

# Music

1980 Number Three

# NEW MUSIC

1980 Number 3

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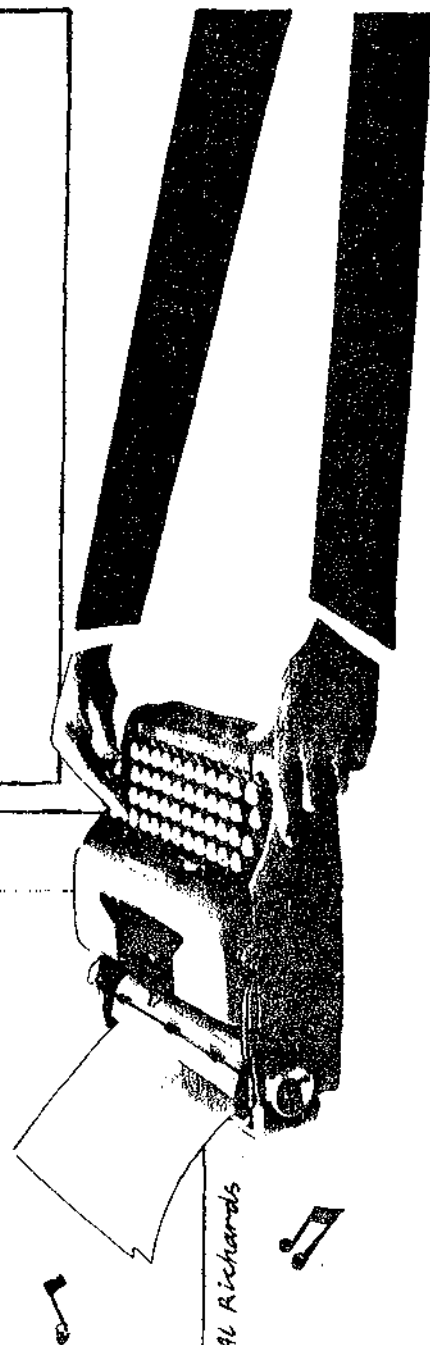
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# Editorial

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

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

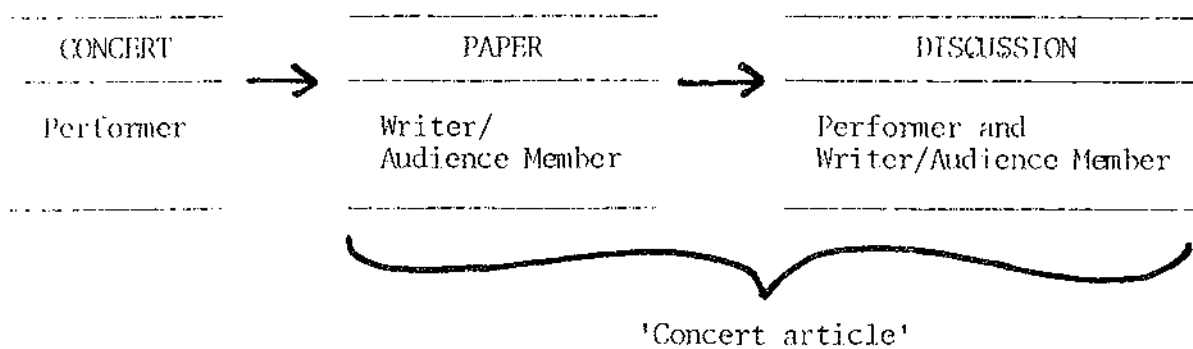
The magazine 'New Music' revolves totally around the Clifton Hill Community Music Centre. This is to say that it is not a journal on new and experimental music in general or in terms of national or global coverage. Although the magazine (and even the Centre) might be tagged 'cultist'/'elitist' or even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

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

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

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

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



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


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

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

Philip Brophy  
David Chesworth.

AVG 13 Students from Melbourne State College.

AVG 20 →↑: "A Double Concert:  
A Narrative Music,  
B Formula: Disco."

