



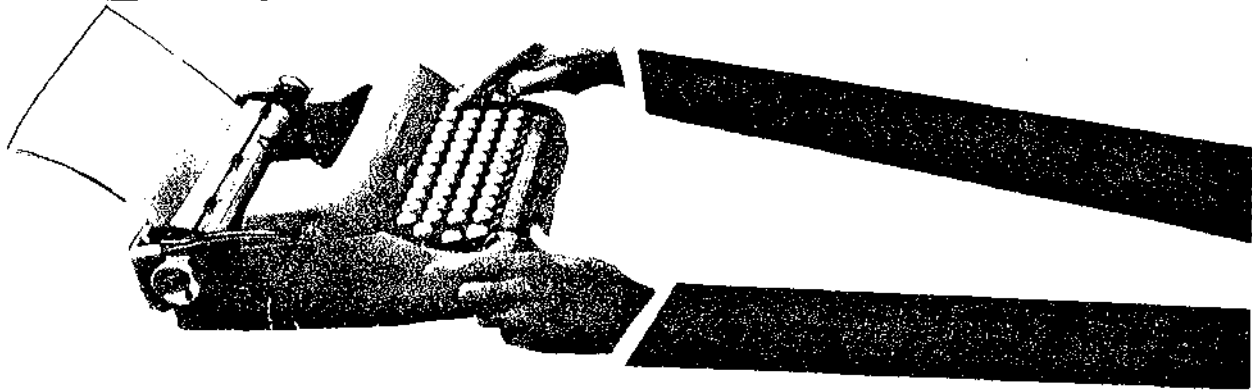
POP MUSIC

1980 Number 4

DOUBLE ISSUE

NEW MUSIC

1980 Number 4.



2	Contents	21	B-83: 4 Years In The Shape OF A PIECE. (Dec. 1)	38	Darry Veith & Judy Jacques. (Dec. 8)
2	Editorial	26	Clifton Hill Community Music Centre Season No. 4/1980	41	Robert Randall & Frank Bendinelli. (Dec. 10)
3	A Problem	27	The Fours (Nov. 5)	44	K.G.B. (Dec. 15)
5	3rd. Benefit Concert	28	Laughing Hands (Nov. 12)	44	Chris/Robert/Jan. (Dec. 15)
7	Warren Burt's "Epic Monumental Project."	29	Paul Shutz (Nov. 19)	45	Les Gilbert + (Dec. 17)
8	Moods (Nov. 3)	31	Merbie Jercher & Chris Babinskias (Nov. 26)	46	Douglas King. (Dec. 22)
10	Der Yiddisher Cowboy (Nov. 10)	34	Mowles/Lewis/Stumpertors/Schmucki. (Dec. 3)	49	→ ↑ → (Dec. 24)
16	"Structure Is An Empty Glass..." (Nov. 17)	35	Chris Wigatt (Dec. 3)	52	What's On?
19	Penguins (Nov. 24)				

MAGAZINE CO-ORDINATORS:	Kevin Memensley Ian M'Lean Chris Mann Adriana Martin Leigh Parkhill Ian Russell Peter Simonsen Paul Turner Chris Wigatt	TYPESETTING Christine Daffney	SPECIAL THANKS TO AL RICHARDS FOR THE LOVE OF HIS TYPE-SET COMPOSITOR. *
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:	Ernie Althoff Judy Anear Walter Billities Sue Blackey Philip Brophy Warren Burt Jane Crawford Julian Driscoll	BROMIDES Ernie Althoff	
	ADDITIONAL TYPING Philip/Daniel/ Ralph/Leigh/ Mona/Jane.	LAYOUT Philip Brophy	NEW MUSIC ADDRESS: Room 378 High St. Northcote 3070 (Phone 489-3798)
		FUNDING → ↑ →/Women Bunt	C.H.C.M.C. ADDRESS (for contacts + info): Rear 111 Station St. Fairfield 3078 (Ph. 489-3798)
		PRINTING Al Richards (Phone 5964991)	CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE location: 6-10 PAGE ST. - C/HILL.

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 (489 3798) 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

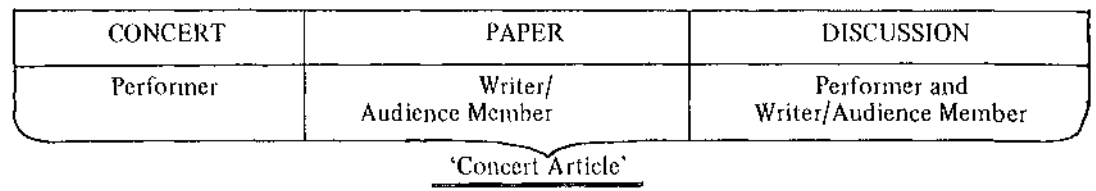
related ideologies is not concerned with stifling notions of wordly importance and artistic recognition. (Hey! there's this incredible guy -- a real artist, you know -- from New York, and he picks his nose while improvising on tortise shells which he blah, blah, blah, etc.) 'New Music' does not at all 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 3RRR FM (102.7MHz) every Monday night from 8.30 pm to 10.00 p.m., which plays current music from all over the world.

Throughout a year the Clifton Hill Community Music Centre has at least four concert seasons, each season comprising of, on the average, nine concerts. Each season is separated by a 2-3 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 first concert season will be available at the start of the second 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 (489 3798) and its staff of writers is organised in the same way as performers for the Clifton Hill Community Music Centre are organised -- i.e. to 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 discussion. Thus, the basic format of a concert article is:

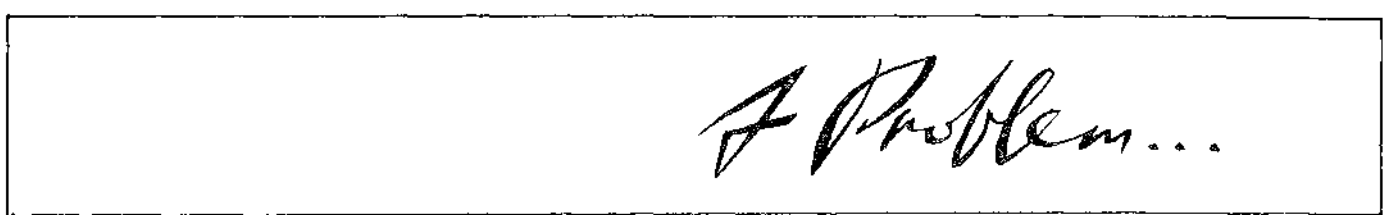


(The magazine will also publish whatever programmes or scores that went with the appropriate concert, as well as printing photographs of the actual performance.) Furthermore, this basic format for concert articles (which is an ideal complement to the Clifton Hill Community Music Centre's set-up) can 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 and David Chesworth



On December 1st 1980 what was the first "organized" meeting at Clifton Hill Community Music Centre took place. It was informally organized and chaired by Warren Burt and was fairly well attended by both regular/intermittent performers of the Centre and preferred/partial observers of the Centre's activities. Initially instigated as a forum to discuss logistics of the economics of the Centre (increased rent; advertising; etc...) the meeting also centred on a number of issue concerning the New Music magazine. Most of the areas covered in the meeting were and are of no direct relevance to the "reader" of the magazine (either belonging to aspects of the magazines production and the centre's co-ordination, or simply to the inevi-

②

table "internal politics" generated by the expression of a variety of opinions and theories within a defined working context, i.e. CHCMC). There were areas that involved the manifestation and production of the magazine's ideology which should be relevant to anyone reading *New Music*.

So - straight to point. In *New Music* 1980 No. 3 was printed a very strong-worded "editorial comment" after an interview with Splinter Faction (a performance duo: Rainer Linz and Elaine Davies), and Robert Goodge, who reviewed their concert. As is probably plain enough to anyone who reads the articles concerned, the editorial comment does go a bit overboard in terms of a lack of responsibility to the integrity and character of the Splinter Faction and the rights and feelings of Rainer and Elaine. Such, too, was the general agreement reached at the meeting. No only was a dialectic communication re-established between the ideas of Rainer and Elaine and Philip, but the meeting itself spurred a new interest in the fundamental ideas behind the workings of *New Music* and re-activation of active discussion and debate that should always exist between people involved in an area such as that of "New Music".

Finally, it was decided that the small paper that Philip presented at the meeting outlining the reasons behind the editorial comment should be printed, along with a formal apology to Splinter Faction. Both can be found printed below.

"In the current issue of *New Music* (1980 No. 3) I wrote an editorial comment upon Splinter Faction's submission of their discussion with Robert Goodge about their performance entitled "Free Drinks". The discussion, being in actuality a "scripted and performed interview", points to a direction away from not only the format of the magazine, but more importantly the ideological base that constitutes the *New Music* magazine as the practice of its ideology.

As the editorial speaks in its conclusion:

"The intention of *New Music* is . . . to provide a ground for interaction, discussion and feedback between performers and audience members (and) to allow performers the somewhat painful opportunity to assess, evaluate and articulate what they are doing or attempting."

The 'Splinter Faction' discussion is devoid of any real, substantial or productive feedback either between the reviewer and the performer, or between the reader and the discussion; and, because of the absence of any dialectic dialogue, Splinter Faction have left no room for self-evaluation or external criticism. Thus, in terms of how this printed discussion relates to the printed editorial, Splinter Faction's submission (irrespective of their intention) takes the form of an action rather than just words.

This is a very important point to note: that there is a specific nature to this scripted discussion, that the words are more an action than they are writing. My editorial comment is based upon the nature of Splinter Faction's writing - not their conceptual intentions, individual viewpoints or polemic statements. Thus, my problem in devising an editorial comment was to tackle Splinter Faction's writing, as opposed to me tacking what they had to "say". In this light, I have hoped to allow the magazine to provide an arena for a conflict based on two opposing writings that are dealing with what are essentially the politics of writing.

Such a conflict should create another level of dialectic interaction centering on the politics of writing - thus, this paper at this meeting. This conflict, I feel, is a very real part of "the inherent and yet often neglected problematics of writing and performing, and I also think that my instigation of this conflict should thus be read as an argument on writing and the contextual position of the writer.

However, there appears to be a mis-reading of this conflict, culminating in the naming of it as "the Rainer/Phil" conflict. This to me indicates a strong and prevalent tendency for many people to still personalize humanize and naturalize writing, transforming a constructed argument on writing into a bitch session between two writers and their pedantic opinions. This tendency ignores the real problems at hand. Problems such as what happens to writing after it is written? What is the implicative relationship between the writer and the writing? What constitutes our concepts of a writer, a writing, and a reader?

The application of such problems in the contextual area of art is something that I have discussed, in fair depth, in my article in the 1978/79 issue of *New Music* titled "New Music - explaining why it can't be explained". That article is in fact the ideological base of the *New Music* magazine, with the magazine being the practice of the theory discussed in the article. My editorial is a further act of practicing the ideology of the magazine.

I did not regard the Splinter Faction submission as a "personal attack" on myself, and nor do I regard my editorial comment as a "personal attack" on Rainer and Elaine. I have attacked Splinter Faction, and through doing so, I have merely brought to the surface a whole level of discussion that the magazine itself seems to have been suppressing. Dialecticism itself cannot escape dealing with its own problems, and passive dialectics in the form of nice, friendly discussions give a specious impression of communal spirit in the social practice of music making. Art loses all vulnerability (and scope for change) when people get too accustomed to such a state. I am here not advocating for a continual blood battle, but simply that people involved in the making of *New Music* should have a "wholistic awareness of (1) what statement the composers' is making irrespective of their intention, and (2) how they inter-relate themselves, their music, and the history of music. "My editorial comment was deliberately designed to push people's awareness of the actual ideology that constitutes this very magazine.

Let us hypothesize. how much reaction would have happened if the Splinter Faction submission was printed without any editorial comment? And conversely, what about these performers who have refused to participate in a discussion about their work? Should the magazine avoid such problems by opting for "passive dialectics"? The whole point is that I wanted to mark the presence of a problem - which most people seem to have not recognized. And the fact that so many people have objected to my actions through what I consider to be a mis-reading of my writing, leads us not merely to the question of whether Philip will kiss and make up with Rainer and Elaine, but more to the problem of understanding the very ideology of the magazine."

Philip Brophy, on behalf of *New Music*, wishes to apologize to Rainer Linz and Elaine Davies of Splinter Faction for the over-powering use of language in the editorial comment printed in the last issue of *New Music*, which could likely stand as slander against Rainer and Elaine. The work of Splinter Faction should naturally enough be evaluated by viewing their actual performances, and not by the possible misinterpretation resulting from the editorial comment.

Philip Brophy.

FRANK

Benefit Concert



videos by chesworth &
randelli prod.*splinter
faction* → ↑ *laughing
hands *i.d.a.*warren burt

GUILD THEATRE (\$3)
SAT. NOV. 15th 8-30pm.

After a year of not making it to Clifton Hill Community Music Centre, the untrained and tuneless Ear finally got to a New Music Concert: bonus seven different C.H.C.M.C. names on one night.

David Chesworth's 'Glaring in Secret' video brought back memories of high powered binocular voyeurism in the middle of the city; avoiding the trap of glitter video colour, he zaps the senses with minimal image and sound. Having recently seen a video synthesis by Sydney person Mike Nicholson, I feel David Chesworth has yet a lot to learn about this wonderful medium, but then so have most of the people who are trying to use it. However, at least he seems to be aware of the complex code systems which equal video (and I don't just mean the technicalities).

Two video freaks determinedly pursuing their careers were next up: Robert Randall and Frank Bendinelli with four short and recent videotapes. Hopefully they have decided that they are best with the short sharp derivative message after last year's much longer derivative works. 'Fantales' was a juicy work: livid lips changed colour over a bleak Australian landscape (slightly tilted). The self-indulgent Mouth spake on the virtues of Virgo artists: it was funny. 'Leash Control' was a moving remake of 'Balla's Dog' on a leash, cute. 'Stargazing' used Warhol's 'Faces of the Seventies' while a Pythonesque voice said 'next'. 'Pauses' has been variously described as a 'semiological coup' or 'that gay pick up tape' or even 'Gilbert has lost George'. Which means, I guess, that it must be the former. Not bad but spoilt by a certain over adornment towards the end. Video doesn't need to be crowded: playing on the spectators awe of a still new medium is not the way to get a Head. However the Randelli tapes marked a return to earlier simplicity, which was refreshing.

Splinter Faction, Splinter Faction, Splinter Faction came and went so fast I didn't notice. Splinter Faction failed to produce a schism. The viewer was heavily assaulted by $\rightarrow \uparrow \rightarrow$'s film. The Phantom No. 692. Technically atrocious (sound out of synch, poor lighting). The Phantom however managed to rise above it all. Taken straight out of a comic book it was simply that, only it moved. Stilted tableaux of characters mouthed lines of complete banality. The eternal themes of good and evil were played out with total understanding. Where the Randelli tapes consume so-called great art and throw up second rate interpretations, $\rightarrow \uparrow \rightarrow$ consume popular culture and re orient it for the spectator to interpret as they please. Reflexive but not self indulgent.

Laughing Hands are dextrous tape players (audio), who sat three together on the dark stage manipulating their equipment. Visual simplicity and aural complexity approaching happy bombardment.

I.D.A. was a different kettle of fish altogether. Ron Nagorca was absent in body but present inside two tape recorders. After some shouting, the two remaining members of I.D.A. settled into a repetitive piece ended only by Graeme Davis' mouth being too full to take any more. I.D.A. could be fairly described as being anally retentive.

Last but not least came the noble Warren Burt with 'Music as Healing'. I was reminded of adolescent openings to new sounds, maybe Terry Riley back in the 60s . . . Pleasantly evocative, it was a clever piece of music and very gentle but ultimately this person prefers the cathartic energy of Laughing Hands, or Essendon Airport or something.

Still it was a good night, exhausting to all senses in its variety and more than adequate proof of the ability and drive of those associated with C.H.M.C.

Judy Annear.

David Chesworth:
 " ('GLARING IN SECRET' 7 min) Video synthesis with feedback. How many times have I told you what's done can't be undone. There's never a dull moment with a cheap trick or two."

Robert Randall / Frank Bendinelli:
 " 4 video tapes that positively prove the old adage that broadcast television is less boring than video art.
 * FANTALES (R) British interview series hosted by Michael Parkinson. 6 min. color.
 * LEASH CONTROL (R) U.S. detective series with Jack Lord. 3 min. color.
 * STARGAZING (R) Musical talent quest series hosted by Johnny Young. 3 min. color.
 * PAUSES (R) British situation comedy series with Barry Evans. 4. min. color."

Splinter Faction:
 "... present a live performance..."

$\rightarrow \uparrow \rightarrow$
 " THE PHANTOM No. 692: super 8 color sound 30 min in terms of the implications of film practice, believe it or not, does have productive dialectic potential. However, in terms of it being a film (i.e. an art-object) this film walks the tight-rope of tedious self-indulgence, thus generating through its spasmodic energy a perverse sense of entertainment. In other words: trash for the subculture. Humour has always been a dangerous ground, not only for the comedian, but also for both the joke and the laughter. The humour in this film lies not in its the conventions of parody, nor in call sensibilities. It lies in its basic pathetic nature. Ah yes - we've done it again."

Laughing Hands:
 " Three pieces of coincidence. 1 for tapes"

I.D.A.:
 " You can't imagine how difficult it sometimes gets. Since our last trio concert, I.D.A. has done some solo and duo concerts, and, coping with the advantages/disadvantages of 2 wives; 4 children; 3 cats; geographical distance; gardens to be watered; and bills to be paid, all three of Ron, Ernie and Graeme have appeared for tonight's concert. Sit back and watch this miracle."

Warren Burt:
 " Music as healing"

(At last! what you've been waiting for!)
EPIC MONUMENTAL PROJECT
 (Modest ain't it?)

FIVE PIECES

For Video, Film, Slides, Voice
 and Electronics.



W
A
N
T
A
N
E
W
M
O
O
D
S
I
N
Y
O
U
R
C
O
L
L
E
C
T
I
O
N



3 NOV. MOODS for Videotape and Stereo Sound

10 NOV. DER YIDDISSHER COWBOY (a film in English)
 in collaboration with Ronald Al Robb

17 Nov. IF STRUCTURE IS AN EMPTY
 CLASS (a film)

24 NOV. PENGUINS - for film
 slides tape and reader

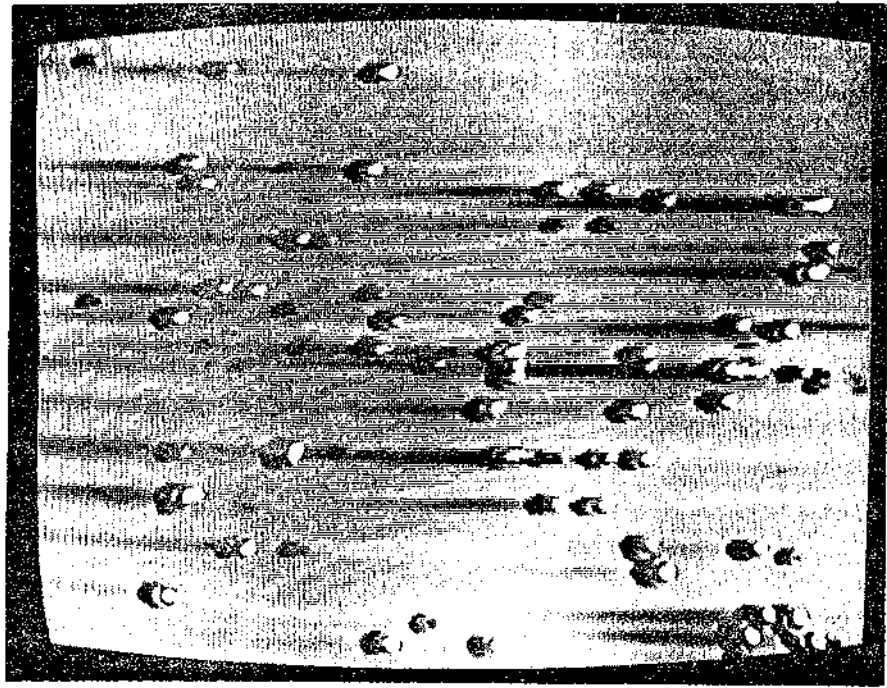
1 DEC 8 83 4 PAIRS IN THE
 SHAP - A PIECE of Electronics

This was probably the
 last of the "Penguins"
 at the time.

CLIFTON HILL
 MUSIC CENTERS
 Mondays at 8:00 pm
 6-10 Page St. Cl/Hill



Moods



Warren Burt : Moods for videotape and stereo sound (1978-80) November 3rd, 1980 at 8.00 p.m.

- I. **Five Moods**
 (3x4x) 5x6x7x8x9 (for Ned Sublette) - 5'
 Return to Uranus (after Ruggles) - 5'
 Veils 2 (60:54:32) - 5'
 Watermusic - 5'
 Dazzler (after Monk) - 8'
- II. **Five More Moods**
 Hawk Call and Whale Cry - 8'
 Butterfly - 3'
 America Goes to the Movies - 9'
 Three Views - 6'
 Bluesicrucian Vision - 4'

(INTERMISSION)

- III. **Gorgeous Formalisms (Even Five More Moods, Yet!)**
 Duo - 10'
 Various Versions of Freedom - 10'
 Gorgeous Formalism - 10'
 For Ives, and Jobim - 6'
 Just Improvisations - 15'



Ron Nagorcka's review and interview of 'MOODS' unfortunately was not received in time to be typeset, but will appear in the next issue of NEW MUSIC. The next issue of CANTILLAS' FILMNOTES (No. 35/36) will contain an article on "MOODS."

This work was partially funded by the Music Board of the Australia Council. Special thanks for this performance to David Chesworth, Julian Driscoll, Peter McLennan, Maria Prendergast, Barry Veith.

Notes : for those who like program notes.

Five Moods uses analog video and sound synthesis. The video parts were made using a Serge Modular System interfaced with a Hearn EAB Videolab at the WRPI Video Synthesis Lab in Troy, N.Y. in April, '79. This system did not make music and sound at the same time. Rather, analog waveforms were used to make video images alone. Where sound and image are made to relate, they do so by analogy, with a similar patch used at a later time. All the sound tracks for this piece (except the first) were made on my Serge System in Sydney, N.S.W. in June 1979.

(3x4x) 5x6x7x8x9 Just as I was starting to work at WRPI I received a letter from Ned Sublette, one item of which was a numerical grid of a 3 every 3 spaces, or 4 every 4 spaces on the next line, a 5 every 5 spaces on the next, and so on. Using an electronic box of dividers I had built, it was easy to set up the sound equivalent of this with the 3rd subharmonic (of a fairly high tone) every 3 beats, the 4th harmonic every 4 beats etc. down to 9. This is the sound for this piece. A video analogy to this procedure was set up with a pattern of 5 horizontal divisions of the screen every 5 beats, 6 divisions every 6 beats down to 9. Unlike the sounds though, 2 video patterns gated together do not form an interval, but a new pattern. So only 5 different gatings (5x6x7x8x9) were needed to make an interesting graphic. The video and sound were recorded separately, making for interesting in and out of phase relations in the final result.

Return to Uranus (after Ruggles) This video is a remake (with sufficient control, this time) of my first video piece, which I made in 1974, called "A Guided Tour to the Caves of Uranus." The sound is made by a rather clever patch where intervals made by very slowly moving square waves additively produce a complex melodic line. This is fed to a number of oscillators each of which interprets this single control differently, resulting in a harmonic progression similar to one sometimes used in the works of Carl Ruggles. The occasional accompaniment of melodic fragments is an interactive system, sometimes reading the melody control and sometimes a keyboard input.

Veils 2 (60:54:32) The sound is a mix of the 60th, 54th and 32nd subharmonics of a very high tone, mixed with slightly out of tune equivalent analog wave forms to produce beats. The video attempts and sometimes succeeds in consisting merely of translucent veils of color. These Veils pieces will continue to be made, until with "Veils 7 (Dance)" a sort of Straussian apotheosis will be achieved.

Watermusic is a straightforward attempt at video mimicry. Various sine waves were fed into the Videolab, phaseshifted, filtered and carefully controlled, and the result is the tape. This fascination with the play of lights on water was unsatiated by this piece,

and led to the making of **Water**, a 23 minute super 8 film on the same subject. The sound is a modal keyboard synthesizer improvisation loosely based on material from the first few bars of Mozart's C-minor Piano Concerto, a quote from which actually appears near the end.

Dazzler (after Monk) takes the video patch of **Water** and elaborates it into a winking carpet of video jewels. The sound was made by loading 16 chords from "Monk's Mood" by Thelonious Monk onto a sequencer. Then, using many dividers, a composite rhythm was assembled which did a random walk through the chords. The electronic duck in the background accentuated the chords' cool, automated swing.

Five More Moods was an attempt to make a more mimetic electronic video. In addition to the Serge and the Hearn, a Rutt-Etra video synthesizer was used. The videos were made, again, at the WRPI video synthesis lab in Troy, N.Y. as were the 2nd, 3rd and 4th soundtracks. The first soundtrack was made at the New South Wales Conservatorium of Music studio, the 5th on my Serge in Sydney, both in June 1979.

Hawk Call and Whale Cry is a cliché. I know, You've seen and heard these images before, but I never had a chance to work with them. So, since they're now obsolete and out of fashion, they're ripe material for a referential art. The images were made by modulating dots and bars from a bar-dot generator, the sound by treating whale songs, hawk cries and nighthawk calls through a digital delay line.

Butterfly is a tribute to video artist Vibeke Sorensen, and uses a technique of raster modulation she taught me. This is the only piece of the series where sound and image were made simultaneously; the same joysticks used to "fly" the butterfly were also used to control various aspects of the sound.

America Goes to the Movies In November 1978, Richard Kostelanetz asked me for a piece for an anthology he was putting together. He wanted an excerpt from my old piece 'Nighthawk' (available from Longua Press, Box 1192, LaJolla Ca. 92308; plug, plug) I said I would give him something new instead. Greatly intrigued by Home Box Office's warnings of dangerous content in the movies they cablecast (presumably these tell you what to watch for), I made the text of this piece, which Richard Kostelanetz said was too long. Undeterred I made a 'reader's diges' capsule summary - which he also rejected because it used musical notation. An excerpt from 'Nighthawk' is in his anthology. This text is the basis for this piece, both in video and sound. Richard was right, though. This piece is too long. The length, however, is necessary for the greater rhythm of the overall piece.

Three Views This piece uses the incredible acting and vocal skills of performer/composer Mark Bornfield. Mark's improvisation was fed thru the Rutt-Etra, modified and colorized. Later, other improvisations by myself and video artist Tom DeWitt were also recorded and colorized, and edited into Mark's performance as a foil, using an elaborate random proportional system.

Bluesicrucian Vision in which the electronic pantography developed by Tom DeWitt, George Kindler and Roger Meyers is used. A camera is fed into a computer, which places a dot on the screen every so often which traces the position of a brightly coloured "keying object" - in my case, a fluorescent ball. This pattern was then fed into the Rutt-Etra, which was being modulated by so many differing waveforms as to completely distort any input I would put in. So I had to learn to surf this random system, and since I was in a Messiaen mood, kept trying to form across. The sound is a single horror-movie organ chord in many different transpositions both audio (heard as the chord) and sub-audio (heard as clicks, static and noise).

Gorgeous Formalism (Even 5 More Moods, Yet!) was all made in Australia. The video portions were made on a system I designed at La Trobe University in Melbourne in 1978 and 79 using an EMS Spectre Video Synthesizer, 2 Serge Systems and a John Roy Daisy Random Control Voltage Generator. The sound tracks were made in July 1979 on a New England Digital Synthesizer installed at the University of Adelaide, Adelaide, South Australia. All the pieces in **Moods** were edited in June and September 1979 at the Paddington Video Access Centre, in Paddington, N.S.W.

Duo is formally the most complex piece in **Moods**. Every element (duration, shapes, composition, etc.) is determined by some formal scheme or other. Retrogrades of these structures are used in the sound track, which subjects selected chord voicings from Woody Shaw's 'Katrina Ballerina' to a rather rigorous reshuffling. Originally, this piece was for trombone and accordion with video but I forgot that these were wind instruments. Fortunately, computers don't have to breathe, so the piece was possible.

Various Versions of Freedom To make the sound various keyboard free improvisations were loaded into the computer's memory. These were then played back to a multitrack recorder in various ratios - i.e. Voice 1 is 17/19 voice 2's pitch and 19/17 voice 2's speed. These free improv's strait-jacketed into different mathematical constructs make the textures of the sound track as well as a political statement for those who can translate numerical constructs into sociological analogy.

The video was made by the most complicated video patch I've ever done, Various ratios were cranked out by Daisy controlled by the Serge. These were fed through VCA's and displayed on an oscilloscope. This was picked up on a camera and colorized straight and made into the dots, circles, etc. The camera out-put was also fed 'directly' through an audio synthesizer and phase-shifted, filtered, etc. This produced the backgrounds. This whole process was controlled in real time by a battery of joysticks, camera controls etc. Like the sound, various takes were made, then edited together.

Gorgeous Formalism is a self-indulgent decadence. A wallow in pretty chords (by Jobim, Horace Liver and me) and pink and blue triangles. The video (which actually describes a fairly severe permutational scheme - and what could be more self-indulgently decadent than that?) was performed to the music, matching its rhythms. The sound is a single pass keyboard computer improvisation, treating various chains of slushy chords in the manner of fragments of a Boulez piano piece. In it, I am following my score's direction to play absolutely as fast as I possibly can and still insure total accuracy.

