill come to mind - consider Brecht's commentary on their opera Mahagonny:

"As for the content of this opera, its content is pleasure. Fun, in other words, not only as form but as subject matter. At least, enjoyment was meant to be the object of the inquiry even if the inquiry was intended to be an object of enjoyment".

Fourth, 'Darkness - Click, Flash! - Transitory Sounds - Tracing - The Isolation of Light' by Graeme.

Illumination of the 'merely' incidental and accidental. Out of the darkness comes a light too painful to behold. The audience grimaces audibly with each flash. I close my eyes, listening without comprehending (naming) what I'm hearing.

Yet the piece was set up (as theatre) like a tableau. Consider this statement by Barthes:

"The tableau ... is a pure cut-out segment with clearly defined edges, irreversible and incorruptible; everything that surrounds it is banished into nothingness, remains unnamed, while everything that it admits within its field is promoted into essence, into light, into view".

So it seems to me that the piece sets out to subvert the idea of tableau - here we are on a stage, in co-ordinated performance, but we don't want to (or cannot) name anything, there is no essence.

Or, if there is, it is in your (the audience) perception of the event - not in anything we (the performers) do.

John Campbell

G: Graeme
R: Ron
E: Ernie
J: John

R: What happens if I just say something like: I've read the review, I'm not sure if I've got anything to say, I can't think of anything ...

(What in fact happens is that the plug gets pulled out of the recorder by one of the three children playing in Ron's kitchen. The discussion then proceeds for ten minutes or more. Graeme discovers that we've not been recording. We start again - a little hesitantly.)

E: Apart from the little bit at the beginning (of the review), you've written about four pieces - you haven't really written about the concert.

J: Yeah - go on.

R: And so, something that we should be talking about is the ...

E: Yeah, how did you feel about the concert?

J: Ah, well, I guess I've said how I felt about the concert by writing about the pieces.

E: No, I disagree.

J: Why?

E: Because ... I think a concert is always greater than the sum of its constituent pieces. What happens in a concert is always more than just one piece added to another piece, added to another piece ... and suddenly it's closing time.

J: Well, OK - I'm not saying it's 'closing time'. Just by the very fact that I've written a review implies that there are questions which follow on from the concert.

R: But what you're (Ernie) getting at is the attitudes of performers, and the attitudes of audience to performers, and the relationship between audience and performers.

E: Yeah.

R: And you're worried about the attitude that the audience takes to you personally or to ...

E: Yeah ... I just think that the fact that it's audience/performer/venue is important.

J: OK ... so you were saying something about people's response to you as a robot (in Ron's piece).

E: Yes - I found it off-putting ... that people should come up to me after the robot piece and say - 'you were great, Ernie, as a robot' - when all I was doing was doing what that piece demanded ... just giving the situation what it demands. I still think that sort of praise was mis ...

J: From the point of view of the fact that they weren't responding to the totality of the piece?

E: Yeah - I don't know. Maybe it was just those people's non-realisation of what they actually were responding to ...

R: Well, what do you feel about the general situation at Clifton Hill? People are clapping these days and that didn't use to happen. I think it's inevitable that it will happen once you get bigger audiences. Somehow it's going to happen because people feel it's expected of them. And so that nice tradition that has been built up at Clifton Hill where people didn't clap has gone. I'm wondering about whether that worries people - it worries me a little bit. I don't think it's a major concern but it is an interesting sort of point.

G: Yeah (inaudible) ...

E: It worries me. What seems to be happening lately - the applause at the end of every number where there's space left to applaud - gets to be really empty and mindless and doesn't really mean much as far

as I'm concerned ...

J: I wonder if it really is a function of audience size. It seems to be to me.

G: At Clifton Hill anyway.

R: Still, I don't know whether we're being a bit precious. I mean, audiences clap because they appreciate you or because they've got something out of it, or they've been stimulated. Obviously you can't put up signs saying 'don't clap' - or can you?

E &

J: You could try ...

E: I don't know - I seriously doubt whether clapping really does indicate that audiences have got something out of it.

R: It's just a social convention?

E: Yes.

J: And, like if there is only an audience of four people, the chances are that all those people plus the performers are all going to get together after the piece to talk about it anyway. So you're not limited to only one form of responding, are you? But an audience of twenty-four ...

E: Yeah, I must admit, I found it far nicer to have - to be able to notice, say in the middle of a piece, where we'd just like performed an action or something - a murmur of comment passing through the audience. Actually, there was a point in 'Anthony Braxton' where I just did a movement thing and just went down on my knees, really slowly, and then right down to the bottom. I moved my two little fingers like the old drinking of, you know, little finger round the cup of tea - and just went flick, flick. And there was this ripple of laughter. So that meant to me everyone was watching fairly intently - and I thought 'Wow, this is good'. And that means far more to me than thunderous applause.

R: Its also very nice when you do a piece that people feel they can't clap at the end. There are pieces, especially very long pieces, where people have been thoroughly involved, and it gets to the end and clapping seems inappropriate and the audience realises its inappropriate and they don't clap. That's a very strong feeling. But then again, in the pieces we did, I don't think they necessarily evoked that, so ... Yeah, the substance of that, including the computer piece, on that business about the relationship between audiences and performers is something that I.D.A. is concerned with. Carefully considering the context of where you perform and what you're performing, and what the audience is going to be. And it is getting to the feeling now where you don't quite know what your audience is going to be, whereas once you knew exactly what sort of audience you were going to have. So there's a different feeling entering the place in that sense. And I guess that's what we're maybe finding a little bit hard to cope with.

E: Although, aside from that applause point, I felt really good about that audience that night. Aside from the numbers, I felt that it was a really pleasantly warm audience, and the feedback that we were getting ... and also I think that the proximity that we had to the audience ... I think I can say for the three of us that we really enjoy being as close as possible or in the middle of the audience.

R: Yeah, that's getting to be a problem in that venue.

E: Yeah. We would have much rather have performed in the back room because you're just much closer to the audience ...

G: But there's too much audience.

E: Unfortunately audiences at Clifton Hill are now getting to that sort of size where ...

G: That's for everyone ...

E: So, like, we felt really good about performing in the coffee area ...

R: When you're talking about the concept of a total concert, there's obviously a compositional skill in how you arrange the pieces - which ones you put where, which ones follow on. To put the computer piece at the beginning is a very deliberate act - to make the audience feel relaxed, feel as if they're part of what's going on. And it changes the nature of the other pieces because that piece has gone first. It's like I was saying before, that it's nice the way I.D.A. is moving towards more total concepts - working with every aspect of what you're doing ... and not just setting up and saying 'Well, here's another number'. Because its more than that - its a total social situation which you're trying to consider.

J: How about if I ask the question again about the audience's reluctance to use the texts (in Ron's piece)?

R: Yeah. And whether it was the texts themselves or the audience's hesitation that meant they didn't use them.

J: Personally, I felt that it was the texts themselves, because they were very lyrical.

R: Yeah.

J: It seemed like you had to adopt someone else's voice in order to use them ...

R: Yeah, I think I agree. And those texts that were more cryptic - that didn't have a lyrical sense, that suggested nonsense words that could be thrown around - would have worked much better in the context of the piece. And the texts really only appeared there because I was playing around with generating computer poetry and that's the sort of poetry it came up with - and I hadn't really even considered handing them to an audience until the idea of using the computer as a theatre object occurred to me, and I shoved a couple of programs together and worked it out from there.

E: Your remark about being interested in the sax playing in the performance of 'Anthony Braxton'. Are you aware that none of us can play saxophone?

J: Quite. I was ...

E: I had a saxophone five years ago, and that was the first time I had one again. After Ron had borrowed a sax and had blasted around with it for a while, Ron said 'Tonight we could be reaching new heights of incompetency on the sax'.

J: Well, I had that written down somewhere, but it seemed that it really was unnecessary to say that you weren't sax players in inverted commas. But so what? I mean you obviously created something out of

using them ...

R: Well, nothing that we do as I.D.A. depends on us being competent musical performers on any instrument. Well - nothing that we did at that concert.

J: What about voice?

R: Well, none of us are trained singers.

J: No, but in order to stay in sync for a chant ...

E &

G: We make mistakes ...

J: You didn't make any on that though ...

E: That's because when you're up there on stage there's a certain amount of adrenalin that goes through your system that forces you to do it correctly. Also - that was the question you asked - why the tape in 'Ono Nota Nutha'? The original concept to that was that when two voices were going to leave the chant to put the middle bit in about the instruction manual for the tape recorder, there would only be one voice remaining for the actual chant. My original idea for that was to get three people from the audience, pre-picked, to come up out of the audience at certain points to join in so that there'd be four voices doing the chant and two out of it. But the difficulty in arranging to get people to practice and get together and explain to them what was needed meant that it was far easier for the three of us to get together and make a pre-recorded tape of this and then use that ... so, again, there was no great amount of competence there either.

J: But there wasn't incompetence.

E: But, again, why should we be incompetent on stage?

J: Well you mentioned that you possibly might've reached heights of incompetence on the saxophone ...

E: That was Ron's remark.

J: Ron?

R: Ah ...

E: Yeah, last week I interviewed Laughing Hands, and Paul said that our sax playing was very reminiscent of the jazz-based musics of the London music collective. I found this very amusing in view of our saxophonic background and in view of ...

R: Of the superb talents that are in the London music collective ...

E: ... And also in view of what that piece was about ... Its also been interpreted by some as a slight against Anthony Braxton. It is in no way meant to be a slight against Anthony Braxton. It is a slight against that genre of musicians that Anthony Braxton unfortunately belongs to.

J: In part ...

E: In part, yeah. In part to the extent that - that piece actually came from having bought a double album of his and finding that screed inside. Because, you know what its like - you buy a double album sealed with plastic, you expect to open it out and find lovely

pictures of Anthony in the studio playing, or something like that. And all there were were these amazing words. And I had the idea to use those words a long time ago before actually the piece came out. And it was sort of sitting around there - and then, it happened. And then came the problem of actually finding people's saxophones that we could borrow to do the thing.

Yeah - swapping them round was a democratic process. I didn't see any reason in having one person do a voice all the time. It also meant that people were going to jump around on the text and find bits and pieces.

There were difficulties in that piece. We didn't know where to end. If we ever get to do it again we'll work out a predetermined end. And the other thing is, the voice next time, if we get to do it again, will be slightly amplified over the sound of the saxophones - because the saxophones were decidedly loud.

J: You thought it was a problem that the words couldn't be heard?

E: Not exactly a problem - I mean that's the way it turned out. But I think it probably would be a little bit more interesting if the saxophones and the vocals were on a little bit more of a comparable level.

J: Yeah, I'd agree with that.

E: Again, there was nothing particularly vicious in that (piece) either - which has sort of been read into it by some people. Its just that I believe in participation and demystification. And I see that sort of purposeful mystification as being totally alien to what I'm on about and I think totally alien to what I.D.A's on about.

J: Yeah, you said that there were some accusations of viciousness about your interpretation of Braxton. What I was trying to get at is that maybe there's a possibility of making a simplistic analysis because your only going on certain information that is available about Braxton. I mean - not having seen him in the flesh, not having ...

G: Oh yeah, but that's assuming that it is about him. Like, I've had this problem with other things that I've done. Anthony Braxton, I would say, to Ernie, is the vehicle for the idea - its not about him at all.

E: Yeah.

G: Its about that ...

R: If I might interpose that it seems to me that composers and performers can not make excuses in the sense of saying - 'Well, the audience interpreted what I was trying to say incorrectly'. Because the onus is on you - if you have some sort of message about something to get across. And its presumptuous to say the audience didn't understand what I was trying to get across. If you're trying to get that across, the audience bloody should understand it - or the faults in the piece, not in the audience.

G: So what happens there? Do you reckon we shouldn't have Anthony's name on it?

R: I think its fair enough that the audience finds it a slight against

Anthony Braxton. Because you certainly are slighting Anthony Braxton in certain ways.

J: You're using his words for a start.

R: You're using his words and you're using his name, and unless you actually say in the piece - 'Look, we're really not trying to get at Anthony Braxton' ...

E: No, I did say that at the start.

R: Yeah.

E: I gave an intro speech. And I said that unfortunately he belongs to that genre of musicians that enshrouds his product in voluminous clouds of mystification and art object hysteria. I made that point clear at the start.

J: But what I was getting at was that you're relying on packaged information about Braxton. Now, record companies love liner notes because...

E: Oh yeah. Well Ron's still of the impression that that whole thing is a fairly good joke on Anthony Braxton.

R: Still, the general point holds, and the general point holds even about the last piece. In fact, what's nice about the last piece is that I don't think Graeme even knew what he was trying to get across.

G: ... No, not really.

R: And the audience is a bit mystified. And in that sense, I mean, that sense of mystification is not something I mind. It's quite a different sense of mystification from a virtuoso getting up and playing Bach, you know, fantastically well - and the audience feels a real separation between them and that skill. That's a different sense of mystification altogether.

G: I liked it because I felt people responded - it was actually in them. Like they sort of imagined things, because to me - as I said before - I just wasn't involved in that part of it. It's said in that (review) too ...

R: Yeah, I think there's a real danger in a demystification process becoming the removal of mystery from music.

J: In theatre even more so perhaps.

R: Yeah, right.

G: There's things that are just magical to be involved in and to get really involved with. It's not that other alienating mystification.

R: Yeah.

E: I always quite enjoy, actually, hearing different people's interpretations of things that I've done or that we've done. Because they always are different. And as happened with Ralph's review of what Graeme and I had done, I found what Ralph had written really interesting. Because it was just another way of looking at it, and a lot of that has sort of sunk in about what we were doing on that night.

R: Yes, that total process of performing at Clifton Hill is getting

very convoluted at the moment. Because even when you sit down to write a piece that you're going to perform, you have in mind what's going to happen with that in the context of the place, in the context of the audience reaction, in the context of the reviewer's reaction, in your reaction to the reviewer. Its a very complicated one, but its a nice one at the same time.

G: Something that fits in with that - I was talking to one guy at the benefit concert ... He's become a regular audience-goer (at Clifton Hill) and he said that he doesn't feel ... Like, he likes the things, but there's nothing that's going to surprise him any more. And I've heard that from a few different people. Like at Clifton Hill now there's not going to be anything really unexpected ...

J: I don't agree with him myself.

G: You don't?

J: No, I mean I wouldn't have expected any of this stuff at all. Well, no not quite so - I might have expected the chant, because you'd done that ...

E: You see, I enjoy voice pieces.

J: ... but I wouldn't have expected the words.