AVG 27 I.D.A.: "Seven Rare Dreamings"  


SEPT 3 John Crawford.

SEPT 10 Mark C. Pollard:  
"So You Thought You Knew Me!"

SEPT 17 The Lunatic Fringe.

SEPT 24 Laughing Hands: "Tapes."  
Staine Davies and Rainer Linz.

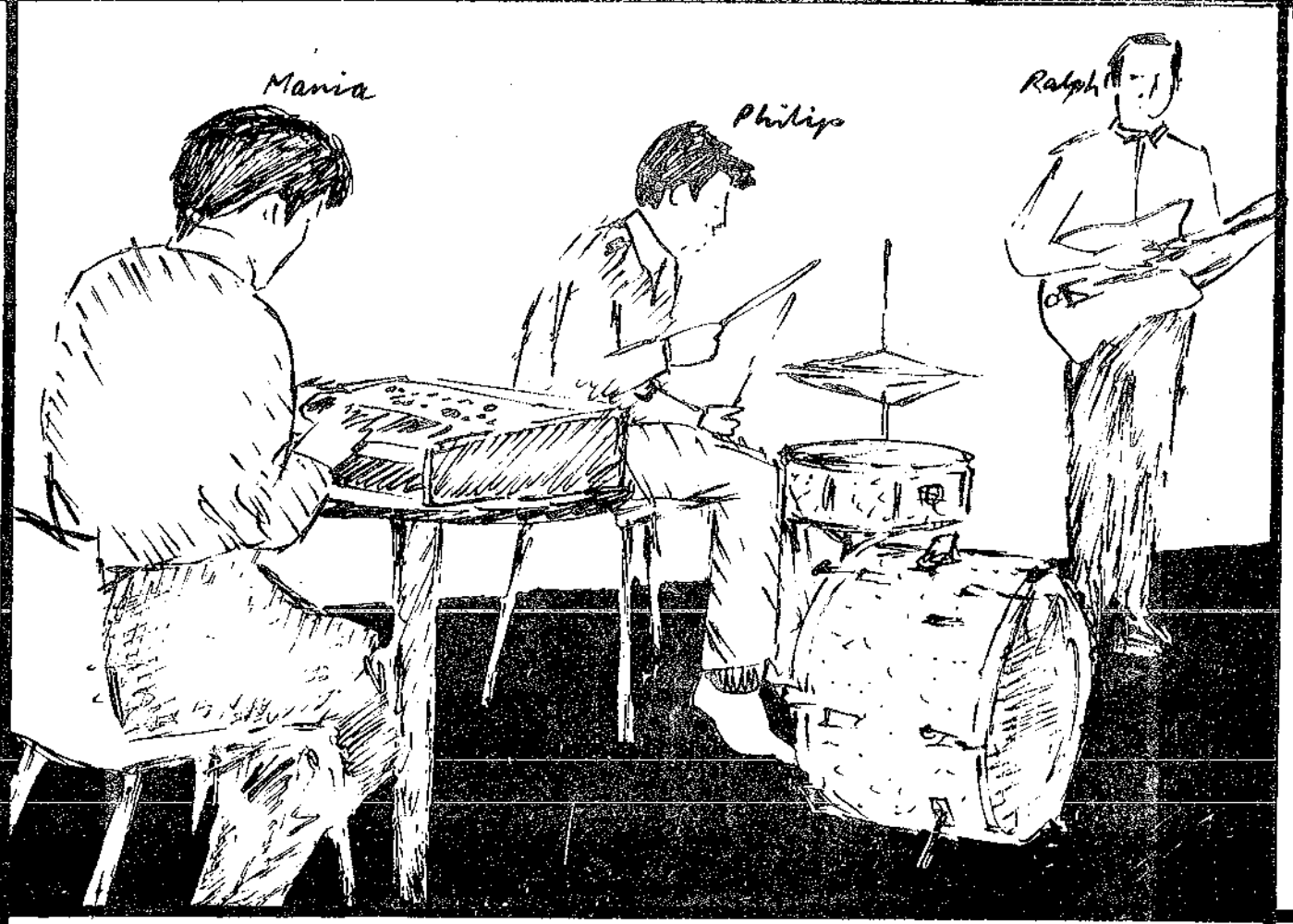
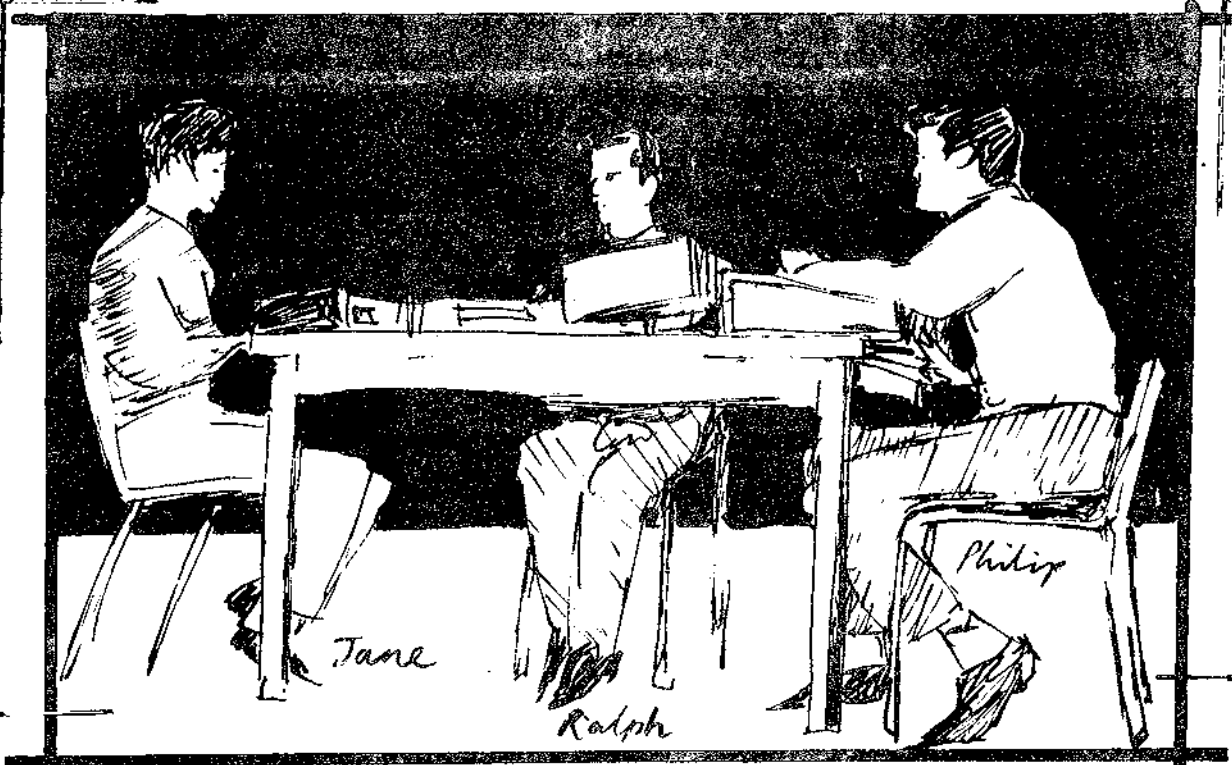
OCT 1 Dave and Phil Duo.