For Ives, and Jobim takes fragments of 3 Jobim tunes, loads them onto a 4 track tape recorder to form a composite Ivesian collage. The video is a "kitchen-sink" patch with electronic synthesis colorized slides and super 8 film of advertising signs and mixing of the slides and films unmodified to form a dense commercial collage analogous to the sound track.

Just Improvisations uses the same video and sound patches as **Various Versions of Freedom**. Here, in the sound, one real-time pass in just intonation was used where a one-minute, 5 voice free improvisation was modified in tempo, timbre and density of voices. In the video, the elaborate patch of 'Various Versions of Freedom' was played live in a response to the sound, sometimes leading it, sometimes trailing. As a concluding piece to 'Moods', I regard it as a sort of 'Grosse Fuge', a grandly complicated gesture capping off a series of involved pieces.



Clifton Hill Community Music Centre Presents 'Der Yiddisher Cowboy' a film in English by Ronald Al Robboy and Warren Burt.

Monday November 10, 1980 at 8 pm.

NOTES: by Warren Burt:

This is a long rambling film which investigates the many aspects of the phrase Yiddish (or Jewish) Cowboys. It started out as a comic opera. There are two sung lines in the entire work. Very early on we realized this was a serious work with some very funny parts, leaning more closely to cultural history and musicology than to opera, perse. Interestingly, all the people involved in making the film were composers, performers, choreographers, or video artists, but the film is almost a narrative socio-historical documentary. Music, in this film, is more of a character, or subject, than a medium of expression. In making the film we were only following that supreme composer's dictum of following the material where it takes you. For us, it took us out of performance into film production. We learned film production techniques from the ground up for this flick. Here is a summary of the movie:

1) Dream sequence - fragmented images of a violin totin' Yiddish Cowboy and a heavy dressed in black alternative with pictures of "Flying A" gasoline signs, horse rides, rodeos, cliff-hangers, mysterious fog, and cantorial music on the mountains.

⑦

Eventually, the cowboy wakes, asks faithful companion Molly about 'Flying A' Gasoline signs. She rebuffs his question. He decides to emigrate to the USA. This section is a structural paraphrase of the film, 'The Yiddish Cowboy,' made in 1909 in Neversink, N.Y. (in the Catskills) by Bison Films.

2) Cowboy Movie - Ikie, the violin totin' Yiddish Cowboy strides over the hill into San Diego. He symbolizes the clever, cultural side of Yiddish existence. He strides into the Bar-AOK saloon where he encounters Black Bart, the heavy. Black Bart defeats Ikie in a music duel. Ikie leaves town defeated.

Then into town comes Lev Tate (nee Braunstein), a Trotsky parody, and a symbol of the political side of Yiddish culture. He encounters Black Bart. They duel -- chamber music versus ideology. The ideological barrage wins. Bart leaves town, defeated, and in the hills is set upon by the music bandits and fatally wounded.

Ikie, wandering the hills, comes upon Bart. Bart tells Ikie the dreaded SOCIALIST REALISM has won and is destroying the Art of the town. Ikie returns to town, duels Lev, and defeats him only to find that Bart has lied to him! Lev's enlightened socialist policies were cleaning up the town, and he, Ikie, has destroyed the revolution! The classical cultural-political struggle of Yiddish Culture redefined. This is a structural paraphrase of the 1911 movies, The Yiddish Cowby, made by Allan Dwan for Flying A films of La Mesa, Ca. At this point, a scabby Western Playboy Formalist Artists, who can't stand sad endings, enacts a time warp, and a dumb pun between Ikie and Lev catapults us into

3) The Story of Lev -- Lev Tate recounts leaving Russia, travelling across Manchuria (played here by the industrial district of San Diego), joining the communists in China, going on the Long March, and ending up on the Great Wall. He then reveals all he has said previously to be a lie, and in fact the mountain he is on is on the US-Mexico border. Another story of Russian exile follows, leading to the mountain, which he tells, was owned by Walter Evans-Wentz.

4) The Story of Walter Evans-Wentz Walter Evans-Wentz lives in San Diego before and after moving to Tibet where he translated the Tibetan Book of the Dead and the Book of the Great Liberation. His story takes us to downtown San Diego, where Ronald Al Robboy first met Saul Stock, the mysterious figure who was to change his life so dramatically.

INTERVAL

5) Saul's story. Ron recounts his meetings with Saul Stock, who first revealed to him the existence of Yiddish writer A. Raboy, possibly a relation, who wrote a novel called Der Yiddisher Cowboy.

6) Notes towards a screen play. Ron then recounts the amazing train of paradoxes and coincidences which led him to the making of a film about this massive literary/musical/socio-political heritage.

7) The Novel -- From his own translation from the Yiddish, Ron reads excerpts and summarizes the novel, Der Yiddisher Cowboy, by A. Raboy.

8) Afterword -- On Christmas Eve, in a tacky goyisher shopping mall, Ron talks about his own culture, utterly suburbanized and thoroughly bled of its radical roots.

RONALD AL ROBBOY's work is not unknown in Australia. Tapes of work in the legendary incompetent performance ensemble, Fatty Acid have been broadcast on 3CR, and his tape piece, Customusic was performed at the Gardens and Galleries Electronic Music Festival in 1976. His text piece, A Guided Tour of San Diego, was used by Warren Burt as the accompaniment for a dance piece of choreographer Eva Karczag performed at the Watter's Gallery, Sydney, in 1978. He lives in San Diego, Ca. where he plays cello in the San Diego Symphony and San Diego Opera Orchestra, directs a performance ensemble, The Big Jewish Band, and continues his compositional researches into the arcana of coincidence.

WARREN BURT lives and works in Melbourne. In addition to his work in electronic and instrumental music and video he has collaborated with Ronald Al Robboy on many projects since 1972. These include the current film, Der Yiddisher Cowboy, and a video tape, The School of Cage: A New Conspiracy Theory. Currently he is performing his Epic Monumental Project at the Clifton Hill Community Music Centre, which you already know if you're reading these notes.

This piece was partially funded by the Music Board of the Australia Council as part of Warren Burt's Epic Monumental Project: 5 pieces of Video, Film, Tape, Slides and Voice.

Kris Hemensley review of Der Yiddisher Cow

Dear Warren,

Der Yiddisher Cowboy was a delight from beginning to end; congratulations to you and your co-star/co-author Ronald Robboy for your perseverance in realizing the full implication of the idea against, what I believe is, the overwhelming pressure toward the facile, the simplistic. I make my observations from a writer's point of view, but one which overlaps significantly with your own procedures. My first impression, in fact, was that *DYC* was an eminently literary work. My pleasure derived in great part from the experience of seeing what previously I've mainly read -- what Billeter and I mean, I think, when we say (or used to) "self-referential" (given an initial external reference, or a spread of references, which thereafter maintains an inexorable process of elaboration, in the course of and by means of which one does get the sense exact. The writers who come to mind in this respect are Gilbert Sorrentino (whose words they are I've underlined), Joyce (of course) Raymond Roussel and his English-language disciple, Harry Matthews, the experimentalist WC Williams, oh and a whole legion of latter day mannerists and hermeneuticists and blessed anagramists, who provide, in my view, a thin red line against the belligerent simplisme of the literal-representationalist-inter-nationale!

Things have got much worse since Rich Kostelanetz (in his essay, 'New American Fiction Reconsidered', *TriQuarterly*/67) decided the failure of fiction writers for having "not contemplated deeply enough the formal possibilities of the novelistic format", given that "there really exist no limits upon the kinds of fictions that can be put between two covers". His roll-call of modern and contemporary exemplars included Joyce, Stein, Faulkner; Barthelme, Koch; Rabbit, Cage, Rauschenberg, Buckminster Fuller, Milic Capek, Norman O Brown. What was also evident, he argued, was that in "each of the arts today,

two avant-gardes exist -- those who would preserve and develop the essence of the art and those who would combine with (or draw their creative ideas from) other arts". One could add science to that, and indeed all of Life's forms.

To make my response I must almost close my eyes to your extensive programme notes! There is no point at all in my reproducing your description-cum-explication. Also I must attempt to give the film experience its due and not work out of the Notes! However, my eye immediately adheres to your comment "In making the film we were only following that supreme composer's dictum of following the material where it takes you." That is precisely what I take to be the pith of my literary reception of your work. And yes, of course there is the tradition of music-composition methodology that predates and parallels any of my literary reciprocals. And then again, that "supreme composer" recalls to mind Wallace Stegner, despite that the great Bach probably owns the title!

I feels that both you and Ronald Robboy are, to put Kostelanetz's formulations to work, combinatory artists for whom letters and ideas are prime source. I must say I never anticipated a musical work of the film even to the extent of the "two sung lines", and though the "opera device was prevalent at the beginning of the film even that seemed to me to be personal, or an enabling mechanism, rather than a manifestation of "music".

There was a thought in my mind, a form of words, late that night after the show -- "The world is all that is the case". But I kept visualising the violin (or cello?) case, and Wittgenstein's seminal proposition reassembled itself -- "The world is all that's in the case." I also recalled that similarly occult statement of Charles Olson's, "All you have to do is, tune in to the music".

The accessibility, its "openness" -- that sense of "experimental" which I discover I share with the immediately post WW2 (OBRA group: "The work is more important than the result! You must make, create, in order to see reality . . . The creative process is a particular process of becoming conscious." (Jorn); "The experimentalist goes from behind the dead tokens to the other side of the mortal tokens. So he is always alive. His painting has at the same time roots and taps. (Dotremont) -- this quality I find in the film, and in the film as but one contribution to a world-wide phenomenon. It is impossible for me to isolate your work from this view-of-the-world. Again, if one is to describe, the one will do what your Notes have done. One will reproduce the parts, the frames, part by part and frame by frame. Once I start thinking about the film, I'm thinking about it (and myself) in the world! I don't subscribe to the extreme analogical view at all, where metaphor at its grossest is the underlying principle. But I don't believe that the isolated fact is immune from the flux of the world. Which is my rationale for talking (writing) about everything at once! -- "everything" permitted in the single occasion of *Der Yiddisher Cowboy*, which once again is a restatement of the film's methodology.

In my mind now is the genial, the gentle face and form of Ronald Robboy, talking in front of camera for that inexhaustible latter hour. "Talking to" me in the audience, and to you behind the camera. Film as lecture, film as diary. Focusing for so long on the subject, that the film's natural appropriation of any living thing, its objectivisation of it, is somehow counteracted -- for so long is that face and form in front of one and talking (which is important), that the subjectivity is in some way restored -- specially when, as I say, the camera role is affected by the subject's autonomous volition.

As regards what he was saying, the research impelled by the creative project, uncovering "historical accidents" to such a degree that "cosmic mandate" was the only rational explanation, is something so many of us working in this way must have felt. Chance, coincidence, whim, eventually accrue a design. It encourages a materiality on a far greater scale than its erstwhile human recognition . . .

The humour of the film (the film of the film, the film of the filming, the explication after the fact of all the facts), from slapstick to the terrible puns that American minimalists seem to have expropriated from the British tradition to underpin their own, is assumed thruout this "reading". I'll extrapolate from the humour such a question as the relationship between art and society (as the Communist proselytiser in the Socialist-Realism segment so excruciatingly quotes from Lenin, the question is: who is it for?). Evidently, part of the work you and Robboy have produced is fashioned from out of that discussion. To that extent, however interesting (though, to whom?) it is tarred with current politics' (of left and right mind you) slur, "manneristic" "formalistic" etc. But the subject matter it produces, involves as background (I mean, images in and around the fiction's action), and as document, verite (the whole of Robboy's lecture e.g.) is, as real as real could be (I think)! As I've remarked in a response to a series of Bernie O.Regan's photographs, the realism of the dominant class or caste isn't particularly arresting except that it is its own rotten, dreadful, powerful fact. But the disaffiliating artists of the dominant class will always be sympathetic to the realism of the rising (or certainly under) class or caste -- Genet, Malcom X, Fanon, Shulamith, Firestone, Millet, Johnny Rotten et al. And at a tangent, out of Lucy Lippard, political art is simply art work, political effect and that is something that has no time limit or does it depend upon mass utilisation. And something else -- Olson's "no such mass as many" is the first shot the appellation "mass" prefigures a type of control and repression. My recent thinking revolves around the idea of art or creativity as an action that is perhaps a last resistance to the totalitarian design. So when I say "open" and "accessible" about *Der Yiddisher Cowboy*, when I express my delight and pleasure in it, I intend it in both personal and general (exemplary) senses.

I'll pull my head at this point! Best wishes,

Kris Hemensley

WB: First, a few questions about the references in your article. These sound like people I should know about. Who is Gilbert Sorrentino?

KH: A New York poet and fiction writer who was an editor for Grove Press for a while. His most recent book is called "Mulligan Stew" which has made the window in Readings in Lygon Street, Australia, so I suppose he's getting internationalized. He comes out of Paris and Williams in American poetics and is known as a very sharp and witty man.

WB: I've heard the name Raymond Roussel, but I don't know any of his works. Is he associated with the pathophysicians at all?

KH: He was probably a natural for entry into that college. A clue to his stance would be his claim that "In 1921-22 I made this around the world voyage. I visited Australia, New Zealand, Tahiti; X, Y, and Z; this, that and the other. NONE of this ever got into my work. My work is entirely imaginary." His great tragedy is that he never got to be as famous as his hero Jules Verne. He didn't catch on because his method was -- well, he was very much into linguistic games. Specific words at certain calculable durations, generating more words, therefore his story fitted into certain compulsory rhythms. His method was picked up in the 60's, and he's quite well known now.

- WB: Harry Matthews?
- KH: Again, another Yank. He had a trilogy published a few years back by a big New York publisher, I forget which but he's one of the few who are doing in English what Roussel was doing.
- WB: Finally, the Cobra group.
- KH: A Dutch-Belgian-Danish grouping of painters and writers crunching around in the rubble just after World War II.
- WB: About the article you say, "Things have gotten worse since 1967" etc. I don't believe that. Things have changed though. I wrote a little thing about that -- let me read it to you. "The interdisciplinary approach is now so firmly established that its novelty has worn off. It's now the lingua franca of art. And those artists who insist on composing or painting or writing only within the rules of their discipline are composing or painting or writing themselves into a dead end. We as artists must be aware of developments or ideas in other fields. I become viciously angry with academics who, in insisting on teaching only the rules of their discipline, give their students a narrow, and not a world view of art. This is a wrong situation and must be corrected."
- KH: Yes, I agree, but I would say that from literary point of view, things have gotten worse. There are even fewer people working in literature being encouraged in what Kostelanetz would have called a combinatory direction. But there's another face to the whole argument and that would be the "conservative" historical left-wing approach, a socialist-realist approach, which would say -- probably -- Chris Mann said the other day, he used the phrase "eclectic minimalism".

Now, someone like Gerald Graff, in a book called "Literature Against Itself", where he argues against not just the Anglo-American interdisciplinary, but the whole range of European writing (or theory and practice) -- where he says that place, if you like to be playful, is very much the all-that-you-have-left-with. He doesn't use the word deprofitization, that's a word that Polish literature, or commentators on Polish literature were using 10 or more years ago. It was rather topical. They said something like, "The Party said, either you are the voice, the vision of the Party OR you have your freedom to create and keep the fuck out of politics. Now Graff says, he doesn't use the word deprofitization, but I think that's what he's talking about, and he doesn't seem to be aware at the time of his writing, that situation is rather better known than he thinks. So I think it's a double edged sword, this interdisciplinarity. Is it just that we're making a virtue of necessity, that we are doing the best with what we have been left with?

- WB: Well, it's basically that we may find people working in other fields have the same ideas.
- KH: Why, though? Through choice, or that's all that's
- WB: Well, that's all there is, I think. It's not why -- it's that, to have a life of their own, if you want to get mystical about it, so that for example, when you have the futurists and cubists in painting doing one thing, you find people like Ives doing related but totally separate things in music, and whoever doing similar things in writing. And this happens all the way through the 20th century. Maybe I was very fortunate when I was doing my B.A. that we had a full year course drawing these parallels between the arts; but it's always seemed a completely natural thing to me that in the 20th century ideas cross the boundaries of disciplines. So that's one thing.

Another would be necessity. When you're in a place like, say, Melbourne, where the establishment is so completely corrupt and conservative then you're going to seek out anybody who's interesting. Also, it's fun to find out about other people -- the writers, musicians etc. It gives you a different perspective and the ideas just fertilize each other.

- KH: My responses stemmed from "Der Yiddisher Cowboy".

And it seemed to me that there you're just overhearing what you were saying to Chris Wyatt before -- Having paid your political dues in the Cowboy you were free to do the formalist bit in the last of your series. I don't believe that. I would like to believe that you are employed by the same problem that you so elegantly play with in "Der Yiddisher Cowboy" -- with the Socialist Realism bit, the "What is to be done"? I'm disposed to believe that you are also asking yourself, "What is to be done?"

- WB: Oh yeah, very clearly. When I said that to Chris Wyatt, I was being very catty and inaccurate. Maybe what I meant was I see nothing wrong with doing many different kinds of work. After reading your review, I even wrote, "We can't avoid the current-politics-of-the-left-and-right-slur of materialism, formalism, etc. To ignore these issues is to open yourself up to attack by them. You have to deal with these issues in order to defang them." Also, they seem to be a major set of issues in 20th century art that people have too easily dismissed with, "Oh, that's political stuff." So in the Cowboy we're both really concerned about all those issues.

Another thing you say is "Art is the last resistance to totalitarian design. You actually say that! And thinking about things like Kenneth Gaburo's "The Beauty of Irrelevant Music," that, of course is not corrupted into a "safe" rebellion. i.e. artists are allowed repressive tolerance to do whatever they like and as a result are the safety valve of society.

- KH: I was thinking even further than that. There's a fellow called Maurice Tuchmann who's a curator of a museum in the States somewhere. He wrote on Soutine and other people. He has a terrific interview with Avigdor -- I think it was the friend of Beckett who painted Beckett and has been born with tenor for development because things have changed so rapidly, the pressures have been so great the world has been so different, this just hasn't been on. They talk about craft. Well, after all, what does craft give you? They both agree it doesn't give you much -- in fact, it doesn't give you anything. And Tuchmann comes out with the comment "So I really think that we might have got to the point where art is relief in this world." So it's not as a safety valve -- it's no longer -- I really am firmly convinced of this deprofitization -- I'm not liking that -- but I don't know. In fact, I'm very confused about it. I think relief in a sense, as a last resistance when ten years ago a discussion around Germaine Greer would talk about sex as a place where the future was not determined, where your options were not determined, where the form was not determined. Sex was a place where you could be outside of an authorized you. But maybe art in Tuchmann's sense as a relief is that, but is by no means society's safety valve. I think that's something else. And we're not even talking about the arts of the mass society. They have their own arts.

- WB: Right, TV, radio, advertising. Our work is just the work of a few cheery intellectuals who are not just entertaining themselves, but who are in fact making what are probably the incisive comments about the society.

- KH: Maybe or maybe not. Because when you say the society

- WB: Which society?

- KH: Right! Who are we, and which society, and --

- WB: If you don't watch TV 10 hours a day, you just don't know what's happening. And none of us do, so we don't. But yet, we are part of some "substantial underground international network."

- KH: Well, I'd like to nod to that. The whole of my writing life has been comforted and informed by that. But again, I am feeling my confusion -- that I admit to -- allows even that to be begged now.

- WB: Having just returned from a long time overseas, I realize that it's no better anywhere else. The incredible loneliness and isolation you feel is nothing, say, compared to what the guy in Albuquerque or Mexico City is feeling. And they're all -- there are a few in every

city, and international communication becomes just vital -- intercultural communication between all of these groups, so that people can realize there are other people out there struggling. It's such a warm feeling to realize someone else is making the same mistakes you are.

KH: Ha Ha! Right!

WB: You say about the Cowboy, "It's more a literary work than a musical work." I agree. But we were both musicians and in following the idea, as a composer should, we ended up making a film which deals with cinema traditions, but one in which the starting point is music, specifically Ron's violin playing. "The world is all that's in the case", as you say. It is not inconceivable to say that without the Fatty Acid experience -- the band we were in together -- the film could not have happened. The liberating experience of working in that incompetent band was one of opening and expanding our boundaries. And it's also not inconceivable to say that the film could not have happened unless we both had lived in San Diego for that period of time where there was that incredible sense of encouraging all these people in different arts to come together. So it was out of those two things where it suddenly seemed not at all unnatural for two com-

posers to get together and make a film about literary traditions, and it seemed that that was our opera, despite its relative lack of music.

KH: Oh, yeah.

WB: Another interesting point -- you write about "the terrible puns American minimalists seemed to have appropriated from the British traditions to underly their own", I've never appropriated any terrible puns from the British tradition. Those are all my own Yankee puns.

KH: Really?

WB: Absolutely! The only British puns I know about are Monty Python's!

KH: It's said that English literature rests upon the limerick and the pun. That was said, I think, a couple of centuries ago.

WB: Certainly we're aware we're making outrageous puns. Those long segments leading up to the Braunstein, and the genes of Levi-Strauss. We're really rubbin' it in. I think sadism is the essential delight of the pun. So we were revelling in it. But I never noticed any British roots on our puns.

KH: It's just a truism that this is the mainstay of British language art. I'm not sure if that was Goethe or somebody. Walter Billeter would be able to tell us. *

Chris Mann Review of a 'Der Yiddisher Cowboy' - A Cult Movie - if one so disposes

The big lie - Black Bart nee Tait says Levs social realism is oppressing the villagers at the A-OK.

The big lie -- China and Braunstein (a cobbler sweat shop owner -- I mean he's German ain't he) are not who they purport to be.

The big lie is a part of the big lie. Fine. And what do we learn from this?

The opening of a state metaphor turning left in front of a \$20 maximum cardboard sign and a go-lo plastic with our hero blandly filling his tank is baldly romanticised with the last shot of our 'cellist of the open air seen wandering off into the sunset down the boulevard humping the big A (the initial capital) which had cost him a movie and ten dollars.

Ten dollars is a part of twenty dollars. Fine. And what do we learn from this?

Part two and the geographic nuologisms opens with a discret panning to right for "Book Drop" and ends with Uncle Vanya in the woodshed having conducted a job interview (notice Al in front of the window answering the phone) and a poignant aside in the editing room.

As Evans-Wentz pointed out, geography is poignant. Fine. And what do we learn from this?

1. The Odessa File is a roll-your own.
2. 1882, 1909, 1911, 1912 were years of real coincidence unlike the stuff in recent memory.
3. & 4. 78's and 2 arias gives 1 7/8 and a Kosher Christmas.

A shorter film? Decorating the problem is never short. Versions may be short -- yes. I think with ads it could do Sunday TV as a half hour. And when? Why does a plurality of incompetance demand charm? This sort of resolution of the energy crisis, this stepping out, is a must.

Chris Mann

WB: You say that you thought that maybe Black Bart's name was Tait before he got married?

CM: Definitely. Yes, I was very happy with "Says Lev's" as well.

WB: "Says Lev's"?

CM: Yes.

WB: "Says Lev's".

CM: "Says Lev's."

WB: I was reading part of this to Frank Bendinelli and was delighted with it and he said "Now, you've got to get someone to translate it." And it's interesting that the movie is very bewildering in the first part, and the second part explains why it was that way; and it seems that your interview is going to follow the same form. Whereas this review -- to anyone who hasn't seen the movie -- is bewildering. Now you are going to explain all about that.

CM: Now YOU'RE going to explain all about that.

WB: Now YOU'RE going to get all reflexive.

CM: Warren! You told me on the evening of the show -- which this may introduce, that you'd been giving yourself a hard time about it.

WB: Right.

CM: Why?

WB: I was sweating blood over it because I felt it was -- well mainly I was incredibly insecure over it stemming from two --

CM: Stemming from what?

WB: Stemming from firstly, the fact that I'm really screwed up in my head now about what I want these concerts to do. And I think I want to get famous off 'em, which is utterly decadent and I realize that this ain't the way to do it. And the other was --

CM: Hang on -- this ain't the way to do it because what -- because they're going to be failures of concerts, or because it's the wrong end view -- or because this is the

wrong aim to start off with.

WB: All three - yes.

CM: Right - OK.

WB: And then the other thing I was worried about was I hadn't seen the movie in 6 months and I was really worried that it was going to be too American in an Australian context - that no one would get the jokes - it would seem just incredibly self-indulgent and that it would be dealing with issues that just had no relevance to anyone whatever. It would be just some wank from the States.

CM: And you were embarrassed about this being subsidized by the Australia Council?

WB: No, not at all. I was embarrassed by the fact that --

CM: Uh, well, excuse me, but if the embarrassment is to do with the Australian audience, some of whom are taxpayers, why were you not embarrassed about the fact that this was subsidized by them, if they were going to be embarrassed or regard the product as being irrelevant.

WB: Well, it never entered my mind to be embarrassed for them as taxpayers because I felt I was subsidized by the Australia Council to do the work I was interested in, and one of the five pieces happened to be with Robboy, and happened to be about a guy in San Diego, but I felt I was still doing "the work" I was paid to do -- that -- you know -- when it came to the showing of the work, I wanted people to get it, and I had forgotten what the piece is about, so I was very worried about them getting it.

And what it's in fact about is cowboys, which is a pretty universal image, and "Yiddisher" which is a pretty universal image -- as Nagoreka was quick to point out in his apology for not being able to make it to the show. And then, when I saw it, I realized it was dealing with all the same issues that people are dealing with here. In fact, I think we got a lot of the reflexive stuff in the second part -- at least I did, from you -- and all your insistence on pieces being reflexive and all that -- and Nagoreka as well with that insistence that pieces explain themselves. I think I brought that from Australia to the States and that whole thing came into the film at least partly because of all the work I have done with you two.

CM: Yeah - I don't um - Yeah - no I think the film is delightful. I think its a good thing, and I'll tick all the relevant boxes. BUT - I'm going to insist -- in a completely nasty manner -- on the fact that you've failed to see a contradiction between the Australia Council and the Australian audience and the fact that this was done in America and the fact that you previously have expressed embarrassment at being a tool of imperialism and that the -- one of the universalizing sort of -- I mean -- the Coca-Colaization and the Marlboro Country of --

WB: Launching Place.

CM: The high plains

WB: Well, as Ned Sublette pointed out; we were having a talk about this and about in the middle of it he said, "Warren?" I said, "Yeah?" He said, "You know you sound like you've been really thoroughly intimidated by left-wing radicals." He says, "In Australia it sounds like you can't make a move without feeling that some leftie is leaning over your shoulder demanding a rationalization for everything you do."

CM: Oh sure, sure. Which is only proper.

WB: Right! I agree - But it's interesting he picked up that I was so intimidated by it.

CM: Well, he's the only person I know who lives in the Bronx and wears a cowboy hat.

WB: Brooklyn!

CM: Sigh, failed again Bloody local geography! You see -- Evans-Wentz was right! Um - pregnant pause - um.

(Pregnant pause)

WB: When we made the film I wasn't worried about it being Australia Council money because I felt all the things

we were dealing with were absolutely germane and the whole working method was so similar to the working method we use here -- Not seeing it in 6 months, I'd forgotten all that stuff -- how reflexive it was and how it was dealing with "universals."

CM: Yeah, that was quite happy. I have no objection to the Australia Council funding suburban work in San Diego.

WB: Didn't they actually subsidize your vacation in San Diego at one time?

CM: No. That was subsidized by a business deal where I actually sold a WWII American Jeep.

WB: That the extension of the original Australian Californian business deal where they sold all those blue-gums to the Railroad company to grow for ties and they turned out to be useless so today parts of California look more Australian than parts of Australia.

CM: Yeah, it ties in with one of the ironies - I was wondering what did you do on Christmas day, which I gather fell in the middle of the filming.

WB: There's a particular chronology that's very poignant. Robboy came over early in the morning -- we edited in the morning -- then Eva and I went over to my cousin Greg's for Christmas dinner and in the evening we were editing again.

CM: What did Robboy do when you were having lunch -- did he come with you.

WB: No.

CM: I thought so. Surfing?

WB: No - he hates the ocean. Every time I'm in San Diego I have to drag him to the sea -- he's an atypical San Diegan.

CM: I'm surprised that not more was made of Mission Valley, actually. I thought there were at least half a dozen puns in there somewhere.

WB: No, by that time the puns are sort of worn out. In Mission Valley, we wanted to be SERIOUS.

CM: You know about reflexivity and all that -- I've just finished reading every word of New Music No. 2 and there are all these young guys interviewing each other, and well, this interview, it feels a bit like Uncle Chris interviewing Uncle Warren -- but I hope all you adolescents enjoy it. *





*If Structure is
an Empty Glass...*

Clifton Hill Community Music Centre presents "If Structure is an Empty Glass...." a film by Warren Burt Nov. 17 1980 at 8 pm.

During the last days of editing "Der Yiddisher Cowboy", Ron Robboy turned to me and said, "Well Warren, now that we've made a film about me, we'll have to make one about you!" Although I didn't realize it then, when I finished editing this film in April, it turned out I had done just that. This film is extremely personal, and totally non-narrative. It has in it, many of the things I'm interested in, from slapstick to severe structuralism to a sensitivity to environmental phenomena. Consequently, during the course of the piece, the viewers will find themselves having to shift perceptual gears radically a great number of times. This is an extremely hard thing to demand of an audience. Hopefully, these notes will help people in threading their way through this web of juxtapositions.