E: Actually, that chant - that voice piece - was probably the piece most relevant to the concept of the concert. In other words not using cassettes. Because people had criticised us for the over or overt use of cassette recorders. And that's what that piece was about - because people were saying, literally, 'Oh no not another cassette recorder piece'. And I just realised - how foolish does it sound when one says 'Oh no not another piano piece'. And again, I think it was Kanga who said that, as we were going through, he really cringed when we said, 'Oh, no not another treated guitar piece'.

J: Oh, everyone had their own cringe - maybe more than one.

E: Exactly. I attempted to tailor it to everybody's likes or dislikes - with a few little surprises thrown in...

E: I certainly never expected to have other people's writings quoted in a review or analysis of my piece of music.

J: I - its just the effect of writing a lot of academic essays. That's my problem. But how would you evaluate ...

E: Well, I'm certainly not saying you should or shouldn't have done it. Its more taken me by surprise that anybody has done it. Its a bit like having a piece that's like the stuff we do analyzed under the rules and regulations of classical musical structure.

J: Well - there might be some point in doing that ...

E: There might be, but I can't see ...

G: What you've written though, I can see as really valid, but its just that that type of thing is foreign to me ...

E: I've got no concept at the moment of I.D.A. music fitting into a world history of music.

R: Well, the problem with analysis - with any sort of classical analysis -

is that thus far it almost entirely deals only with sound - sound relationships. And contemporary analysis is still dealing with that. It hasn't got to the point of being able to construct systems whereby you examine sound in relation to action, in relation to the total context of the concert and so on ... Now, I don't know whether some 'genius' is going to come along with some sort of cybernetic diagram that can do that - and it would be almost absurd of course to come up with that.

And I guess what this (review) is about, is about responses, right? Its an individuals response to the material presented and its not really about analysis at all. And the analysis would have to go all over the place to try and work out a response, and I don't know whether its possible ...

Even in the context of the music we presented, what sort of structure does it have which you can do that with?

There are all sorts of dangers that lie in analysis. I don't see any particular danger in response - it evokes response in people and that's expressed, and that's nice - but if things are analysed that tends to predicate future behaviour in terms of the analysis. Something's been analysed, therefore what you do next tends to be an attempt to either fit or not fit the analysis.

J: Maybe ...

R: I'm sure that's what has happened in Western music.

J: That's what has happened ...

G: That's close to the Anthony Braxton thing - setting up an analysis, all those words, and then he has to stay true to it ...

R: Yeah.

G: It sort of confines him.

E: But I can't see in any way how the next I.D.A. concert's going to be in any way like that one.

J: Well, I can - I mean ...

R: Yeah, I think you can ...

E: Oh.

J: It's going to be like that one in the sense that you're presenting ...

G: An I.D.A. concert...

J: What were the ideas in the last piece?

G: Ideas ... In a sense, one part of that (review) is pretty precise. The idea of darkness and all those things were for the audience to look after themselves. That's magical enough by itself, so I wasn't going to contrive anything. So basically what it was to do with was doing a piece where the performers had to listen. It came from the idea of listening to sounds spatially, sounds travelling, or tracing ... It grew out of the idea of putting a problem, a function that they had to do - not musical - just collecting things, which would create the score. And the person up the front (ie. Graeme) had to try and trace through space the same things ...

J: What exactly did the performers have to do?

G: There were six chairs, six tins, three objects - a box of matches, a ball of paper and a bundle of sticks. Contents for a fire. To me, that was something that would look after itself - like I'm not going to tie down what 'fire' means to people, but it just seemed like a bit of a contrast to having the darkness ... So what they were really doing was trying to perform that function by listening ...

R: Yeah, I think that because I was blind-folded the whole time during that piece, I think I had a different perception of it to anybody else. I didn't see any of the flashes ...

G: Yeah, I didn't either.

R: The whole idea of light was completely missed by me ...

G: Me too - I never thought of that piece as visual ...

R: I listened to it as if Graeme had set up a very complicated way to get a Cage-type chance process going. And there were all these nice sounds coming through - and any theatrical aspects escaped me.

G: Basically, that was what I was after - instead of composing music, do a function ...

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by our special correspondent


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1. 'Things are not so bad after all.' (ea)
2. 'Anthony Braxton says...' (ea)
3. 'Ono Nota Nutha' (ea)
4. 'Darkness - Click, Flash! - Transitory Sounds - Tracing - The Isolation of Light.' (ea)



Graeme Davis: Flashed in the Dark!



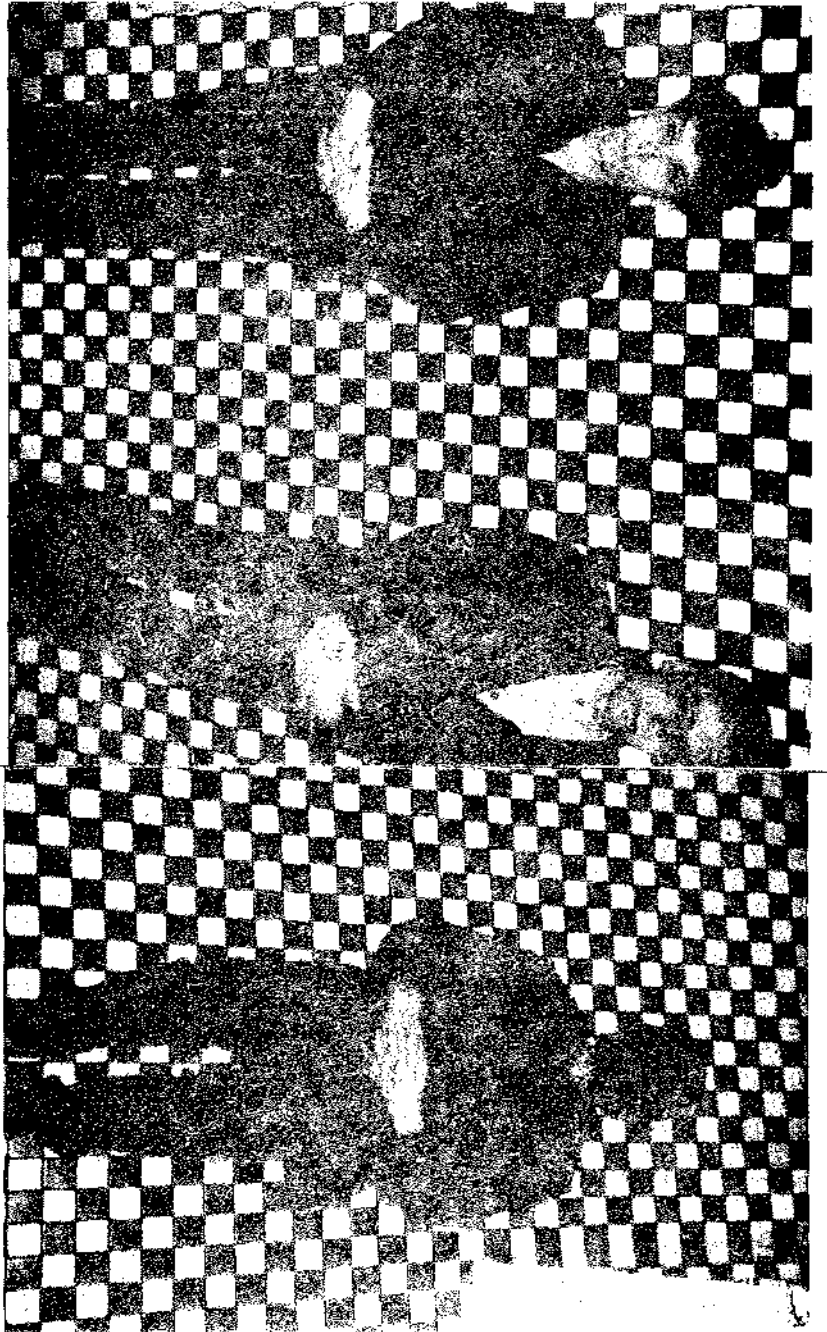
Crisin Althoff: Will they Complain?



WARNING

The Surgeon General of I.D.A. warns that one, some or all of these pieces may cause confusion in the minds of some spectators due to the role of audience causing serious delirium between each a lament and experience, resulting in self-inflicted boredom. If these symptoms are manifest within you, PLEASE LEAVE NOW. AS I.D.A. takes no responsibility for the damage caused by not being amused or entertained during a 'night-out'.

LAUGHING
HANDS



Since performing at Clifton Hill last March (see 'New Music' No.1), this band has dispensed with one member, and I feel that the music coming from this now-trio has improved because of this. The thick, sludgy, hob-nail-booted music that was at times almost an aural encyclopaedia of electronically-derived sounds has noticeably 'thinned out', enabling the listener to detect with a far greater clarity the patterns, shifts and timbral nuances of the pieces.

Unfortunately, there are still many people who believe that Clifton Hill is a venue for electronically-based music only, and a casual glance at the Laughing Hands stage set-up would comfort and reinforce these people's mistaken beliefs. Upon closer inspection though, odd things show up. Amidst the synthesizers, echo units, amplifiers, guitars, effects pedals, drum machines and the like, lurk little percussion instruments like the insides of toy pianos, a zither, metal disks held to boards with Blu-tack, a pink plastic toy synthesizer from the Waltons toy department, even a plastic ukelele with elastic strings! All these objects are deftly used to the music's advantage, so obviously the band members use the instruments they have with their own creative powers, and are not just sucked in by the wonders of technological hardware.

At this concert we even get visuals: a black and white TV set, on which images amusingly align themselves with portions of the music (that is when the equipment behind it doesn't set it into a frenzy of distortion), atop which stands an old library book with a very relevant title. Behind this frontispiece sits the band: one-two-three in a row, fairly serious and single-minded, except in between pieces when comments and in-jokes about the last piece are made annoyingly just out of audience earshot.

Since 90% of Laughing Hands' material is improvised, the audience doesn't really witness a 'concert'. The TV set on this occasion is the only acknowledgement that the audience is in fact out there. What we are doing is sitting in on probably what this band does at home. Still, this is certainly not detrimental, because the band as a trio works very smoothly and decidedly imaginatively together. What does happen as regards an audience however is a noticeable effort to constantly head into new directions, so that as well as the fact that the nature of improvisation makes this a fairly standard approach, we are consciously never served the same set twice running.

And the music itself? Well, it's much harder to describe than the band! Hopefully more about the music and the way that the players themselves see their music will result from the following interview. Even with the great differences of actual sources of sound, I feel the band's sound is always basically 'electronic'. Nevertheless, within this category, the range of sounds is vast. Even when watching the band play, sometimes it's hard to match a certain sound with the associated manual action after it has been processed and treated. Listening to the performance on tape, it is practically impossible. I feel the band employs a realistic approach to live electronic music. The timbral qualities, the rhythms and the repetitions still convey to me an image of things ominous and forebodingly menacing, but I don't mind shivers up my spine every once in a while.

Visual image analogies make it easier for me to describe Laughing Hand's music. There's one category of pieces which seem to be short segments of very long pieces, rigidly and oppressively repetitious in nature, rather like a glimpse of a preview scene of some future film of times in ancient Rome or another instance of human enslavement for man-power, where thousands of well-oiled and sweating slaves heave at tiers of oars in the dark galleys of some ferocious warship, overseered by cruel and well-armed commanders. Work teams dragging vast statues up even vaster inclines of burning sand, for the folly of some maniac high-

priest also spring to mind. Another category of pieces also uses the vehicle of rhythmic repetition, but adds to this small scattered pieces of individual information, seemingly random and unrelated to the base structure. Conveyor belts roll in some amazingly complex assembly plant, where a 'Central Control' uses television monitors to inspect progress at different locations in the factory and at different stages of manufacture. The products roll by, one after the other, but it's not a good day (night?) for worker concentration, and the androids aren't much better; there are little defects all over the place, and the inspectors at the viewing panels are getting irritated. This is not good enough! Quotas must be met! Something will have to be done! Laughing Hands also played music in a category new to them at this concert: the fully-developed, beginning at A, finishing at Z, subtle changes of mood, light and colour inbetween, three acts and seven scenes, total and complete movie/play/book. Obviously, some structural forethought and preparation is needed for this sort of music (remember it's music), and here the band attempted to merge these concepts with their generally improvisatory habits. In some ways they succeeded, but for me, personally, give me the slave galleys and the conveyor belts any time.

Ernie Althoff

E: Ernie Althoff interviews -
G: Gordon Harvey
I: Ian Russell
P: Paul Schutz

- I: It's interesting to read your interpretation of that night's music as serious images, with shivers up your spine, because we thought that at least half the pieces were of an opposite nature.
- G: Yes, but a lot of what we do is 'parodies' of shiver-up-the-spine music, even though our perception of that feeling might be different from yours; so if you don't see it as a parody, it's just as valid for you to see it as you do.
- I: It's interesting to hear that most people react to our music in this way.
- E: Do they? I only know that those metallic, rhythmic type of sounds give that sort of feeling to me.
- P: The images you mention are really interesting because a lot of them are things we've spoken about as regards images. We used to say 'Let's do a FACTORY PIECE', and that basically meant we would make fairly machine-like noises that were repetitious in the individual player's timing but out of synch with each other, so you get that effect. Consciously though, that's something we haven't done for a while.
- G: We've obviously developed a subtle kind of communication whereby we understand things to be a certain way, so the difference between 'factory piece' and 'parody' is felt by us, but perhaps not by others.
- I: I really enjoy 'factory pieces' - that's why we did them, and I suppose it's still our leaning.
- P: We tend to be getting away from it now though. Now we try to opt for concentration on pieces of a more subtle nature. One thing I always notice is that when I'm playing I don't feel that way about them, but when I learn some pieces again on tape they do sound very ominous. I think this results from an interaction from the way the three elements get together: sometimes they grate against each other even though in themselves they're not ominous. A disturbing

atmosphere results from these three things, all self-contained, being rammed together. We're usually in a pleasant frame of mind when we play, we're not up there trying to expose the political evils of the world, like so many English bands. If anything, we actively try not to do that.

E: Oh yes, you can tell you're not 'preaching'. As I said, it's pretty much a lounge room feeling.

P: We have no personal or social reasons to adopt that stance, and I wouldn't like to be thought of as doing so.

E: What I didn't mention in the review was your final piece. It was almost 'bouncy-bouncy-kindergarten'. It was appropriate right at the end, because compared to the preceding pieces, it was like a little throw-away relief tune.

P: It was! Although it just happened that way, it could be seen as a tension-reliever for the evening.

E: The other spot of 'light comedy' was Gordon obviously persisting with a rhythm structure, forcing you other two to continue with the piece, although it had almost finished.

G: That piece was meant to have pregnant pauses, but due to the way we work in improvisation, the others did think it was finishing, so that made my continuing a surprise to be dealt with. We did have a big problem that night: our seating. It illustrated to us how important eye-to-eye communication is.