OCT 8 Rainer Linz, John Campbell and Musik 4.

OCT 15 →↑: "New and recent films."



6-10 PAGE ST.  
CLIFTON HILL  
Ph. 48 3005  
All concerts start at  
8:30 pm. and are  
FREE.



## NARRATIVE MUSIC - A recital of collective events

1. A Rotating Object - I was just starting to hear it and it ended. Too short. It precludes the gradual seduction that a greater length could have given it.
2. Various Levels - Would have been better with violins and a piano instead of synths. Raised the question of worthwhile ideas (should they be communicated in the playing and listening), and boring noise. I remember this being quite loud and me very tired and falling off to sleep despite my efforts not to. Does this fact actually recognise a success in the performance? How would I feel listening to this tape not in the knowledge that it was  $\rightarrow\uparrow\leftarrow$  and did not know a few things about their approach? I'm sure I wouldn't treat it as I do.
3. You Do You Don't - I remember thinking this performance was full of every cliched clean, sweet, synth. sound I can't bear. This leaves me empty (or completely confused). I am easily distracted while listening to it. I am not enjoying having to listen to it - to dissect it. I am not motivated by it enough to dissect it.
4. So Here I Am - A chance to grasp at something tangible. A piece with words offered. Good words - they preach no apparent vision of reality or preferable reality. I found this quite sad. The first to effect me in any but a negatively critical way. I felt the words - an ambivalent monologue about contemplating leaving somewhere, arriving somewhere else and returning, fitted well. At least they didn't seem out of place. I didn't like the sounds but it made me feel quite melancholy and sort of sadly reflective which I thought was good.
5. Being There - Nothing. Wished it would just end. Irritation value for people who feel guilty about turning something off before it's ended. Metal Machine Music was much funnier.
6. Presence of The Present - I guess I just must prefer beat music. I enjoyed this seductive funky drone with white noise rushes. As a short piece its enjoyable, but fairly forgettable. Too short again
7. Down - Nothing

## FORMULA DISCO

Being a great fan of intensely repetitious rhythmic music I loved this. It consists of drums, roland synthesizer providing rhythm and guitar adding the simplest embellishments and tapes. The tapes varied from synthetic percussion rushes, galloping rhythms to football commentary's, sexual satisfaction, instruments and apparently random noises. Also, being an admirer of imposing seemingly unrelated noises on each other within a conventional rhythmic framework (of the rock song) I was pretty impressed by this performance. This music is instantaneous, catchy, memorable fun. It is monotonous and revitting, a rare combination. It is very simple, very funny and very effective music. It is good dance music and good entertainment. It is not one dimensional. I find I can listen to it quietly while I do something else or I can make it my activity and I am not distracted.

It was pretty stange to see a performance by  $\rightarrow\uparrow\leftarrow$  in two parts, to be bored and left unmoved by the first and thoroughly excited by the second. In the first section there was a hilarious visual addition of rhythmic nodding. I was in stitches at the time, but on hearing the tape I could not really remember which piece it was. For me, the music was just not long lasting, not as memorable. But perhaps that was intended. If so then I view it as a waste, for I believe music should always be memorable as a listening experience. And there's a difference between disposable music and music you forget entirely as soon as it has stopped. I found the first and second sections entirely unrelated. A friend made what I felt an entirely appropriate remark when he said  $\rightarrow\uparrow\leftarrow$  were slightly more preferable as background noise to the sound of Nicholson Street traffic. But I thought why bother with  $\rightarrow\uparrow\leftarrow$  when the traffic is always there.

*Alan Bamford*

Discussion about "Narrative Music" by ↗↑↗ between Ralph, Maria, Phillip and Lee of ↗↑↗ and Alan Bamford who saw the "Narrative Music" performance along with "Formula: Disco" at CHCMC.

Ralph: That comparison to traffic noise reminds me of what we wrote in one of our very early programmes about the S.E. Freeway...just the whole question of contexts. Which then connects to what you said about whether your opinion would be different if you didn't know it was us.

Alan: But a freeway and a work of art are just the same.

Phil: But you're implying a context when you say that.

A: It's as much a work of art as anything else.

P: But there's a whole lot of implications in you just saying that. You're not just telling me that a freeway - this concrete structure, is, what we commonly term, a work of art.

A: It's more a comment on what's conventionally held to be a work of art. It's not meant to say that a road and the roof of St. Paul's Cathedral are one and the same.

P: You're just knocking it off the stool.

A: But I think that me writing that, and then reading the programme notes, which I read but didn't take home with me, and I forgot, made me just listen to the music on the tape. And my approach to listening is completely different and uncomplimentary to your approach in making it.