This film was made with super 8 mm sound film. I used it not only because it was relatively cheap, but just as in my cassette recorder work with Ron Nagorcak in the Plastic Platypus, I wanted to explore the many possibilities for distortion inherent in cheaper media as a compositional tool. For example, in "4 Winters", those overly warm saturated colors are desired result of refilming photos a number of times under varying light conditions. The dirtiness, the scratchiness, the fragility of the medium - I embrace it all, without shame or regret.

Here is a synopsis of the sections of the film. The actual structure will become apparent only in the watching.

I. Conceptual Art Comedy - is a severely structured collection of vague philosophical parodies, gawdawful puns, slapstick violence and dumb jokes. If you don't get some of them, don't worry - the only people who would, would be Australian Artists who had also lived for a time in the USA and England. This section lasts 11 minutes.

II. Structural Fantasy - This part occurs between the credits and Water. It lasts 52 minutes. It takes 6 very different visual pieces and edits them into a symmetrical whole. They are:

1. 5 Structural slowdowns where various slowings of filmed images and related sounds are juxtaposed. The sounds were slowed with a digital rate changer, a device which enables you to change the speed of a sound without changing pitch. This is unlike tape, where rate of sound and pitch are tied together. The 5 pieces are:

- a) Subways -- a vision of a hell
- b) Danger Dance - Eva Kneivel's 30 second balancing act takes 6 minutes - a voice spelling "splash" lasts the same.
- c) West Side - a camera is swung in a dance to the tune of a Korean Classical Song. A cowboy wanders down the abandoned freeway within sight of the Statue of Liberty.
- d) Dolls - mannequins and a 22½ second scream stretched for three minutes.
- e) Memories of Albion --Chris Mann's 30 seconds of obscene racist linguistic violence is here dealt further violence by divorcing sound and image in independent structurings.

2. 8 Dances by Eva Karczag. Various dance improvisations are used as entractes, foils, resting points, and pieces in their own right. The soundtracks are various experiments in providing sound for post-modern dance, a genre in which traditional music-dance relationships are particularly inappropriate.

3. 4 Winters. Slides of snowfields in New York, England, Norway and Denmark are superimposed with 4 versions of a 12-tone solo piano piece. The result has a curious warmth.

4. Chainsaws - Chris Mann, at work on the farm, sawing wood, slashing brush, etc. A sinister violence shines beneath the images of honest labor . . .

5. Birds - 10 shots of birds from around Australia, accompanied by silly computer music. The result is not entirely demeaning, but has its moments.

6. Simone and Sarah on the Rocks -- 'Cellist Sarah Hopkins and Trombonist Simone de Haan improvise on Ricketts point, Port Phillip Bay, at low tide on a blue, bitter August morn. They toss modal motifs across the waves to each other. Eventually the 'cello shrinks from overexposure. The tune continues.

III. Water. Many, many, many shots of light on water taken in Adelaide, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane are cut together. The piece progresses from day to night. The aim is to explore the interaction and abstract beauty that exist in water and light. The soundtrack mixes dripping water from urban environments with recordings of waterfalls in Bronte Gully, Sydney. This section lasts 23 minutes. Standing on its own at the end of the film, it answers many of the philosophical questions raised at the films beginning. In this way, the middle 60 minutes of the film may be seen as a giant (slightly inverted?) comma.

This film was partially funded by a grant from the Music Board of the Australia Council as part of the Epic Monumental Project, 5 pieces for video, film, slides, tape and voice.

(Jane Crawford's review is printed on page 18)

W: There's only a couple of comments on the review: "Cage's 4'3" cannot be smashed by a symbol of ideology and it was the symbol of middle class culture, the culture we all came from. Certainly we've all had frozen chickens for dinner in our adolescence.

The empty glass was smashed by Mao and Wittgenstein as equally powerful people to Cage, however the middle class was completely powerless no matter how hard they tried to smash the glass. *Why Chinese Glasses?*

J: That was meant as rhetoric.

W: There was a simple reason - they were the cheapest.

J: It was accidental.

W: Yeah, if I'd found Korean glasses that were cheaper, I'd have bought them. But it's nice that they were Oriental (pause)

That's interesting - "The dark side (west side, subways, dolls) vs. the calm self. . .". It's absolutely accurate, but I never thought of that. That never occurred to me. Chris Mann also brought up this thing about "man doing violent work against trees and language". (pause)

"The birds are listening to electronic music" -- some of them are dancing to it. Putting the electronic music to the birds is one of the things I still haven't resolved in my mind. I still feel a bit bad about it because it does tend to cheapen them a lot.

J: That's interesting because that was a hard part for me to interpret. I couldn't figure out where the birds came into it, and why they were played that music.

W: The birds came into it because, like all the others, I thought the images were beautiful. I didn't want to put environmental sounds to them, or instrumental things to them, so then I was trying to figure out what should go with the birds . . . the computer music was the thing I grabbed out of the air, and it seemed cutesy and it seemed curiously inappropriate, so I think I'm keeping it. It really does demean them. It's a nasty gesture.

J: I didn't find it demeaning. I thought they were 'dumbly' intelligent. They could hear it, but couldn't

understand, but they didn't care that they couldn't. W: Good, I felt bad about it, but did not want to change that for a lot of reasons.

J: Why did you put the credits between the first and second sections?

W: I wanted something to really separate section one and section two because if you didn't separate them, because of the cutting between disparate things, you could assume that they were part of one thing. Whereas with 'Water' it's pretty evident that you're in a different piece. It was purely practical.

J: I didn't understand the bit about the pullet.

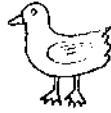
W: Oh, okay. Ned comes over the hill singing "Single Bullet Theory". Very few people get that, but I thought it was one of the most literal. It's very simple. The Warren Commission, when they were reporting on Kennedy's assassination, reported that he was killed by a single gunman, a single bullet, from a single vantage point, there was no conspiracy - the 'Single Bullet Theory'. Emile Sapruder was an amateur film maker who was filming Kennedy going through Dallas and he just happened to film Kennedy's head getting blown off. So this became the famous Zapruder film that was used as proof of the 'Single Bullet Theory'. The same film was later used to disprove that theory. So Ned walks over the hill in a Texas cowboy hat singing "Single Bullet Theory, etc." and then yells "Zapruder" at the camera and then the camera zooms in on a grassy knoll, which is the knoll over which Howard Hunt is supposed to have shot Kennedy. It's very appropriate that that's one of the first films that I made with my super 8 camera - an inverted gesture about famous super 8 movies in history.

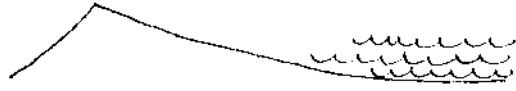

J: Where does the pullet come into it?

W: If "Single Bullet Theory", then "Single Pullet Theory". It's just a pun.

(pause)

"Structure . . ." is hard to talk about . . . a lot of it is so heavily non verbal, but I really like that, and I especially like that I'm using Chris Mann to establish its non verbalism. *

A Film About Warren, Witnessed by  's
an entanglement of symbols

two versions of its shape: I. 
II. 

Section One

Cage's 4'33'' cannot be smashed by ideology, or a frozen chicken
however, vegetables are smashed; by hammar, shoe, chainsaw,
axe, slasher.
Nature subdued by violence.
Why did Warren choose glasses of Chinese origin

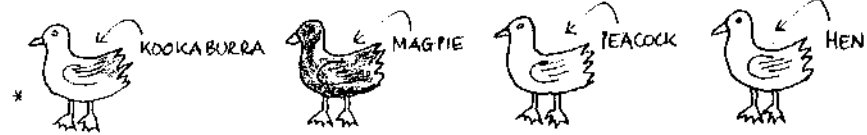
and, enter the  s.  Art lives, behind false
noses

an empty glass = structure,
what's in it = non-structure, but what's in it is selected.

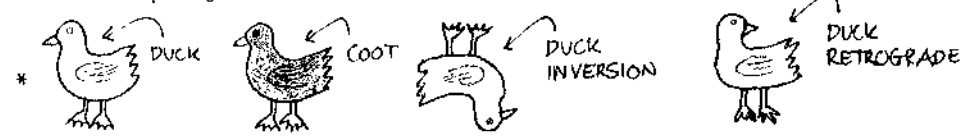
Section Two

here we have a structure, filled

Some themes: *circular motion and/or dance



*man doing violent work (against trees,
language)
*water/frozen water/sea water/water sounds/
music played to water




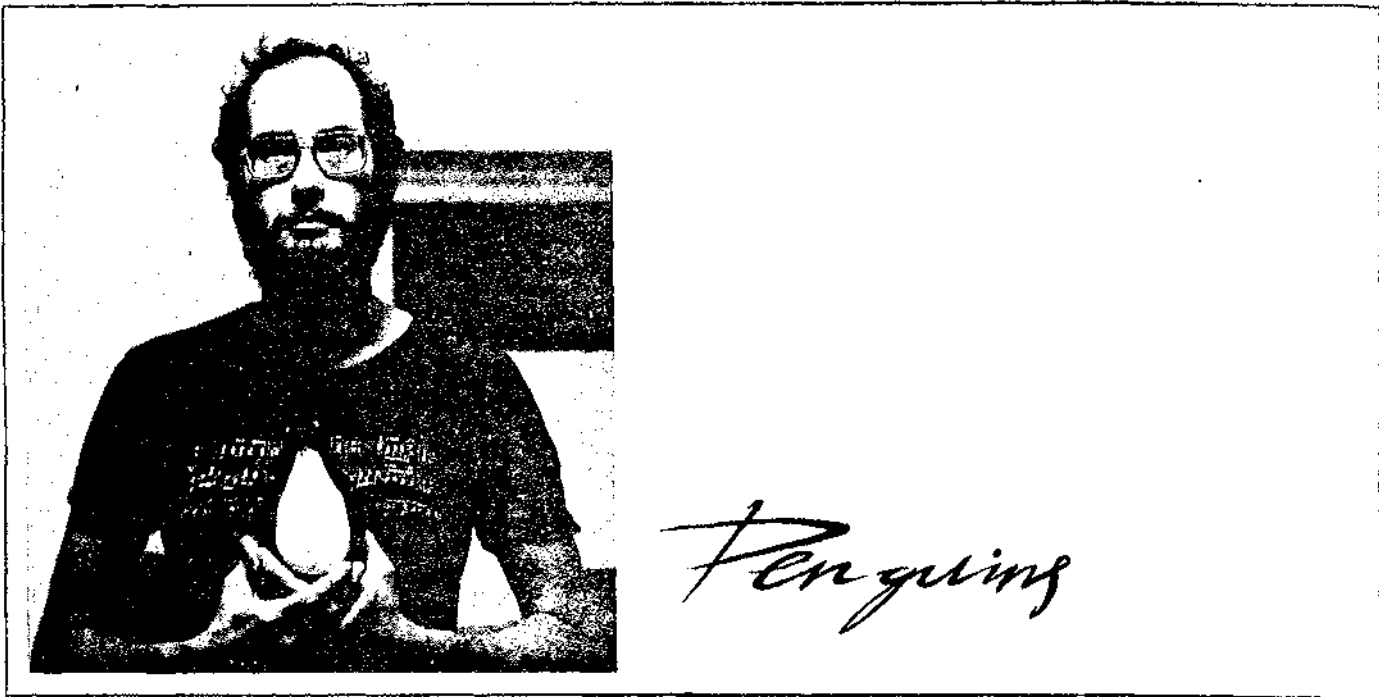
*trees
*the dark self (West Side, subways, dolls)
vs. calm self (4 Winters, Dances)

The birds are listening to electronic music,
are they the audience.

Section Three

The structured visual action of Section One is now countered
by selected visual action - light on water.

Symbolically: water - fills the glass,  s can swim
on it (but penguins can go deeper),
has reflections = an indirect method
of looking at yourself.



Clifton Hill Community Music Centre presents Penguins by Warren Burt, November 24, 1980 at 8 p.m.

This piece is so self-explanatory, it's hard to write notes about it. Presumably, a program note should help people experience a work give them a handle into it, in some way, as well as telling how the work came to be. However, the origin of the piece is fully dealt with in the piece itself, so the only thing I think I need to write about is the nature of the cutting up used to make the piece.

'Penguins' exists in several versions. Originally, it was a collection of 147 postcards sent to Kenneth Gaburo last year. These were then xeroxed and bound into book form and distributed to 20 friends. It is this book I am performing from tonight. Sending a text on postcards automatically means cutting up the text. Sending several texts implies intercutting them. Sending a text to Kenneth Gaburo mandates the use of retrogrades and other contrapuntal devices. So many things in this piece are presented backwards. Some others are forward, but reversed. For example, the texts of the "Essay on Penguins" are written left to right, but bottom-to-top, so that reading from top to bottom presents a nice spray of the information contained within it. Tonight, the post cards are projected, and as they were written, from bottom to top in correct syntactical order. So when you see a text that it looks like I'm reading incorrectly, you'll know it's part of the "Essay on Penguins".

The question has been raised -- why did I cut up my information in this way -- and not just present it straight. The answer is simple. I like games and puzzles. This piece should not seem bewildering, or alienating (and believe me, I've done (hopefully) everything in my power to assure that it won't be) - but rather, intriguing, and engrossing, so that in the course of the piece you will want to see how things go together, will want to follow the train of assemblage thru to its end.

POSTSCRIPTS: Once you set a train of investigation like this in motion, it has its own life. 13 years after writing Maledetto people are still sending Kenneth Gaburo small ridged bits of industrial hardware. I suppose I'm going to receive information on penguins and Yiddish Cowboys for many years to come. Oh well. I'm a big boy now, I can take it.

1. Marge Prior finally saw a penguin in September 1980.
2. Kenneth Gaburo has yet to reply to the piece, but he says, he will. His reply will, I am sure be amazing.
3. Sadie, the plaster penguin, recently returned from a tour overseas.
4. Jeff Gibson of Toowoomba sent me the penguin apron in May.
5. Jane Svoboda sent two new penguin poems from N.Y. in July.
6. Julian Driscoll gave me the brass penguin last month.
7. Tom De Witt sent me the poster, "Penguins in Everyday Life," last Friday!
8. Ms Crawford's fashions this evening are from Mr. P. of Phillip Island.

This piece is part of the Epic Monumental Project, a series of five pieces for video, film, slides, tape and voice, by Warren Burt. It is partially funded by the Music Board of the Australia Council and concludes next week with the performance of "8 8's" Four Pairs in the Shape of a Piece," for computer and synthesizer on tape.

Review of "Penguins" by Walter Billeter

Who cares about penguins? Warren Burt - obviously. Why - wrong question, try "how?" How? musically, anecdotally, informedly amusingly, constructively, pictorially, often quirksome and overall exhaustingly.

Why the question persists why penguins? And yet it's not the subject matter that's bothering me ("some of my best friends are penguins" - a faint smile, then exit a la Charlie Chan); rather it is a perceived lack of any reality relatedness, anecdotes about friends and penguins notwithstanding. What I mean is that the piece appears to be peculiarly afloat, i.e. somehow cut loose from external reality without being given an internal centre towards which it could gravitate. It feels like being confronted with a kind of patterned absence, which irritates and intrigues me.

Walter Billiter

WALTER: At one stage I thought it would be quite easy to just dismiss the thing, but there's an uncomfortable feeling about it because there's no question that it amused me all evening when I saw the performance. And I spent quite a bit of time with the book when my copy came through the mail. There's enough there so that you can't actually just dismiss it. And then I asked, why am I irritated by the thing? Frankly, I don't know. At one stage I thought the lack of co-operation by Kenneth Gaburo, for instance. And the thing that the postal system could not be reflected in its presentation with different things. That these would account for it. But then thinking through that, I don't think it would make any difference in that sense. I still think it is, "Well, who cares about Penguins?" That's the first thing. It's not that penguins are uninteresting - it's not the subject matter. There is something - I mean, if you arbitrarily pick something and you do something with it - I've done that in "Novemberies" for instance. What I had in "Novemberies" thought was also right in the blood of just about every person I knew. So there was no possibility whatever I did that it would ever cut loose from some sort of reality thing. I had to play that down, that reality thing, when I wrote that, because I was finding I was tripping myself up. Because I don't mean a relatedness to reality like the politicians have it. I don't mean it in that sense. But I think that when any work starts to become interesting is precisely where it interconnects with the outside of it. You know, its one thing to make artifacts, and beautifully centred things, which are enjoyable in their own right, yes, but when they become REALLY interesting is in a context into which they are placed.

WARREN: That's interesting. Two things - about the lack of centre in the piece, I agree. There is something missing in the piece. I know that, and I think that came about from the way I did the piece, which was I started off by buying the postcards, saying I was going to do a bass piece of Bert Turetzky on thirteen penguin postcards as a memento of our visit to Phillip Island. I never got it together to do the bass piece, but when I went down there to buy the postcards, I bought many more postcards than that. And the first thing that happened was this structure of cards without any writing or subject matter whatever. It was just an elaborate ordering of 144 (at that time) postcards of penguins. And getting really into the postcard as an object - misprinting and all that. And then the subject matter of penguins came secondarily.

WALTER: Oh, I thought that was right. If you have penguins postcards then the subject matter is given. I thought that was right.

WARREN: So the subject matter is completely referential to itself and completely introverted and so in that sense, yeah, there's something missing, but

WALTER: It's very strange, because on the other hand I imagine myself - I was getting this little review together and sort of thought, Well, what the hell am I asking about? On the one hand I pick up Bayer's "The Philosopher's Stone", the thing with the 'blue blue blue'. You have to say there's an arbitrariness. You pick the blue. Blue is a character in the piece, it's the subject matter in the piece, it's the form of the piece, and I have no quarrels with that at all. And then I start to think about - I told you earlier that there's a lot - you could go into analysis of the structure itself

I basically agree with you that the piece does that in itself. Like you have in your introductory note it is self evident. I agree with you on that and I just assume

everyone who comes across the thing will know the piece anyway, so we can talk about other things. But it is this -

WARREN: The reality reference is another thing that surprised me. I thought that Melbourne would be the ideal city to do it in because penguins are one of the essential tourist characteristics of this city, and my god! everybody's seen those damn penguins. But a) I am really surprised to find out how few Melbourneans have actually seen them, and b) those that have seen them a lot of times are turned off by the trivialisation of them. In this piece I was trying to make penguins real characters and in fact, go against that trivialisation - making a tourist trap of them - which is what has happened.

But I find that many people don't have that relationship to nature, or whatever. There's a real ambivalence in my attitude. On the one hand, I'm trying to dignify the penguin and say let's not make them anthropomorphic and Chilly Willy. On the other hand, the piece is cutsey-poo as all hell, and there really is that thing in it of "Oh, aren't these little fellers cut and look at all these little cute objects that are made modeled on them." So there's a real conflict between giving the bird itself dignity, and dealing with the trivialization of the bird that society has put on it.

WALTER: I think that was well done, though. On the most direct level with the cartoon coming in - the criticism in there. But that's another thing I had with the performance - you read it the way it was written. You know, the "Essay on Penguins" parts - you read them from the bottom to the top. That's a thing I thought was not strong enough. Ironically, because I think there are things that are insufficiently developed. I would think that reading, for instance, in our society is in a very primitive stage in the sense that we find unless we have a text that meets expectation, we certainly cannot, while also concentrating on the ear, read a counter-text. I found that somehow this didn't come through strong enough because it just didn't work. Maybe in other performance, a second voice reading it in the opposite way as well. You know, so you have it all there.

WARREN: That is a real weakness in the piece that I haven't been able to solve yet because although I was delighted with - any of the upside down texts give wonderful things.

WALTER: I know! -

WARREN: Very funny things, but when you're reading the book you can pick up that it also works as a logical entity the other way as well.

WALTER: When you spend time in reading, you can pick up those sorts of things, but our minds are not developed enough to do it in the performance. I guess because we're just incredibly conditioned to have a very linear superficial sense thing, and everything that's not fitting we tend to block out. I mean I do that, and I write these sort of things, and still I find with multimedia, that it is an assault on the senses on so many levels and maybe that has something to do with this hesitant approach to the piece on my part. Because you find that while we're exposed to the multimedia things you cannot let your critical faculties work as you normally do because the input is so great.

WARREN: That's even the case with cinema.

WALTER: Yeah. Again I hesitate using these words, but it's almost sort of a gut reaction level. When I saw Herzog's "Kaspar Hauser", I was really disappointed. I was sitting there enjoying the images, and then was just

getting, through the film, more and more annoyed and didn't know why. When I got home I said, "I'm sick and tired of being manipulated by images". But it wasn't an intellectual thing first off. It was just a feeling of discomfort.

WARREN: Right! Something is wrong here. What's wrong?

WALTER: And I think the more versatile and multifaceted the work is, the more you have these sort of reactions because the mind just can't switch from one to the other and bring them parallel.

WARREN: That's one possibility. The other possibility may be that there's some very serious weakness in the piece and all the structures piled one on top of the other -- like a house of cards -- go to confuse and disguise that weakness, but in the end the weakness is still at the bottom. Despite all the elaborations it's still built on a sand base -- it's a beach piece, right? and can be swept away very easily. No matter how elaborate your castle is -- Maybe that's what comes through -- that weakness -- which I can't define.

WALTER: But when you look at "Der Yiddisher Cowboy", now this works just the opposite way. You can't say you do not have arbitrariness there. You have an arbitrariness of selection from the material, and you have a very creatively structured way of dealing with it. But then you have this sort of interconnection linking with the external, which cannot become divorced. Maybe because we're familiar with exploitation, you know, we're familiar with the whole situation.

WARREN: Yeah. The Yiddish Cowboy came out of something Ron was vitally concerned with in his life and the Penguin thing for me was never more than a pleasant obsession. It wasn't this gut driving issue, it was, "Oh yeah, this will be a nice fun thing to do". And I think I was very conscious of writing a light piece. You know, with all the profundity of the "Light Cavalry Overture", and maybe that's what is wrong with it, that the involvement with Penguins which began it was fairly superficial and it wasn't, say, a gut reaction with history, such as Robboy had in the Cowboy.

WALTER: Yeah, it just confirms that concentration on structure and form is not all. It's a precondition, but it's not everything. That a funny thing, though in the piece itself, while sitting there, on the one hand there was no question you could not ignore that there were structural things going on. On the other hand, the

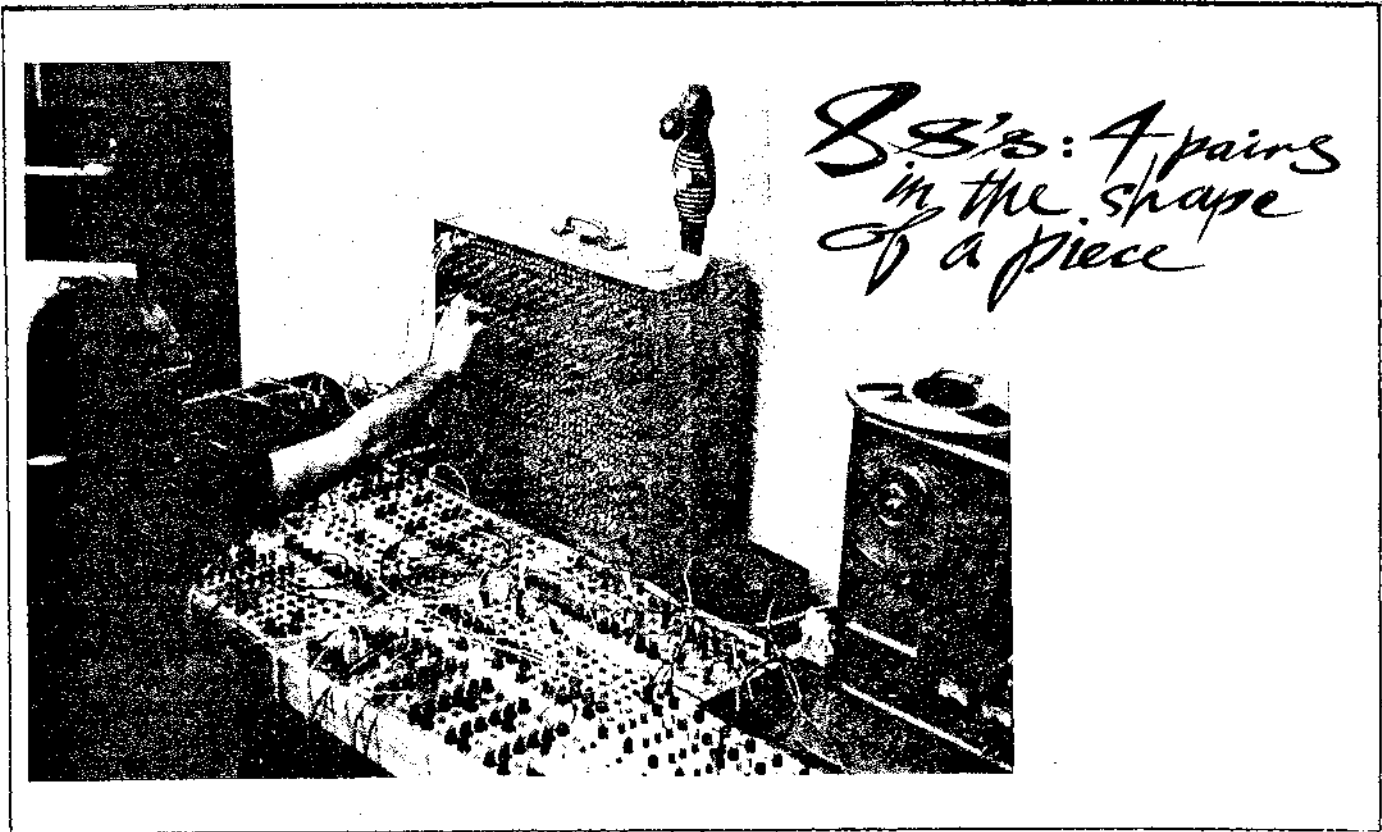
whole thing, at the same time, did appear sort of formless. And again I just find it irritating. Irritating in the sense that you can't just shrug them off, because you don't know why it does it. That's why I thought, maybe there is more to the piece. But I come now to a point where I'm very distrustful of the critical inventory, and the way we think, because I think it has put an input into the piece. There must be a different reaction -- you know -- a different way of approaching of experiencing these sorts of things, of talking about, experiencing these sorts of things. So I refuse to categorize and want to find out what's there and I don't know how much is trying to sort out my thing, and how much is the piece. I know first off, it has something to do with reality and its connection, and I went into that, and more and more I found the concentration on that would just trip myself up again. The very argument would be misunderstood, taken just as the very blatant politico sort of thing of right subject matter and social relevance. It's not that what I mean. It's context. Now, without trying to make anything out of that, yes, it is what I mean. It is that, in anything you do, you have place and you have anger in it, and the thing is that maybe art to some degree being a process of selection primarily, that you have to be careful about how you place it. With this piece, it's almost like you could imagine sort of -- Oh, in one of the science fiction stories I read, they used antimatter and the problem was how to bed this in matter. You had to construct this field so the whole thing wouldn't blow up -- and yes, you maybe have this rigid form and structures going on, but they're not penguinic structures. I think that's my hassle.

WARREN: THAT'S IT!! That's what's wrong with the piece! Perhaps if I had taken some sort of analogy --

WALTER: GANZ ORGANIZIERT, AGAIN!!!

WARREN: With the penguin year - like Thoreau in "Walden" uses the structure of the year to tie together his otherwise disparate essays, that would make the piece tougher, and thoroughly work. As it is now, it's like one of those fantastic impractical nests built by a crazy penguin. That sort of unthought -- out light juxtaposition element is the weakness within it.

WALTER: Yeah. It's again the internal-external relationship, isn't it? I'm obsessed with that at the moment, and I don't know if one should look at pieces like that, but that's what I do, so *



Clifton Hill Community Music Centre Presents Eight Eights - Four Pairs in the Shape of a Piece by Warren Burt Dec. 1 1980 at 8 pm.

- 1) Five Adventures of a Stunned Mullet (Feb. '79- dur. 8')
- 2) Out to Sea with the Flatheads and the Flakes and the Flukes (Mar.'80 dur. -- 8') (Prime Serial Canon II).
- 3) Journeys through New York State (Reflections on a Roadmap) (Apri. '80 - dur. 8')
- 4) Autobiographical Changes (August '80 dur. 8')
- 5) After Ruggles (April June '79 - dur. 8')
- 6) Yackandandah Dance (Oct. '79 -- dur. 8')
- 7) After Monk (June '79 - dur. 8') (Random Walks through "Monk's Mood, by Thelonious Monk)
8. Reloopse (Variations on "loops," by Robert Erickson (No. 79 -- dur. 8')

NOTES: I've noticed for years that a lot of my pieces tend to fall into certain lengths, biological rhythms, or some such. One of these durations is eight minutes. So, a couple years back, I decided to do a series of pieces, all eight minutes long. It seemed like a fun sort of discipline to engage in, and it was. So here they are -- 4 pieces for computer, and four for synthesizer. The computer pieces were done on the New England Digital Synthesizer using Joes Chadabe and Roger Meyer's PLAY 2D program, at their studio in Albany, N.Y. The synthesizer pieces were made on my Serge Synthesizer, while I was living in Sydney last year.

These 8 pieces are absolute musics, musics about music history, musics that deal with internal formalist problems of musical organization as developed in the tradition of Western Twentieth Century Art Music. As such, they are capable of standing on their own terms, not compromising with any external necessities placed upon them.