P: We were dead in a straight line, and Ian had his back to Gordon, and they normally have a lot of eye contact while playing. This made it really strange. It was to us the most graphic illustration of the need to set up in a particular way.

G: Of course when we play at home we have the perfect set up. We didn't think it was a very successful musical performance. We were much happier with it when we listened to the tape, but our response to the live performance wasn't all that good. Very mixed feelings!

P: It was a constant performance: there were no dreadfully low bits, but the usual communication you can feel going on was somehow inhibited, and I'm convinced it was due to our seating arrangement. I also felt very separate from the audience that night. Maybe that was the TV set. I couldn't see the audience.

E: So you are aware of an audience being out there! It doesn't really appear so.

P: We have realised that we should do something to show the audience we are aware of them. There is definitely a technique of feeding back to the audience that we need to practise more. Another consideration that arises is the need on one hand to relate positively with the audience, but on the other hand it's often a disadvantage with this kind of music for people to see what you are physically going to do, because they anticipate the sound that's going to happen, and this can be distracting to the audience's awareness of what is happening. This was the aim of the TV set, and also why we'd love to use film, so that people weren't anticipating sounds from visual clues.

I: This review has also showed us again that our music is very visual, and we'd much rather people watch what is going on inside their heads from the music than we three making it. It very much detracts from what you can get out of it.

- P: Our aims regarding what we would like an audience to think about when we play short atmospheric pieces for example are obviously a set of visual or emotional responses, and I think you seriously jeopardize the lucidity of that response by the presentation of a whole lot of other visual keys from watching people manipulating equipment. We don't consider the physical process of making the music really relevant to the audience. The impact and the function of a sound without a visual key is something completely different. How did the TV affect you? We didn't get much from it.
- E: I found the TV a step towards the acknowledgement of a visual presence, but considering what I've always felt to be impersonal approach from the band, it was a begrudging acknowledgement of this presence.
- P: I think we are mainly interested in people getting the maximum from our music, and I see our visual presence as an inhibition to this process. Our tapes and record are a much better way to listen to our music.
- G: As regards preparation for this concert, the only thing we did that was different to other nights was that individuals had certain little patterns or settings worked out beforehand, but probably with that came predetermined expectations of how the piece would work, and being that these things never ever work out as they are intended is probably how you get the impression that there were concepts.
- E: Yes, I realized that nothing was the product of a large rehearsal, but it seemed to me in the two longer pieces that there were deliberate shifts through different feelings, getting into a narrative 'AND THEN' context.
- P: From our lounge room practices we've worked out our categories of pieces, with their own key-word labels. Someone can say 'Let's do a drone piece, or a factory piece, or a silly piece!', and we all know what we've done before in these contexts.
- I: Or one of us may have worked something out, and therefore wants the other two to hang back a little, because this section has some meaning to you.
- P: These things are all just fundamental personal communication things. Verbalising about them like this makes them take on a significance which I don't think they have. To me, they are just basic working tools, it's not an outlining system we've developed for playing.
- I: Actually we've been through a few phases. We used to all start together without unexpected things and see what occurs, but we've been through a phase just recently where we've all been working things out and presenting this to the other two to see what they do. Now we're going back to the stage of not talking about it so much beforehand and just reacting again.
- P: I think as soon as one phase gets too easy to do, we tend to drop it and do something else. It gets boring. We are basically rabid seekers of new sensations.
- E: That may be so, but the other pieces you did that night interested me far more than those two 'narrative movement' pieces. I began to feel that many other people had already used this form: it held no surprises for me. The other pieces remind me of the early Andy Warhol films I've seen where there is no camera movement at all and all the action is in front of the rigidly fixed camera. The simplicity of this idea really excited me. In your repetitive pieces the 'camera of the mind' doesn't pan or anything. It's fixed on one

certain image and watching whatever goes around inside that image. I find this far more exploratory if you want to think in a historical musical context than the fairly standard narrative form.

- P: That's a very good way to describe them. The great difference is duration though. With our pieces, because they are short, you are given a whole selection of images in one night, and if they are rigidly repetitive enough you can still create an atmosphere of rigid focus even within a three-minute piece. You don't have to do a four-hour marathon.
- E: That's what I've said: they are always little glimpses of things which you KNOW behind the sampling device is a vast unending piece.
- G: That's always been more or less our aim. Usually the ones that have developments and changes within the piece are the ones where we're not very satisfied with the first bit and we desperately try and do something else. It's good to hear your comments, it shows us that your idea of our success is similar to ours in that respect.
- E: I wasn't very satisfied with what came out in your interview with Chris Wyatt (see 'New Music' No.1) about your methods of improvisation or even in fact what you call improvisation. Can we talk about that some more?
- G: I think that probably the biggest trap in improvisation is not being aware of the music as a total piece. That being the case, it's rather important that everyone has a rather similar understanding of what a piece is like. We all have a similar perception of a piece in its completeness.
- P: We work towards a piece as opposed to working towards being seen to be improvising. A lot of improvisation situations are designed to glorify the ability of individual players.
- I: Time was once when the epitome of your playing was to be good enough to be able to do a solo spot. Improvisation got to be synonymous with ego in certain areas.
- P: A lot of people, particularly classical musicians, view improvisation as complete extraneous indulgence. They see it as the antithesis of working on refining and honing down a particular piece and your understanding of it. I don't think it needs to be polarised so violently. Improvisation isn't necessarily that far away from the process of refining a piece, as opposed to refining three interlocking roles. I don't listen to our music and hear three musicians, I hear a total music from a band.
- I: We are more coagulators or conglomerators than improvisers. We are locking together things rather than personally playing.
- P: We all influence each other as well, which is something that in say jazz improvisation is furiously avoided. There are no solos in our playing.
- I: The way we play, we really relate strongly to the music as a whole, so one's awareness of it is really high. I cannot just plod through and do my part.
- P: I think it's very easy when talking about the mystification of the musician to reject any notion of changing a person's consciousness through music as being mystification. I don't think this is accurate; there are a lot of areas in playing, particularly in improvisation, where your brain just has to function in a fashion

which isn't your normal everyday function. One's ability to do this affects the music. I don't think it's something you can work at and develop consciously. It develops only through application.

G: You can only teach people to free themselves from their self-constraints.

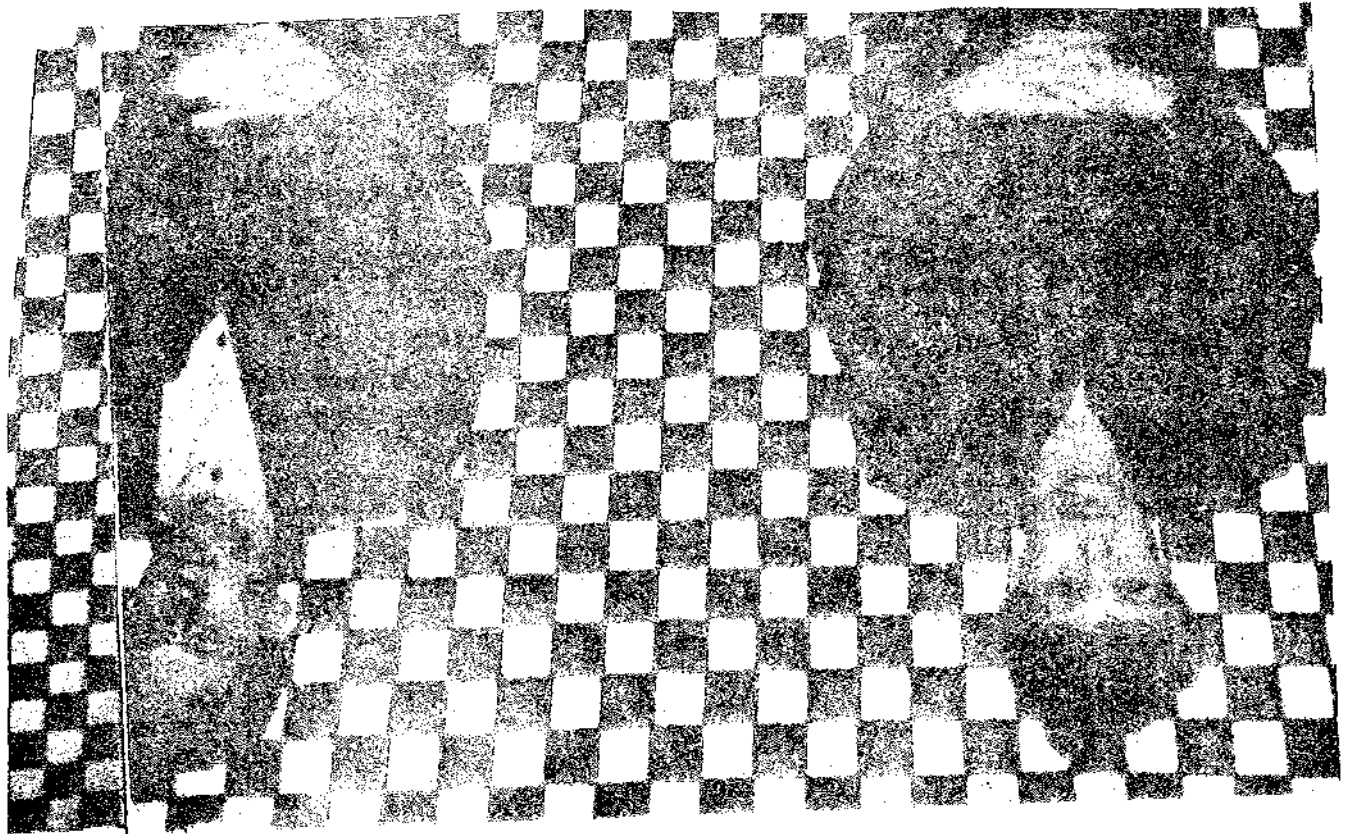
E: Was Laughing Hands formed consciously as an improvisational group?

P: No, no! It was formed because the people in it needed to play music that they enjoyed listening to. We are all avid listeners. What we do is produce music that we can't hear on record. The process we use, that just happens to be improvisation, is used because we've found that it gets us the results we want consistently, and so fulfills our aim of producing music. The only reason we do it is because we enjoy playing it and listening to it.

G: There was no conscious intention to do anything, we just got together and it worked and so we continued. Then we had ambitions! (laughter).

P: I would say we're all fairly impatient. This method does produce music fairly well instantly which is the way we like it. We like to be able to just come in, make it and then listen to it. In this context I can't see us ever working to an enormous and complex degree on pre-arranged pieces.

I: We play our tapes over and over. We don't listen to them as improvisation. Once they're done, they're pieces of music. The improvisation process is just a tool we use. We don't WANT to IMPROVISE, it's just that that's the way it works, so we do it.





L. I. M. E.

Live Improvised Music Events (LIME)

Ros Bandt , Julie Doyle, Gavin McCarthy, Carolyn Robb.

LIME are an improvisation group, using sophisticated home-made and found instruments.

The LIME concert was one of the most enjoyable concerts I've heard at Clifton Hill for a long time - due I think to the rarity of seeing them there, to their flexibility and scope and most of all to the glaringly apparent joy which the group shares in performing and working together. This final point more than any other - including the actual musical content - makes being in the audience a pleasure. The music is what they do but its only possible because of the groups dynamics.

My criticism of LIME is their tendency to theatricality. Theatre in music is O.K. and that it rises from a desire to further the communication between group members makes it appropriate, but I find it hard to take the manifestation, which is romantic and emotional - emotion of a kind which is separate from the music - for example, the concept and planning of Julie's piece - Inmates - is good and full of potential, but its let-down was the fact that LIME are not actors, even though theatrical expression (of a kind naturally arising) is right for them. I think they should re-examine what they mean by theatre.

That LIME have been together now for some time is apparent in the 'easiness' with which they perform and react to one another. Their infectious presence was especially noticeable in the Foot Duet and those pieces using homemade instruments. Love of musical mood is made clear and timbres and rhythm are often more important than pitches. Pitch patterns are important, not so much the actual pitches, which indicate a consideration of the musical result, not the cerebral one. A body of material is often set out and then modified, extended and contracted, as in 'E-mode' where space and tonal centres are exploited. Variation technique is central to many pieces. The music suits the instruments well, again demonstrated in E-mode, where none of the 'brilliance' of the flute - which makes it so ugly - was used, but rather wind instrument characteristics, eg. continuous tone production, rising, falling etc. were explored.

John Crawford

J: John Crawford
Julie: Julie Doyle
R: Ros Bandt
C: Caroline Robb
G: Gavin McCarthy

INTERVIEW WITH LIME

J: How did you get together (as a group of 4)?

R: It began with the 1978 La Trobe Sculpture Festival where we had that big piece that we rehearsed for about six months.

Julie: And we had lots of other people in it - about nine people, and five of us evolved out of that (with Nick Tolhurst) and then it came down to four.

Caroline: The whole big thing began from the Sculpture Festival where anyone who was interested in performing in the pieces worked together and some of us continued on because we enjoyed doing it.

R: A lot of people didn't show up to rehearsals and it impaired the performance and so we decided we would have a group which was a little bit smaller and you could control it a little bit more

in terms of who was going to show up. It was really haphazard and people didn't have an identity; the performance was O.K. and then after that there was just a nucleus of really keen people.

C: Five people came to rehearsals and then Nick dropped out after about a year.

Julie: We really found that we really work much better - with the rapport between the five of us in the beginning and now the four of us - it sort of had to happen that way. I thought - we found out we had so many things in common and things we wanted to do. Through talking and what happened we had ideas that we wanted to do.

John: It's always seemed to me that the commitment of the group was really strong, really apparent in performance. An enormous amount of hard work goes into preparation.

R: Hours and hours of rehearsal.

C: We rehearse once a week and sometimes its a day or a weekend. We're with each other so often we're really getting to know each other. We know what to expect from each person. We can anticipate what they're doing and I think that's why a lot of our music does work.

John: Do you think that knowing what you think others are going to do holds you back at all?

R: Oh no! Because there are always surprises and tricks. People play up.

Julie: Something always comes up that's different, that gives you something to work on. I still really don't know you all. (Laughter).

G: Every rehearsal there's some new idea or surprise being put forward which is one of the reasons I think it just keeps powering along; because you never feel you're going to a rehearsal to do the same stuff over again.

C: It also depends on how you're feeling at the time, certain people have got a high - this brings out something completely different in the others.

John: Do you find you swap roles as leader - or is there no sense of leader in the group?

C: Sometimes during rehearsals.

R: Depends who's taking responsibility for a piece.

C: If somebody's got a particular idea then he takes over.