P: True.

A: Which was why I was tentative about this.

P: But that's the usual case...like anyone coming up against anything and trying to apply their listening perspectives to it...to that persons intention in what they were actually doing. There are always problems in getting someone to listen how you want them to listen and strangely enough N.M.\* is one of the very few concerts that were done where we've been involved in not holding up something to listen to, but to suggest a way of listening. And to see if someone can adapt a way of listening if anything can come out of that music that we did. And in the programme notes we were offering a certain kind of still very vague perspective of not seeing synth cliches as cliches but as another way, as suggested in the programme.

A: I think it would be very difficult to alter the way you normally listen to music presented from a stage by a group of people unless it's not presented from a stage.

P: But N.M. was very much a scientific experiment where we had to ask people to try and listen to the music in this way and disregard us. A very artificial situation was set up - it had to be very forced listening - not a natural one. Read what you hear in terms of the programme - and what the programme is on about is that N.M. is, like the theory of it, based on the way cinema works - how film cuts from one scene to another to give two completely different spatial areas and it still retains a temporal continuity. It stems from that; and the seven songs stemmed from one song which was "Being There" which surprisingly was one of the ones you got nothing from, cos there was a lot of feeling that that was the one that really worked. A lot of people said that, having applied the listening perspective to it. It was an attempt to recreate a real-time event while the music gave you an impression of cutting from one place to another. And we did it with sharp cuts in volume. You were near-then far. I can see it being very boring but we said try and listen to this music as if it's telling you something. Telling - not describing. It's really descriptive of nothing so you're totally correct in saying nothing. So what we should ask is, is it valid for a performing group like us to try and suggest unnatural listening perspectives or whatever?

A: Yeah, it is. Cos I don't think that you can ever judge anything on any terms other than those by which it was done. It's completely unfair to apply Y's principles to X - that's a real fascist way of deciding whether a thing is successful or not. So yours is a perfectly reasonable approach. It's just that on that night I found the noise



so tedious and I was distracted so easily from it I just wasn't able to concentrate in the way I should have.

P: The noise thing could have been an important thing for the piece though. I mean, I know that had we used nice sounds - melodic pitches and things like that - that people would have enjoyed, but we wouldn't have been able to do what we did.

R: On the other hand people didn't enjoy it because it was noise, and that's like the problem of escaping the fact that it's still music. Ultimately the way to execute that would be with some kind of signal that had no kind of history to it.

A: Yeah...I wasn't using the word noise in it's derogatory sense. There's "noise" I like and "noise" I don't. What I meant was that the sounds that I heard just didn't hold my attention. Like, I think the idea is good, of proposing new ways of listening and making music designed in association with these ideas. But at the same time you have to make the sound you are using sufficiently attractive for those listening - just so that it has enough "bomph" to grab whoever and not let them go.

Lee: But that's like covering up your idea - if you're going to make it aesthetically appealing. You're in fact playing on what they think the conventional idea of music is.

A: But what you say brings the argument down to the fact that people listen to music to hear noise, and to appreciate both what there is, and what there is behind it. And if you're going to try and convey some sort of idea about the construction, presentation and acceptance of music - if conveying an idea about the way it's done is your main intent - and the noise you end up using is secondary then you should forget about making music and just write books. Cos if you're gonna make crummy music to convey worthwhile ideas then you're wasting your time with instruments.

P: Yeah well, what do you see writing as - English Grammar?

A: For me it's the simplest, most direct and concise way of conveying an idea, thoughts.

Maria: But how do you know if they work unless you try them out - I could write about plenty of things...

P: Yeah - that's why we did the concert. To see if what we thought would work, would. But what I'd like to get onto is - I totally disagree with your view of English grammar and language. To me English language - speaking - writing - reading is the most problematic area. Any realm of the arts and aesthetics held up against something like language - is the safest type of thing I could ever think of in my life. To me there's no foundation to the belief in something like language being the ultimate way of conveying thought. Because what makes language appear to be that is that our English language first and foremost seems to be natural and it's the most unnatural thing in the world. The English grammar system is a constructed hierarchical system that has mathematical rationale and logic to it. Our pure thoughts, concepts or whatever...for a word to have any meaning there's a whole range of laws and conventions that have to be followed and the whole thing, for people who are attracted to concepts, of suggesting that they just write adds to the long history that writing is a safe practise.