However, music, and indeed, any sound, has a palpable, provable physical effect on the listener. This physical effect is interpreted as an emotional reaction- which are all really physical states, anyway. These ideas have been more than adequately demonstrated in the works of Manfred Clynes and John Diamond. And while the measurement is nowhere precise enough to say that piece X produces Y physical effect, enough work has been done to show that a broad similarity does exist in many peoples responses to a given piece of music.

Therefore, as a composer, and hopefully, as a caring person, I became concerned with the physical effects of my music on people. Since reading Partch's 'Genesis of a Music' several years ago, I have become very concerned with the effects on various intonations on people and have done much experimentation with scale material both justly and unjustly tuned. I can report that some scales I constructed (i.e. the 17th root of 2.19) actually produced feelings of great agitation -- i.e. they gave me the heebie-jeebies! Others, for example -- a justly tuned scale based on multiples of subharmonics 2 through 9, produced feelings of well-being, satisfaction and even dare I say it? Nobility.

I have a great fascination with number patterns, randomness, etc. My curiosity nearly always prompts me to ask -- what would that sound like? Does that particular pattern or algorithm have, latent within it, a "good" music? Can I learn to hear the "good" music in that pattern? And when I do learn how to listen to that music, will it in fact, be "good"? Will it have a positive physical effect on me and its other listeners?

So I become concerned with the effect my music has on people. This concern extends itself to a concern with the proper performance conditions for the music. That is, if you are concerned with people's responses, then a listening environment should be set up that is minimally intrusive on people's receptivity to sound, so that you can be sure the responses you are getting are not those of annoyance at the dripping tap or the drunk in the last row, for example. In my many years of presenting tape music in concert I have evolved what, for me, was the ideal listening environment. Imagine my delight when reading in John Diamond's work that the ideal listening environment to ensure maximum bodily response to sound matched my environment almost precisely! Here is my idea of the optimum listening environment:

Carpeting (of natural fibre, if possible), warm (but not hot) NOT stuffy - adequate natural ventilation -- no air conditioning No smoking (smoke confuses not only the receptivity of the smoker, but also of all those around the smoker) Speakers placed for maximum acoustic clarity, well off the floor. People preferably lying on the floor -- in Alexander rest position, or if they must sit, (bad backs and all that) in wooden, straight-back chairs (never in metal chairs, which have been shown to have the same confusing effect on the body's receptivity) Lighting should be dim -- and from non-glaring incandescent fixtures and not fluorescents. All equipment used should be functioning as well as possible to insure that people are hearing the MUSIC and not a distortion of it (i.e. distortion produced only when you want it!)

This concern with performance environment is only a natural extension of a composer's concern with a sense of responsibility towards his creation. The same meticulous care put into composition and performance of a musical idea should also be put into ensuring proper conditions for its reception. Music does not stand on its own. It needs us to care for it, to work with it, to learn from it.

Now obviously, compromises will be made. This is Clifton Hill with an inherited performance space, borrowed equipment and an annual budge of 37 cents, maybe. However, within those limitations, I would like to make the environment as conducive as possible for pleasant listening. Therefore, if anyone wants to lie down, I have strewn the stage area with rugs and blankets for this evening's performance and all those who wish to relax in that way during the performance are more than welcome to.

What follows here are some technical notes on how the individual pieces in this set were made, and a chart showing some of the various formal relationships between the pieces.

- 1) Five Adventures of a Stunned Mullet is a study in Chowning frequency modulation using ratios of frequencies and duration derived from prime numbered scales. The scales were loaded into the computer with certain weightings which were then selected randomly in such a way that the overall result - though randomly derived, preserved the weightings inherent in the original

listing. The piece is a monophonic timbre melody of noise, and the surging, surflike character of the piece results from the inter-sections of various long envelopes I used on the oscillators affecting the modulations.

2) Out to Sea with the Flatheads and the Flakes and the Flukes, takes the scales and the rhythms of the Mullet, and makes a polyphony of various percussive and abrasively rude timbres with them. It sounds "serial" to the uninitiated listener, because, surprise! it is.

3) Journeys through New York State. Ron Robboy, in the Yiddisher Cowboy, says I am capable of taking any thin thread of trashy material and making a piece of it. Delighted with his description I made this piece - all the pitches are taken from a table of distances between major population centres in New York State. The rhythmic ratios were derived from the number of elements in a list filling the available time for a section with equal duration notes. So, for example, if one list had 39 elements and another had 38 elements, and both lists were to last 3 minutes, the resulting rhythmic ratio between the parts would be 39:38. Only one timbre was used for all the notes of the piece, producing a polyphony with an extremely moody sound reminiscent of certain moments of Wagner.

4) Autobiographical Changes uses random numbers from the Dreambooks published by Robert M. Lalli of Tuckahoe, N.Y. Dreambooks are gambling tables which act as a betting guide for people interested in various lotteries. I found the seediness of these books appealing and began researching what Mr. Lalli calls "popular numerology". All the rhythms and pitches of the eight one minute sections of this piece are derived from numerological reductions of my name or the names of various organizations I've been a part of. Curiously enough, the sound results do have relevance to their sources! For instance, section 4, the most "minimal" or the lot, is a reduction of YCMA, which stood for Young California Minimal Artists! The funky rhythms of section 8 derive from the 'Blind Lemon Pledge', which is my persona when I play blues on my kelele. It should be added that the same algorithm was used to transform each of the names into a pitch-rhythm.

5) After Ruggles is an example of a single complex controlvoltage producing a chromatic harmony with a synthesizer in real time, over which a sequencer and a composer interact in real time to create bluesy little melodies. The harmonies were loosely derived from the work of American composer Carl Ruggles.

6) Yackandandah Dance is a study using Chowning Frequency Modulation on an analog synthesizer to make extremely realistic instrumental sounds. I got the idea of trying this after working with the New England Digital machine and tried simulating its method of producing FM on my Serge. I was delighted with my success in discovering a whole new world of analog timbres. The pitches derive from Olympos Pentatonic, an ancient Greek mode, which sounds oriental, and is thus an antidote to sloppy thinking by weak-minded musicologists who strive to see "oriental influence" in Australian/European/American (pick one, or none) music lurking under every rock. The mode was sampled in various ways by a sample and hold so that I had control in real time over which elements of the mode I wanted sampled, and what types of sampling I wanted to take place.

7) After Monk takes 16 chords from "monk's Mood", by Thelonious Monk, and rigorously randomizes their order and rhythm. This is an long term interest of mine, what happens when the "flue" of tonality is dissolved, and the tonal elements are allowed to combine freely. The "drum" sound in the background was found to be necessary for the hearing of the rhythms that the other voices were playing. We experience syncopations in relation to something. This delicate little "duck drum" as I called it, provided that something.

8) ReLoopse takes the patch of Yackandandah Dance and develops with it a monophonic melody with rapidly alternating timbres. This is a variation of "Loops", by Robert Erickson, for 6 instruments, and is a rigorous investigation of Klangfarbenmelodie. Therefore, the piece should be listened to for its timbral interest.

The pitches (derived here from a chord of Scriabin) are of only secondary importance - the main focus of your attention should be here directed on timbre and the way it changes.

THANKS THANKS THANKS THANKS THANKS THANKS

TO: The Music Board, Australia Council for their Grant to do this work. Joel Chadable, for letting me use his computer. Steve Jones for the use of his Darlinghurst studio to record some of this. Julian Driscoll for loaning equipment throughout this series. Chris Wyatt, David Chesworth, and Phil Brophy for technical and practical assistance throughout the whole series. Without these peoples efforts this series would not have happened, and I want again to extend my warm thanks to all of these people for all they have done.

Warren Burt

Chris Wyatt Review 4 Pairs in the Shape of a Piece by Warren Burt

Warren Burt presented eight pieces each eight minutes long, subdivided into two sections by the synthesis media used in their production. The first four were produced on a New England Digital Company computer, and the second four were produced on Serge Synthesis systems and homemade electronic systems.

Warren went to a considerable degree of effort to ensure that listening conditions were optimum and in initially presenting the pieces also spoke about the physiological relationship between attention and listening environment.

I felt that in some pieces more environmental movement would have presented different facets of the music. I was concentrating on all the works more or less equally - lying on my back with my eyes closed in the epicentre of the stereo playback area Warren had assembled. All sensation apart from that of the music was reduced for me. In retrospect I think some outside interference or awareness of the same would have sharpened my experience of the pieces. I say this because two of the digital synthesis pieces and two of the analog pieces had frameworks or structures I felt to be intellectually involving, more so than 'physically' involving.

In the highly concentrated listening environment I was in I found that I almost listened too hard, or got too deep. I got lost in the structure and got stuck in the sensation so to speak. This is in contrast to the two analog pieces that were physically involving for me - 'Yackandandah Dance' and 'Reloopse'.

The other perceptual element that was most striking, if expected, was the disparity between the perceived durations of the various pieces. This element for me reflected the overall grouping of the pieces -- for both halves of the concert were 'perceptually' symmetrical; the second and fourth digital pieces, like the complementary analog pieces being the most 'moving', the first and third pieces in each group having more intellectual interest -- for instance in pitch as apart from timbre relationships.

The symmetry thing could be carried too far. Still, the split into analog and digital pieces, apart from being a factual grouping was also expressive of some kind of overall mood in each group of four.

The digital group was the most homogenous in this regard, possibly because the same machine was used, or because all the pieces were done at the same time, or whatever reason or reasons one would care to speculate on.

Overall the most involving piece for me was the last analog piece -- 'Reloopse' -- a re-evaluation of a work by Robert Erickson called 'Loops', which deals with repetitive tune and rhythm with cycling timbre. Unfortunately even despite Warren's careful design of a comfortable listening environment I had heard just too much electronic music non stop to fully get into it. This could have been due to my fatigue, but speaking to people afterwards who also experienced similar fatigue I'd say that some kind of upper limit for concentrated listening had been reached.

Overall, it was a good concert. We heard eight elegant process pieces presented in an interesting relationship.

Chris Hyatt

W: You said that more environmental movement would have presented different facets of the music -- what do you mean by that?

C: I took advantage of your kindly donated rugs, and was listening quite deeply to what was going on -- it seemed to me that in a couple of pieces -- I'm particularly thinking of the first and third analog pieces which are just to do with pitch relationships really --

W: No they aren't.

C: Well -- anyway? I think I would have preferred to have had more stimulus while I was listening to them because I found that I was listening to them so much that I kind of got away from them.

W: I don't understand. You mean you were listening so deeply that you drifted off?

C: Yes.

W: Oh, that's okay, that's perfectly cool.

C: I guess so but it left me at odds with what I was listening to, which RELOOPSE and YACKANDANDAH DANCE did not. I guess you could drift off to them but they're more timbrally --

W: Engaging.

C: Yes. For me YACKANDANDAH DANCE and RELOOPSE and the other two analog pieces AFTER RUGGLES and AFTER MONK represent two different aspects of your music.

W: Well, the pitch relationships in RELOOPSE and YACKANDANDAH DANCE are every bit as complex as the pitch relationships in AFTER MONK and AFTER RUGGLES -- its just that in the two pulse pieces (Reloopse and Yackandandah Dance) I give you a beat and that's the main difference for me besides the Chowning FM stuff which gives these pieces their sparkly timbres -- the main difference is that there's a nice steady dancey beat in these pieces, and that seems to be where they become engaging or physical as you call it, whereas a lot of jazzers find AFTER MONK incredibly engaging, because its all those jazz rhythms and jazz harmonies scattered around in a non linear way.

C: I find it engaging also; theres a kind of tension there because its doesn't ever resolve. Now I know that Monks work doesn't resolve either but AFTER MONK is so pared away that you do expect it to resolve and it doesn't. I suppose you could have made it jazz type cadential but you didn't. That was purposeful was it?

W: Oh yeah. Its just setting up a random process and following it through to the end. There's no attempt in that piece in being cutesy, like say at the end of Song. I set up the sequencers so that that very high sixth chord -- that real jazz sonority at the end of all these combinatorial chords happens, and I purposely set it up to get that real sort of corny cadance at the end because I really wanted that -- but in this (After Monk) there was no effort: it was just right, we're eight minutes in, pull out the plug that was driving the

sequencer and by pulling it out it also triggered the base thing to go duhm duhmm and then fade out.

C: What about what I said at the end of the review about the eight elegant process pieces. Were they?

W: Ah, no.

C: Most of the analog ones were though?

W: Well all of them were process pieces in one sense or another but the process wasn't machine oriented in some of them. For example in the third computer piece -- that is not process oriented except that I'm taking something thats absolutely flakey and arbitrary -- a road map -- and feeding those numbers into the computer and seeing how it sounds. And it sounded good so I kept it.

C: You followed that through though -- you didn't change --

W: Oh, completely rigorously. There's a five minute section, there's thirty nine notes so each of those notes takes one thirty ninth of five minutes. There's another sequence that has thirty eight notes. They take one thirty eighth of five minutes. Its just completely rigorously followed through.

C: It seems to me that as a set of pieces they were reasonably rigorous in terms of their content.

W: Yes, well they were hard to write. I rewrote and rewrote and rewrote. It was the first time I've ever done that with an electronic piece.

C: Were the digital pieces done at more or less the same time?

W: No. The way it happened was I realised I was going to be travelling around the world a lot and had this idea that I'd do an eight minute piece -- since eight minutes is a nice duration -- that I'd do an eight minute piece on eight different synthesisers and somehow that never happened. The first piece I did in February of '79 was digital. It was the very first piece in the set and the next two pieces to get done were two done in June in Sydney -- the two analog pieces AFTER MONK and AFTER RUGGLES. Then in October and November of '79 RELOOPSE and YACKANDANDAH DANCE were done in Sydney and then in March and April of '80 I did the second and third computer pieces which are the PRIME SERIAL CANON and the JOURNEYS THROUGH NEW YORK STATE and finally in August of 1980 I did the last one -- the last computer piece -- the AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL CHANGES. So in fact what happened was that the first four pieces were done on Joel Chadabe's machine with the Play program, and the last four pieces were done on my Serge system, and the only homemade electronics were my box of sequencers so it was basically all Serge stuff. And so it happened that each group of four was done on the synthesiser. All that time, I conceived of the structure of the works long before I made the first piece. And then I did all these pieces and it was just serendipity seeing in fact which pieces fitted into the structure out of all the pieces I cranked out. *

WARREN BURT'S

Experimental electronic
Performance on 5 consecutive Friday evenings
Incorporating procedures such as
Collage, cutting, sequencing, overdubbing, retro-casting,
 multi-tracking, re-ordering, synthesized non-mechanical
 music
 amplifying
 unique battery of
Media - synthesizer, film, video, computer, tape, slides
Umpirically crossing
Musical frontiers.
Experimenting
 together with these pre-performance preparations,
Natural
Talents
Alive
Performance technique/presentation
Rooted from
Omnithological fecundity to
Perish American anecdotes
Represented in the newest and penetrating
Experimental musical
Concept and techniques.
Thought and techniques.

EPIC MONUMENTAL PROJECT

Five Pieces for Video, Film Slides, Voice and Electronic

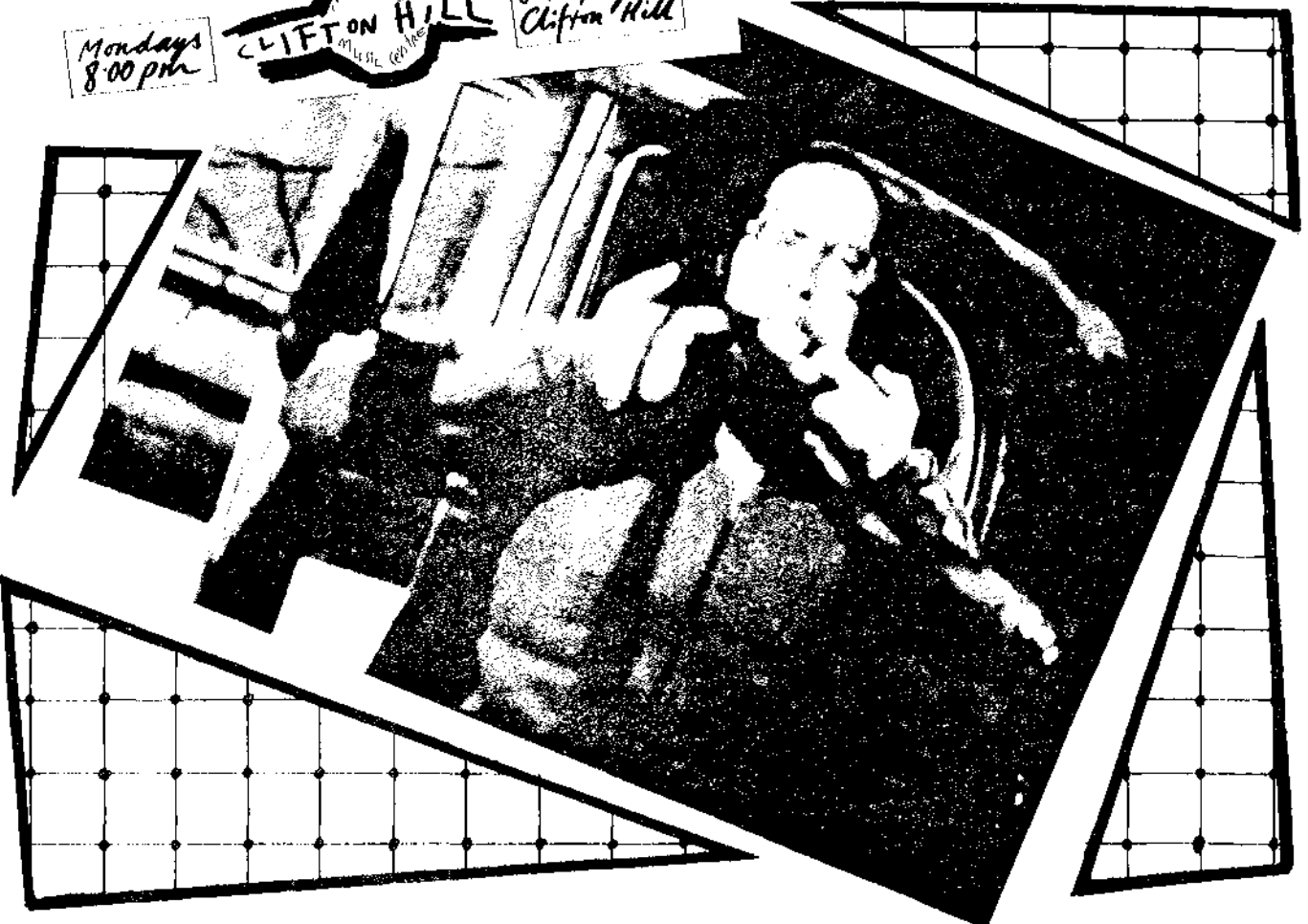


- 3 Nov. MOODS for Videotape and Stereo Sound
- 10 Nov. DER HIDDISHER COWBOY (a film in English) in collage with Ronald AI Rolloy
- 17 Nov. IF STRUCTURE IS AN EMPTY GLASS..... (a film)
- 24 Nov. PENGUINS - for film, slides, tape and reader
- 1 DEC. 8-PAIR 4 PAIRS IN THE SHAPE OF A PIECE-computer

Mondays
8:00 pm



6-10 Page 8
Clifton Hill



NEW MUSIC

MONDAY CONCERTS		WEEK	WEDNESDAY CONCERTS		
NOV 3	EPIC-MONUMENTAL-PROJECT BY WARREN BURT. (8 PIECES OF VIDEO FILM SOUND, VOICE-ELECTRONIC)	1	NOV 5	THE FOURO. <i>Well, why not?</i>	
NOV 10		2	NOV 12	LAUGHING HANDS.	
NOV 17		3	NOV 19	PAUL SCHUTZ <i>Exotica</i> (percussion work.) <i>Exotica</i> . THE STRANGE EFFECT.	
NOV 24		4	NOV 26	HERBIE JERCER & CHRIS BABINSKAS.	
DEC 1		5	DEC 3	CHRIS WYATT. → HOLMES, LEWIS, STANOP → → OULOS, SCHMUKI etc.	
DEC 8		BARRY VEITH & JUDY JACQUES.	6	DEC 10	Video <i>Nite</i> RANDELLI Prod. David CHESWORTH
DEC 15		K.G.B. CHRIS, ROBERT & IAN. (Improvisations)	7	DEC 17	LES GILBERT.
DEC 22		DOUGLAS RAY. <i>Multi-media event.</i>	8	DEC 24	→ ↑ <i>Wartime Art.</i>

**CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY
MUSIC CENTRE.** (6-10 Page Street,
Clifton Hill.)

ALL CONCERTS START AT 8.30 pm, EXCEPT THOSE (Ph: 489 3798.)
MARKED *, STARTING AT 8.00 pm.

The Four

Peter Simondson, Roxanne Boughen, Robert Goode, Peter Russo.

Although I didn't get around to seeing the threeo when they played their first season at Clifton Hill Community Music Centre, it seemed that some fundamental changes have taken place, since they became the fouro. Obviously the introduction of a new member, Peter Russo on drums who manages to produce some quite intricate and full rhythms which could almost be said to fall somewhere between jazz and his own form of semi abstract drumming.

This was their second performance and it must have been less spontaneous, I found it to be quite a tight recital of the eight pieces all of which were written by Peter Simondson as opposed to the spontaneous creation group of the songs in their first season. In between each piece of music short sound tapes were played which consisted of incredible and usually quite unrecognizable sound effects that managed to creat the dreamlike image of all sorts of creatures, disasters and explosions; flying, running and dancing between the sterephonic speakers in the room, as well as guitar pieces which because of its arrangements would be impossible to play.

On the whole I found the performance quite fast moving but pleasantly passive (except for the fire crackers) and in all ways, very intriguing. Needles to say I enjoyed it very much.

Ian Mclean .

Interview - PS=Peter Simondson RB=Roxanne Boughen PR=Peter Russo RG=Robert Goode and IM = Ian Mclean.

IM: What do you think about the review?
 PR: I was interested that you mentioned the Threco and that you got the impression that that concert was more improvisational.
 IM: That's the impression I got from reading the concert review artical in the previous magazine.
 RG: That's right. That concert's pieces were more loosely structured.
 PR: A jam was it?
 RG: Well not really, it's just that this time the pieces were all written by PS. In the other concert they were figured out by all of us, and they were less restricted in how each performer approached them. They allowed more freedom for each person to interpret them . . . Maybe we should mention that Peter S intended the pieces to have saxophone instead of a guitar part.
 PS: Yes that's right.
 RB: We anticipated certain timbral qualities but ended up with something else.
 RG: So really the FOURO wasn't supposed to be like a continuation of what we did as the Threco. A problem we had because the guitar parts were added was lack of rehearsal time. I think it would have been better with more.
 PS: Yes, we didn't have time to do the endings.
 IM: Since the music was all written out though doesn't that make it easier?
 RG: Theoretically yes, but we are pretty crummy readers.
 IM: Something I wanted to ask you Peter was if there was any Captain Beefheart or even Frank Zappa influence in the music. Some of it reminded me of 'burnt weenie

sandwich"?)
 PS: I don't think there was all that much influence.
 RG: I thought the music had rock influences but was based on permutation structures.
 PS: Yes I picked out patterns that might be rock patterns, but what I do to it has nothing to do with rock music.
 RG: The instrumentation was pretty much a standard 'rock' set up.
 PS: A few people criticised the line-up for being too 'rock' oriented.
 PR: Yeah, Billy Thorpe has the same line up bit it doesn't mean the music we did has anything in common.
 ALL: Yuk, yuk.
 IM: Lets talk about the tape pieces presented between each live piece.
 PS: They were all very percussive in a way, all the sounds have sharp attacks, but they are all acoustic sounds, I didn't use electronic ones.
 RG: Was that concious choice or was it because you didn't have electronics available?
 PS: It was a concious decision, I like acoustic sounds.
 IM: How recent are these pieces and do you plan to do more of these?
 PS: A few of them are old pieces. It takes so long to do one piece that there is no point in just playing it once. I plan to do more of these tape pieces in the future.
 RG: Do you write the tape pieces out first or do you figure them out as you go?
 PS: Well there were ones I wrote out first and then fitted the sounds to the score I had written and there were other ones that I just did as I went along. I think with the more recent ones they are very strict in following a plan though. *



It was a little difficult watching the L.H. concert this evening because the members had chosen to perform in the dark.

The music of LH is intended (I believe) to be listened to without distraction and the darkness encouraged this, except I found that the silhouetted figures became just as distracting once your eyes became used to it. The decision to quench the lights is fairly important as musical considerations aren't the only considerations to be taken into account when discussing a concert.

The feature of LH which strikes me as most positive is their use of tapes. Tapes are an important aspect of their music and it seems that they are using them more and more.

Performing with prerecorded rhythm tracks is becoming increasingly common, not only at Clifton Hill but in every studio around the world, and I think that it works well with Laughing Hands. They manage to keep a good balance between their machines and live sounds. There seems to be a tension set up where you think that their tapes will drown themselves onstage out: "The past intruding into the present", but this didn't happen.

Too much equipment can give a performer a headache but Laughing Hands don't seem to have this problem apart from Paul's wrestle with his cassette (cassette 4- Paul 1).

L.H. are however hidden by their instruments. Their music seems to require less and less of performer presence and Laughing Hands appear more and more as former presence in the form of tapes.

The wooden marimba was an example of excellent balance between tape and live sounds and this type of mix I like "for what a good mix is worth" in New Music.

Tapes are a feature of music which will be with us for a long time and their importance in New Music is something which L.H. appear to recognise.

Interview — PS= Peter Simondson G=Gordon Harvery I=Ian Russell P=Paul Schutz

PS: Do you want to tell me about yourselves?
 G: We've done that already with the other interviews.
 P: Ask us things about the . . .
 PS: About the concert then, are there problems in bringing all your equipment?
 G: We thought it was a pain to bring all our equipment and play live when there were about ten people in the audience.
 I: Less than ten people.
 P: And also the amount of work which went into making the backing tape for the concert. Like there was ten to twelve hours — more like twenty hours of work making the backing tape. These backing tapes were made just for that concert and weren't going to be used again.
 G: Then we played live over the top and made a much poorer job than we should have liked to have done. Our most successful concert has been when we did half a night of tapes at Clifton Hill.
 I: There were more people at that earlier concert.
 PS: Was it deliberate to have the lights out?

G: Yeah.
 I: Our music is for listening, there is nothing to look at, at all.
 P: I go to concerts to hear music, I don't care if it's coming from a pair of speakers connected to a person or a tape deck.
 PS: Would you do a concert where you just play your record?
 I: No, we wouldn't there's no point if you can go and buy the record.
 P: If we play tapes for a concert they are expressly for that concert.
 PS: Is there anything special about the Nov. 12 concert at CH?
 P: It's the first time we played with tapes live.
 I: That performance was largely a tape performance.
 P: We accompanied the tape as opposed to the tape accompanying us.
 I: We embellished what was on the tape.
 I: We may have played a little too much.
 P: It was perhaps a little too cluttered.
 PS: Do you think my article is a fair and accurate representation of the concert?
 I: Yeah. *

Paul Schutz



As the title suggests the first half of this evening at Clifton Hill was taken up with a performance by Paul Schutz, dealing in a very general fashion with the concept of leisure. The stage was set up with an easy chair, placed in front of a television which was switched on showing only snow or test pattern. A potted plant, was placed in such a way that it hung over the chair. A tape recorder was placed on a table by the chair, serving a dual function in the sense that, like the other props, it is something associated with the concept of leisure, serving also to play the pre-taped music.

The music itself, consisted of a number of very short pieces, the programme notes said 41 as a number, but I didn't count them. They were mostly percussion and synthesiser pieces and to be very general, they were, what I would term mood or environmental pieces.

As the programme title indicates, the overall theme was the 'Leisure Setting', but this theme can be approached from a number of different angles. Firstly, the performer could analyse the concept of leisure, in modern society, like what is the concept of leisure, in what ways is it used and what are its effects along with all the moral, social and political ramifications. On the other hand it can be approached in such a way, that the various definitions of leisure are accepted by the performer along with all their good and bad aspects.

In the second case the performer can employ a variety of mediums, in this case it was music, to try and invoke in the audience images of leisure or the leisure setting in the same way as a visual image can illustrate a subject from a number of different angles without becoming embroiled in political or philosophical arguments. It is this second method of approach which characterised Paul Schutz's performance. He created a static visual image, and then used a number of short music pieces to create aspect of the visual image. In this sense it was mood music.

One thing which I found interesting was the absence of the performer. Being pre-taped, and played on a cassette machine there was no need for the performer's presence on stage. In actual fact it was like listening to a record. The music was effective and achieve what I suppose was the desired effect, but it lacked the human element of a live performance. To extend this idea further it can be said that the performer is avoiding putting his ideas forward in the sort of situation a live performance affords. On the other hand it may be, that this was absent by design in that there were no distractions to take away from the visual image and allow the audience to dwell entirely on how the music matched, enhanced and worked with the image.

Leigh Parkhill

Interview – L = Leigh Parkhill and PS = Paul Schutz

L: I guess the first thing to ask you, is about the article. It had the accent on completely the different part of the title of the piece. The idea of calling it the 41 Aspects of the Leisure Setting, was that you were given a static image of the leisure setting which was kind of ephemeral, it could have been any setting and the light changing from the television was supposed to aid the different mood pieces, in giving a static image a completely different appearance. That was the theory of it.

L: But music was part of creating that image.

PS: The idea was rather than just present a whole lot of mood pieces and rely entirely on the audience to have no visual stimulation at all just like in a darkened room which is the usual thing for taped pieces, was to give an image that had implications, you know, you could look at it and imagine what was on the television, for example, or just the changing light on that setting combined with the music, could give that setting a whole lot of completely different characters.