G: For me one of the crucial and magical things about the group is that nobody is ever expected to give more than they can, which has meant that we've all had time to develop and to work with each other. It's always been a free and trusting relationship which has allowed us to grow and mature.

C: A lot of the success of the group is due to Ros's energy.

- R: Oh! But I'm just the point of contact, the excuse - you know.
- John: Is that because of the origins of the group? You were a tutor at the time.
- R: It was Jane O'Brien and Joan Lawrence who set it up too. (Discussion of origin and university years).
- Julie: At that time we hardly knew one another at all.
- G: I was in second year at the time of the Sculpture Festival. I was so taken with the improvisation labs - I just couldn't believe that at the end of first year that that was all we did. I was horrified that it wasn't going to go on - I just jumped at the chance to work with people.
- Julie: Also the different places to perform that have come up. The response we've had has been enormous and varied - this spurs you on.
- R: We've never looked for work or tried to promote ourselves as a group, we've just done what we've been ready to do and what we've had going. We're only prepared to do just as much as we can work on really well.
- C: It's an important part of our week - a real outlet for all of us; a way of extending ourselves personally and creatively, musically.
- John: How much do you think the original spirit of first year improv. labs is preserved and projected?
- G: We had to write in our first year exam what we thought was right or wrong about improv. My response was that there should have been a lot more emphasis on the interpersonal relationship aspect of improvising as a group, rather than individual skills or whatever, and through LIME I think that's the way it's developed for me. It's taken to the level I thought it should have gone to.
- John: What about working with made and found instruments?
- Julie: Very important for me.
- R: We've all taken what we need to do our own thing in an individual way. It never became so important to us as this year when we all started to build and make things. Now we've got our own instruments - our own works of art in a way and we're now working within the limits we've created for ourselves. In a way we're going from expansive material into defining more limits, but then working within these limits in more expansive ways. Not everything we do is for our own instruments. We use junk, etc. also. Whatever we can bring into the melting pot just goes in.
- John: How about ongoing, linear ideas. Pieces that you had earlier in the group that are still in existence - specifically 'Oh Rose.'
- C: Every concert we've done something with 'Oh Rose'. It's always been a different treatment.
- John: And how much is it the same piece every time you do it.

G: The text is the same every time.

John: Why that poem?

C: That's part of Nick. That's one of "Nick's poems."

Julie: It started as a dance piece.

R: Nick recited it and Julie moved to it. It exemplified the idea that came up early of small pieces e.g. the foot piece. Little pearls. That came up quite spontaneously.

John: How much is theatre a generating force for you?

G: More and more I think.

R: Julie's piece is very demanding. You need to be a good musician, actor, memorise score ...

C: So many of our pieces are theatre. Expression in the face.

G: We are physically responding to each other - not just with sound.

C: I think we are becoming more confident with each other and with audiences so we're letting ourselves go more. Pieces are turning naturally into theatre.

John: That seems like a connecting point between musical improvisation and the ability to relate to one another.

R: Yes. It's never forced. We don't decide we are going to do a theatre piece. Except Julie's piece.

Julie: That was written for a final year piece but I'd had that idea for a long time.

John: Why did you decide to write that?

Julie: Music theatre is one of my prime interests and I felt having four people in the group ... It was originally a solo piece but I decided to score it. Doing it was a real extension. Everyone got a lot out of it.

John: Do you see this entering an ongoing stream for LIME - as with 'Oh Rose'?

G: A possibility.

Julie: Not in that length, but perhaps by selecting certain emotions.

C: The thing is that 'Oh Rose' is a special piece to us. It's got a lot of connotations, memories of the beginning, Nick ... I think we really need to do it. It's good to approach that text in different ways for a musical piece. Whereas Julie's is a composed piece, a really different thing.

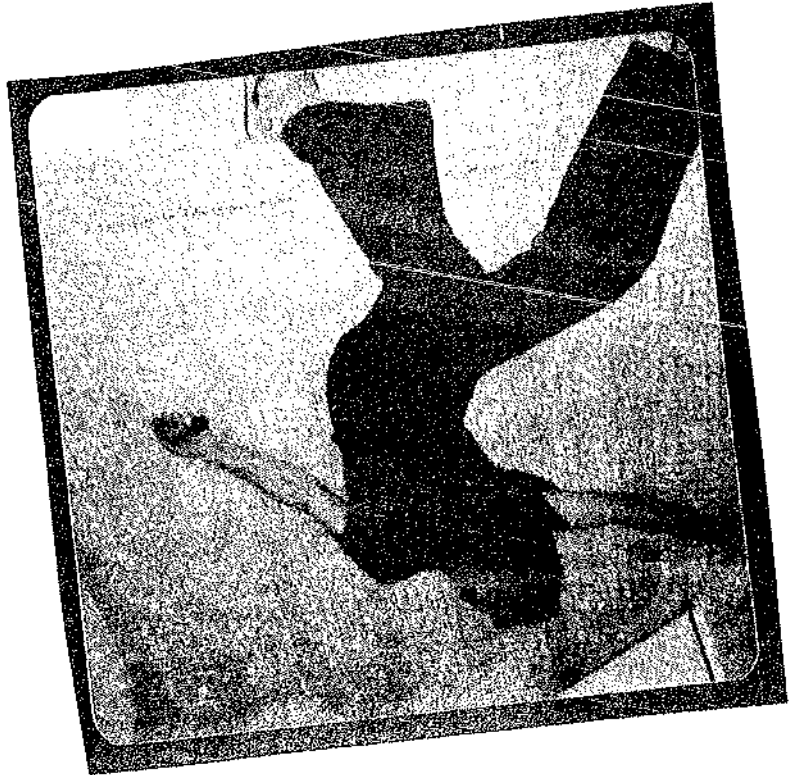
John: You don't see it entering ...

Julie: Not really. I'd like to do another, different one.

G: We've got a number of pieces now which have entered a phase where they are units in themselves and - 'Nuts' for example. We've done it a few times now and each time it's been fairly

close. It's got the same form and structure each time and we all play fairly much the same thing. Decisions are always made on the spot ...

- R: Especially the length of the parts which change quite a lot. But always the unfolding is pretty well in sequence.
- C: But how you do it is different. I know the way I do that piece each time has been different.
- John: When someone comes along with an idea is it only a germ, or is it much more thought about than that and you give some indication of what you want people to do?
- G: That's just highly variable e.g. the foot piece - I was just sitting down and happened to hit my foot with a beater - (it developed quickly and spontaneously).
- John: What kind of roots do you see for your kind of improvisation - i.e. Western music, etc?
- G: For me it all started in first year, I heard people like Harry Partch. He must have been the enlightenment as far as what can be done with different sounds. I was just thrown when I heard 'Delusion of the Fury'. I think that's definitely where my roots are.
- R: I don't think we're influenced by him - except in manufacturing instruments, and - (others thought Partch was not a stimulus for them) - that he got an ensemble together to work for a long time on a piece which grows organically and that he's really romantic and will use anything that works in a piece. The spirit is a prominent part of it.
- C: I think we've taken on a lot of that spirit but that he wasn't our influence. I think the influence was ourselves - what we wanted to do and what we got out of it.
- R: I think we've kind of made our own tribe that's got its own organic functioning and I think we function like more primitive cultures. Body, physical, mental - a whole process.
- Julie: I felt inadequate because I couldn't improvise on the piano. Couldn't play without the music. It was really soul destroying because you really love music but I couldn't play without any music. When I took up the flute I refused to have the basic training. That's my basic thing - I wanted to use myself.
- C: It's terrific to find people with the same kind of feeling towards improvisation.
- John: There'd probably be a lot more people who'd like to do ...
- C: So many people have said ...
- R: Everyone's been: "Can we join?" I've said what we need is a big melting pot - just like how this group started. And I don't think we're particularly expandable now because we've really put so much time into becoming our own tribe and you couldn't break in without a lot of pain.



PAUL SHULTZ
CHRIS WYATT



Paul and Chris presented an evening of improvised music using keyboard synthesizers, a Serge modular synthesizer, percussion and violin.

Their methods of approaching improvisation on these instruments were similar in that they let the synthesizers form a base structure, mainly rhythmic, over which they played improvised sounds using percussion, violin and some synthesizer functions. Although their approaches were similar, I felt that a lot of the music, especially in the first half of the concert, did not 'hang together'. It took some time playing together in order to 'sympathise' with each other and produce a cohesive sound.

The music was roughly divided into four sections, governed mainly by the changes in rhythmic patterns and changing to new instruments. The overall effect reminded me of extended versions of Eno's 'Music for Films'. This association was probably encouraged by the synthesizer generated pitches, slowly changing, that played quietly in the background during much of the concert, sounding not unlike an aeroplane flying past. The percussion and echo effects were used sparsely over the top of this. Some of these effects were well-worn, almost cliched, but many of them were intriguing and had me wondering about how they were produced. Perhaps this combination of changing relatively simple pitches and rhythms with unusual but identifiable additional sounds, usually repetitive, is what makes this kind of music likeable.

Although I enjoyed the music very much, I found myself wondering whether Paul and Chris were playing it fairly safe, in that their improvisation fell well within the boundaries of their previous musical experience (I think!). This raises questions as to the nature of improvisation and its intent, which I don't feel qualified to discuss fully, but I do wonder why they chose to improvise, and what would have resulted if they had set a more defined structure beforehand, or if they had chosen instruments with which they were not familiar.

Jane Crawford

P: Paul Schutz
C: Chris Wyatt
J: Jane Crawford

C: For me that night was a total washout, except for the one piece at the end which sort of started to happen a little bit, but I got none of the hits or none of the kind of stick togetherness that we had when Paul and I were practising, when we were playing together beforehand.

J: But you have played together before?

C: Well, no.

P: We'd played twice before that concert, and both of those occasions were just: walking into the room, set up and start playing. They were sort of feeling out what was happening.

C: The second one really worked well. We thought, well, we'll just go at that, and the combination of no set-up time, and a few other things meant that I just didn't think it worked at all.

P: For most of the evening I was really enjoying myself, but that was, more or less, my state of mind at the time. It had very little to do with whether the music was working or not, and also I tend to still have this ... it's probably a slight stigma ... in that I don't really think about how its going until afterwards, until after I hear the tape. The act of making judgements about whether this is working or that is working is a sort of subliminal thing.

J: When you had the practise sessions did you work out any kind of structure at all, or any way that you thought the music would feel?

C: Yes, we did.

P: We did in the second one.

C: But we tried to achieve what we had in that practise session and we didn't come close to it for the whole night.

P: No.

C: We didn't get to that point, we got a few other things inbetween. And I don't really think that we did extend each other; not musically, I didn't extend myself at all that night. I wasn't very happy with the way I was performing.

P: The comment about neither of us going beyond boundaries that we knew were reasonably safe, is really valid I think.

C: That happened during the practise session, actually. We had one really wonderful thing happen where ... I was starting to get really interested in really cheesy synthesizer effects again, like just turning a knob and changing pitch, and there was one point where I had a patch, a percussive patch, in which I would vary the rate of tempo, just with a knob, and Paul was playing percussion and we were doing rhythmic things. I was doing it by varying rates and he was playing. I remember that quite distinctly because that really stood out.

P: Yeah. Most of the things that worked really well during the practise were very rhythmic, weren't they?

C: Yeah, very.

J: You didn't use rhythms very much, I noticed, on that night.

C: There was the drum machine which was kind of a wild card for both of us I think.

P: Yes, I brought the drum machine, and I was thinking, well, we might use it or we might not use it, I just had it there in case, and I eventually decided that I'd stick it in at one point. I listened to the tape back, and you're not really very conscious of the drum machine even being on the tape. Its not very obvious.

C: I haven't listened to the tape back. I just remember being very dissatisfied with that night, to the point where I was trying to actually shatter the frame of things. So when you say that it wasn't 'hanging together', I was really aware of that, and I was actually physically trying for it not to 'hang together'.

J: Do you think that your approaches to improvising are very dissimilar?

P: Hmm, I think they are.

C: Yeah, they are.

P: Well, see, even if they weren't, and I do think that they are, the equipment that we were using is by its nature going to make our approaches different.

C: The limitations are totally different.

J: Yes, I guess so, although as I said before, it did seem like you were

both coming from the same basis where you're using a background noise, and then making percussion noises on top of that.

P: That happened a lot, but I don't think it has so intentionally, was it?

C: Well, I did manage to quickly set a patch which we played around with at an earlier time when I went to Paul's place to work out things beforehand, and it was very static, the pitch didn't change much at all. It was mainly timbral, and ... I'm trying to avoid saying it has a drone piece.

P: You're doing it quite well! It was a drone piece.

C: Yes, it was. I was quite happy with it at the time, and I still am, actually. I thought it was quite refreshing, it wasn't tonal particularly. That was sort of interesting, because it went in and out of textural balances, and we did get percussive things over the top of it because what happened on the night - it sort of fell to bits, and I was aware of that, and I was sort of trying to bust it up all together because what had happened was we had a rather nice rhythmic interplay that happened over the top of it when we were actually practising, which was quite, almost like a call and answer situation which was very interesting. I was taking components of the steady state sound that I was producing and percussing that through a couple of other devices in the synthesizer and Paul was, if not doing the same, he was using sounds which were related and so it had tonal implications, and that didn't happen at all, so I really tried to bust that frame to bits, and I couldn't do it either, that was what was frustrating me that night. I like what happens when things totally fall to bits, that's when it starts to really interest me.

P: Its a part of dynamics that cohesion can break, but of course if there's no cohesion there in the first place then the break doesn't have any impact. The sounds of the two machines are ... taking the Serge and the ARP as the basis of what we were both doing, the Serge isn't so much a real time instrument in that it takes considerable amount of patching around to get a sound, whereas the ARP is much easier to operate.

C: In some ways what resulted was partly because of my pre-occupation, which was (that) I wanted to try and patch in real time. Now, there are two ways you can approach it in a system like that: that system is big enough to set up a number of patches which are reasonably complex in themselves and during the course of the night, or whatever, move between them, or parts of them, or bring different parts of them out to the fore, or to the back. I didn't want to do that. What I was doing was assembling them, doing it, like tuning in, which is why there were a lot of periods of just pure set up type sound before it actually was a click point, and then, working with that. Then when I didn't think it was working any more, I'd keep some component going, possibly, and quickly try and do another patch, and do it in a sort of linear, building sense, like that, rather than ...

J: Is that why you chose to do improvisation instead of putting a structure?