A: I didn't say it was safe.

P: You said it was simple and precise and it's not.

A: I just think it would be far easier for you to convey the ideas behind narrative music in a piece of writing.

P: But it wouldn't have, because people accept writing to be simple direct and concise and they would have just read something and not thought of anything about grammar, semantics, words. They would have thought meaning. Writing effaces itself. It becomes natural.. we use this totally artificial thing.

A: Within that series of historically accepted rules and conventions.

P: Yeah, well, everything has.

A: Ohh - I don't think music has.

P: Music is based on music history. Tonality is a historical concept - harmony is a mathematical structure.

A: That doesn't mean that to make music you have to use them.

- P: But whether you like it or not you are using them.
- L: If you're not using tonality, not using conventions - people's listening of music is determined by the history of music.
- P: Any act, gesture, decision made in music has a meaning, a connotation and a signification that is the result of all the previous acts, decisions, judgements and whatnot, that have come before, if we know about them or not. Anything is something because it's not something else - and that something else had to happen before it. I know it's not intentional in a lot of things but the history is always there.
- R: It's built into the operation of perception. It's all comparison.
- A: Getting back to where it started - if you can't make up music that is acceptable to people who hear it, if your intention is to play it to people then you shouldn't.
- R: And that's another really sore point with us. The idea of entertainment.
- L: If it's not good to listen to you shouldn't do it - is that what you're saying?
- A: You shouldn't expect others to accept it.
- P: In other words why should we bother communicating ideas if we're making no concessions to the people who listen to it.
- A: I don't consider it a concession to make music for performance to other people that grabs them and holds them tight. I think that if you're making music and part of that involves presenting it then I see it as essential to make effective and successful music. And for me, part of music being effective is that it grabs you and holds you tight.
- P: From your standpoint, if it doesn't grab hold of people - is that due to the music not communicating?
- A: Yeah, whenever I look at something on some sort of performance level there's two primary sides to it. Like I can go and watch Laughing Clowns and feel elevated and severely affected by this and for the moment or forever, not care a damn about Ed Keuppers vision. But the noise is great and it effects me. I don't really want to break it down to the physical and the intellectual but it's a multi-dimensional experience and I'm not prepared to sit and take in noise that bores me while I search for the idea cos the idea's just not going to get through cos I just don't care about it.
- L: But is it going to get there if we get you sitting back and feeling good?
- A: It sure would. It would motivate me to want to hear it again.
- L: But don't you think it would be denying the original intention?
- R: Yeah, if something motivates you it becomes the vehicle for the communication, not the communication itself. Yeah, like you said about making music - more than making music we use music. We've used music a lot - never set out just to make music.
- A: But in the process of using music you've made the music you use.
- R: But if we set out to make music we'd be more concerned with sounding pleasant. In which case it becomes the vehicle for something else and not the actual point itself. In using music you're using the form to get across rather than using it as a vehicle. So can you see in that attempting to do what we are trying to do if we'd made a more seductive music it would have been counter-productive.
- P: Our actions on stage were totally motivated by an idea-that's the short and sharp of it. Trying out an idea. We did that concert to go beyond theory because theory is essentially quite meaningless. You can't attack it in any way but a performance..those actions that performance were the result of the idea and for those actions to have been different would have meant we would have had a different idea.
- A: It just seems to me that asking an audience to listen in the way you did is asking them to listen in an unnatural fashion and in order for them to be able to do that everything that they experience to be positive at the moment in order for them to be able to approach a familiar subject from a quite unfamiliar direction.