As I say that was the theory behind it, I hadn't tried it out. I thought it worked rather well in that the light from the television did change frequency of

flickering and brightness and often to great effect with the tapes. Basically the whole idea was just a way of exploiting a whole lot of short edits to maximum effect.

L: Well that's what I was trying to get at when I was talking about mood or environmental music. Using a visual image as a springboard for a musical backdrop.

PS: If you want to use a visual image you've got problems, because you either have a different image for each piece, which means that your images have some pre-determined connection with the piece. It means you are giving the audience a push in a specific direction, now, if it happens that your image doesn't even remotely co-incide with what the music evokes for them, then all that causes is just complete chaos.

L: That's what I was trying to get at, when I was talking about the absence of the performer. I wondered whether your absence was, in fact not trying to give the audience a push in any particular direction but rather sort it out for themselves.

PS: Well, I thought if I'm going to have something visual with this it has to be something that is completely static, but is anonymous enough to apply in a whole lot of situations. Now if I'd had the armchair without the television it probably still would have worked but I think just the light activity from the television, it

cast shadows, it changed the shape of things, so it was static, but it did have changes occurring. The reason I chose the leisure setting, as I said, was that it was as good an image as any, and it was appropriate if I was using a television for light to have that setting it just seemed light the right thing.

L: But that music would have worked in invoking totally different images if it was in a different setting. If you had called the setting 'urban homelife' the images encouraged would have been totally different. The fact that you were putting a name to the 'Leisure Setting' means that you were working with that concept in mind.

PS: The setting was also suitably banal, for the music. Most of the pieces, particularly the percussion pieces were not kind of home relaxing music. The pieces weren't that kind of thing, they were much more exotic.

L: But they were sounds which are associated with leisure.

PS: Yes. Some of them were, but that was sheer coincidence.

L: The potted plant too. Was that a conscious prop?

PS: The potted plant was deliberate in that I wanted something that could be focused on, as a kind of catch, to a more exotic thing. You know the connotations, with percussion, everyone thinks of jungle and all that kind of stuff. Putting the potted plant there was a deliberate gesture, you've got this potted plant, and its in a completely captive position, and all it actually is, is a functional part of the 'Leisure Setting', but it is also just an image that can be picked up upon. You know, you can focus on that and ignore everything else.

L: That whole area I find quite interesting, the way music can be used to enhance visual images which are often more effective if accompanied by a sound track. You can get much more, a sense of time and of place. When you were talking before about the jungle I had those sort of feelings.

PS: Yes well! A lot of the percussion pieces were very derivative.

L: Did you use percussion for that reason?

PS: One thing I should point out is that while the tape in the form that you heard it was designed for that performance, but, what it was in fact, was a series of short edits of all the tape work I've done in the past three months, prior to the performance. Most of the pieces that you heard, go for ten minutes or so, without any change. Now when I decided to do the performance I had the choice of playing two or three of the pieces in their entirety, which I didn't want to do mainly because the way I work with tape, is if I sit down for a day and devote the whole day to making tapes I'll make an enormous cross-section of different sorts of things, and I never felt happy playing one of those tapes to anyone, because it really isn't indicative of what my actual music interests were, without completely misleading everyone, was to more or less chop up everything that I did, and that is what I did, edit all my tape work.

L: But with a particular theme in mind?

PS: Yes, but that could have been easily changed, I could easily have changed the theme, and used the same tape. It might have worked completely differently. With all those pieces and with most of the work I do, there is a variety of applications. They are not designed with any particular aim in mind. If anything, its designed as situation music or film music, for a film that hasn't been made. People often criticise Laughing Hands, by saying it sounds like film music, and as far as we are concerned that's a compliment, because that's what it is.

L: The association of the television and the music was entirely at random. The fact that it was on test

PS: What I did. The idea with the television was to get it to cast as varied an active light pattern, on the set, so what I did was find a programme which had a lot of movement, car chases and explosions so it would give the maximum amount of light. I don't know whether

you noticed, but several nice coincidences happened where, a really active piece would finish, and the second it finished all the light would just drop away and the thing would go really dark, and that was the sort of thing I was hoping for.

L: It was random in that sense?

PS: It was random in that I wasn't transmitting the programmes.

L: Do you think that is an idea which runs through much of your music. Things happen by circumstance rather than by design?

PS: Very few of those tapes, or the tapes that those edits came from are pre-meditated to any great degree. Usually if I decide that a piece is going to sound like this, it takes me two minutes to discover that I've found a much more interesting sound, on the way to finding it, or I've lost interest in it altogether. I could find something that I'm really happy with, and work on it for half an hour, and then discover that the whole thing sounds much better at twice the speed, so I'll play it back at twice the speed. I don't have any sense of massive integrity, whereby I have to follow an idea through.

L: In those terms, an idea doesn't have to be followed through completely, it can in fact alter towards the design.

PS: There were a lot of faults with that performance. The edit of the tape, I decided for my own convenience, that I would make each piece exactly one minute long. Now I don't in retrospect think that was a good idea because some of them really needed to go for longer.

L: I didn't really think that they were a standard length. I thought you used the idea, that different music works in creating different senses of time.

PS: That's interesting, because for me there was a really strong illusion that some of the pieces were a lot longer than others. I think it was a very foolish thing for me not to announce more strongly at the beginning a) That the pieces were all one minute long and b) just how many of them there were. The way they were edited I wasn't quite happy with that either, unfortunately it was edited from one cassette to another. Some of them definitely should have been butt-edited, there were too many fade ins and fade outs. Warren Burt said afterwards and I think it was a useful criticism, that he had the feeling of one piece going on to another piece, without any sense of progression, you just got this constant impression of A.A.A., each piece was totally isolated from the next one. I found myself that I couldn't remember the piece before, if I tried to remember it, during the one that came after it.

L: Using synthesizer and percussion, can produce a limited scope. You tend to get that continuity of sound which doesn't create an impression of progression.

PS: There was a very strong lack of progression. When I decided on 1 minute pieces, the idea was that there would be no progression, the audience was going to have to cope with 41 different mood changes. That might be all very well in theory but I don't think it worked and I think a progression would have made it more, interesting and of greater benefit to all the tapes.

L: It would have been difficult to work a sense of progression into it.

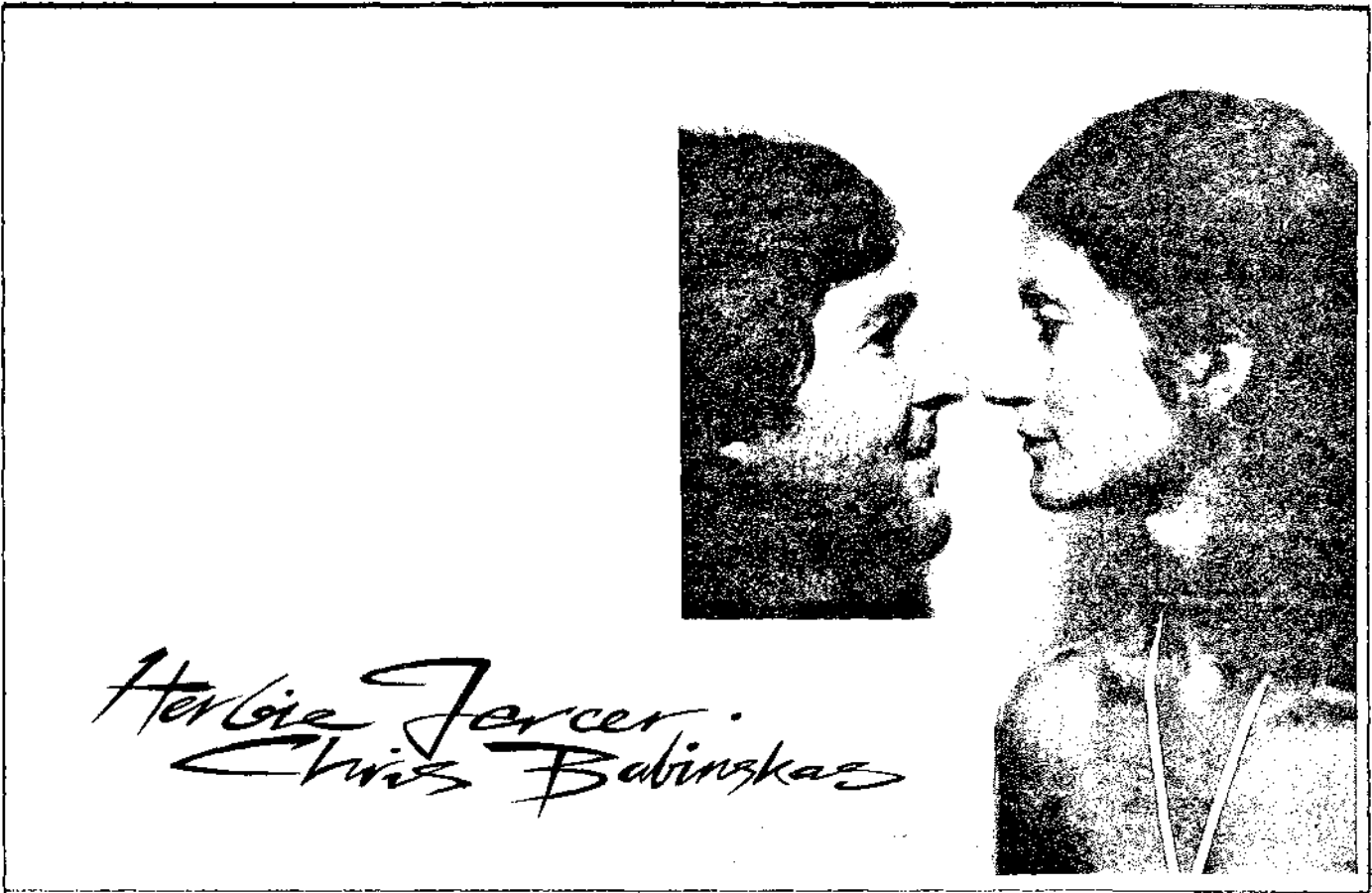
PS: It would have taken a lot of very, very skilful editing.

L: One would also have to be very perceptive, to pick out a progression in that it was "Aspects of ..." rather than a progression to ... What I understood was that, it was a number of different views of the one subject, whereas if there had been a progression to, I don't see how you could have gone from point A to point B, because it wasn't the nature of the music. The theme behind it would have to have been different too. By calling it "Aspects of ...", I got the impression of a camera taking photos while moving around a fixed object. To have been a progression, you would have to zoom in on the object from a fixed point. The whole idea of the concert would have to have been

different.

- PS: The idea of it was to be, like, there's a technique that Fellini uses alot. Moving through a fairly anonymous environment and looking through doorways. The camera will just swing around and look through a door and there is a completely self-contained inexplicable event going on inside the doorway, and the camera will watch it for a few seconds, and then you go on. It's rather like if you are on an incredibly fast express train, and you are reading a book, and you look up every ten minutes and every time you look up the landscape has changed completely. That was the way I wanted it to work. I think for that to work perfectly, you would have to have a much greater variety of tambre and things in the music. While I selected those things from a fairly wide variety of tapes, I did notice afterwards that there is a strong similarity between most of the things that I do. It was very eye-opening in fact, because there was I thinking that I've got this massive repertoire of things that I can play, but when you get them crammed end to end like that, you begin to see certain patterns and formulas, that you see sub-consciously so that it was very educational for me to hear them like that.
- L: What you said before about wanting people to get images from the music, you didn't start off with that particular point in mind?
- PS: One thing that I feel fairly strongly with that sort of music, is that there is a bit of flack directed at image and mood music, as far as I'm concerned it's a basic functional aspect of music as a whole. A lot of more highly regarded forms of music are relegated, in fact, to mood and image music. One area for discussion regarding mood music is that a lot of it is designed so

- that you have to sit in front of the speakers and listen to it, which is really wierd when you think about it. I think thats a lot of the problem with Eno's Ambient records, is that because they are so carefully and exquisitely worked out, you don't put them on and then go and do something else, you don't use them as environmental works because they don't work in that way, they are much too delicate. When they are subject to the sound of two or three electric dishwashers and a Hoover and a few other things they don't come through very well at all. You are much better putting on Roxy Music record and hearing the shredded remnants of that, through all kinds of different appliances and walls and doors and things. It creates a much more interesting ambience than something which is specifically designed for ambience. It's kind of ridiculous "everyone shutup so we can hear the ambient music". I've often wondered why so many mood pieces pay such incredible attention to detail. In a way I would really like to give concerts of that music in a situation where people weren't aware that they were at a concert
- L: You wouldn't expect the same results?
- PS: No. It would be different, but that would definitely be using it as background music.
- L: But to have the desired effect, you wouldn't want people to be aware that it was "Music for interval" by design?
- PS: As soon as everyone heard the music though they would be wanting to know what it was and who made it, so you would have given the game away. I think you would just have to say "This is just some music for interval, and everyone keep talking", and nobody would say a word. *



A tape of water is playing - is it a storm drain? Urban sounds suggest it. Herbie is in the corner, at attention. Both he and Chris are still. This allows us to see the set. A nice set. Sheets of white cloth and clear plastic with orange handprints all over them. The performance proceeds slowly. It's very ritualistic. Later Herbie tells me that he's applied for a job as a travelling artist in the Northern Territory. I wonder how this no-holds-barred ritualism will go down with that other set of rituals? Could be interesting. But all the images handprints, snake bite kits, suggest similarities, so why not?

An aside: This is the first time I've ever heard a guitar amp used with a) extreme sensitivity (sorry, Ned) and b) no hum.

Herb is reading the instructions from a snake-bit kit. Chris is dancing. Is she being a snake? If so, does she have to?? If not, is Herb's reading of snake-bit instructions enough of a suggestion to make us view it as a snake dance? Will she bite? No. Yes. All of these suggestions of violence with their defeated expectations, are good. But I can't help noticing that Herb's art - his perform-

ing does not need storytelling. On the other hand, Chris's dancing seems to be getting away from it, but hasn't gotten away from it totally, yet. The question then being how does the dance itself not tell a story (be representational) without losing a sense of narrative. Yvonne Rainer gives one answer (in "Lives of Performers," 1972) Can Chris come up with another?

A new section. Masked dancing. She's wearing a mask. But dancing behind a sheet so only her feet are visible. The mask is eerie it's a life mas of herself -- more suppressed violence.

Herb tells the story of the environmental tape -- where he recorded it how he did it. This adds a nice, suddenly inserted bit of reflexivity into the evening. This segues into a live little steam engine chuffing away and eventually running down. A nice contrast to the water sounds that came before.

Throughout this set Herb seems to be foreground and Chris background. Only rarely does she seem to be the main interest though she is far more (physically) active. Why is this?

But what they are doing at its best moments, is a real theatre of minimalism. You watch even the breath with interest. And just when I thought minimalism had had it along come the Sunshine people to prove me wrong again.

The door is open. The summer sounds do not interfere. They work with things. This has the slowness of a NOH drama, then unexpectedly, it veers off in a new direction.

OK, Herbie, lets hear a really articulate comment about "the jerk" as an underlying structural rhythmic principle in your stuff!

Second half is much sorter than the first. It starts out with a dismantling of the set and the sweetest surprise. A bit of the set collapses under the weight of the discarded 1st-half costumes (now they're in street clothes). Herb makes a gesture of annoyance with his hand -- a yo-yo flies out! This stuff keeps happening -- elegant little theatrical surprises in a coda context. Finally, Herb begins to play music with his oscillator board and his stick. About five minutes into a really interesting drone-tone and bowed strings improvisation -- everyone is beginning to really enjoy the music -- he stops, picks up his stick (a 10 stringed electric instrument prepared this evening with chessmen used as Koto-like bridges) and says "Still can't play it!" and begins doing something else. The evening winds down with showing photos of previous performances and friendly chatter between performers and audience.

But still -- the rhythm of change is so erratic, sudden, capricious and crazy; we're set up and then knocked down -- teased, twisted about our expectations so continually defeated by this dinky subliminal violence that all I can do is re-ask. OK, Herb and Chris lets have a really articulate comment about "the jerk" as an underlying structural rhythmic principal in your works.

Warren Burt

Interview with Herb Jercher (HJ) and Chris Babinskas (CB) by Warren Burt (WB).

WB: Let me ask you, Chris, about the dance things. I really sensed a lot of the stuff that the dance was being representational story telling stuff, and yet it wasn't?

CB: Well, it wasn't in the sense that it was planned that it was going to happen. So if you're telling a story on the spur of the moment, like that snake-bite thing; I didn't know that was going to be read out, and I didn't know I was going to start moving there and then, or that I was going to be doing anything related to it. So it took me by surprise that what I was doing could be interpreted as a snake -- and that did have a real story context to it.

WB: Right. I mean Herbie telling the story and it was very interesting that your dance up till that time hadn't been story telling, and then you started undulating with it.

CB: Yeah it surprised me just as much.

WB: So in this piece you were actually working very improvisationally with each other.

CB: Yeah.

WB: Cause, a lot of these pieces -- it's interesting I would even go out on a limb and say there is a "style" which is shared between Les Gilbert and Barry Veith and Judy Jacques and you two. It was very funny to see all three of those performances as related. I think there really is a style there, and within that, it really helps to know how much is improvised. And it turns out in all three cases a lot of it was improvised.

There was a lot of theatricality in the dancing, and some of it worked and some of it didn't. How do you feel about working in that way?

CB: I felt that way too -- that some of it did work and some of it didn't at all. Do you mean how do I like working in that improvisational way or that theatrical way?

WB: From the piece I've seen, you seem to be in two minds

about the theatricality. Embracing it -- almost going back to ballet -- but not ballet, you know, going back to that whole story telling tradition and yet also dealing with movement for its own sake. You seem to be between those two worlds.

CB: Yeah, I think I still am. For a while I seem to be exploring more of the two areas and seeing where that's going to lead to without saying definitely I'm going to close myself off to that or that but still trying a combination of the two.

WB: Have you seen Yvonne Rainer's film, "Lives of Performers?"

CB: No.

WB: She proposes a really lovely solution to that problem. The film itself is about interpersonal relationships between members of her company and has all this dialogue that was recorded about these relationships, which is then transcribed and re-read very slowly and pedantically. This is the soundtrack which is happening in the context of films of rehearsals and various other dances, some meant to be story-telling and some not. This solution is very elegant because it gets away from the need for the dance to have narrative, emotion-laden gestures.

CB: Where can that be seen?

WB: The National Film Library in Canberra has a copy they loan to institutions.

CB: You see, the other thing is that if in a movement performance that you're doing in a stage set-up, how can you get away from that thing of people putting their interpretation on what you do. If you happen to use a prop or get in that sort of relationship with another performer, its very difficult to get away from those things whether you perceive it in your own mind or not. Some of the other things we've done, Herb, did you think -- didn't have that sort of story telling thing to them. I mean that one did for some reason.

HJ: Yeah, right, but its also related for us it was a Scylla was the first we'd done that with a whole mythology

thing and then to be hit with the reality of having to read survival instructions which is the only piece of information given, that you've taken this bag with you - this little satchel with you out in the desert and then you're going to open that up when the snake bites - My God! By the time you've finished the instructions you've either died of fright or you've gone delirious and eaten the paper instead of slicing yourself.

So in that sense, sure there was storytelling. Perhaps that's related because of the Northern Territory gig, which by the way, didn't come through, so we're not going there.

CB: So we're keeping the snake bite kit just in case.

WB: So what about this rhythm thing. Most people, when they're improvising fall into a regular rhythm i.e. three minute things, five minute things, you didn't. Taking the whole performance, there were long stretches then extremely short events and the rhythm itself was as varied as if you had carefully organized it. I think that somewhat comes from Herbie's idea of "the jerk", but what is that idea? Does it come from playing off your name?

HJ: Yeah, it really comes from a long association of being subjected to "You're in Australia mate, and you're the jerk". They never heard of the chhhhhh (a uvular rattle) - obviously they never met many flute players - the chhhh as in Bachhh, as in Yerchhher.

But over that, I think its from a lot of improvisation. Wanting to get away from the straight formalist "You do an improvisation where there's 8 bars 12" rhythmic sequences that are so even they're too predictable. Taking the time element where that is a constant and playing with that. Not so much worrying about the individual piece or that whole spatial sequence as a whole and using that as the continuing wave parameters that come through. So you get waves and shifting waves of these large segments which in between don't have to be noted strictly 1 to 1 relationships, but that being there and sort of looking at those in an improvisational context and within that using this scope - doesn't matter where the pause is for the whole duration of that but so that the longer gestures and shorter gestures or segmental things are taken within that. So the jerk sections become the elongation of the jerchhher, and then there's an end to it as well.

Yeah, and you're right, I've had to live with the minimalism of trying to figure out what does this Jercher mean, you know, the Jerk, Herbie Jercher. I always wanted to form a rock band, the Herbie Jerk band.

WB: Almost everything the two of you did seemed to have an element of teasing in it.

HJ: It's funny, you know that has come about we sort of picked it up from working with Judy Jacques. She's an expert in that.

CB: I don't know if I agree with that.

HJ: How do you mean - as an expert or as learning from that?

CB: As picking that up from her. Because those performances we did in Warrnambool were before we started working with her.

HJ: OK, sure. But we also did transactional game analysis things at the (Victorian) College (of the Arts) with Hamesey. I got into a few games as performance pieces. Now, some of the time we do that and during those sections jerk things are done on stage and its working through the allowance of having that game on there and the transactional factor - relating that directly to performance layout - that gives you the space - the fourth dimensional dynamics - standing on one side of the stage and moving to the other side of the stage, your motion, and all that.

WB: What do you disagree with, Chris?

CB: Well, it's your saying teasing the audience. That really surprises me. Do you mean in the sense of something happening and waiting for something else to happen and what's going to happen?

WB: Yeah. Seeing something happen, something sets up an expectation that something else is going to happen, and then not only does that something else not happen but before you know it, it changes into something completely different than what you expected. So its not just the elements you're making that follow each other in an unexpected way, its also the timing.

CB: For me, it's a completely unconscious process, and maybe the audience is as much to thank as anyone else because it's off that energy that you're waiting and working. As well as your own energy its the whole cross thing. That's why it would have been really nice for the audience to be sitting closer, so you could really change with it.

HJ: Yeah, that was the idea originally.

WB: So you wanted the audience to be much closer so you could work off their expectations.

CB: Cause then it would be much more intense, instead of that distanced thing.

WB: Yeah, that's why I picked up that thing about NOH drama you got your very slow energy because you were so distanced and I half expected you - in your mask, to go (sings an imitation Japanese song line) Nafceey-aynceeyahyeohhPOK! Which is interesting because one of my big quirks with local pop musicology has been every idiot and their brother talking about the wonderful Oriental influence -

HJ: Groan!

WB: In Australian, European, American music, and I don't see it.

HJ: It's all just numbers, folks!

WB: Unless you want to, say in Australia for example, look only at the most superficial aspects of some works by a few composers, you really don't find that heavy oriental influence.

CB: Well, we did go to the Noh drama when it was here in Melbourne, but if it had an influence, it was in a different way. We were impressed by the intensity and dedication of the performance.

HJ: Right, and the stage projection and all that. Although, I did get the idea of modifying the stick with Golf tees from that. I said, hey, right, it can be a koto, and lets look at it that way. But going back to your own thing - about Oriental influence in Australia? You know, there's enough there in the Australian the real Aussie as in Aussie stirring tradition that you get from the old fellas out the back you know, they'll have you on every second and just lead you up the golden path one minute, turn around and completely bring you back in a different direction. You'll never know what's going to confront you and your ability to change at any given time means that you've got a number of different outlets. It's like vertices and lines that whole thing. If you're going to get to the end of the path - there must be another one, you're still on a parallel, unless you're jumping up and down on stage.

CB: And the environment affects you as well, because you never know if the path you're going to choose has potholes in it. That you find out while you're using it.

HJ: The path of least resistance. In your review, what did you mean by fragility?

WB: Well, like the Japanese performer, they created such a presence, such an air of concentration on the act and anything can destroy that. If somebody coughs -

HJ: Do you find the same in some of your performances? Especially when you've done your things I sense a lot of intense concentration. Even the fact that it might be a replay situation, it's still that direct first person endeavour, right there on stage, which is that crystallization of what performance ought to be.

WB: Right. So that's fragile. Anyone can destroy it. But its also tough, it can take disruption. I think the Japanese have therdge here, because they have the tradition that if you interrupt -

HJ: The knife comes out.

WB: Your are just the lowest of the low. But when you have that intense concentration, which is what performance should be about - then you're putting

enough concentration into it and you're demanding of your audience that they give the same concentration to it. I sense that also in the stuff you were doing, demanding that people concentrate on what you were doing no matter how slow.

CB: I was amazed when you made some of the comments you made, because I didn't think people would have noticed some of those things. You know, what you said about the feet and behind the ladder, and I thought, golly, someone did notice those things that you feel are very internal movements, and you don't think its going to come across that far. Its really nice when someone sees it.

WB: Well, that's what we're there for to look at and observe everything. Also what I liked was that by your attitude to performing you gave us the frame to be able to look at what you were doing. You were very clear about your beginning, defined what you were about, and so it seemed to have that sense of concentration to it. And so every gesture does become precious. By your dedication and concentration you respect us, and we give you that respect back.

CB: But with saying that about the beginning, how do you feel about the end?

WB: Oh, that was fine, to allow it to dribble off like that was very nice. Also because the second half was so completely different. Suddenly you're not in costume.

CB: Do you think we should have done the second half?

WB: I thought it could have been a little longer.

CB: Really?

HJ: Actually, we lost track of time. That's the amazing part, you know, with throwing away the watches, 'cause that was one of the gesture things. We've done a few of those in the country where we just took away time and decided to count time through our own movements; body rhythms, etc. And its amazing how that worked out, where you've got something that's already on a constant time and you're working through that without consciously knowing that but still coming out at the right point. That was exciting.

WB: Yeah, it was interesting that the first half was 50 mins. and 50 very slow minutes, and the second half was 15 minutes and gone before you knew it. That was a really nice touch, but I wanted a little more music, and a little more of --

HJ: NAHH!

WB: But some of the stuff you played on the stick was so beautiful!

CB: I know!

WB: It was such lovely music.

CB: I was really getting into it and then it just stopped!

HJ: But that's the jerker element again. Its the self-realization thing that there's still an on-going learning process within yourself. It's still there, in its truthful element. The first person I heard say that was Oscar Peterson. He was rattling off these bloody things and suddenly says, "Goddam, I still can't play that one!" I mean, there's Oscar Peterson saying that, and I thought, right, that's something to work towards; saying, right, that's a reality, but let's keep on it.

*

Holmes. Lewis.
Stamopoulos. Spinkie



Clifton Hill Community Music Centre, 3rd December, 1980 -- Audio Visual Concert

First half: Martin Lewis, Denise Holmes & Nick Stamopoulos -- music. Second half: Chris Wyatt -- taped and electronic music and slides.

For reasons best left unmentioned, the job of writing a review of this concert has fallen to me after a lapse of over six weeks since the concert took place. Consequently many details have been lost due to the filtering effect of time on memory. But, looking on the positive side, the impressions that remain are the strongest and most significant ones, stripped of the embellishments which probably didn't matter anyway.

For the first half of the concert, Robert Vincs provided three films to which Martin Lewis, Denise Holmes and Nick Stamopoulos improvised musical accompaniments. Of the three musicians, only Martin had seen the films previously, the aim being to keep the improvisations highly spontaneous in response to the visual stimuli.

As I remember it, this technique produced quite acceptable film-music without anything really remarkable about it. The visual content always held centre stage with the music playing the role of a re-inforcement in the background. This was as it should be if the intention was in fact to create "film music".

The films were old 8mm black and white "home movies" with potential Freudian interpretations hiding behind highly entertaining fairy-tale absurdities. First there was the Dracula theme where good triumphs over evil and the male hero gets the lady and they presumably live happily ever after, having subdued their lusts by the authority of the Church. Next there was the

unfortunate gentleman who found himself being transfigured into the form of a hideous monster. He could not suppress his monstrous "lower" nature so, to preserve public security, his violent death through the efforts of a "good" hero, was inevitable. In the final film, *Moby Dick*, the evil monster-whale, surfaces out of the unconscious depths, and as Ahab thoroughly kills his whale, the audience is reassured that good triumphs over evil and that civilization is saved from its self-destructive inner forces.

I didn't think of it at the time but I wonder now whether there might have been a way of using these films for an anti-authoritarian, anti-repression statement. I wish the performances could have questioned the thesis that the way to deal with psychic monsters is to kill them. As they stand, these films though crude and absurd, serve as propaganda for the dominant paternalistic and capitalistic culture because they reinforce the authoritarian personality type which is so essential to the class society.

Between the second and third film Denise Holmes played her 'cello piece. This was done in semi-darkness which made it difficult, I am told, for Denise to read the score. I would have liked to have seen how the piece was played as well as hearing it. The 'cello had interesting things attached to it but I could not tell when or if these were used in the piece. My impression is that this was a spirited piece but there were slides of flowers being projected during the performance which added nothing and seemed inappropriate in mood.

All in all, this half of the concert proved to be highly entertaining and the audience seemed appreciative.

Paul Turner

Interview with Martin Lewis (M) Nick Stamopoulos, (N), Denise Holmes (D) and Paul Turner (P).