C: That's why I was really seriously trying to improvise on that system. The whole idea of improvising with a machine in which you're virtually making instruments, which is what you're doing with a synthesizer, you're saying its going to have this parameter, and this parameter, and I wanted to see what would happen - this has been a preoccupation of mine - to see what would happen if you put it outside of that context. Its also, I guess, a bit of an athletical feat which can't really be done on that kind of system. That's not a really fruitful way to approach it. You'd have to change context to make it effective. I

thought that the problem was probably, on that night, that what Paul was doing and what I was doing were either not dissimilar enough, or they were not similar enough.

J: I thought they were similar enough, I just didn't think that you were listening to each other, or playing off each other very much.

P: The thing is that when you're working in two reasonably different time scales ... like real time for Chris and real time for me aren't necessarily the same real time, see, so to have a call and response situation between those two instruments would be running two separate time scales, so they'd go in and out of phase with each other.

J: I still think it could have worked, though.

C: We could have done it, we could have done call and response.

J: One accompanies the other, in a sense.

P: It happened on a few occasions that we started off playing together in modules, and the modules got out of phase, so at one stage I would have more or less finished an idea, and I'd stop and be setting something else up, and Chris would be playing an idea, and he'd come to the end of his and stop and set something else up, and while he was setting up I'd be playing something. It was a sort of leap frog action going through the whole piece.

C: That's what I mean about the linear clump approach which I think is kind of not so interesting to look at. The last one I did with David Chesworth, before that, was a different kettle of fish altogether because I had specific things worked out, and I had specific objections. There was one that was based on listening to a 'sax' solo by the Art Ensemble of Chicago.

J: I enjoyed it when you picked up the violin and did that long violin bit. I thought that fell in quite well.

P: Yes, on the tape that's one of the best parts.

C: I thought, in retrospect, that I had too much stuff there that I thought I was comfortable with, and I wasn't. In retrospect, I would have preferred to have been just the violin that night, nothing else.

P: That probably would have been interesting. I think possibly we both suffered from having too many options.

C: Anyway, I really don't think we covered much new ground that night. In retrospect, we never got to the stage where we covered new ground for ourselves, although we got to points where we could see bridges - something there which we could work on, and they're still there, it's just a matter of us finding time.

BRUNO
BOGHETTO



Well after a bit of a wait Bruno got underway with his performance. The presentation was minimal with no dressings. The content was that of a text reading interrupted with monologues, a joke and tied together with synthesized and tape sounds.

To explain this a bit more in detail I shall attempt to just describe the work.

The setting; a large room with Bruno seated behind small tables loaded with sound equipment, 4 channel stuff. Bruno's head was framed by a blackboard nailed to the wall just behind him. To the left, a window covered with cyclone grid. A reading lamp for light to read and work by. Darkness ... The performance begins; Bruno switches on the light and commences to read a text on Wilhelm Reich (W.R.). This serves as an introduction on W.R. for those of us who don't know this bloke, and as the basis of the concern and content of the work. This text arrives at two points - (1) Neurosis produced by natural psychological disturbance of sexuality, eg. frustrated excitement, coitus interruptus; (2) The characteristics of a persons sexuality, determines the characteristics of his personality.

Bruno then drops the text, stands up and comes round to the front of his set up. He then proceeds to tell us a story in his own manner which is quite intimate. The surprise is that he is not just telling a story relevant to the text but a joke. Then its back to the text on W.R. and his work on sexuality; the trouble he had in gaining credibility. Finally ending up in jail and dying.

Bruno then announces 'The Trial Begins' a tape is switched on; it is Bruno's voice describing the proceedings of a trial. This is lost in content, but is heard in the background as a synthesized sound track is introduced. The sounds involved were assimilations of helicopters, police sirens, jungle noise, clapping, voices and many more too hard to describe. These sounds were to be articulated by a Quad panner, but a tape substitute was used for the occasion. We also lost two channels for a while (gremlins in the works). These two sounds were then turned down but maybe not enough as it was difficult to hear what Bruno then began to speak about. He stood up and addressed the window in the corner. Bruno spoke as if he was being asked questions on W.R. as he was now the character that shared his cell in jail.

Bruno answered the unheard questions in a manner that gave an introverted and isolated feeling (this part was well executed). On answering if he had been influenced by W.R. to the extent of attempting to write anything, Bruno produces a piece of paper from his pocket and proceeds to read. On finishing, he asks rhetorically ... "crap or not eh, what ya reckon?"

Then the four channels now all going were reintroduced and set on automatic. Bruno then left the setting and sat with the audience until the tapes finished.

An impressively put together work.

Graeme Davis

B: Bruno Borghetto
G: Graeme Davis

B: Well, I'll read this then.

G: Yeah.

B: About the joke ... that was part of the performance the whole thing.

I don't know whether you understood that. It was describing the sexual aspect and things related to that in a somewhat Freudian flavour.

G: I didn't see the joke or what happened there as a separate thing. In fact I saw the joke as an integral and important part of the work. I hadn't heard that joke before maybe others had ...

B: Joke telling is a way of expression of ones own sexual repression or say racial repression or whatever.

G: Yeah ... Racial jokes tell about racial problems. Before the punch line I was sitting there listening to what I thought would be a story about a pervert molesting a little girl ... you know to make a point. But then, you, just like the nature of a joke, inverted the story ... Ohhh! Surprise.

B: I told it badly actually but I'm working on that.

G: It worked for me.

B: Yeah, but I mean its like painting: it works for artists and more often than not it doesn't work for the general populous. In a way there's a sense of performance within performance to which the public to a degree is ignorant ... you know ... So to get it across to that public you have to use the devices which are known to them, and good acting is one that comes in handy. Another one is just telling a joke properly.

G: What about the text, reading that you're not as comfortable there? Like reading out loud is something you need practice at. I find words hard to pronounce, but these things are not really that distracting, just problems.

B: I think that that's a really harmless variable. I tried to use a broadcasting voice, but the thing was that I was fucking hopeless. You'd think just reading would be an easy thing, so I ended up trying to be as natural as possible. It just needs practise.

G: Yeah.

B: Back to the joke ... with little girls especially, there is almost a sinister thing about them. But just naturally I have dirty thoughts ... you know that that's all there is to it though, so I accept it. I feel quiet comfortable with them. The only thing that doesn't make me feel comfortable is, outwardly there's not much you can do about it, but to repress the feelings. I'm not interested in moral codes, morality put in that sense is disturbing to me. That there are so called moral codes any way ...

G: This guy W.R. have you read a lot about him, and like what he says?

B: Well, yes.

G: You see I don't know who he is so the text for me acts as an introduction.

B: I had to do that as I couldn't assume that people knew about him. I was reading about W.R. a year ago, then I was into stuff like Bertrand Russell. But as a rule I don't read much; I came across W.R. through this script I was given for a film. It wasn't like I went out of my way to read about him. The material was more or less there, I just manipulated it.

- G: I find using texts appears to be informative/intelligent you know. But I don't read much either I'm more an intuitive worker. So I wonder when you see someone using a text do you assume they have all the information, like really know what their talking about.
- B: Yeah, its pretty good that way. People think you're smart.
- G: The text can be something you just find.
- B: It works that way though ... what happened after the performance a couple of people did come up and ask about the text and for info. on W.R.
- (Cup of tea.)
- B: Yes, I like performance because it expresses things that I feel ... Here we are a body of experimental people who turn up to do their own thing and are obviously not into money. One of the few things I like about not having money. Most things I don't like about not having money, is it forces you to present work minimally, you make do with what you've got and also it involves a non-waste element.
- G: Technology still hangs on a bit. What about doing something without it?
- B: I like technology ... its here you know.
- G: What about the sound part of the performance?
- B: That was a real disappointment.
- G: What, technically?
- B: That's one variable I never want to have to work with and that's equipment failure. There is already too many variables happening anyway.
- G: Isn't that just familiarity with the equipment ... like how often had you used the equipment before that night?
- B: Well, I wanted to do it live: not to be left there to have a smoke, and the technology being the only element. Producing it live ... say you have tape or synthesized inputs, you can sculpt the sound with a mixer and a Quadpanner - its really good, you can build up a crescendo, cut off before a climax. Making them live is something different.
- G: How many sounds were meant to be literal?
- B: That part was actually a soundscape/sound script for a play that was put on at La Mamma called 'The Door'. So that's what was actually played because I couldn't do it live. I would have liked it shorter, the sound was just too long. There was a climax at the end of the tape which was real important and appropriate to what I was doing. That's why I could utilize it for the performance.
- G: If you had a Quadpanner would you try to make people audibly dizzy? I mean is this the idea of being surrounded by sound?
- B: There was actually a Quadpanner. It didn't just go around, but did big 8's as well. The sound was this swirling thing becoming hysterical. Getting back to something earlier about W.R., it wasn't really his ideas, but his conviction that interested me. That's the swirling thing, its been done in movies, the feeling of persecution and alienation while still trying to maintain your conviction.

- G: The part you read out at the end was difficult to hear, it appeared as if it could have been interesting.
- B: I turned the wrong button. It just didn't work out that good.
- G: Then after the reading you set the sound again and you walked off and sat with the audience, what do you reckon about that type of gesture?
- B: You mean becoming part of the audience?
- G: No ... The fact that you've left and the performance is still going?
- B: I think they would realize eventually that it was the finish and the tape would end sometime.
- G: Yes ... when though?
- B: Yeah when? I thought it was a bit long so I was pissed off by it. Maybe I would disassociate myself with it.

THE CARRINGTON GROUP

I enjoyed the Dorian Le Gallienne String group a lot this night; I've seen them play in different venues in different contexts and I think Clifton Hill brought out strengths in their performance. In all other places I've seen them play, the contemporary pieces in their repertoire existed as contrast, whereas the performance at Clifton Hill was virtually the inverse of this, the mainstream piece being the Leslie Howard 'Adagio'.

The pieces performed in order of performance were Vertiginous Ace by Phillip Carrington, Gnomon II by Richard Excel (solo violin), Adagio by Leslie Howard and Mechanisms by Paul Turner.

The main strength of the group overall can be summed up by one word - amateur. I think amateur music is a very positive thing. I also think the Dorian Le Gallienne orchestra as a functioning music group get patronised a lot by their defined audience. I find so-called mistakes (due by and large to the lack of financial and social pressure to conform to a mythical musical standard) indicative of musical processes that take place within the group. The most interesting piece in this regard was Vertiginous Ace.

I didn't see the score, but I got the feeling that in some sections, particularly Workshops 1 and 2, the notation was not what the group was used to. Listening, it seemed that all players at one point were just given a space to deal with as they liked. This set up a really interesting contradiction, despite that which came before and came after, and an improvised music dilemma: what is right to play and what is wrong?

This is a very hard situation to come to terms with as it depends on security; on what each individual player feels at the moment. The great thing about this is that it somehow communicates. This is very rare in so-called professional music, especially string orchestras. The channels for interaction with other players are well worn, and are part of the set of seamless gestures of control-of-music that are presented to an audience.

The piece that was least divergent from 'the great tradition', Adagio by Leslie Howard was the one I enjoyed least. I think this was because of the limp neo romantic nature of the piece. It didn't give the group any chance to do what I think they do best.

I liked the other two pieces played but in writing found the other two more linked to my overwhelming impressions of the Dorian Le Gallienne String group.

Wittingly or unwittingly they gave a very sincere and honest concert.

Chris Wyatt

CW: Chris Wyatt
PC: Phillip Carrington
P: Peter
M: Male member of DLG
M1: 'Mother member
M2: Yet another member
MA: Mandy - a female member

CW: What do you think about what I said?

P: I feel pleased by that. Maybe there's something good going on somebody else is seeing.

CW: Did you find Clifton Hill a different place to play in? I mean different from the other places you play? Did you find the audience different?

PC: Come on, expand.

P: Well, I mean when we've played contemporary works before to basically the parents of the children in the other orchestras, there's been a lot of resistance and hostility.

CW: Do you think there's actually been hostility on their behalf? I tend to feel in the things I've been involved in with you (the string group) the attitude that - well music is very education ... I found that a bit patronizing.

P: The stuff we were doing was educational for us, but wasn't music for them?

CW: No, more like they knew you were doing something and figured they should clap.

PC: But because they are so - what might be called middle class they didn't show their hostility. Whereas in actual fact they were hostile toward it and it came out in the committee meetings that they were, and we were banned from doing it anyway. So the hostility was there, but repressed in a public scene.

CW: It sort of comes down to what you think music is - for yourself.

PC: You virtually say that the strength of the group is its

amateurishness.

- P: You mean amateurishness in the fact that we play badly, or in the fact that we're not bounded by the professional scene and all that implies.
- CW: I mean about their mythical professional standard, which has to do with, as I said - notions of financial and social pressure. You all come from different backgrounds - some of you are tertiary students, some still go to school, some in the workforce. You are much more interesting in terms of community music than a professional string group.
- PC: You also said you found that because of this (amateurishness) they also seemed to put across more expression, didn't you?
- CW: It communicates for me in a way that seamless professional musical gestures don't.
- M: Isn't there a difference us playing works you don't know - new works, works that haven't been performed much? Paul Turner's piece I think was a first performance. If we kept playing on that, working on it - we could probably play it in a well oiled manner.
- CW: I thought actually of all the pieces Mechanisms was one of the - well, I didn't think it deviated from the score much ... Do you see yourselves as a professional orchestra?
- All: No!
- CW: Why do you meet each week?
- P: I can answer that as an individual - I've played in a number of groups, and I've not really been satisfied in them. I am satisfied in this one, and it's mainly because of the variety of music we play, and the fact that we do play modern stuff.
- M: And that we can have a say in the music, and a say in how the music is played. Direct input - whereas I'd say for a larger group, it's not very possible unless you're in a position of power - like first desk of the first violins. We change around positions a lot.
- P: I'm wondering Chris about whether you're talking (in regard to the group) about structural honesty, where if for instance you make a sculpture you don't carefully grind all your welding joints out, but leave them, and that's the kind of thing you're talking about - so people can see how the thing was made.
- CW: Well particularly with Phillip's piece and to a lesser extent with Paul Turner's piece. I felt that as a group you were really unsure of the syntax of the notated language. But you kept on going and I think that is the interesting thing. There are 'professional' string groups that when faced with an improvised score say 'Oh, of course, I know how to play this - I know what is required', whereas I didn't think you had all that many handles except individual impetus (rather than a set of collective assumptions) to grasp what was given.
- P: That's very true - that was my experience - particularly from a couple of movements (of Vertiginous Ace) - Workshop 1 was really wide open and I felt that insecurity you were talking about very strongly - that you weren't given a great deal of directions as to what to do.
- PC: You seem to find that Paul Turner was almost more conventional.

CW: I can't really separate myself from knowledge of Paul as an individual and of his musical intentions.

PC: Because you know him so well.

CW: Well, I know him a bit, and I know he's interested in making music that can be played.