- L: But aren't you recording a positive effect in saying it was boring?
- A: It seems that you doing narrative music is a thing in which you can't fail.
- P: I very much disagree. I think that we're in a lot more of a vulnerable situation than if we'd put ourselves in a familiar sphere of working. I mean theoretically, sure - if it fails or not there's this programme that says we know it all... but if I see a programme I don't just accept it, or even that the person knows what he's doing.
- A: Yet it just seems to me that if a person found the music that they heard unattractive and they ceased to consider it - it's not your fault because if you'd made attractive music it would have subverted your idea, but if they had appreciated it and liked it and got the idea then you're not a failure, regardless.
- P: Yeah, we're safe in that sense but the piece is a stimulus - a basis for a dialectic discussion on the concept, and I think the concept is incredibly vulnerable. It stands there waiting for someone to say 'NO!' Sure we ask for a certain listening perspective - but what we're more working towards is to be knocked about a bit by people who did apply this perspective and didn't agree with it.
- R: Yeah, cos on one level we're still using musical conventions - metaphorically - volume and space.
- P: What you'd said I'd never thought of before - of holding up a theory into practise like that but on the other hand, I mean it's true I'll accept that. But any piece of music, art object, object sort of speaks silently a way for us to perceive it and that might have been a problem with this concert in that we did very much formally ask the audience to dissect it in a certain way. But I'm pretty sure tho' if we didn't ask, they would have just walked away.
- R: With that piece the only place it could exist successfully is in the listeners head. You could listen to it in neutral terms cos everything you listen to is just like an object - it's all what you impose on it, those perceptual filters that you impose on anything that tell you what is going on and for that piece to succeed would have required a really concentrated effort to do that.
- P: Especially with the stuff we did there was so little there in the first place.
- R: It gets down to the example of volume being a metaphor for distance - but you can listen to it and think "that's soft and that's loud," but after reading that programme you should have thought "that's far and that's near" - it's that concrete, the perception thing.
- A: But perhaps if the music is the idea itself then that programme could be redundant.
- P: I don't think so because the programme itself is based on the listening perspective - a listening perspective that can be forcibly applied to a whole lot of musics that do have their own meaning regardless of the applied perspective.
- A: But perhaps when you wrote that you presupposed certain ways of listening that most people apply and it was therefore necessary to say "Listen to this music in a way that probably isn't the way you usually listen."
- P: The thing of the music having to exist by itself - why I think the programme is very closely related to the concept is because I could think of something like "Discrete Music" is a well known piece - a seminal thing in terms of instigating a certain listening perspective. Lets take two hypothetical views of what the meaning of "Discrete Music" is. First off - it could be a structural process piece, where not a concept it set up, but a technical exercise is set into motion and the record is the outcome of that idea. On the other hand there's the thing of the concept of repetition in music, and of the way that one can listen to repetitive music and the way one can let repetitive music function in a whole number of different ways, from the therapeutic to the muzak-type of realm. So there's one piece with two very different but very common meanings to it - they are historically written. That becomes part of the history of music. Two perspectives - well known and applied after not only to that music but to other music that sounds like Discrete Music. And this is where it gets very problematic, in that there could be a third

perspective that isn't historically written about that music. And if someone, with a third perspective, went out and performed something that was almost Discrete Music in the way it sounded, to them it would very much say what they wanted to say, but to an audience, it would fall into either one of those historically written perspectives.

A: Yes but you picked a piece of music that's been around for while so you say that somebody who listens to it is going to think - "ah, that's like that thing by Brian Eno, see what this person means is..." But while it's usually possible to relate elements in music back and forth it's hardly ever that it happens to be that a piece of music I like I can say that block of music is like this block and therefore the ideas must correlate.

P: Yeah, that doesn't happen much. But what if a perspective one wants to tell people about happens to be something that has been got from a whole realm of history of music that people assume to be one certain way?

L: So you're saying that there are listening conventions and that this had to be articulated because it's not a convention and that's why it had to be in that form?

P: Yeah.

A: But all I'm saying is that if a piece of music is effective then the way it should be considered should be evident in the hearing of it.