- P: There were a few things I forgot about . . .
- M: The pictures handed around after the cello piece containing various pictures. I can't remember specifically.
- D: There were old ladies . . .
- N: They were basically pictures on music with sheet music printed over them . . . scenes, landscapes, a picture of a violin body and portraits of old people . . .
- M: The cello piece was used as a contrasting slot to the first and third part of the program. The first and third part were movies; black and white 8mm films. The second part had the cello music with slides of wild flowers up the back.
- N: The theme runs quite different. Rather than Dracula and fictitious monsters, you had serene slides.
- P: So it was used as a contrast. Did it worry you that the audience didn't really know why the photos were being handed around? People were a bit mystified by it I think.
- M: All the better.
- N: Everyone expects a reason for everything. If you're told beforehand what's going to happen it's spoon feeding. Something has to be left to the imagination.
- P: So there wasn't any deep reason. It was just in order to achieve a contrast.
- M: That's right.
- N: And to get people to think. Because the photos had musical things and the old people - two different things in photography. And while the music was probably understood more, being part of a musical act, the portraits of old people . . .
- P: The other thing I forgot about was that in the improvisations you had a tape. What was on the tape?
- M: The tape consisted of three parts. The first a theme played on a xylophone, the second was more ad libitum-bashing around the La Trobe improvisation lab, and the third again was the xylophone theme; this time played backwards but I don't think that was audible to people listening.
- D: That it was backwards?
- M: Yes. That was to give a support to the three of us playing. Otherwise I think the music might have been a little bit shallower than it was.
- P: Were you worried about the texture being too thin?
- M: Yes, we were as a matter of fact. I think it still was anyway. There was not a great variety in the musical instruments being used and I feel the texture was a bit too thin. It would have been more interesting I think being thicker . . .
- N: But also if you're going to improvise, you like to stop sometimes, which in itself is an improvisation; to have intervals. Unless you've got that something going underneath it can sound shallower than it really is.
- What was underneath on the tape acted as a rhythmic component rather than as a tonal one.
- P: Was the tape co-ordinated with the film in the same way, as I suppose, the improvisations were?
- M: No, it wasn't just a straight, monotonous . . .
- N: It was just like a drone, like a rhythmic backing, leaving the instruments to cater more for the climaxes.
- M: Although there were climaxes in the tape. It was quite interesting as none of the others had seen the films. I was wondering how the music was going to turn out. Part of the reason for the tape was just in case we got to a stage where everyone just looked at each other and realised none of us were playing. At least we would have something going through. At the climactic parts of the films the music seemed to reach a climax.
- N: A lot of people who spoke to me afterwards though it planned out to a T, to coincide with the film. So whether or not it was a success in that regard is probably up to the viewers themselves.
- P: You were happy with the way it worked as film music? I'm assuming it was film music rather than music that was meant to be listened to, and the film was in the background.
- M: Yes, I think that's how I'd see it too. I think the two were supposed to be on equal par.
- N: It was also to get the eyes off the people playing. How many times have you seen the performers being intently looked at and wondered what they are doing. This was a break something different. The music was there but you were looking at something else.
- P: You were altering the theoretical aspect of a live performance?
- M: Yes, virtually like the orchestra in the pit.
- N: Some people put the music first, some put the film first. There were varying opinions afterwards. Some people asked about the films, some asked about things I was doing musically.
- P: Did you select those films for any particular reason? Were the films themselves important or did you just want to select an image that was fairly bland?
- M: We could have selected films like "A day in the life of a New York policeman" or "The making of star wars" something incredible.
- P: If you were picking films that you didn't want to be too interesting, so that people would listen to the music, I don't think it worked because I found the films really interesting.
- D: So did I. They were neat.
- M: We tried to pick interesting films really.
- D: But even though they were interesting we still listened to the music. I was still aware that the music was . . . I heard your guitar.
- P: I wish we could get some comment on Denise's cello pieces and the preparations on the cello.
- M: It's a modified cello. She uses a bike bell installed on the neck. There are tubes going into the cello and

coming out in a plastic funnel at the base of the cello which, if you blew through it would resonate. She also used tuning-untuning a string and tightening it up again which I thought brilliant. She had a piece of wood clamped to the base which vibrated against the cello when she pulled back. The piece was written for an improvisation lab session: written on the seasons; connotations of pastoral scenes. She really is quite brilliant

P: Did she use all the preparations in the piece?

M: Yes.
 P: It was a pity it was in darkness.
 N: You weren't supposed to see us while watching the films.
 Just listen to the music.
 P: You didn't want to distract attention from the performance?
 N: People always want to see music. You can't really see music, you have to hear it. Although, they are interested to see how it is done. *



The second half of the evening was taken up with Chris Wyatt's taped electronic music and slide show. There were three pieces but only the second had a visual accompaniment. This consisted of a very striking, high technology, computerized, multi-projector slide sequence in which a seemingly vast array of images faded, cut and overlapped into one another automatically in a fairly rapid succession of surrealistic juxtapositions. The music was surprisingly violent and loud, in keeping with the violent visual effect. (I couldn't help wondering at this display of naked energy from the placid and gentle Chris Wyatt). The music was tight and appropriate to the visual imagery. I was very impressed - beguiled by the technology perhaps. But I think the work rose above mere reliance on the effect of impressive technology. It was a superb use of the medium and well worth seeing and hearing again.

I forget what the first electronic piece was like, except that it was loud. I can't do much better with the third piece but to say that it too was loud and that I seem to remember it kept on kicking on every time I thought it was about to end. This final piece was the only one with a title: Music for Figures in a Landscape. Figures in a Landscape is a video-art piece by Robert Randell and Frank Bendinelli.

The tapes were made using equipment belonging to Latrobe University Music Department and to Warren Burt - something called Daisy and something else called the Serge Tcherepnine synthesizer.

Paul Turner

Interview with Chris Wyatt.

P: Is there anything I left out or got wrong that you would like to straighten out?
 C: It was interesting that you thought the last piece was too loud because that was my ...
 P: I don't mean too loud - loud also.
 C: It was the softest piece of the lot of them.
 P: Ah, this might be my memory.
 C: What did you find beguiling about the second one particularly? That interests me because it's a new medium to me and somebody else said it was very - seductive, they said.
 P: Well, it went with such assurance. And just the fact that it was new and something we hadn't seen before - It gripped your attention.
 C: The sound with the image wasn't new surely? Was it just the way it was presented?
 P: I think the image was the new thing. That was the thing that was really captivating. Looking back at it now, the images are what I remember about it, more than the sound. I felt I was sitting there mostly watching the images. Probably if I saw it again I would be able to get it all together much better. I don't think it was beguiling in a bad sense. It wasn't the sort of thing that if you saw it a few times you would realize there was nothing in it.
 C: The first piece - What did you think of that?
 P: I'd like to hear it again.
 C: I could play it for you.
 P: That's a good idea.
 (No tape is played)
 C: That is, I guess one of the joys of tape pieces isn't it to replay them.
 P: Yes, well it didn't seem as aggressive as I'd remembered it. In the organ factory you had it much louder.
 C: The speakers were bigger and there were more people. It depends - Things change depending on where you -
 P: It seems to make a difference, because it definitely hit me as a really aggressive

C: I think it is a pretty aggressive piece actually. The timbres are.
 It was done in real time.
 P: Did you vary things while it was -?
 C: Yes, all the time.
 P: You didn't just set it up and let it run.
 C: No, every change you hear was my doing.
 P: It seemed to me like a piece where you had set up a background - an expanse of a basic sound, into which you put various distortions and overlays in an irregular way.
 C: I don't know if that's strictly true because it was done - as I say, there was no multi-tracking at all. It was done in one hit and it's . I found it immensely interesting to do because it's the most structured electronic music piece I've ever done. It's sort of like intuitively based but I knew beforehand what I wanted to achieve structurally and rhythmically, and I had it within my control to do that, so it was quite a conscious attempt to make - I was really conscious of not wanting for it to be - See, with a sound that always recurs like that basic sound you talked about, it seems to me, especially with taped electronic pieces, that the tendency to do A-B-A type things is very strong. Just to establish in people's minds some kind of base ground. That high pitched sound does come across as base ground but I try and destroy it as such quite distinctly so that at the end of the piece you hardly hear it at all.
 P: So you mean, you would rather your pieces didn't give the impression of a simple A-B-A form?
 C: Well no, I am interested in that, but I didn't think that with the timbres and the type of piece that was that that would suit. I had a form in mind. I wanted to build a shape which first of all established itself in terms of two different types of movement, one which is smooth and the other that rhythmically broke that movement.
 P: That's what I meant by: you laid out that basic thing then distorted it.

- C: I guess you could say that's true. They're pretty aggro timbres and sounds. I think it's valid as a piece. I was conscious when I was doing the piece that I could have given it a background of angst which you hear in a lot of electronic music which uses heavy timbres. I could have called it -- The Vietnam War -- or maybe if I'd called it Apocalypse Now -- that would have been the ultimate bad-taste thing. It had nothing to do with that. There's no way that could be considered music to accompany anything. It's meant to be listened to on its own. As such I'm always going to present it purely and simply as a piece of music. The presentation of it in the future worries me quite greatly. I want to set up situations and environments where it can be listened to, because it demands to be listened to I think, otherwise the point of it escapes me.
- P: I guess you want to achieve some form of emotional response rather than a purely academic appreciation of the --
- C: I just enjoy the way the rhythms and timbres change I don't think it's evocative or atmospheric at all.
- P: What about when someone says that was an aggressive piece. "Aggressive" is an emotional thing to say. It's referring to an emotional response.
- C: When people say aggression -- aggressive to what? It's more specific to say a piece is wistful or melancholic than it is to say it's aggressive.
- P: I'm assuming that when you create a piece you don't just do it as an academic exercise but something of yourself goes into it.
- C: Definitely.
- P: In the case of this piece, maybe there were some aggressive feelings lurking in the background which somehow found their way into the piece.
- C: That could quite probably be true, but I don't know whether I find that piece aggressive so much. It's challenging. Did you find it too loud?
- P: I don't think it was too loud.
- C: See I think that piece needs to be played at a certain volume otherwise it doesn't work. But I didn't want it to cause anybody any pain. Well it's supposed to make you recoil a bit, because then you get into the sound mass itself.
- P: What about the music of the second piece?
- C: That was made loud because of certain things I wanted to get across. It was me coming to terms with commer-

- cial media -- sound and image. For a long time I've found sound and image -- particularly film -- to be a really sus medium for me because it sucks me in so much and I can't quite work out why. Commercial media are all about sucking people in. They always talk in terms of Blowing Peoples Minds. I think that if you looked at the seductiveness -- the force with which they do that -- it can be seen in a lot of ways. I'm quite terrified by the physical speed at which they move things. Like T.V. -- the speed at which images are shoved at you. I'm really interested in that. There are a lot of ways of looking at that without being static or minimal. I wouldn't call it a surrealist juxtaposition of images though. It wasn't narrative, but I didn't think of it in terms of it being surreal. It's an ideology which I don't ascribe to. Surrealism's very Freudian -- dragging things out of the depths, but those images were not from my sub-conscious, I don't think. I like to think of some of the pieces I do as analogues for sets of experiences I've been in or that interest me. The out-of-controllness that I feel sometimes in that A.V.
- P: When there is image and sound, I tend to notice the image more than the sound.
- C: I think what happens is that the mixture of the two -- somehow the visual impression is greater -- the sound and image together make you connect it all together so you see hear and feel what's being done.
- P: They add up to more than either of them.
- C: That's right.
- P: Did you get the images together first and then the music -- the normal film-music process?
- C: Yes and no. The images took me something like two months but I had in mind what I wanted to do with the music and I knew I could do the music in three days once I got down to it. It's a lot easier to make the music when you've got images in front of you, I find.
- P: And what about the last piece. The images came first in that I suppose?
- C: No, we worked separately on that. I knew roughly what the images were going to be, time span and everything, and I tried to create a piece of music which would create an ambience for those images. *

Barry Veith.
Judy Jerques



This review and subsequent discussion was prompted by my enjoyment and puzzlement at the interaction of these three musicians. Before progressing, I state that several months have elapsed between the event and my writing, but could I argue that this could facilitate the filtering of lasting impressions from non-essential trivia?

The substance of the presentation was an improvised dialogue (*trialogue?*) using a wide variety of vocal, reed and percussive timbres. I heard squeaks, squawks, yelps, whoops, burbles, guttural utterances, key rattles, and quotes from popular songs. (Over the Rainbow). At times the sounds created by one or more of the performers caused spontaneous laughter, sometimes unashamedly joyous, sometimes tinged with embarrassment.

Visually, all three performers seemed to parody gestures peculiar to their usual mode of performing. For example, there was wide-eyed ebullience from J.J./B.V.'s almost studied parody of the archetypical jazz muso's gestures, while battling with the inconsistent interface between brain and fingers, and the wild, seemingly uncontrolled attacks on the drum-kit by Des.

The evening impressed me with these qualities - unashamed spontaneity; lack of contrivance or pretention; an almost mischievous willingness to take risks (a quality, in my opinion, of all great improvisers); a willingness to project; and a desire to be outgoing towards an audience, i.e. shrugging off the apologetic introversion common to many new music performers.

To qualify the preceding, though, I felt B.V. and J.J. teamed and interacted very well, embodying all the aforementioned attributes, but Des seemed a little on the outer, at times ill-at-ease, a bit self-conscious, again almost apologetic for his involvement. His long solo at the end of the piece perhaps indicated an adherence to safe tradition where statements and improvisations are more sequentially ordered than at that time, conveying the impression that he was more inexperienced than the others in coping with this performance situation.

In summary, I pleaurably witnessed an entertaining dialogue between B.V. and J.J., indicating a respect between friends for each others musicianship. This interaction was ~~so~~ stridently punctuated occasionally by D.M., who seemed to volley from a different court of perception entirely. A good concert.

The following interview was taped the night of writing the review (13.2.81). The transcription ~~was~~ stopped about ten minutes before the conclusion of the tape. The tape is available to anyone wishing to listen to it.

Julian Driscoll

Interview with Barry Veith (BV), Julian Driscoll (JD), Des McKenna (DM) Judy Jacques (JJ).

JD: What comments have you on that?

BV: Are you asking me?

JD: Generally . . .

DM: Yes, I've got something. If Barry and Judy are working on something that doesn't inspire me to play along with it, then I'll deliberately as part of the performance play across or against it, as a deliberate improvisation venture. That's premeditated, not blending with them at times.

JD: I thought perhaps . . .

DM: I agree with you partially, but I'm just explaining a little bit of what I did.

JD: Could perhaps the fact that you were in the background and they were in the foreground without much eye-contact . . . without the others, could that have contributed to your attitude?

DM: No, because I listen all the time.

JD: Do you think eye-contact is important in an improvised situation?

DM: If its there, its good, but in that situation I usually can't have eye-contact because there are instruments between us.

JJ: Hmmm, I can remember looking into your eyes often.

DM: But that may not have had anything to do with what we were playing at the time.

JD: Comments, Barry?

BV: I think that the idea of reviewing goes hand in hand with the idea of creating a performance, and I think what we are investigating goes towards questioning the idea of a performance and a review. The fact that you get up there and do something, and you have an audience and a review (or not), that brings it into a typed situation, a conceptual thing, to people who are regarding that process. Its important to me in performance of this kind, and even more so in future, to ignore the idea of performance as such. I know that's not possible totally because the minute you pick the

- instrument up you are performing, but its important to me that some ideas of the workings that are below consciousness are externalized, and I think that in that sense it goes beyond the point of review. I'm not saying that you can't criticize it . . . that its not criticizable, or maybe that the things you mentioned don't exist. The fact that they do exist can be raised in a review situation in a magazine, or you can consider them as an individual.
- JD: Personally, I dislike the word 'criticism' and all its connotations. I prefer to call it 'comment'.
- BV: I understand what you're getting at with this and I appreciate it, 'cos I've never come across anyone else whose done it this way, and I appreciate it; but what I'm saying is a logical flow on from the fact that you've created this situation. In my opinion, the review should be an extension of the performance, and that there isn't any difference between the review and the performance, and that people should be, or will be, as affected by the review, essentially as they are by the performance, the review deriving from the performance has to be part of the performance.
- JD: I find that concept initially hard to grasp, because the performance is an entirely different situation to writing a review, and the perception coming from a performance will be entirely different from the perception from reading a review.
- BV: I would disagree with that. I think the writing of a review is tantamount to the performance process. There's no question in my mind. It is derived from the performance and that makes it part of the performance (if we want to call it a performance). The only way that I would dare to call it a "performance" is in the chance that its a review in a paper distributed for regard by other people, in the same way that a performance is a group of people on a stage with an audience. You have an audience as a reviewer.
- JD: Are you talking about connotations of 'enhancing'?
- BV: Well, maybe. I would use the word 'evolving'. The review grows out of the performance. In the same sense the performance couldn't exist without everything that went before that. What I'm trying to suggest is a continuous interaction process amongst people which occasionally results in getting on stage and doing things. We're with the brain's reaction to various conflicts, joining together of perceptions, and conceptual ways of seeing things. This is very wordy, but I'm trying to get something across. Perhaps someone else can say something.
- JD: Its establishing a sort of continuum of interaction?
- BV: A synthesis, which suddenly brings a few things together and externalizes it in a way that some social groups prefer to call a "performance". For example, the Music Department; music students; etc.
- JD: I though an interesting part of the performance was when you all started to applaud each other.
- BV: That was done in order to get away from the idea of a performance in the traditional sense.
- JJ: Begging applause.
- BV: You could say that.
- DM: At the Dollar Brand concert, there was a split second when they finished, there was no need to applaud, then everyone applauded cos it was the done thing. It really gave me the shits cos it just wan't necessary. It was so good you could just sit there and think.
- JD: Anymore comments?
- BV: As well as querying the idea of a review anyway, I think its trying to terminate the process of this performance.
- JJ: How do you see that?
- BV: I'm not putting it down, but writing a review, in essence says "that the end of that; when the next thing comes along?" The thing that is rewarding to me are the transitory moments, even only one in a three hour performance. They are the only worthwhile things to me. Everything else is attempts to reveal the truth. It doesn't matter to me that it "works" in comparison to the formal structures found filed away in academia. The essential thing to me is that at some time, there is the touching of something that is universal. The idea of "how did people enjoy themselves in the three hours?" is important in the social sense, but when "it" happens, its like digging for gold, you can dig for a year and find one nugget and that makes all the digging worthwhile, and I think all performances are like that. I think that the essence of music is going after things we can't understand, things that are common to our spiritual life.
- JD: I can't grasp your idea of a review "terminating" a performance.
- BV: The reason we call it a performance is because of a traditional way of looking at an activity which would, in my opinion, be better if it was more widespread, and not just in films, stages, or on some sort of podium. The fact that we were at the C.H.C.M.C. and there were people looking and hearing and we were up there doing something, to me that was an abhorration of a process which should be universal. We're talking about dialogue.
- JD: Interaction?
- BV: Interaction and dialogue.
- JD: But an implicit in that is, that people are on different perceptual planes; how do we approach the problem that several, or most, of the audience may be on a different plane to the performance?
- BV: Right, I agree, but in that performance I had chosen in this sort of approach to that problem.
- JJ: So they could see us reaching that point that we reach if we have the audience involved, interacting.
- BV: No, I'm not talking about an audience all going to someplace and deciding to interact. I'm talking on a universal level. The things that are worthwhile in any activity are common and accessible to everyone. And its my belief that its not possible to discuss music or any other compartmentalized notion of being, without getting into ideas of political or sociological interaction. Its not possible to get to the guts of anything without discussing what that means to other people and why. For instance, if we played some highly complex pattern from some remote country, and could give them a way of seeing and perpetuating their whole idea of being. To us it may mean nothing. What I'm saying is that any musical statement must fall somewhere between those two poles and more or less have those connotations. I don't believe that its possible to discuss music without getting into those issues.
- JD: So you're talking about establishing a greater understanding of the perceptual framework in a sociological context.
- BV: Exactly. Percisely . . . in which music is only one point e.g. the amount of money made by being able to predict the effect of, for instance, the sort of musical structures used in '40s american films. The cause and effect thing. Like Wagner and his cadences that never quite resolve. The feeling that we're going somewhere and we don't quite know when we're going to get there, and it was effect, as a political, social connotation the playing and composing and conducting of music has a great deal to do with the person the composer wants to be regarded as, what effect he wants to have on other people. Anyway, thats my bit for the day.
- JD: Well, yeah. That immediately makes we want to say that that makes the playing of American Jazz music by Australians look rather absurd, cos its completely out of sociological context.
- BV: I would agree with you completely. It looks absurd to us insofar as it won't mean anything to us in the same way it meant to them, and we don't get the same impetus to do what they did, because that music grew out of, in my opinion, the necessity of an oppressed minority to develop a dialogue and a special, secret language in order to maintain some identity and integrity as a race, and the sooner people realize that its not the colour of your skin, but the political necessity to communicate that results in creative process, the better.
- DM: What we do now is borrow that idiom as an exercise, as groundwork for our own expression.
- JD: As a framework to work on.

BV: Which I think is fine. I'm not saying we shouldn't look at these things, try to understand and get inside them. That's a way, in this society, of opening up other ways of perceiving things; but I'm not for everyone getting up and trying to play like Coltrane, like that guy in America who transcribed all his solos and plays jus like him.

JD: But that's pathetic.

BV: That's what I mean, its pathetic.

DM: That's the sort of mentality of someone who can never be his own entity, 'cos he's too hung up on what everybody else did.

BV: I'm not saying its pathetic in the sense that this guy is crippled for life. Maybe that's his way of getting inside somethin enough that he can go on and do his own thing.

DM: Yeah, but does he ever do it?

JD: Well, its a point of departure, we hope. I'd like to talk more about what you (DM) were doing in the concert.

DM: To me its very important . . . its like a workout on a punching, a release like a primal therapy. If its not, I'm frustrated at the end of a job. After months of bosanovas in restaurants, floorshows, when you play jazz that's opposed to '50.s jazz, i.e. free, you really cut loose. There's not often a chance to do it, and that night I had just got wound up near the end. I would have been really happy to do another set. That's what eople played for in the first place, right? After they'd done their work, hunted, etc. they got out their bongos and played around the camp fire until they were exhausted, and that's what music was essentially all about. Everyone in Melbourne seems to be really onstipated, playing within their own idiom and you an't break a rule. They must be so frustrated within their little boxes.

JD: Well, I suppose they're playing within their own frameworks which to you and me appear to be more limited than those we like to work in.

DM: But they don't understand why they're playing in the first place. It's to have a good time, right?

BV: That's a good point.

DM: If you've got all these rules, i.e. play four on cymbals, etc. you can't possibly have a good time. It's not 1945 anymore. The Clifford Browns and the Alex Roaches, when they got together by themselves and didn't have to play to an audience they really cut loose. People only hear records that are only a commercial product, watered down, chopped up. Too much of that goes on in this country. Playing with Brian Brown or duets with Paul Grabowsky - towards the end of the night we'd be smashing furniture and feeling good . . . not that we should wreck every job we do, but . . .

JD: Let me ask you, would you feel as good if you sat alone in a room and played your drums as a primal therapy, or must you be with other musicians?

DM: No, that's not good enough. I have to play alone alot and have a good bash to loosen up for my cabaret jobs. So I have to do that as a sort of . . . laxative. (laughs). But if you're playing with people that are sympathetic, then its on. You've got empathy and sympathy, like at the Commune or C.H.C.M.C., then you surpass yourself.

JD: Having heard what you've said, I'm still left with the impression that you were still doing your own primal therapy without much interaction with Barry and Judy.

DM: No, not all the time. As I said before, if they're doing something I can't relate to, I'll either not play, which I do a lot, or else I play against it, something completely absurd, like one night we broke into "Sweet Lorraine" played really straight. Or maybe packing up the drums really noisily and going home. It's completely free - everything's on. There's no point in sitting there if I don't feel like playing. If I think they're getting bored, I can put an end to what they're doing and vice versa. People are so conditioned to putting the drummer in the background to keep time, like a cricket umpire or something, so when it is my turn, there's all those hours of being squashed that have to come out, so I

tend to overplay a lot, probably. I had a good shot at listening to what they were doing, and most of it I liked.

JD: Yeah, I liked the concert.

DM: When you said about the long solos and showing my traditional thing, well, basically I like to play time with any pattern, rock, reggae, etc. I'd like to fall back on time sooner or later.

BV: I think Judy should say something.

JJ: Well after the performance, I was totally exhausted. To go out and avoid the normal, cliché performance, your awareness of the audience is pretty horrible. What I'm trying to achieve is to dig much deeper than the surface of playing. Some of the things that come out really allow an exploration to occur. Sometimes you fall in and then have to snap back to reality really quickly. You lose it in maybe half an hour. What Barry and I are trying to achieve is a very difficult process as performers. Maybe its not possible.

JD: What is it?

JJ: Just allowing the unconscious process to surface without inhibitions, without blocking things, and knowing how to accept certain things and reject others. It's just trying to get rid of all the peripheral bullshit. It would be nice to be that efficient, to be able to dig straight away and know what to discard. From my experience, the things come up a split second before you produce the sound, and often you say . . . "oh no, we'll put her away", but sometimes its relevant to bring it up and sing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow". That was a really strong decision I made to sing that song, but it would be nice to always be in a position of confidence in your own choice, and not to be afraid of being conscious.

JD: That was the most refreshing part of the performance for me, the unashamed spontaneity. It was unapologetic and adventurous.

JJ: That's exactly how it is, and that's a very difficult place to be, to reach, especially as I've performed to so many different types of audiences. It's hard to keep shutting off that past.

JD: What involvement with the audience does this attitude imply?

JJ: Well I think they can still be involved if there are humorous moments.

JD: Do you see the role of the audience in that situation different to when you're singing in a pub with a band, could you talk about the way you related to audiences in different situations?

JJ: Oh, that's really difficult Julian.

DM: Pass, say pass.

JJ: That's telling the truth, I can't tell the truth today.

JD: You tried to tell the truth on the performance, why not today?

JJ: Well you're asking questions, we're verbalising.

JD: But many of the same things came out of your gestures in the performance which were tantamount to verbalizing anyway. Why does verbalizing make a difference?

JJ: Well, maybe. When I sing Jazz to an audience I have my own sense of humour which is there in this case too, but I'm more aware that I'm singing something they like, and I behave sometimes accordingly, not always, and some of my gestures they are so . . . naughty.

BV: We should play Julian the laughing tape.

DM: That was really naughty. We were like little children in school giggling in front of the Lord Mayor of Echuca and his wife.

JJ: We did fifteen minutes of spontaneous laughter.

DM: I started off with a laughing box. We were pissed as fucking newts. Three people turned up to the job so we all got drunk and started playing. What we played seemed so silly because they were sitting there all dolled up so formally.

JJ: We didn't know you had this laughing box and you got up on your kit and pulled the string, and suddenly everyone was wetting themselves. It went on for about fifteen minutes.

DM: That's necessarily what music's all about, I mean, we

couldn't entertain them with what we were playing, they wouldn't have know what was going on, so we just burst out laughing and made them all very happy and went home.

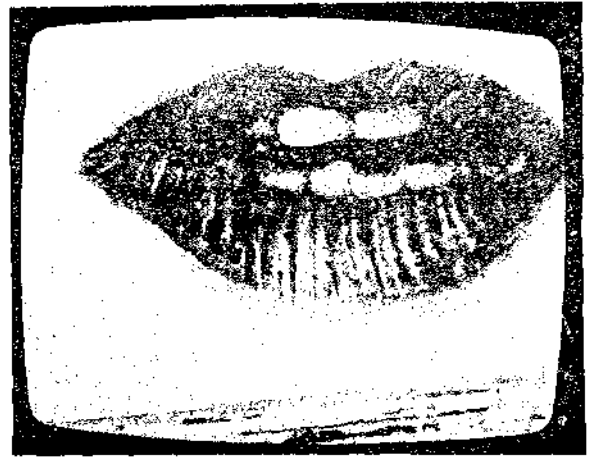
BV: I think, personally, that as far as this interview is

concerned, you should forget it (all laugh). I think the only important thing that's happened in this interview is when we just laughed. *

(transcription ends)



Robert Randall Frank Bendinelli



Robert Randall and Frank Bendinelli's video night was loosely divided into two sections: 1 new/recent work: four three minute tapes that are part of their "Video As Art" series (FANTALES, LEASH CONTROL, STARGAZING and PAUSES); and two reworkings of less recent work (VIDEO ON THE ROCKS, BEYOND INTERVIEW and STRIPPED). Unfortunately, I arrived late and missed FEEDBACK, but we will talk about that later in the discussion. For the purpose of this article, I will centre on Robert and Frank's new/recent work not previously shown at C.H.C.M.C. Their reworked tapes (originally reviewed in the NEW MUSIC No. 1/1980) will be covered in the discussion.

There seems to be something about all of Robert and Franks's work that lends them to being digested too easily by an audience, which consequently closes off a lot of discussion and questioning that the works, in a more enthusiastically analytical light, could prompt. A very possible major reason for this would be the superficial image of naivete that their work not only contains but seems to promote; and this "image" would further be the effect of a particular handling of specific subject matter, namely, Video using art and Art using Video. It is this invertible strategic framework that embodies the crux of Robert and Frank's work. Robert and Frank, as self-proclaimed and generally acknowledge "video artists", involve themselves in a working sphere that can be loosely delineated as (VIDEO-ART). From this, we can structure a broader catagorical sphere (MEDIUM-HISTORY-CULTURE) in that one can read Robert and Frank as culturally determined workers in a technological art. In fact, such are the expanded implications of the name "video artist". (It should here be pointed out that R/F's awareness of a "working context" is pretty much a feather in their cap, considering the newness of the medium and the blinkered ideas of a lot of other video art that falls between technical doodling and theoretical wandering).