PC: Really professionally?

CW: Well, to a standard he's happy with, and I think he achieved that.

PC: Yeah, we were pretty close to the score in that. Closer than anything else.

CW: Yes, I think you were.

PC: How did that come across to you as music?

CW: I liked it. I think it's a solid simple and effective piece.

M: It might sort of sound simple as a product, but to play, it's very hard. In a lot of places it took ages to get together.

M1: I think you've been talking a bit about the merits of the compositions though, haven't you?

CW: I tried to sort of ...

M1: It's hard for a critic to detach the playing from the merits of the composition.

CW: I could have talked about the solo violin work Phillip played, or Paul Turner's piece which I didn't really - I felt that particularly Phillip's piece indicated a lot of things about the string group that I think were really important.

M1: The Turner was the most integrated you seem to be saying.

PC: This piece is a real craftsmen's piece - stacked, movement upon movement.

M1: Doesn't our performance of the Paul Turner show the benefit of - isn't that the second time it's been performed?

PC: Just several movements at a time, not the whole thing.

M1: But I think it shows that benefit though. That's why it was probably better integrated than the other pieces.

PC: My piece isn't really integrated.

CW: Paul's piece had no uncertainty in it at all.

M1: You're not talking about mistakes -

CW: No, it's more like attitude - not to do with whether you've duffed a note here or whether you're slow or fast. And the only way I could really talk about that was via the works themselves. It's got to do with what one does in an awkward situation.

M1: I think there is a benefit to be gained from other performances in the past. You'd find that if we'd played the Carrington and the Howard last year, and the Turner only this year, you'd find that

they'd possibly be more appealing.

CW: The thing I didn't like about the Howard piece was probably the piece itself. But I thought of all the works it was the most - in terms of its style - true - I don't personally happen to like their style. I imagine all of you have been classically trained on string instruments as I have, and are used to their kind of music. Aren't you? (Various sounds signifying agreement.) And I think that really showed. And I think the stuff you weren't so used to I found more interesting, maybe I'm just putting on you my own dissatisfaction with classical string technique.

PC: Do people here have any preference for the pieces? For me it varied from week to week. (More agreement sounds.)

MA: I think the Paul Turner was really demanding - challenging and much more stimulating than the Leslie Howard because the lines in the Howard are so classical, whereas the Paul Turner had you on your toes all the time. Perhaps because it was more linear.

CW: The thing that interested me about Phillip's piece was that it virtually fell to bits at a couple of points and that was very interesting. (Surprise and mild protest sound.)

Was that the written one?

PC: No, that was the absolute improvisation one, so it was good that that happened.

M: There was nothing there for us to - but if there was a rest, it didn't necessarily mean a collapse.

CW: What it did was it shrunk your awareness of musical events to one point.

M1: It really had you wondering about what was going on, you mean?

MA: But that can make an audience feel very tense.

CW: Yeah, but at the other places I've seen you play it that had happened, and I've seen it happen, everybody sort of (makes grimacing gesture) I don't know whether you noticed this act, I didn't see that happening at Clifton Hill.

PC: No, it was a very steady atmosphere.

M: We couldn't see the audience because we were lit and they were in the dark.

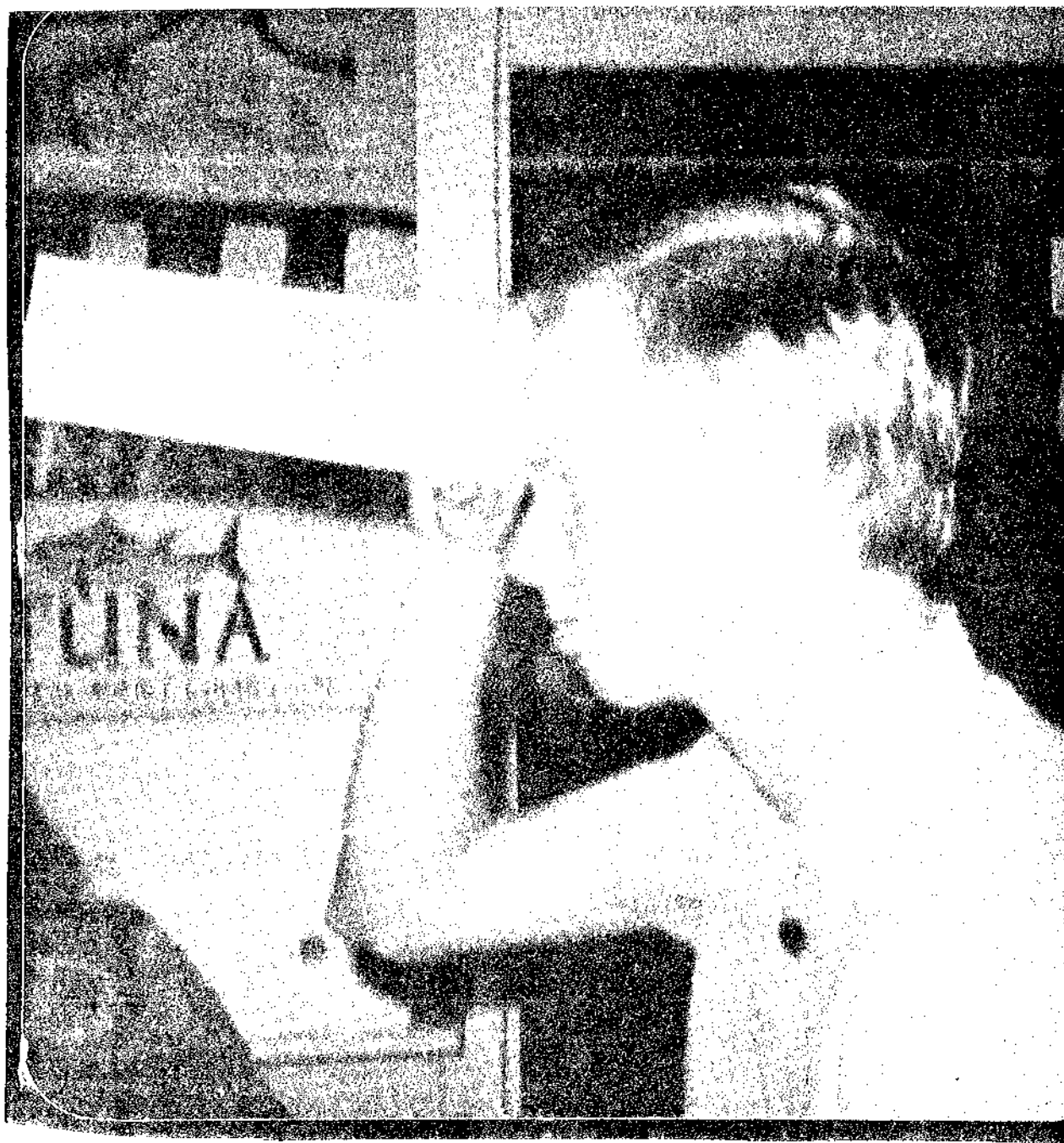
M2: Maybe it was because we were faced with words, words rather than notes.

M: You keep trying to read them.

MA: Yes, that's right!

M2: You were saying now it came to a silence at some stage. When I improvised with this group I never feel that a silence is uncomfortable. And improvising - I seem to remember that we did an improvisation one night a while back - just out of the blue, and I always think it feels really great. I don't know about the others but in any improvisation situation I always feel pretty good. Maybe if some of the other people feel that way that's why the audience feel OK. I never felt it fall apart in any way.

DAVID



CHESWORTH

After a night of David Chesworth, I'm mindlessly humming 'doh a deer a female deer', then kicking myself awake again. Not unlike the aftermath of tuning in to commercial radio. That is not to say David is like radio. Someone asked me 'how was it?' I say '... it was more or less demanded of you to appreciate it on an intellectual level rather than enjoy it'. To which that someone replied 'sounds like life' and nodded off to sleep. It is on this note that the dilemma of interest verses disinterest rests.

The performance was about an hour to an hour and a half long, no break. I think I detected two halves to it though. The opening number was a very long monotonous tape of seemingly random guitarish noises. David himself being a defunct stage prop. It matched the ceiling quite well. I'm guessing, but I think this was an opening statement - 'this is music, sound, noise - existing independently of people, the manipulative force'.

Then the one man show begins. It had a lot to do with traditional learning processes, largely based around your first grade music lesson, if you had any. That sorted the men from the boys. If you are unfortunate or fortunate enough to have missed out on music lessons then you could be made to feel at ease by the familiarity of the alphabet. As both the language of music and words were treated in the same way. Each one being stripped to its early stages of learning, and toyed with in such a way that questioned the value of learning. The art of becoming illiterate. Really quite destructive.

At some stage I found myself indulging in drawing parallels. The most extreme parallel I could think of was Pol Pot's destruction of a whole society. For the sake of revolution aims unknown to me, this man initiated not only the destruction of a country's social structure and operative laws, but also the very tools, equipment and people that were necessary to the survival of that race of people. Outcome - death and dying.

What is happening there now is a constant struggle for survival. This struggle was also present in the last half of David's show.

Yes, well, you can take these things too far can't you. But do you get the picture? It is all very well to destroy but it is rather important to have a clear idea of why, and if there is that clear idea, then surely there must be some following through of the idea. So that thing can actually carry itself through destruction and into bigger and better things.

This is where I think the performance fell down. Maybe it is my lack of musical education but I didn't understand anything past the destruction. In the latter half I noticed some 'pieces' of music that seemed to be the aftermath of destruction, the re-creation type of theme. But I really didn't understand whether in fact they were re-creation and if so what they were re-creating.

Then maybe destruction had nothing to do with anything at the Clifton Hill Community Music Centre tonight. Maybe I completely misinterpreted the whole thing. Maybe it was my first music lesson, David Chesworth style.

Tanya McIntyre

T : Tanya McIntyre
D : David Chesworth
P : Philip Brophy

D: Do you want to ask me anything about it?

T: I'd like to know what you think of the review first.

D: I'm interested that you took the first piece so seriously; it was there either to be taken seriously and be connected, or to be left. It's just a piece that went before it.

T: Why did you want it to be left ambiguous like that?

D: Well, cause I was going to play it regardless.

T: Regardless of what?

D: The thing is - OK - I had this long piece lasting an hour, with the chord organ and the electric piano. And I had this synthesizer piece and I decided to play them both together. And I played them without a break, but there was no... I didn't write the synthesizer piece with the other piece in mind.

T: What do you expect it to come across as?

D: Well that's it: I mean, I didn't know, I didn't want to sort of -

T: You don't care?

D: Well, like, I was just leaving it up to whoever was listening. I said on the programme 'what relevance has this piece got to the rest of what I'm going to play'.

T: Yeah, its sort of like a joke though, isn't it?

D: Well, I don't know because -

T: I mean, is it a joke on intelligence or is it a joke on -

D: No, its not; because I didn't expect it or not expect it to be interpreted, right? The thing is, you said what you thought it meant - 'this is music, sound, noise, existing independently of people - the manipulative force'. Well that's quite correct. There is nothing wrong with that.

T: Mmm, that's what it was. That's not critical.

D: No, no.

T: That actual statement is more or less a fact.

D: It's how you interpreted the piece. So it was interpreted that way. It was open to be interpreted in any way.

T: And you didn't intend it to be that way?

D: Well, as I say, I wouldn't have minded, it's just that yours was the only reaction I got to that piece, connecting it with what came afterwards.

T: Yeah, well I probably wouldn't have had any reaction at all except for the fact that it went on long enough for me to have to think about it. Like at first I was just going 'Oh yeah a few noises', and then it just went going and going and going, so I'm thinking now, 'Why does he have to do this?' And then I started to look at it more closely.

- D: Yeah, the length of the piece. I thought that would be a good length for the piece because its a piece that repeats. The first section repeats twice, then you go into another section then back to the first section. I just thought that was a comfy length. That's why. But different people hear it different ways.
- T: And you had no idea about it except for the fact that there was some musical pattern to it?
- D: I was really interested in the rhythm and also the fact that it was a guitar and piano piece that was being fed into the synthesizer. Little bits of that guitar and piano piece were being selected very rhythmically so you'd also get this strange harmonic thing happening alongside the rhythm so the two would bare no relationship to each other.
- T: Mmm, that's not very interesting in terms of being an audience. That's interesting from one musician to another. But an audience isn't aware of that.
- D: Well, I don't know because I think the audience was aware of that.
- T: I wasn't.
- D: You weren't, but other people were.
- T: Other musicians in the audience perhaps.
- D: Other musicians in the audience. most of the people in the audience are musicians to a degree, you're a musician because you've played in the →↑→ girls band.
- T: Oh yeah, but I wouldn't rate myself as a musician. I don't understand what it is that people are doing with equipment unless I'm actually seeing it, unless someone is actually explaining to me. I don't hear things musically, I hear things more in an evocative way. What they evoke, not what they are.
- P: I was just going to say, the first piece I didn't see as being political like the second major section. I really just saw it; I would never have connected it like you did. Which is really interesting. Cause I saw it like - 'here David's done some electronic music; here's this other thing'. I definitely saw that second one as being really political. In terms of - 'I'm not just playing music, I'm making a statement'. The first one I didn't see as that. It wasn't political, was it?
- D: No, but I could've indicated that on the programme. The question was should I have said 'this piece has nothing to do with the other piece'. But I decided not to do that. I decided to actually put this witty little thing on the programme.
- T: Well, just the fact that you did that first, before you did anything else, puts certain connotations to it. And anything that comes after relies on what went before it. Me, as an audience, I'm looking at things and trying to work out reasons for doing them. I'm not just sitting there listening to something that's going on in the background. I've come to this place to see something, to hear something and to understand it hopefully.
- P: I think it could have to do with familiarity and exposure. Because there are some conventions of presentation of a certain form. I saw that as an electronic tape piece. That is a musical convention. There is this form called electronic tape pieces and there are concerts where people play electronic tapes...

T: But how far do those conventions spread?

P: ... in the same way as you could go to a photographic exhibition, or think of any institutionalised gallery thing. Anything like that where there is a convention of presentation. If people have never seen photographs in a gallery before, or something like that. I can walk in and go, 'what's this big statement of putting photographs all along the walls of an art gallery'. (I don't know if that's such a good example.) And someone else would say 'This is a photographic exhibition' and they'll say 'A photographic exhibition!?!?' What's the big point in that?'

T: Yeah, but its not the fact that its a photographic exhibition. That's not what you're talking about ...

D: Like say, I could listen to a single, I used to listen to singles that are primarily singles just as I'd listen to a track in the middle of an album. Without realising that a single is a single and its different from ...

T: One amongst an album.

D ... Yeah, and then I'd listen to it in terms of its area and what it does. It's really different. As you say (P) you become familiar with electronic music.

Yeah, you're right in what you're saying (T) but how can I justify it by saying - 'there is this convention...' Same way that people would look at performance art. How widespread is that. Someone comes to an art gallery. 'Art-galleries-have-paintings-in-them'. And they see this guy masturbating on the floor.

T: Yeah, but that's not like, what I'm interested in. Sure, there's conventions in everything, whatever you do, if you're doing it in a full way, if that's what you spend most of your life doing, then sure you understand all the conventions. But you've got to somehow get beyond that too, I think. You've got to somehow reach a wider form of communication.

P: I think its coming back again to that 'musician versus non-musician'.

D: The fact that it was played anyway (the first piece) ... I could have been really negative and not played it. With the impression of, maybe I should just play that to a couple of my friends who really know what electronic music's about, but that's really what electronic music's about, but that's really walking backwards. You may as well not play it. At least this way more people will hear some electronic music so when they hear a bit more they'll listen to it. say in terms of my piece, and another piece ...

T: Yeah, but whenever and wherever you play it and no matter how often its heard by how many people, there is going to be wider connotations than just how you are using the equipment. There is always going to be people putting their own connotations onto it, from their own field of experience or whatever. Now, you can't just rely on the musical experience of things.

D: Well, that's what you've done, you've put your connotations onto it, so I'm just saying I'm surprised - but I never intended you not to do that.

T: Yeah sure . . . anyway what about something else, turn the page.

D: Did that piece have a title? I can't remember.

P: No.

D: That would've been helpful. It didn't have a title which is really quite significant. I did play around with titles but it's just that I didn't come up with one. That may have changed a whole lot of things.

T: You could virtually put it into whatever context you want just by putting a title on it.

D: That's right, yeah...? 'David himself being a defunct stage prop.' that's really good.

T: I liked that too, I was once a defunct stage prop.

D: 'Defunct stage prop?!' I operated the cassette! Then you say 'the one man show begins, it had a lot to do with traditional learning processes, largely based around your first grade music lessons, if you had any'. Yeah? I never had any. 'That sorted the men from the boys'.

T: That's what it seemed like.

D: Yeah, um, you didn't actually say what the men and what the boys were. You never got more precise about what the men got and what the boys didn't.

T: No, well it goes on.

D: '... if you are unfortunate or fortunate enough to have missed out on music lessons you could be made to feel at ease by the familiarity of the alphabet'. But your familiarity with the alphabet is just the same as your familiarity with the music.

T: Yeah, that's why I said that. If you missed out on music, you got the alphabet and each one being treated in the same way. So that statement about sorting the men from the boys, I guess is a bit of a joke. But, it's there.

D: Yeah, then you say 'the art of becoming illiterate'. What ...

T: It seemed to me, the way you were using the alphabet especially, or that's the one that I can describe the easiest from memory. Just the fact that you were going through the alphabet, stopping and starting, wondering which letter came next, sometimes putting the wrong letters in, was like the art of becoming illiterate.

D: I see!! because when I stopped saying the alphabet, I was drawing the attention back to the music below. The fact that below it in some cases there was this big sort of cluster of notes without any sort of pitch.

T: What about the times when, every time you got up to Q you said U after Q? That's not how the alphabet goes. And I think the first time you went QU. The second time you went QU then paused as though you thought you'd said something wrong. Third time you got to Q, paused, and I thought - right, this time he's gonna say it right', but you said U again. It seemed like you were really picking out this . . . maybe you weren't, maybe it was an accident.

D: I didn't know I was doing that.

T: Yeah, you were.

D: I always have trouble with my alphabet So I really am illiterate. I wasn't trying to be.

T: For me, there was that same sort of theme through all the doh, ray, me, all that. Always lots of mistakes and lots of accidental discarding of the actual alphabet. Or whether it was deliberate, it was still there. You weren't saying it perfectly and you went over and over the mistakes, so that that became really dominating - the thing about making mistakes.

D: I think that most of those mistakes were accidental but them actually being there didn't wreck things. Because I was doing that doh, ray, me, fah, so la, te, doh and the doh and ray, and the me and the fah would get out of place and I'd start on the me, fah, so la, te, do, ray, me. That was intentional, so unintentional bits could be seen in the same way really.

T: So how do you see your use of alphabet and musical alphabet? What were you doing with it?

D: To an extent you were right in that OK, I do something, its just one of the basic ideas of music. What keeps you listening to music, something goes against what you expect. You know 'Oh gee, that was a great change'. The use of ABCDEFG which is the notes on the piano and I sort of continued. It was partly that thing of going against what you expect. So its more of that thing than it is of negating the ABCDEFG.

T: So, I've written it down as destruction of learning processes. You see it as more of an extention of learning processes.

D: Its more that, I just treat that particular aspect of music of doing something you don't expect, that idea I take very basically. So that it becomes obvious that I've added extra things. Obviously people pick up on that and it sort of carries them. Like music does. Someone plays another chord, you're sort of 'Oh gee, what's gonna happen now?' So its more of a positive thing than a negative thing. The doh, ray, me, thing is connected very much with the scale which is your basic seven note scale which is what people sing most tunes in. I was concerned with the way that scale functions in music. Also the way another type of scale functions which is called the 12 tone row. So I suppose this is where I'm getting heavy. Because the 12 row was invented by a guy called Arnold Schoenberg, you know, Arnold blurbiur, early this century as a basis for writing music, because he got sick of using the scale. Then a lot of people adopted his system of writing music, using all twelve notes, and ordered them in certain ways.

T: Are these twelve notes including sharps and flats?

D: Yeah, all the black and white notes in one octave. He applied very strict formulas or rules to the way the 12 tone row should be ordered and how you should build your pieces from this. But the thing is, everything is built from the twelve tone row. That's sort of the basis and music's built on top of it. The first thing you write when you do a twelve tone piece is the 12 tone row. Which is different from the first time you do a piece on the white notes of a piano. You don't sit down and then write out every seven or eight notes. Then think OK now I will write a tune using those notes. The normal procedure is you think or hum a tune and you'll find later that tune that you hum, will fit into that scale of 7 or 8 notes which is tonality. Its the way we hear harmony, all that

sort of stuff. That's the traditional western way of hearing music. The fact that the scale is a historical thing, it still came after a lot of music had been written using the scale.

T: It came well after cave men too. What about the bit when you said this is a 12 tone row, played the 12 tone row and then blindfolded yourself and did something similar. What was that about?

D: The ideas around doing that, there are things I can say about it but it'd take me about an hour to sort it out.

T: Well, I'll tell you the way I saw it, as someone without any knowledge of it. I figured that a 12 tone row was something that you learnt in music. I thought all right, that's a standard thing that you learn in music. And then you played that and then you blindfolded yourself and you played it differently. The second thing you played meant as little to me as the first thing you played, except that you were blindfolded. And it sounded a bit less co-ordinated, but I wouldn't have preferred to hear one or the other. So I figured that that was another destruction of some standard thing that you learn in music.

D: Also I played a 12 tone row and then I played a 12 tone piece. The 12 tone row I played, which is usually the basis for a piece, when I played it I played it more or less as a piece cause it went da, da, da, (etc.) which are all the 12 notes. Then I said 'now I'll play a 12 tone piece' and then I did just a run up da, da, da, (etc.). Why did I do that? Well, there's quite a few reasons really. Firstly the chromatic run up - that's what its called - means you move in one direction playing all the notes as you go. That's interesting in that it treats the sound you hear: its heard in two ways. Its heard as 12 notes. But its also heard as you playing all the white notes, but in the middle of the white notes you're also playing some of the black notes. That's the sort of ambiguity that playing notes in succession can give you. Because before the 12 tone row was invented, the notes (so called chromatic runs, one note after another) were used as runs, but only against something that was happening tonally, perhaps a chord or something like that. In a way, playing that run again as a 12 tone piece, I guess that's the closest I get to a dig because it is a valid 12 tone piece. The fact that at the end of the run I just play a few random notes as well. That is a valid 12 tone piece. There's no way of arguing it isn't. That bit at the end was a deliberate lazy move. That indicates, in a way, that to play those notes like that could involve a lot of thinking as to 'what notes will I play?' and 'how will they fit in relation to each other?', or they could just be very random notes that I played. I leave that very ambiguous. But that's juxtaposed with this chromatic run up.

P: The explanation of what a 12 tone row is. There were two ways you could have done it. You could of said, like you did, this is a 12 tone row, and played it: or you could have said 'there is this thing called the 12 tone row' and said virtually what you're saying now. That brings up the whole problem of how far do you go -

D: In explaining this to start with.

T: When you're dealing with something like that, on one hand you're trying to tell the audience something. But then there's this other thing that you seem to be doing which is not telling the audience anything and trying to let them just find their own way in it all. That's all very well, but most people just won't be interested.

D: The way I saw that - I knew I'd have to make a decision as to how

far I'd go. And I pictured myself in the audience, seeing this guy talking about the 12 tone row. And I just saw it as being something that would throw a whole lot of shit on what was going to follow in a way that people are gonna say, 'OK well he's . . .' you know its really stamped as being a big intellectual piece. People would have no option but to take the piece solely as the music serving that little spiel at the start. I wanted the piece to -

T: To do it all by itself?

D: No, well not necessarily. Graeme Davis came up to me and asked how much of that is theoretical and how much is just music? And the way I see that - well you say here, 'it seemed to demand that you appreciate it on an intellectual level rather than enjoy it'. And likewise I heard people say 'I just really enjoyed the sounds', or 'I enjoyed this that and the other', or 'I just thought the music got a bit boring after a while' or whatever. And to me that's fine because I wouldn't have been able to have written an hour and a quarter of music like I did, without myself having some sort of cohesion, right? Without me thinking, well OK, that fits with that, these pieces all fit together, on certain grounds. So, something else I could've done would've been to have played all these pretty little simple rhythmic things that I'd, like and have nothing behind it, but I would've got no satisfaction from doing that whatsoever. Do you understand that?

T: No, I don't quite understand it.

D: Well the thing is, I got ...

P: Its sort of like who do you please first.

D: Yeah.

P: You could've made it more communicable in a sense, but it wouldn't have the really violent polemic base that that performance did have. A definitely striking thing about it was that it ... its not enjoyable. The fact of it not being enjoyable is a very important part of what it is. Its not enjoyable music that's meant to instruct or whatever, or say something. Its a really big issue, the whole thing of how far do you go. Like people not understanding... David's composing, he's doing this thing. He's doing it. What he wants to say he's saying. Now you (T) are saying that David is saying something, but through saying that something he's not saying anything, in a sense. There are two clearly marked sides that really don't fit.

T: Well, I think the first thing I said to you (D) after the performance, was 'its going to be hard to write about it cause on one hand there's a lot of things to say about it, and on the other hand there's nothing'. I could've gone into it in detail, which I did, or I could've said nothing really happened.

P: Or 'He was saying a lot but about nothing as far as I could see'.

T: I guess it comes down to your own purpose.

P: ?? ... I don't think David would agree with that either. That's called wanking I think.

T: Purpose?

P: Yeah, like when a guy sits there and says 'Hey! I'm just doing my

stuff'.

T: Oh yeah, but you can have a purpose that goes much further than that.

P: Yeah, David's purpose did go further than that.

T: Yeah, but I'm still curious as to the exact purpose - no, that's asking a bit much I guess, like you probably can't pin it down that easily.

D: I made a conscious decision to try and make it pretty musically interesting. I tried to have it so, OK, so you don't get what I'm crapping on about - this idea of the history of western music. But you might really enjoy the pieces. I wanted to incorporate some of that into it as well. In this particular piece I didn't take the attitude of total disregard for the audience - saying you don't understand, stiff. I didn't take that cause I wanted to have pieces that in some way would give something to the audience. The idea of calling it 'themes and variations'. There are a few themes in it, some, you've touched on. Some of the other themes were purely musical themes. In a way, the idea of permuting, where I sing doh, ray, me, far, so, la, where things move against each other. Well that existed with the ideas of 12 tone and tonal harmony. But also things that could be pinpointed in the actual music, of notes against notes. So the themes were apparent in the idea but also in the actual execution of the music. There was that sort of crossover.

T: One thing I really don't understand anything about at all. The last half, there was a lot of doh, ray, me, still and then in-between that there were sections of just music. I've got no idea what they were. I didn't really enjoy them much.

D: Again, I'll talk about ^{what} other people said to me. They said that through the hour and a quarter there was an actual progression. Musically I was moving on from one idea to another. Richard Vella gave me this whole resume of what happened. And it actually does. I was sort of surprised that this thing happened. The idea I had was not to have an on-going thing from one piece to another. But to have all these ideas or themes or whatever, and have them equally spread out in all the pieces. OK, one piece would emphasize one particular thing, sure. But it wouldn't emphasize that particular thing as a consequence of a thing that occurred two pieces back. The idea of stringing the bits together was to contrast things on a musical basis, not really on an idea basis.

T: So would you say that there was one basic idea that might involve several things yet there's one basic idea in the whole performance? In different ways you executed that idea all the way through.

D: Yeah, you could in a way. Its just that the idea takes on different emphasises in different pieces.

T: That would explain why I got some sort of stimulus out of some things and not others. It explains why someone who's got a broad knowledge of the history of music could understand the whole show. Someone like me could only pick up on things that said doh, rah, me and things that had the alphabet in them.

D: I know what you mean. Someone might recognise that hymm I was singing. The fact that that hymm was the origin of the words doh, ray, me, fah, so, la. The first part of each phrase of the hymm is doh, then ray,

fah, so, la. The part of each phrase of the hymn is doh, then ray, me, fah, etc. They're the start of latin words. The one person in the audience who would've picked that out and sure did, was Graeme Hair, ultra big musicological figure. But I don't think it would have meant anything other than 'OK I recognise that piece'.

T: But surely recognition is really important. You walk down the street every day and if you don't recognise your surroundings then you get lost.

D: See, I picked out a particular case where the recognition of that hymn wasn't terribly important. It's just a little ... the way someone would react to it would be 'Oh really!' or 'that's really witty'. It's nothing more than just -

P: That was the one where you opened up a book didn't you?

D: Yeah, that's right. That was 'The History of Music.'

T: That could've been a dictionary or a bible or anything.

D: Exactly, but it did say history of music on it. But it was a thick book.

P: In terms of what it was there's no different between it being history, dictionary or bible. It was an authoritative journal.

T: That's when I start to wonder; that's all very well, I'm not criticising that. But if it's not important to know what that song was, what that hymn was, then it's not important to talk about your performance in terms of music. Because if you talk about that book in terms of music or the bible or the dictionary then you should be able to talk about your performance in terms of all that as well. And you should be able to recognise the whole thing like that, so that it doesn't involve musical understanding although that could be a lesson in it or something.