As mentioned before, R/F's work declares of itself a certain naivete, in the vein of the naive, Warholian stance, but, unfortunately, their naivete (mainly the deliberate result of their predilection with the trashy and tack aspects of popular culture) sometimes goes against their actual works. Inas much as all their work contains an ongoing statement regarding the juxtaposition of Art with Video, both in terms of subject matter and the "status of the video medium, (there are some loose threads left hanging from their neglect of the basic, conventional conceptions of the nature (historical and ideological) of the Video/Art explosion, as opposed to the intended polemic effect of the Video/Art explosion. This means that one can see the propositional and theoretical procedures at work (video, too, is an artistic medium; popular culture is more relevant than art history; video, as a medium, is capable of communicating art within the economics of a technological society; etc.) but one is also affected by the irritating complexities and problematics of the deeper implications of the (MEDIUM-HISTORY-CULTURE) nexus, away from the (VIDEO-ART-POP) model.

The viewer of their work is thus split between these two modes of comprehension, and in the face of having to link up the two models to form a monstrous paradigm, usually opts for the surface reading of the non-complexities of the inherent qualities:

of the video medium. R/F's work is actually the other end of being "meaningless" (the criticism levelled from the surface reading it is "too meaningful"). This means that their main problem lies in what seems to be an under-analysed view of the communicative effects of their artistic dialect, which is out of synchronization with a somewhat over-analyzed view of their position within a working context.

FANTALES, LEASH CONTROL and STARGAZING all display not only an interesting technical and creative use of the medium, but a curious sense of humour that is an example of the corroding effect that comes from R/F's deliberate sense of naivete. Although there is the presence of wit intermingled with the naive humour of the tapes, the viewer, upon assimilating the pun or catchline, is somehow prevented from bothering to go beyond the effect of the joke, to realize the potential of issues raised (unintentionally?) in the tapes (perspectives on the history of art; modes of narration; the semiological nature of representational images; etc.) It could be argued that the tapes, as part of the modern and contemporary medium of video, are intended to be "disposable art", more in the line of mass consumption than art history worship. Such a point is undeniable, especially in the case of R/F's work in relation to its viewing audience. But my point is that most of their work is capable of going further in terms of the positions and ideas that the tapes set up and/or evoke.

As an exception to this, however, PAUSES is a definite break away from the problematic humour of the other three tapes. Although PAUSES does have its own tinges of self-conscious comedy, both in the structure of its repetitive gestures and the acting of the gestures, it doesn't have an overtly defined focal point for its interpretation (and consumption), providing the viewer with a polysemic narrative that openly allows for exploration beyond the basic nature of the video medium.

On the whole, FANTALES, LEASH CONTROL, and STARGAZING point to a continuing development of R/F's interest in the problematics of video in its three major areas: 1 - as an art form; 2 - as a relatively new medium; and 3 as a cultural activity.

Philip Brophy

P = Philip, R = Robert, F = Frank

- P: The first thing I want to ask is do you see the idea of "disposability" of your work by audiences as a problem?
- R: No-one every says anything to me afterwards. Actually, this is the first time anyone has ever brought this up. I get used to, after showing a tape, deathly silence.
- F: That's the reaction we always gets. At the Guild Theatre, where we showed the four short pieces; after they stopped - dead silence. I don't know why. It's not that I was expecting applause, just some sort of reaction.
- P: That's strange, because to me your work seemed to go down best on that night - especially with people who had seen your other work. With the brevity and power of those pieces, you could even show them on T.V.
- F: Yes. One of the aims at the moment is making our tapes very short, consciously saying, let's work to five minutes. Let's get a concept and try to put it across as quick as possible.
- R: The whole thing has mainly been to get Video Art accepted. It has a dirty name in the art world. Mainly from the wallpaper-video from the sixties, abstract stuff that just rambled on and on.
- F: We've just been trying to review some of the stuff at the LaTrobe Triennial. I can't call it Art Video - I don't really know what Art Video is, but I don't think that stuff is. There's no concept behind the work; it could be film, and in all our work we're trying to say: this is Art Video, this is not film. And that is our medium. One of the things we've found is that no-one has tried to analyze the things we do. There are a lot of concepts in our tapes that - as you've mentioned - don't get past the visual image. We want to make our tapes entertaining, but hopefully people, too, will be able to get behind that and see what the tapes about.
- P: I find myself in a strange position. What prompted me to write the article was not so much problems I saw in your work, but more so problems in the way your work was being seen. People who are familiar with and knowledgeable in the area of Art (and Video Art) seem to have as many problems trying to come to terms with something like popular culture as those people who are unexposed to the realm of Art have in trying to view or understand an art object or idea.
- F: I think our pieces are a combination of high art and pop art. People can come to them at both levels.
- R: But what people tend to forget or not realize is that they are comedies.
- P: That's something that I sometimes find aggravating in your work: the humour. Trying to go past the joke, past the superficial ideas of a tape, into an area where there is a lot more to look at.
- F: I think the problem with the joke, is that you're only getting the pop art part of it, and not the high art. Art Video, over a period of time, might be becoming an academic art and not just a popular art. I think that's possible.
- R: People have accused the tapes of being elitist, and I say, yes! they are elitist, because at this point in time, we're still trying to get the fucking art accepted.
- F: To view it as art as opposed to viewing it as entertainment. That's the main problem we're trying to get across.
- P: One of the other problems I mention in the article is one mainly based around art history.
- F: I can't understand what you're saying there. I've read it over and over and I don't get it.
- P: Okay. It revolves around the difference between an implosion and an explosion in the Video/Art juxtaposition. The implosion would be a set of defined problems that you recognize - trying to get video accepted; trying to get video viewed as video; etc. Your tapes generate and attack such problems. The explosion would be the consequences and implications that are set off from your working in your defined problematic area. In other words, you recognize a problem; you work with that problem (i.e. produce a tape); and then that tape sets off another set of problems to do with how you work with a recognized problem. For example, the easiest one to see is the problem of the image of art history, that it is just stuffy books with a lot of dates that you learn about in form two. You're continually coming up against people's superficial impressions of art history. Art history is a very involved area. It's not just dates and names.
- R: Art history is the history that creates the art that is going to follow.
- P: Exactly.
- R: In the early days, we were getting nowhere with funding bodies. They kept on saying to us "prove that what you're doing (i.e. video) is art." So we thought that if we're going to have to get video accepted as art, we would go back to the other arts that video came out of, and examine those, and find out how video relates to the arts that preceded it. That's how the whole art-about-art thing started.
- F: Though it wasn't really that conscious. For some reason, in '76, we started playing with art images.
- R: There are starting points, references to a previous art, but the tapes are trying to take it one step further.
- F: They said that Pop Art was meaningless duplication of

- pop images, in the beginning, and it's only really lately that the formal qualities of the work of pop artists have been analyzed.
- P: It has been written into Art History.
- F: Yes. Our work's the same, in that there is the high art and the popular art. No-one's ever tackled the formal qualities of our work. They haven't asked: what is this tape really all about?
- R: There's a definite look that we go for with our work in the studio. A definite "gloss". And if the tape doesn't achieve that, it just doesn't work for us. I can't describe what that gloss is exactly, but when I see it on the screen, I know we've got it. Our most recent work is perhaps what we're most excited about. It's like we've gone through a validation, of working through all this art-about-art, proving that video can be art. All that heavy ground work. Now we're at the stage of finding out what are the statements that we want to make in the medium.
- F: Hmm...I'm really happy where we're at this moment. We've developed a style which we're happy with at the moment. There definitely has been a progression on it, and we're still going. What disappoints me is that no-one looks at the style of our tapes, and analyzes the formal qualities of our work. Our play with words and images goes right back. Our camera never moves, and never has. All the action happens within the frame. We work very strictly within concepts of real-time; no editing, etc. It all goes back over three years. There's a conscious rejection of a whole series of filmatic approaches. No-one's ever really thought about it. We're building up our own language. Video language for us - what it is for us.
- P: There are a lot of problems in trying to analyze the formal qualities of a set of video works, of coming to terms with, say, your style. It's a lot to do with the newness of the video medium. Let's look at some existing differences between film and video. A film image of, for example, a flower, will conventionally be read as "a flower", whereas a video image of a flower will more be read as "a video image of a flower". With video, you not only have the recognition of the represented object, you also have the recognition of the medium. That appears to be the way that things have come about, mainly because the cinema (predominantly a history of Hollywood "realistic" narrative) has given us our basic means of constructing and reconstructing images of both ourselves and the world around us. In this sense, the vision and perspective of the film medium has become naturalized into a concept of a perceived objective reality. The images presented in film escape questioning; their validity is sealed. Thus, when you hold up video against film, it looks artificial, unnatural, cheap, etc. because the formal and visual qualities of the video medium foreground the medium itself, seemingly making the medium obtrusive to its content - its representational images. Here is where it becomes very hard to analyze your formal style, to realize the specific type of your images. You mention the "gloss" of your work which even you can't define yourself. It's very hard to look at video and not think of something like an ad on television you saw the other day, or last week's Countdown film-clip of some group. The image of video itself has not yet been able to disguise itself enough for us to disregard the superficial aspects of its visual veneer, of the image of video. We've yet to get over that wall of the nature of the medium. We can talk about procedures, like your concepts of the fixed camera, real time editing etc., but it takes a while for a mass-reading of those procedures to be named as a "style".
- F: Of course. These are problems that we realize in our work. Those procedures have always been very important to us, as well as popular image content.
- P: Another thing that video has suffered from has been its status as "cheap film", where such usages just bastardize the medium. Outside of the basic technicalities of the conflicts between video and film, where each medium determines a set of procedures of usage based on the nature of the medium (electronic versus chemical, etc.) there are problems in video rejecting things outside of the technological history of film. To totally reject film is really to presume that film itself is a pure medium, when in fact it's not. The history of cinema is based on a tension between film as film language and film as a re-writing of literary and theatrical devices.
- F: Well, I don't know what your question is. What are you getting at?
- P: I'm just saying that in as much as people came to comprehend film weighed down with a history of literature and/or theatre, people are now coming to video weighed down by a history of film. There are problems in totally shutting out film, because people are coming from that very background at this point in time.
- R: One of the things that really attracted us to video was that there was basically no history to video, so you could go in there and do whatever you liked in it, and say, I can do this because legitimately there is no history to video.
- F: Well, the history is the history of television.
- R: Well, yes. I mean, I came from a background of theatre, and Frank came from architecture, so that we both came to it in a complete state of innocence and said that we'd take just from what we know in our own backgrounds and tastes and just use this medium however we want to do it.
- F: That thing about rejection...I think that with any new art form, anything new that you're trying to do, what you have to do is put a parameter around yourself and say, that's what I think is art. Defining the major issues and rejecting everything else. And that's what we're doing. We're saying, for us, art video at the moment has to be a fixed camera, has to be real time. We could develop from that, do a whole series of different things, maybe borrow from film. At the moment they're not important to us. We have consciously rejected them. Art video has that problem you mentioned of being taken as cheap film. I'm really annoyed when performance art is filmed on video to be shown again. To me, performance art was an act by artists of rejection of documentation, of the art work.
- R: And now all of a sudden, if they have to send something up to the V.A.B. to prove that they've done all this work, they come running to Frank and me, saying will you document our work? We used to do this, but we won't do it anymore.
- F: Video really suffers, the movement of the medium, -ause a lot of people haven't got any concept of using it as the medium itself. Video doesn't lend itself to quick edits and montage and multiple cameras - unless you're using a studio and very expensive equipment.
- P: What is also making the growth of video difficult, is the general lack of acknowledgement of what you mentioned before as being the history of television. People on the whole don't really realize the fundamental differences between 1/2 inch black and white portapak work and a full T.V. studio work. Video seems to be, more than any other existing medium, totally involved in a political/economic struggle, where your work in video is basically determined by the powers in those areas. Video isn't video.
- F: Robert talked about gloss, and I think we are trying to look at a good, well-produced finished product. It's a conscious aim. That is a part of our work growing now.
- P: Sure. That's a decision on your part in the work you're going to do.
- F: The whole thing is that the aim of anything we make is to broadcast it. We're really dissatisfied with the gallery situation at the moment. I think video should be made to broadcast, and I'd really love it to be shown on any of the stations at the moment.
- R: And one of the fundamental difference between film and video is that video can be used live. A current demise in T.V. now is that there is hardly no live broadcasting, apart from the news the sport, and the Don Lane Show. Real time for us, is the closest thing we can get to live broadcasting. Both have that same sort of tension, where all the adrenalin gets going.

- A review and interview of David Chesworth's video work (shown on December 10th) will appear in the next issue of NEW MUSIC, as the type-set articles seemed to have disappeared just before we had to go to print.

K.G.B.

The K.G.B. half of the evening consisted of five pieces of almost equal length. The pieces were self contained but were fused together into a layered whole by the absence of pauses between the pieces and by their symmetry (electronic-acoustic electronic-acoustic-electronic).

The impression of layers came across dimensionally as well. The taped electronics, due to the placement of the speakers created a very definite well (broad and thin) in front of the performers who occupied a deeper, less defined space.

I shall not describe the piece in detail. The electronics were 'larger than life' -- possessing an almost violent quality at times due to the high fidelity and commanding (though not oppressive) volume. In contrast to this, the live pieces were quiet and subtle -- 'human' perhaps -- as the performers improvised their way through complex and pleasing timbral changes utilizing, among other things, wind instruments, voice, cello, percussion and piano.

Ian Russell.

KGB INTERVIEW

Due to a rapidly approaching deadline and a broken down car, this interview with K.G.B. was conducted via the telephone. Hence it does not follow the normal format of question answer. It is a precis of the conversation and must be accredited to all the members of K.G.B. (K=Kathy, G=Graham, B=Brian)

"The three tape pieces were individual contributions; the first being Graham's, the second Brians and the third Kathy's. We were interested in the contrast between the electronic and the acoustic mediums, which seems to have come across in the review.

The acoustic pieces were improvisations with very

loose structures -- i.e. the first acoustic piece explored long dissonant notes whilst the second piece used a small riff as the jumping off point. The second piece also featured ceramic instruments that were made by Kathy.

This is the first time we have played in public as K.G.B. and we hope to do more work utilizing the medium of recorded electronics and simultaneous live acoustic improvisation. We are all members of another band (Pas de Cinq) which performs mostly written music so K.G.B. will be giving us another type of outlet.

We do not tout any great philosophies -- perhaps K.G.B. is just a reaction to the four years of music academia that the three of us have been subjected to."



Chris Robert Ian

Aah! Violinist festooned with vibrant red scarf (was he French?), guitarist with Polytone amp and Gibson jazz guitar and well-equipped saxophonist who looked distinctly northern-European (ECM connection?). Was this going to be a -- a . . . jazz evening? Just as I began to wonder they started counting -- one, two, three four, Bang! A crisp professional start and they were racing. Yes folks! Chris on violin is first past the 100 notes mark but Ian on sax is coming up from behind fast -- a sure winner with real style. Their placings at the end of the four minute piece were: 1st Ian -- 15,802 notes, 2nd Chris -- 8,700 notes, 3rd Robert -- 630 well placed, syncopated notes.

After they had run out of breath (only joking!) the music changed dramatically. Continuous organ chord, Robert playing harmonics rather than percussive treated guitar, Chris and Ian creating appropriate sounds. This section was a welcome relief from the preceding fire and brimstone.

Next came a truly "Jazz" piece with the three repeating a practised riff and then improvising on it very freely. If I hadn't OD'd on jazz in my youth I might have gotten something out of this piece and been able to write an unbiased review.

The final piece began with solo sax (he was a good saxophonist thank heavens) and eventually incorporated Robert on guitar and Chris on double bass. Robert's guitar was very cutting and scratchy in contrast to Chris's "mushy" acoustic bass. Ian's sax vacillated between soft and violently brassy. The piece was "sort of" interesting.

Was it nostalgia that drove them on?

Ian Russell.

Excerpts from a long taped interview with the following people and several bottles of wine: RG=Robert Goodge, IC=Ian Cox, CW=Chris Wyatt, IR= Ian Russell.

RG: Why do you call it jazz?

IR: Because it sounds like jazz.

RG: We utilized the jazz genre - but it wasn't jazz.

IR: Does this mean that during your high speed playing you were avoiding jazz connotations?

IC: Hold on, I agree with Ian, I thought it was jazz.

IR: Why wasn't it jazz?

RG: Because free jazz is concerned with learnt jazz technique and with "soloist as God" and I think it was obvious to everyone that we weren't good jazz players.

IR: I disagree because both you (Robert) and Ian are good players and Chris can play the violin quite well.

CW: In retrospect for myself, the concert made me re-evaluate the musics of that period and the melodic aspects of free jazz . . . Free jazz has certain conventions and I found it strange playing with you two because we busted a lot of those conventions.

RG: We were trying to include all the elements of improvisation: timbre, melody, dynamics.

CW: We were trying to be expressive.

RG: And we were trying to create a progression in the music and not create static structures.

IC: We weren't nostalgic because if we had been we would have hired a hot drummer and bass player and trumpeter etc.

CW: The strange thing about that type of playing is that the melodic aspects and the atonal aspects exist in two different ideological camps - or do they? This cross-over area between atonality and straight contemporary

classical music, like Schoenberg et al and people like Anthony Braxton interests me. When you try to define emotions there appears to be a European angst or cry from the soul associated with Schoenberg and a kind of blues angst with Braxton, I don't think our playing ad any of that, I think we cut ourselves quite away from it.

RG: Yes, that sort of comes down to that wanky bullshit of having to live the blues to play the blues.

CW: In a way we were looking at, or exposing that kind of jazz myth.

RG: The overall structure of the entire evening was fairly carefully planned, i.e. the details were left open and the framework was worked out ... and I'm not sure if that happens in free jazz?

IR: Agh! Let's stop talking about jazz!

(Laughter, more popping of corks, etc.)

RG: Let's face it, the term 'improvisation' is very difficult to come to terms with.

IC: Why is this?

RG: I just wonder if an improvisation you can do anything but utilize genres?

CW: Yeah, and the minute you do it in a genre, it's not improvising.

IC: But when Charlie Parker improvises over something, surely that's improvising?

RG: Yeah, but I think the real problem is the term itself.

RG, IC, CW, IR: etc. etc. etc. as we made our way through the lost jungle of "The Connotations of Improvisation" - until the wine ran out. *



Two features of Les's mammoth music piece left lasting impressions: a) the display of the relevance and interest value of sounds and actions regardless of the intricacy or simplicity of their production, and b) the way sounds can be generated within a space to indicate the relevance of the space to the actual music.

Les worked in the large, downstairs area of the Organ Factory with the audience sitting wherever they liked. Two large speaker stacks faced each other from opposite walls, and the central space was occupied by a group of amplified keyboard instruments and other electronic accessories. Around this were suspended four large tin sheets, with a lightbulb suspended on the outside of each sheet, causing comparative darkness in the central square. All the wires and cables went up to a central point and then outward, giving a good tentlike illusion and also effectively keeping the cables out from underfoot. The feeling for me was one of defined but invisible walls marking out areas within areas, volumes within volumes.

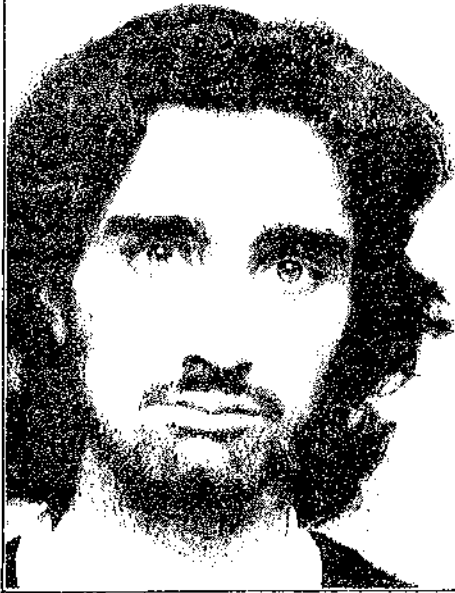
In these spaces, Les performed. The structure of the piece seemed to me to be a top layer of small and apparently independent "sound and action samples" over a couple of layers of drones produced on the keyboards, one layer being more active than the other with sudden changes in volume and the like. The bottom layer was the constructed space, which in a way controlled the upper layer of sounds (obviously, it gave geographical placement to them for a start).

The top layer was the main feature of interest for me that evening. Little sounds and actions that in other pieces might have been overlooked took on relevance and a meaningful magic of their own, bearing up well to the complexity of some of the electronic background sounds. The rattle of the paint sprayer, its quiet hiss when in use, the noises of Les rummaging in his toolbox, the quickening rhythm of nails being hammered, Les' footsteps in both boots and socks, the r-r-rip of the insulating tape coming off the reel and the snip of the scissors cutting off the swinging roll, the quiet sounds of the piano strings being brushed - this category of sounds made the piece for me. Beautiful high-pitched overtones emerged from over the thunder-roar as Les hit the suspended tin sheets. These sounds bounced and echoed around the little tin-walled space as Les ran round and round the outside. I could have happily witnessed that as a piece in itself. The little actions were interesting too. Halted and restarted run-ins to an action as if some last minute decision had been made, actions performed at the outer edges of the space, the use of actions determining the actual timing within a sound-sample - all very intriguing.

Later that night, some of the audience began to wonder whether it was a case of too much of a good thing. Not believing that an audience has the right to dictate the length of a piece to a composer/performer, I quietly made my way upstairs for a coffee, after I began to see certain actions as having good potential as gestures of finality. Quite a few others were fare more disgruntled than I - maybe they hadn't felt what I had in earlier stages of the piece, I don't know. The piece had become a process with Les firmly in its grasp, determined to reach the official end no matter what. When this point came at last, Les gesture of finality was a sprint upstairs to the coffee machine and a tired collapse in a nearby chair, and the audience went home to tired collapses in nearby beds.

Ernie Althoff

Unfortunately, Les proved to be a little more than elusive for the purposes of an interview. When he wasn't working in Moorabbin as Composer in the Community Music '81, he was building houses in Ballarat. He'd also been to Sydney for a while. Posting him a copy of the review with phone numbers written all over it brought no response either, so we remain in the dark as to Les's feelings about both his performance and my review.



Douglas Remy

Programme Notes (or most of them) Music Texts

Brown, quoted by Nyman

What interests me is to find the degree of conditioning (of conception of notation, and of realisation) which will balance the work between the points of control and non-control . . . there is no solution to this paradox . . . which is why art is.

John Cage from Juilliard lecture (i) . . . "A Year from Monday"

For living takes place each instant and that instant is always changing. The wisest thing to do is to open one's ears immediately and hear a sound suddenly before one's thinking has a chance to turn it into something logical, abstract or symbolic.

John Cage from Experimental Music: Doctrine . . . "Silence"

A sound does not view itself as thought, as ought, as needing another sound for its elucidation; it has no time for any consideration - it is occupied with the performance of its characteristics: before it has died away it must have made perfectly exact its frequency, its loudness, its length, its overtone structure, the precis morphology of these and of itself.

Morton Feldman quoted by Nyman

. . . To demonstrate any formal idea in music is a matter of construction, in which methodology is the controlling metaphor of the composition . . . Only by 'unfixing' the elements traditionally used to construct a piece of music could the sounds exist in themselves -- not as symbols, or memories which were memories of other music to begin with.

Quotes from Philosophy Texts :

The distinction between abstract and concrete ideas is virtually the distinction, misleadingly put, of concepts and percepts. The doctrine of abstract ideas was held by the Cartesians: to have an abstract idea is to think of some feature or features of the perceptible without attending to other features which it has and which are as inseparable from it (except in thought) as are the length and breadth of a road. . . . Locke tried to give an account of abstraction in terms of a doctrine of simple and complex ideas, but he fails to distinguish thought from perception. In book III of the Essay he tells us that all ideas save those denoted by proper nouns are abstract. Of these some are indefinable; they are simple ideas. Others are definable; these are complex ideas.

Philosophers have referred to perception in various ways: as an act, even an operation, as a process, and as a mental state. None of these is satisfactory. "Act", at least as activity or operation, suggests listening or watching rather than just hearing or seeing; "state" and "process", "activity", suggests something open to public observation -- yet whereas one may observe X looking at Y, one cannot observe X seeing Y. (One can perhaps claim that the best description of perception is "mental act", which would put perceiving in a special category with realising, noticing, deciding and so on . . .) One suggestion is that perceiving is simply having an experience, but this neglects the active side of recognizing and identifying involved in it. A more popular suggestion is that perceiving is a skill or art, or rather, since seeing X or hearing Y occur at a definite time, perceiving is the exercise of a skill. Oddly enough, the evidence for this is not linguistic. We may speak of a skilled observer, one who can direct and coordinate a series of perceptions, but not a skilled perceiver; we do not say that X is an expert at the art of seeing or hearing things. Rather, this suggestion is based on the fact that perceiving can be improved by learning and experience, so that one recognises things easily, avoids mistakes, or can make allowances for such factors as distance. Although this may occur to one on reflection, however, its full and precise extent has been established only by psychological investigation. As soon as one seeks out this and other psychological evidence about perceiving or even asks how one learns by and exploits experience in perceiving, one is carried far beyond language and conceptual analysis to a scientific study of the subject. Also, to maintain that perceiving is the exercise of a skill brings one back to the suggestion that it is an operation or activity.

Perceptual consciousness is very selective, and this selection is usually largely unconscious, though voluntary attention can greatly modify it. One special case of voluntary attention is of importance -- "perceptual reduction" or "phenomenological observation", where we concentrate on the sensible qualities of what we perceive and not, as is usual, on the identification of the object concerned. An artist must do this when she has to paint a scene, and this kind of observation may reveal all sorts of previously unnoticed details of colour, shape, and so on. It is open to question whether this kind of reduction reveals an element present in all perception -- namely sensing -- or whether, and this is more plausible, it is simply a special kind of perception of external objects not found in normal perceiving.

It may be necessary to bear in mind that many weeks have elapsed between the viewing of the concert and the writing of the impressions made by it - was this intentional?

Before the commencement of Doug's multimedia piece, the audience was handed 'Program Notes' supposedly to be read during the interval, or before the beginning of the first half. Before I reached the end of the first page, an enormous question mark had already formed in my mind. If I was to work at understanding the text (all three pages) it would take many hours to sort through and grasp so that saturation of it, and satisfaction of an understanding in my mind was reached. Maybe this is simply my own limitation not experienced by anyone else. The next question that formed was, if these were notes for the audience, why were we expected to know what the numbers and names in the left hand margin signified? I gather that the numbers were time indicators in seconds for the performers, and each name was the performer of the specified paragraphs. Again I may be nit-picking. Perhaps it was another method to act on our consciousness. I have spoken at length on the program notes, I suppose because so many weeks later they are the most tangible evidence I have of the performance.

The performance. First post-impression: many of the concepts were over my head. I believe, for my own benefit, that a viewing of the performance followed by a discussion session among the audience and perhaps later, the performers, would aid my own opinions. I remember a stage of preoccupation with the props and was interested in the use of the lighting person off to one side of the stage, in full view and deliberacy. At times I lost track of the narration and while commending the definite actions of the performers (e.g. walking casually, slowly to the positions) I found it somewhat disturbing. Much more could be, and perhaps should be said, but for the limitation on space. It is my first experience of a multi-media concert. I would need to see this particular piece again, especially after airing my thoughts on paper, so as to understand it. I am, in some ways, cursed, with a need to understand by analysing what I have seen in order to make sense of it. For a piece to have effect on me, it is not enough simply to accept it.

Sue Blakely

Dramatis Personae: Mark Kerr, Douglas Ray, Irene Serwin, Diane Walmsley, Anne Welch.

1. **Spontaneous Combustion:** a previously unseen and unreleased piece for several players, by Diane.
2. **Dream Focus:** a tape piece, by Douglas.
3. **Interval:** an improvisation by audience.
4. **Dream Foci - colourless Green Dreams . . .** a multi-media piece for 5-6 players and audience, by Douglas.

Conversation between Sue Blakely and Douglas Ray - 29th January 1981. Transcribed by Douglas, edited by Douglas and Sue. D = Douglas and S = Sue.

- S: One thing that I thought was interesting was the recurrence of the quote: "Re ich makes the comparison with turning over an hour glass and watching the sand run slowly through to the bottom".
- D: That first thing that Irene says in the multi-media piece is a piece in itself, a process piece from a paragraph out of Nyman (Experimental Music).
- S: How did you choose the quotes?
- D: A lot of music quotes were from Nyman - that was one of the books that John Crawford was going on about during the year - and the other ones I picked from John Cage books.
- S: So did you decide you were going to do a multi-media piece or was it something you'd been turning over . . . did you just come across the quotes or did you go out and look for them?
- D: I'd already collected the philosophy texts for a logic project, so I got out my notes and cut up the relevant ones, and I'd been reading a lot of John Cage, so I looked through that for them. I was trying to apply some of his stuff, and see how well it worked for me. The idea for a multi-media piece came when I saw I.D.A.'s "Seven Rare Dreamings"; "The Splinter Faction" (Rainer Lintz and Elaine Davies) did some multi-media pieces at LaTrobe and I was also inspired by . . . Getting on to the review . . .
- S: I was a bit worried that I didn't concentrate enough on the performance and spoke too much about the programme notes; did that worry you?
- D: No, but there are a few things that need to be said about the performance . . . e.g. the stage set-up. Across the centre of the stage was a doodle by Ernie Altoff, out of "Seven Rare Dreamings"; and the history of the multi-media piece: it was the second performance, the first was earlier that year at LaTrobe.
- S: Was it very different?
- D: No, the texts had been revised.
- S: But you had the oscilloscopes and slides.
- D: Yes, I had . . . more scopes, and some of the slides were different. In the first performance I was doing the part that Mark was speaking.