P: Example ... a game. A game in the sense that to actually participate in it, there are restrictions, limitations, boundaries. Now, knowing what that book was, really wasn't important. What was important, I think, was the thing of it being some type of gesture; where David picked up a history book of any nature at all, as some type of symbol of history. That was important. Was it? I think it was.

D: Yeah.

P: Acknowledge the fact that he's not picking up a comic, he's not picking up a jug of water. He's picking up a history book OK. Why is he picking up a history book? He's reading it, and he's playing something from the history book. Through the theatrics of it, he's made a gesture. Obviously people aren't going to look at it in terms of aesthetics and say 'Gee, he's got a great book cover. I like the way he's sitting up straight as he's playing that, etc...' That's a whole realm of it that's outside the game. The very intrinsic sort of things about it weren't primarily important: he could have picked any other similar song from that history book. There was a point being made from that. Of course that gets back to the communication thing. Obviously, you're meant to question each thing that happens. He's not there for our amusement, why is he doing it? And, playing the game is asking those questions. But -

T: But you can't expect any answers.

P: Getting to 'go' where you get your \$200 in monopoly, depends on whether that is comprehended, and this is where it doesn't become like an even game like monopoly. To play a game you've gotta have something already with you. In terms of the 'even' game you've gotta have the time to play it and the whole knowledge of the rules. To really get the guts of your 'game' (D) you would've had to know what a 12 tone row is?

D: Yeah.

P: Its like a game on level two, and I don't mean that derogiterally. Well, lets say on another level, a level where it helps in a certain way if you happen to know what a 12 tone row is all about.

D: But do you take it on that level, and that level alone?

P: Yeah of course, as they say, the old levels thing. You can take it on any level you want cause that is the audience. That is the realm and the total property of the audience.

D: But it doesn't work on the basis of 'You are on this level, therefore you're only on level A of appreciation, and you didn't really get the sublime goings on of it'.

T: But it does a bit because I'm asking you now what were you doing with that book? I've understood that you picked up a history book and you've explained to me that it doesn't matter what sort of book it is, except that its a history book and I gathered that on the night anyway, but I didn't know what you were doing with it.

D: That I was extracting a piece from it?

T: Yeah, but what was the importance of doing that?

D: An interesting thing about writing and making music is knowing how people work. For example, how you'd (P) go about doing something is very different from me. My piece grew with music and ideas together. The piece wasn't finished until a day before it was going to be performed. It was always a growth on both levels. The music was intrinsic to the ideas. Its really different from approaching things totally theoretically.

T: Having an idea and translating it into music?

D: Yeah. Its just an interesting point to be made about the way people listen to music. We tend to separate the music from the ideas. There's nothing terribly wrong with that, its just the process of analysis.

T: And its hard for you to do because you didn't approach it that way.

D: However, it is a bit of a cop out for me to say that because I think interesting things can be extracted solely in the music and solely in the ideas.

P: Do you (T) think that it could have been done differently?

T: I don't know because I still don't really understand it. So far I understand that you've (D) had an idea that's grown with music. You just explained they grew together. But I still don't understand what that thing itself is. It doesn't really give me anything. Its something that I could or could not find interesting

about what you've done, but its ...

- D: What I tend to do, is sometimes reel off sentences which someone else told me about the music or what they thought I intended. One that comes to mind is something that you said (P) where it involves the juxtaposition of the two ideas, together. The 12 tone row, and the scale. Mixing them together, and what they represent together. Putting them in unusual contexts. Each one of those pieces does that. So, here I am playing with a device of history, the scale, and someone's invention, the 12 tone row. Playing with them in a way, on an equal footing. I'm playing with them on an equal footing, but they're always going to have their own meaning.
- T: It's a bit like blasphemy or something then, isn't it?
- D: Well ...
- P: It's dealing with a specific body of knowledge, ie. the history of western music. Do you (T) see that as a bad thing.
- T: No, I don't see it as a bad thing. But there's this certain thing built up, you can interpret it whatever way you want, or you can be told what it means. It only got to that point where you can apply a meaning to it. It didn't pull itself any further than that. I'm not sure whether that's a good thing or a bad thing because it's not dead. It can still go on. But I'd be interested to see it go on. I'd be interested in seeing you take those ideas one step further and make them into useful implements rather than just saying this is an implement.
- D: That's what I did, I put them to use in the music.
- T: Is that what those bits at the end were?
- D: That's what little sections of the whole piece were: putting them to use. Otherwise, it turns into a bit of a lecture, then you're forced to intellectualise about everything. I could see it from the audience thing of getting too heavy on this, and I really didn't see the point in doing it what way.
- T: So you reckon that you did implement the structure that you set up?
- D: Yeah! I definitely put it to use.
- T: It's hard to see that.
- D: Well it gets back to having that sort of body of knowledge. Like what you were talking about before (P).
- P: I wouldn't call it elitist, but kind of restricted. But I find that myself about a lot of things. I find my perspective on painting for example, really restrictive. I find it like a game where I haven't got that required perspective or whatever.
- T: But some things go beyond that, they're the things that interest people.
- P: Talking about attacking something and not going on from there. I can see the inadequacies of that. But then again, I can see the worth of starting an attack like that. Its kind of like trying to find a world solution - which can't be found.
- T: Yeah, for sure, I compared it to a big world catastrophe: Pol

Pot's revolution. I realise that what I've said about it is asking a real lot. Even if you achieved it, it might take a life time. But that's the way that I've put it to you because that's the broadest way I could put it. You've virtually got anything to move around in. By me giving you such broad terms and broad expectations then I can find out where abouts in all that you fit in. I didn't have to say anything.

D: It's interesting when people say things specifically to me about this, their interpretations etc. Richard's for example, was on the basis of the gradual break-up and moving away from the scale, getting more and more into the use of the 12 tone row, until that bit where I sing 'doh a deer a female deer which brings us back to doh'. Even certain tonal things are brought out, like there's a dominant seventh chord, which plays a large role in tune-y type music. He saw that, and it's not the way I saw it primarily. But he saw it that way. So what I'm doing is defending what you're saying, though you don't need defending. But I'm just saying that's the way you see it, and that's the way Richard see's it. I've had to say to both of you 'Oh really, this is really interesting, I haven't thought of it in those terms'.

T: Do any of the things that people have said to you about it worry you? Or may you think 'Gee I don't like that. I think I'll have to make my ideas a bit clearer?'

P: Subtle, Tanya, subtle.

T: No, I'm just wondering, because if somebody said to me 'Your photo's remind me of Pol Pot', I think I'd go 'Fuck, shit, I didn't want them to remind you of that'. Because I don't think that's a very good thing. People have said that sort of thing to me about some of my work, and I've thought, 'No, I don't want you to think that'. So the next time I do something I'll be more careful about how it is going to be interpreted.

D: You talked about the destruction of musical things, but by talking about that more now we've become clearer on what you mean by that. I'd get more upset about things like the audience having no access to the music whatsoever. My music sparing nothing for the audience, when I've deliberately thought about the audience. If you'd come up with something like that, then I'd have to re-assess it. So, in that way I can see what you mean, but because you haven't done that, I don't think I have to re-assess it.

T: So as long as there's some reaction there, it's alright?

D: The reaction I've got has been either on talking about the ideas behind the music, or asking me about the ideas behind the music. They've always been, actually making the point that they only got something musical out of it. The fact that they're thinking that there must be something else to it, is sort of good in that they're thinking about it. So maybe if they think about it a bit more they might get something else out of it. Interesting thing about music, especially in that situation is that you may hear the piece once, and then you've got to base your assessments on memory. I could hardly start giggling with this music. It would hardly get a following.

Official Programme ← (fold lettering)
Ed

David Lesworth does many things.

Themes and variations to be precise.
So what reference has the 1st piece?
Send your answers to the "what does it all mean
competition," 36 Stafford St Northcote 3070.

For your head

* The scale was formulated to → try to
explain and systematize (already existing music)

(Italics Ed.)

(root: A
History of
Western Music)

* The 12 tone row was formulated to provide a
basis for musical composition. "A functional norm is
stated, and deviations from this norm appear."
(underline Ed.)

Milton
Babbitt:
composer

For your bum

* There is no interval, so get comfy.

"WHAT'S ON?"

The next issue of "New Music" comes out on October 29th. This "Whats On" attempts to give you an overall view of what will be happening in the broad area of new and experimental music in Melbourne up until then. For accuracy, all dates should be checked nearer towards the event; and there are also a number of concerts that were not confirmed or arranged at the time we went to print.

- **SUN. 10th AUG / 3.00 pm:**
Victorian Time Machine (with Rohan De Saram)
Perform pieces by Xenakis/Hamel/Fulkerson/Bone/Carter.
GRANT ST. THEATRE.
- **SUN. 10th AUG / 8.00 pm:**
David Tolley + Dure Dana/Keith Hornslow present:
"Indulgent Music."
UNIVERSAL WORKSHOP.
- **MON. 12th AUG / 8.00 pm:**
Igor Stravinsky's "Soldier's Tale"
OPEN STAGE, MELB. STATE COLLEGE.
- **TUES. 12th AUG / 8.00 pm:**
Igor Stravinsky's "Soldier's Tale"
GRANT STREET THEATRE.
- **WED. 13th AUG / 8.30 pm:**
Students from Melbourne State College
CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE.
- **FRI. 15th AUG / 8.30 pm:**
- **SAT. 16th AUG / 8.30 pm:**
- **SUN. 17th AUG / 8.30 pm:**
Chris Knowles: "Still Motion"
LA MAMA
- **WED. 20th AUG / 8.30 pm:**
→ : Double Concert: (A) "Narrative Music"
(B) "Formula Disco."
CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE
- **WED. 27th AUG / 8.30 pm:**
I. D. A. - "Seven Rare Dreamings"
CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE.
- **THUR. 28th AUG / 8.30 pm:**
- **FRI. 29th AUG / 8.30 pm:**
- **SAT. 30th AUG / 8.30 pm:**
David Tolley / Dure Dana / Bruce Tolley present:
"An Affair of the Heart Cut."
PRAM FACTORY (BACH THEATRE).
- **WED. 3rd SEPT / 8.30 pm:**
John Crawford.
CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE.
- **WED. 3rd SEPT / 8.30 pm:**
Floderman (De Haan & Vine)
MELB HALL (CONS. MUSIC)
- **THUR. 4th SEPT / 1.00 pm:**
Floderman (De Haan & Vine)
LATROBE UNI.
- **FRI. 5th SEPT / 8.30 pm:**
- **SAT. 6th SEPT / 8.30 pm:**
- **SUN. 7th SEPT / 8.30 pm:**
Don de Clario: "In One Key."
LA MAMA.
- **SEPT. 10th WED. / 8.30 pm.**
Mark © Pollard: "So You Thought You Knew Me."
CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE
- **THUR. SEPT 11th / 1.00 pm:**
Quad Tape Pieces by Chesworth/Wigall/Sosmin/ others.
GLEN COLLEGE STUDIO / LATROBE UNI.
- **FRI. 12th SEPT / 6.00 pm:**
Christopher Lyndon Gee - Twilight Piano recital:
(Bader + Lues)
MELBA HALL.
- **SUN. 14th SEPT / 1.00 pm:**
Latrobe Uni. Open Day: Various Musical Events.
LATROBE UNI.
- **MON. 15th SEPT / 1.00 pm:**
Contemporary Players: (Meager + Turner pieces)
MELBA HALL.
- **MON. 15th SEPT / 6.15 pm:**
Jeff Frenning: Improvisations.
GLEN COLL. STUDIO / LATROBE UNI.
- **TUES. 16th SEPT / 6.15 pm:**
Latrobe Choir: old + New Works.
GLEN COLL. STUDIO / LATROBE UNI.
- **WED. 17th SEPT / 8.30 pm:**
THE Lunatic Fringe.
CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE.
- **MON. 22nd SEPT / 6.15 pm:**
Elaine Davies / Rainier Lutz
GLEN COLL. STUDIO / LATROBE UNI.
- **WED. 24th SEPT / 8.30 pm:**
Laughing Hands - tapes
Julian Cafarella - a short piece
Elaine Davies / Rainier Lutz - music theatre.
CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE
- **THUR. 25th SEPT / 1.00 pm:**
Steve Ball - Dallapiccola / Bartok / Jarnett
GLEN COLL. STUDIO / LATROBE UNI.
- **MON. 29th SEPT / 1.00 pm:**
Schonberg's songs.
MELBA HALL.
- **WED. 1st. Oct / 8.30 pm:**
"The Dove + Phil Duo"
CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE.
- **THUR. 2nd. Oct / 1.00 pm:**
L.I.M.E.
GLEN COLL. STUDIO / LATROBE UNI.
- **THUR 2nd. OCT - THUR 9th. OCT.**
A series of new + experimental music events
(performances not yet finalized).
LATROBE UNION GALLERY / LATROBE GALLERY.
- **SAT. 4th OCT - 8.15 pm:**
New Audience Concert - featuring Richard
David Hamel
MELBA HALL.
- **MON. 6th OCT - 6.15 pm:**
Douglas Ray - Multi Media pieces
SOUND LAB 2 / 5th LEVEL / HUMANITIES BLDG. 2 / LATROBE UNI.

"Oh, no! There's too much! We'll have to write the rest of them on the back page which was meant to be blank!"

"What's On?" continued:

• WED. 8th OCT / 8.30pm:
Rainer Linz / John Campbell / Music 4:
CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE

• THUR. 9th OCT / 8.15pm:
Astra Choir: Ligetti / Huffschild / Wiffen
ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, VICTORIA ST
WEST MELBOURNE.

• MON. 13th OCT / 6.15pm:
Joan Lawrence & Laurie Wiffen: New
and Old Piano Pieces.
GLEN COLL. STUDIO / LATROBE UNI.

• TUES. 14th OCT / 8.15pm:
"New Aspects of Blowing" by
Thomas Puschhof (Flute).
MELBA HALL.

• WED. 15th OCT / 8.30pm:
→ → : "New & Recent Films"
CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE.

• THUR. 16th OCT / 1.00pm:
Latrobe Contemporary Music Ensemble
GLEN COLL. STUDIO / LATROBE UNI.

• THUR. 26th OCT / 1.00pm:
John McCabe - piano recital
(English composer).
MELBA HALL.

Plus

"THE NEW + EXPERIMENTAL MUSIC
SHOW" - Mondays 10.00pm
3KRR FM - 102.7MHz

(If you have a concert you would like
listed here, send details to the magazine)