- S: Mmmm . . . you didn't do any speaking in the second performance.
- D: Yeah, the idea was that I'd have time in rehearsals to direct the thing, but it didn't work because there was always someone not there so I had to do their part. I still haven't got round to seeing what it looks like! Which worries me because that's why I want to do it again.
- S: Because it's your piece, I wondered if it was intentional to not take part in the speaking . . .
- D: Yeah, I very much like to do the speaking but I also want to see how it looks.
- S: About the programme notes, a couple of questions from my review . . . Was it intentional to ask me to write the review so long after seeing it?
- D: No that was my poop organisation. You also said in your review you had problems trying to grasp all the programme notes at once, well they're . . . really solid stuff!
- S: So, what did you expect everyone to do with the notes? Did you want us to accept them as words, whether they were disjointed or not?
- D: No, the notes were for after you'd seen the concert, so you could mull it over, try and work out something about what was happening . . . but they were also a preparation so you could get some continuity during the performance. The notes are the texts we read from.
- S: How did you decide what to include in the piece?
- D: I thought of each kind of event in the piece separately . . . and made a separate piece or progression, for each kind of action; so there were parallel streams of activities or events happening. For instance: the pictures, the instruments, and the interjections . . . The structure of which pictures were showing when was a binary sequence; and the instruments, move from soft, to loud to soft sounds, and from staccato to legato; the structure of when the interjections happened, and which combinations of words were chosen (from "colourless green dreams sleep furiously/silently" Chomsky, and "a sound does not view itself as thought": Cage) was the result of a Cagian chance process . . . tossing coins . . . in binary sequence . . . The vocal piece is a more unified experience than the text piece: it not only has the sound perceptions changing, while the lighting and positioning are static, this is a conscious contrast to the text piece, which has many focuses of attention to the voices, in the vocal piece. The choosing of the texts. . . I was going through my sources trying to find concise things which said something important to me about music.
- S: So that, even though the audience may be at sea . . . you got something out of it.
- D: (Startled laugh) . . . I haven't seen the performance yet, so I don't know how it fits together . . .

- S: No: even though your so close to it, have you gained something from having done it?
- D: Oh yes . . . but it's hard to say what, a lot of it is purely emotional.
- S: But as a second performance now, are you any more sorted out?
- D: Yeah, I know that the structure works better with only a partial return of the vocal piece at the end.
- S: One of the things that only occurred to me quite a while later, and gave me the idea of multi-media was when one of the girls put the picture down beside the piano, and sat with her back to the audience in the same position as the picture. I don't know if you arrange these things. It really worried me, in the absolute deliberacy of the way they moved; everything was absolutely quiet, and you could hear them walking across the stage and their . . . almost tap dance shoes on.
- D: Well, things like her sitting down by the painting . . . that particular act wasn't staged, but I'd told them, OK, once you're putting the painting down, then stand back and look at it a bit, and appreciate the act you have just performed.
- S: Oh, right . . . That reminds me of some saying, possibly Buddhist . . . when you're doing something, know that you are doing it. For example when you're sweeping the ground, know that you're sweeping the ground; do it consciously. That was one things that worried me. You had your person off to the left, who was working with the lights, and it worried me that very often they didn't seem to be involved in the performance . . . One girl was working things seemed quite bored with the whole thing.
- D: That would have worried me too.
- S: So, even though they were obviously technically very busy, they still should have been part of the focus of attention?
- D: Yeah, they should have been aware of themselves . . . as a performance. The idea of all the different foci of attention, and having so many texts about so many different things, was to give too much information to take in at the one time, so that although everyone got the same stimuli, nobody had the same perceptions that was one of the guiding things in the construction of the piece, it was intentionally working on how you perceive things.
- S: Mhmm . . . in which case I think that it would be a really good idea to have a discussion session afterwards. It's a shame that it's not like some sort of club or class or ritual or something . . . that you have to discuss it.
- D: Yeah, a discussion would be good.
- S: About Ernie's doodle . . . did that have two purposes, one look at and secondly to cover up equipment?
- D: Yeah, and to cover up the people, mainly . . .
- S: Mainly the people?
- D: Yeah, so they'd have somewhere to hid when they weren't talking.
- S: I was interested in everyone wearing torches around their necks; I know it wasn't intentional, but it was like a uniform; it was a unifying factor among all the performers, it turned out really good.
- D: If I do the piece again I'll be thinking of unifying it with costumes . . . 'cause I'd be tossing up whether I wanted the people to be themselves and project the texts through themselves, or whether I wanted them to be something else, part of the text . . . it must have been very difficult for them to decide how on earth they were going to say things . . . because I wasn't much help, I just told them to make the texts understandable.
- S: Hmmm... along that line, you're forcing them into being themselves narrating because the texts are written in the third person . . . "Reich says, and..."
- D: Some of the texts are in first person, like some of the quotes from John Cage. Oh, the idea with the numbers and names down the side of the programme notes, that's just that those notes are notes from the players . . . the numbers are figures in the score.
- S: I guess it's got a lot of room for experimentation, for example, people being themselves or something else . . .
- D: Yeah, within the structures there's lots of freedom. One of the structures was the lighting, and that was scored particularly for each text and for each person so you had some of the texts coming from darkness some with indirect lighting and some lighted directly; that was emphasising. . .
- S: The content of the texts?
- D: No, the perceptual experience . . . trying to distinguish between the perceptual experiences of someone while they're talking, and not seeing someone while they're talking.
- S: There was one section where you had a number of people speaking simultaneously: it's a bit like polyphony, your brain seems divided by trying to get around all these areas . . . was that, again, just the perceptual business?
- D: Yeah, giving you a choice of perceptions; you had the choice of one or the other, or both, or you could ignore both of them.
- S: One of the things I enjoyed the most about that was the physical business of the the people getting up in different areas . . . that was almost more pleasing than the text being spoken.
- D: Ummm... there are a lot of levels I tried to build into it, intellectual and perceptual.
- S: Yeah. . . and it suddenly occurred to me that you could divide it up if you wanted to, in these various streams, aural and visual.
- D: No, well I suppose that'd be one way of experiencing it, but it wasn't what I intended. There's the thing in some of the Cage quotes, about letting a sound (or here, an experience or event) be just a perception, and not "something logical, abstract or symbolic" -- but I don't demand that the audience see it that way, but I'd like them to be aware of the alternatives. But I was trying to concentrate on an event's being all of the perceptions of that event together, the acoustic and the visual. Like thinking of the texts good point to outline the structure of the multi-media piece; the vocal piece forms the beginning and the end of the multi-media piece: the text piece comes in the middle . . . the vocal piece is presented first with just the sounds, and 'scope screens: when it's repeated, you get to see the performers . . .
- S: We actually saw the performers to begin with.
- D: Yeah well you were at, supposed to, but there was a bit of a muck up. I mean the performers were back-stage, so you got something of the idea . . .
- S: I got the feeling of depth, I thought that must have been intentional... you got all this unearthly light coming from round their necks... in absolute darkness.
- D: Well that wasn't intentional. It was the next best thing; we were going to have the curtains closed, but they were so thick that we decided not to -- the singing's soft. You still got the idea of a distinct perceptual experience to the repeat of the vocal piece at the end.
- S: It seems to me that the whole piece's very regimented. Very structured . . . everyone knows exactly what they're doing -- did you have any blank spots for improvisation?
- D: Everyone knows what they're doing but how they do it is their business; the talking, I wanted them to develop some sort of style, but I left it up to them . . . Putting out the pictures . . . I arranged where they were going to put which pictures, and what they were going to do with them, whether they were going to turn them around or whatever . . . but whether they stood back and glanced at it for a second, or dumped them down, or whatever, that was up to them. But getting back to the vocal piece! . . . The idea was: first you hear the sounds and see the 'scope screens and that's one's perceptions; then you have the text piece with all its revelatory experience on perception . . .
- S: You hope!
- D: Yeah. And then you have the return of the vocal piece

and it's culmination of the idea in the text piece of an event being all of its perceptions together, because you're hearing the vocal piece and seeing the performers, (at least, seeing scattered around stage instead of backstage) and it's different thing to just hearing the music and seeing the scopes.

S: And by now, even the perception of the vocal piece at the end will be very different from that at the beginning.

D: Yeah . . . It's a bit too long . . . the centre part, and the last part . . . 'cause by the time you've been through the vocal piece once, and the text piece, facing the vocal piece again . . . I'm told it's not a very happy experience. How did you find that?

S: I found it a bit too long, in fact I found the beginning a bit too long, as well . . . the vocal piece. Do you re-perform the vocal piece in its entirety, or do you cut it down?

D: The first time we performed it I repeated a little over half of it, this time I repeated it all, to try out the balance of having the complete thing come again . . . but I think that's a mistake, it's just too long.

S: Yeah, but there are a number of things that you did that are very attention getting; turning the lights down, and just having this eerie glow at the back of the stage, and you've got the green light of the 'scopes...

D: Yes, the first time we did it, we had the audience come in en masse, then we turned off the lights, signalling the start of the piece, and then they just had the

'scopes . . . I suppose they would have had a bit of a glow from the torches, too...

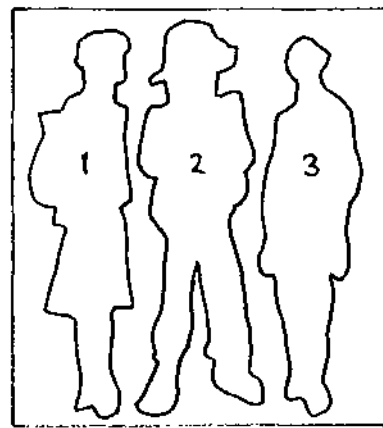
S: Well, are you satisfied?

D: The piece?! No, I wasn't satisfied at all! There were people missing cues and stuff, it's really terrible . . . It was better than last time but sometimes they aren't getting into the texts . . . there was one long part that Mark had where he reads one section of the text in darkness, then he has a bit of indirect lighting . . . and that would have been a big clue as to what was going on with the lighting and the texts, but it just didn't come off 'cause two of the lighting cues were missed there completely so the lighting didn't happen, and the slides got out of synch (slide changes were cues for many of the figures in the score), and . . . oh, it was . . .

S: The important thing I think, as a participant of the audience . . . One of the important things I felt was that there was continuity. Because the piece seems complicated, I was afraid that there was going to be a hesitation, and somebody would finally lose their place. . . I couldn't gather any information about where the cues were. I was watching, and I was really worried about any hesitations coming, and they didn't seem to come. The most off putting thing of the performance, I'd just say again, is that once or twice the lighting person didn't seem to be totally involved. *



Wartime Art



1	ARTIST / ART
2	ARMY / WAR
3	ARTIST / ART

NB: PHOTO TAKEN DURING WARTIME.

Thoughts on 'Wartime Art' and ↗↖ :

1. No music without a history; there is nothing we pluck from the past which has not been transformed, reworked, redistributed. A wartime theme from back 'then' reappears in a Bette Midler movie now; a fictional Sullivan family pops upon on the Hollywood screen of the 40s and Australian television of the 70s. To mark that history, to begin to analyse those shifts: this is the crucial task to which ↗↖ commit themselves, a process in which they are involved -- something bigger than both of us, performer and critic, something urgent and essential. ↗↖ want to be productive, want to make connections; to sight the outline of our culture and then immerse themselves in it.

2. And too, no music played now that doesn't reflect a history, that isn't layered, accumulated, spread out over a succession of modes and forms: ↗↖ plays wartime music not only with the 'right' sounds, the exact references (saxophones, military rhythms but with sounds and codes from other times (synthesisers, funk rhythms). Music you cannot 'place', for it comes from many places at once.

3. What were ↗↖ after in this history marked 'Wartime Art', what bit of culture were they trying to disengage and analyse? My sense of it was that they were zeroing in on music that helped to socialise people, to influence them in wartime, music that was keyed to emotional response: a response directed and shaped to form feelings, conditions of nationalism, patriotism, fighting together for a worthy cause; feelings that came to seem 'natural' when they were utterly determined and socially-useful.

And not a response, a state only back then (something which sucked our parents in . . .) but something still with us, tapped for different purposes today, inside the social fabric of signification: the new nationalism of "Come, On, Aussie.," perhaps even more broadly the humanistic ceremonies that weld society and its functioning units (such as the family) together "The 12 days of Christmas".

4. ↗↖ sought to get between that music and that response, to de-naturalise the 'natural', to subvert the feelings that will inevitably (given our placement as social subjects) stir within us. Certainly, the effect of so much repetition and discordance on these beloved tunes was an anguish-producing tactic.

5. But everyone loves 'disturbing' art, anguish today has a code and a market value (of Apocalypse Now). An analysis of the production of an emotional response cannot simply play on the production of a different response: it has to spell something out, to make a cerebral connection somehow. I'm uncertain as to what exactly 'Wartime Art' was trying to do: was this uncertainty intended? And I wondered at times how deep the analysis was going: if the music was simply pitting the triviality of wartime music against the 'truth' of war itself — the constant track of sound effects mimicking gunfire, battle and so forth — then the point seems a bit trite and conventional to be laboured at such length, and not really an analysis of musical signifying processes at all.

6. Contradiction: the most exciting part of the performance for me was the "Come on, Aussie" number, for it showed with remarkable clarity how a single response, a single signification — nationalist pride — can be spoken, inflected in different ways: from the heavily earnest and tough to the jaunty and uplifting and back again — alternated arrangements that exposed the complexity and difficulty of determining a semiology of music. Where is the meaning, precisely — in the notes themselves, in the choice of instrumentation, in the arrangement?

7. And where is the ideology, precisely — in the 'wartime' or in the 'art'? Is the music itself an agent of political conditioning or is it everything we learn to associate the music with, through the lyrics, the context, the situation? Could we ever think, ever hear, the music without these associations — could we have pure signifiers? Or is that the wrong question should we seek to outplay the established meanings, subvert them, weight them, transform them? a problem of theorisation and focus that ↗↖ are implicated in.

8. RMIT's Catalyst tells me that ↗↖ is a "satirical" band, and the description bothers me. To satirize — doesn't that mean to think oneself situated outside, out there, superior, knowing, not implicated or affected? It seems to me that the drive of sometimes successful, sometimes not is to place themselves more and more inside, to find in the culture what forms and determines them as performing subjects — and me as a listening subject. To be able to play Wartime Art sincerely, in a sense, not paradoxically. And ↗↖ make me want to follow them on this path, this process. To those who imagine themselves outside anything you have nothing to say to me.

Adrian Martin

"Wartime Art" Discussion A = Adrian, M = Maria, P = Philip,
R = Ralph, L = Leigh, K = Kim E = Ernie.

A: Where do you see 'Wartime Art' in the development of the band? Some people said to me that they thought it was something very new for you to be doing. Do you think it's the start of something new, or that it grows out of your past work?

M: That's what they said with 'Asphixiation', that it was something new, like we've 'progressed' or something. We do so many different things, it was just another idea. We're not going to be doing 'Wartime Art' for the rest of our lives, or for another ten years.

A: The difference, and I think this is what people were responding to, is that now it's not only a question of taking music and analysing music, but you're also taking a 'big theme' — war, wartime — in the way you took disco as a theme and a set of social questions through its music. Do you think there's a continuity going from musical analysis to beginning to tackle something like wartime?

P: Just on a superficial level, the theme of war would seem to be a much more powerful, larger, and more complex theme than disco. But that's one thing I think we've always done; we've never been influenced by a superficial image of a theme . . . I really wouldn't be able to say that disco was any less complex than war. I mean, what is less complex or more complex than another thing?

R: It's just that wartime, and even disco, are both very present now. They sort of suggested themselves as things to work with, because of their relevance now.

A: You put yourself at risk, really, because to understand the economics of war, the government procedures of war, the institution of war — look, I'd make a distinction between micro-politics and macro-politics. Micro-politics is things like sexual politics, musical politics; and macro-politics is those broader structures. I'm not sure from the show that it was obvious that you'd gone into that macro-politics, and in fact, that you even think macro-politics, that you can grasp it in any depth. There was kind of a superficial thing

there: war is madness, war is hell . . .

R: I didn't think of it in that light at all, really. To me, it was always a question of the micro-politics, this thing that's influencing us now, that's around us at the moment.

L: One implies the other.

P: In just the presentation of the show itself, the only way you could relate it to macro-politics is by some type of analytical extension. On stage, there was no comment on Afghanistan, or things like that.

K: I guess I don't draw a very great distinction between micro-politics and macro-politics. I've got more of a total view, I don't really split them up.

A: What I'm really getting at there is that "problem of the theorisation and focus" — like, what can I focus on and say something worthwhile about? Now, I wouldn't say that I could tell you something wonderful about the economics of war; I might be able to say something about the music of war. I thought the show was between those two things — particularly with the synthesizer sounds supplying some sort of 'comment' on war.

R: I didn't think when we were doing it that we were setting up a contrast between the war-art and the war-reality. We were just incorporating those sounds into the arrangements, and I think that's different.

A: Why did you put them in, then?

R: To me, it was bringing those elements down to a musical level.

P: You mentioned the semiology of music — it's bringing it to that level. What is the meaning contained in a sound that represents the sound of an explosion, which is the sound connected to a war? All those levels.

A: What meaning did you want it to carry?

P: Not really a specific meaning . . . it's hard to specify a meaning. This whole thing, the problem of us getting on stage, making these gestures, making these noises; I don't think they were not focussed enough, but there wasn't a cage set to catch them bouncing back out to all those other references. It comes back to the theme more than anything, in that if we're wearing army uniforms, things are just going to naturally

escape into those wider areas, those areas beyond our control . . . This area, like the difference in focus between micro and macro politics, this now is becoming a very dangerous area, because in a sense just dealing with macro-politics or semiology and ideology -- these disciplines, almost -- it's not getting that dangerous to situate yourself like that.

K: You wrote that it's hard to place it, because it comes from many places, and that sums it up. When we play a version of 'Revelie', it's relating to actually being in the army and hearing 'Revelie' and having to get up; but to me it also relates to all those Abbot and Costello movies where they have to get up because there's 'Revelie' playing, or where the Andrew Sisters get wheeled on to sing 'Revelie' or whatever. The two originals that we did in a way related more directly to movie images than just to real images -- "Let's Move 'Em Out".

E: In a way, it's dealing not with war but with the 'mediarisation of War', one step removed.

P: Because how do you deal with 'just' war without going through some representation of it?..So many people have said to us after seeing 'Wartime Art' -- I saw this show on television, or 'that night I went home and saw this ad on television', and I think it's been very effective in almost de-naturalising the natural surface of a lot of images and ads. That was one of its prime intentions.

R: Anti-propaganda propaganda.

P: Getting back to this thing of making the audience unsure of exactly where to relate things that are happening on stage . . . we've always worked on that tightrope thing, and it's mainly a defence against things like parody and satire, and the problems of being over-obvious -- but at the same time also staying on the other side of the problems of being too oblique. After three years, I'm pretty confident this is the place out of the three places to be.

A: In some of your other works, the thing that most attracts me in them is ambiguity, that one doesn't quite know why you are doing things . . . it's impossible to get, say from your 'Caprice' EP, just where you are in relation to that music. But the thing about 'Wartime Art' that I thought was less successful was that there was a kind of moralism there. When I say 'ambiguity', I mean it's not easy to say whether you own or disown that music, you're in the guts of it, it's not a question of saying yea or nay.

R: We're not directing your intentions in any way -- that's really intentional.

P: Often that ambiguity is the difference between consuming and not consuming what we do; being able to safely locate us and say 'great music', or being able to say 'I'm not sure -

E: -I must think'.

P: It's that fifty-fifty middle-of-the-road thing that I think is pretty important, because then you just have a conflict happening there.

L: And I think in a way we are concerned with the consequences of what we do, but the consequences are very open in a lot of ways.

K: I agree with all the things that have been said about the positive sides of ambiguity, but I think that we all do take a moral stance on war. It's different being in the middle of disco saying 'yes I like it -- no I don't like it' but I think that we could say about war that we're all definitely anti-war. But the show is much more complex than just saying 'yeh, let's all get together and be anti-war' which is the same thing as saying 'Yeh, let's all get together and be pro-war'.

R: The title itself, 'Wartime Art', makes a distinction, as if to say: this is the art, and that's the application; and once you make that distinction it's a lot safer, you don't run the risk of seeing them both as one, which is propaganda.

A: Let's talk specifically about the music. I'm interested in the whole question of using music which has a really strong emotional tie to it. Like, just when the concert starts with that drum pattern, straight away you're somewhere in that music because it determines you

in that way as a listening subject. It's a question of certain codes of sound, certain musical codes.

R: When you're talking about instrumentation and arrangements in the review, that was something I wanted to maybe dispute, about semiology in relation to arrangements. I don't think semiology relates to arrangements but it relates to tunes. All that stuff Warren Burt's been doing about how frequencies can elicit these physical reactions, emotions -- that's really what an arrangement does, doesn't it?

P: But anything can become a convention and then contain meanings.

R: But I wonder whether an arrangement can ever get away from that essential physical reaction from frequencies.

A: I'm bothered by that -- I think all responses are cultural.

P: What I think we should remember is -- how does one acknowledge the theory of the effect between physicality and sounds? That in itself is a cultural concept. For you to say that sub-frequencies make your guts move -- that's a segment of knowledge that you have learnt, and before I knew that, I knew not anything about the way sounds were going in my stomach. I tend to agree with Adrian -- you can't totally escape that cultural thing. Once you get into arrangements of sound, you're getting into a mixture of both that physical thing and the cultural thing, because the brain relates that arrangement to a past history of arrangements.

E: I think the big difference between this performance and other work was the two added saxophones -- a new sort of sound, 'massed' saxophones, and once again, that's got a meaning. Most people seem to think of the big bands -- the 40s. So there's a statement there in just the collection of instruments.

P: To me it was a very conscious link to Glenn Miller. I've always felt that Glenn Miller was somewhat of a central figure in popular music during wartime -- he was a hero he became a myth; and the whole thing that Glenn Miller introduced popular music into the army to play. It had a lot of implications in linking civilian life with war life.

A: In a way I would have liked to have seen you do more of that -- to trace that music out historically. That would have given me more connections . . .

M: Disappointed, eh?

A: Could you explain some of your techniques for re-arrangement?

E: It starts with what you've got . . . the necessity to bring the music down to who we were and what our capabilities were.

P: This show did have a deliberate thing of basing everything on just brass and percussion. That contributed to people seeing it a lot different on just the musical level. I guess that was very aggressive, which relates to the theme.

A: How do you decide the details of rearrangement? Like cutting up phrases and stuff?

P: I often see that suff as being somewhat arbitrary as to actually why to do it -- but then, once you do it, you rationalise it, and say yes or no. Often it's a theoretical concept that initiates a procedure -- saying OK, this is the song we're picking, and we're picking it because of these reasons: how are we going to rearrange it? OK, what do we want to say about the song in relation to its original meaning? How can we have this effect? We try something, say yes, and move on. When we come to practise, there'll be a loose framework -- a group of notes will have been written out -- but then it's got to be worked into a form that, once you go all through it, does have the right effect and meaning.

K: That effect and meaning was something that, while we were doing it, was ambiguous too, just trying it out.

A: You say that you analyse the contents and meanings of song, but you don't use lyrics or words. Is that an expedient thing -- do you decide to just put that aside? Because it seems to me that if you want to get into a semiology of wartime songs, you have to deal

52 with their lyrics.
 P: In terms of defining some area of micro-politics, the whole area of the relationship between words and music is a very large, unresolved area to just carry in assuming it is resolved.

I sometimes am scared in that sense. I need to either get just the words or the music. I think we basically deal with music because there are a hell of a lot of people already dealing with words. I feel like the music area has been a lot more untouched. We have dealt with a lyric-music relationship in 'Asphixiation', and with just words. I just think it's too complex an area to jump into like that. It took us almost two years of playing "Nice Noise" and "Venitian Rendezvous" to come to some understanding of how people relate music to words. A lot of our theory of that relationship is based on on theory but on watching what has happened, and feedback we've got from just playing

music. The sub-slogan to "Nice Noise" is 'why don't you get a lead singer?' That proves there's a huge area there untouched. Music is seen to be the carrier of the words, and that's the problem we're tackling by just doing music. Does music carry fucking words, or words carry music, or what?

M: Remember we were at the Crystal Ballroom once, and this guy came up to me and said - there were all these eight different bands playing at once in all these eight different rooms, and we were doing "Nice Noise" - he came up and said he'd been going around to all the other bands and they were all singing and just going blah, blah, and he come to see us, and we just didn't need a singer. He said if you took away the singers from all the other bands, there'd be nothing; and that listening to just our music, there was so much there. *

(* in TEXTS)

The Programme notes to WARTIME ART cannot be printed due to lack of space and their lengthy length. If interested, you can write to NEW MUSIC for a copy.

What's On

- Wed. 21st January 8:30 pm:
 Films -- Sue Paris (Punk Line)
 -- →↑→ (Contracted Cinema).
 CHCMC: 6-10 Page St. C/Hill.
- Wed 28th January 8:30 pm:
 Films -- Andrew Sinclair (Gravel Pits/
 Semi-Auto Biographical Portrait/ In
 His Own Image).
 -- Warren Burt (Interact/Slow Motion
 In the Big City/ Computer Video Dance/
 Proquim/ Tide Pool)
 CHCMC: 6-10 Page St. C/Hill.
- Wed 4th February 8:00 pm:
 Warren Burt/ Eva Karczaga (Music/Dance)
 National Gallery, Melb.
- Wed 4th February 8:30 pm:
 Films -- Ian Cox
 -- Dirk De Bruyn (1 years/ zoomfilm)
 CHCMC -- 6-10 Page St. C/Hill.
- Wed 11th February 8:00 pm:
 Warren Burt/ Eva Karczaga (Music/Dance)
 National Gallery, Melb.
- Wed 11th February 8:30 pm:
 Films -- Rinaldo Caputo/ Adrian
 Martin/ Ruth Williams/ Paul
 Fletcher/ Peter Simonsen/ Kim
 Beissel.
 CHCMC: 6-10 Page St. C/Hill.
- Wed 18th February 8:30 pm:
 Films -- John Dumbley Smith (Hoddele St.
 Suite/ City Scape Series)
 CHCMC: 6-10 Page St. C/Hill.
- Wed. 25th February 8:30 pm:
 Films -- Cantabiles (Skin of Your Eye)
 CHCMC - 6-10 Page St. C/Hill.
- Sun. 8th March 2:00 pm: →

- Environmental Symphony for⁶⁴ Ron Nagorcha
 + friends.
 Footscray Park.
- Wed 11th March 8:30 pm:
 NEW MUSIC BENEFIT CONCERT No (3)
 K.G.B. →↑→ Laughing Hands, Essendon
 Airport. I.P.A.
 CHCMC: 6-10 Page St. C/Hill.
- Wed 18th March 8:30 pm:
 →↑→ (6 Videos - "Suddenly I moved" &
 "A Non Space")
 CHCMC: 6-10 Page St. C/Hill.
- Wed 25th March 8:30 pm:
 Kim Beissel - Films
 CHCMC: 6-10 Page St. C/Hill.
- Wed 1st April 8:30 pm:
 Ian Russell / Valek
 CHCMC - 6-10 Page St. C/Hill.
- Tues 5th April
 Victorian Time Machine - New Music
 from the Netherlands + Les Gilbert.
 Grant St. Theatre, V.C.A. *
- Wed 8th April: 8:20 pm:
 Astra Choir - works by Globo Kar + others.
 548 Bourke Rd, Camberwell (Church).
- Wed 8th April: 8:30 pm:
 Les Gilbert / Severed Heads / Ralph
 Traviato.
 CHCMC: 6-10 Page St. C/Hill.
- Tues 14th April → Tues 30th June:
 →↑→ present "Television Works"
 at the Flying Trapeze Restaurant.
 (Further details nearer the event.)
- Wed 15th April 2:00 pm:
 I.P.A. - (Seven Rare Dreamings)
 Open Stage Theatre - M.S.C.

- Wed 15th April 8.30pm:
Signals.
CHCMC: 6-10 Page St. C/Mill.
 - Wed 22nd April 7.30pm:
Composers Gallery
Melbourne State College.
 - Wed 22nd April 8.30pm:
I.N.A. - (Solos)
CHCMC: 6-10 Page St. C/Mill.
 - Wed 29th April 8.30pm:
The Connotations / Peter + Rosanne
CHCMC: 6-10 Page St. C/Mill.
 - Tues 5th May
Victorian Time Machine (New Music
from Japan and Anne Boyd.)
Grand St. Theatre, V.C.A.
 - Wed 6th May 8.30pm:
Laughing Maids (Landscapes of China)
Daniel Schauf (Play Loud - Film)
CHCMC: 6-10 Page St. C/Mill.
- * "New + Experimental Music Show" 3RKKK FM Mondays 8.30/10.00 pm

The next issue of "New Music" comes out on May 27th. This "What's 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.

If you want more
"New Music" magazines
(back issues/etc.) write for
details to the address
on page ②.