P: But what you're presuming is that our ears are the only things that makes music work for us, in the same way that our eyes make paintings work for us. But I don't know if my ears are getting it - I don't know the difference between my brain and my ears.

A: All I know is that if I put my hands over my ears it doesn't get to my brain or my heart as well & I assume the first perception of music I get is in my ear and what I hear has to be something that is grasping one. I'm not going to be drawn to it further.

R: But don't you think that tastes come into it. This history of habit at work?

A: I think I have sufficient broadness of mind to not throw anything out as soon as I experience it. But I'm not a very patient person...I really like instantaneous music.

P: It's just that, what do advertizing men call it - a gut reaction?

R: Yeah, do you trust your instincts and your feelings.

P: There's even a history to feeling, to instinct, to guts, just as there's a history to thought.

A: Well, I feel music far more than anything else - I don't think about music very much at all - I never have discussions like this (general chuckles) but I listen to it a lot.

P: Don't you dream about it? *(laughter)*

A: I don't remember them.

R: But you're not necessarily talking about music tho' when you're talking at this level, you're just talking about faculties of perception, taste and all those other things - and music fits into that.

A: I often unsuccessfully attempt to do what I'm doing without thinking about it - to just do it and sometimes afterwards I like it and sometimes I don't.

R: But that applies to us. The difference between writing the programme notes and the concert is doing it - just going ahead with it in the same spirit - just we have a different motivation to satisfy us - separate from the act of doing it which has to be automatic all the time.

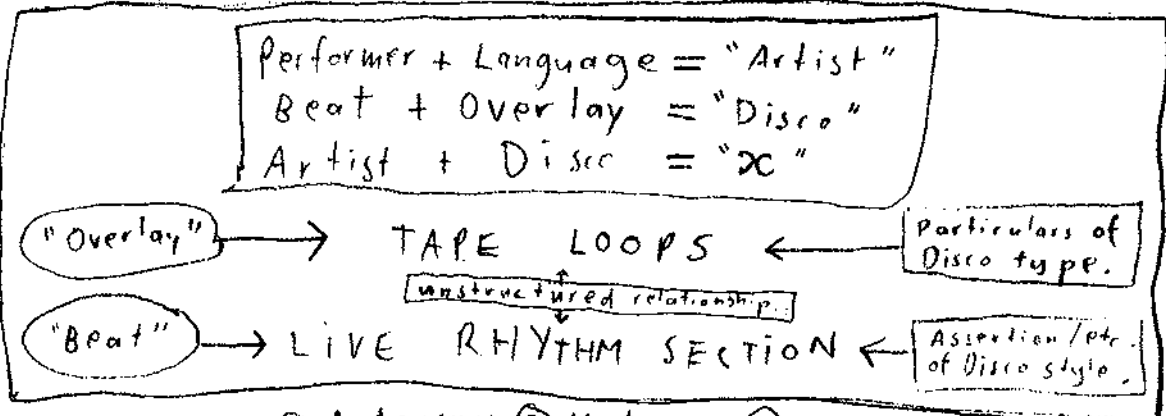
P: It's like a void - these *synthi knobs* - the only thing you can rely on when you're on stage is some kind of instinct - but you've picked as much of a battler as what we have in trying not to think - you're trying to de-culturalize yourself. It seems to me a very two-sided thing. That you can experience that other thing, but you can't really talk about it; but you can't really experience too much "Narrative Music", but you can talk about it much more.

# "Narrative Music" →↑→

Tonight's concert contains 7 songs that are still in the vague stage of self-clarification. An attempt has been made to write music that tells something—music specifically involved with the actual act of ~~the~~ telling of narration. Music not primarily or intentionally concerned with concepts of texture or structure, or with the effects of conventions/uses of tonality and rhythm. All the songs tonight are concerned with the location (or rather, the multitude or complex of locations) given to a listener by passing through real-time with a piece of music. "Narrative" music (music that narrates) would thus be concerned with [writing/telling/reading] as opposed to [composing/performing/listening]. At least, such would be the perspective that one should adopt to see if tonight's songs function under these terms.

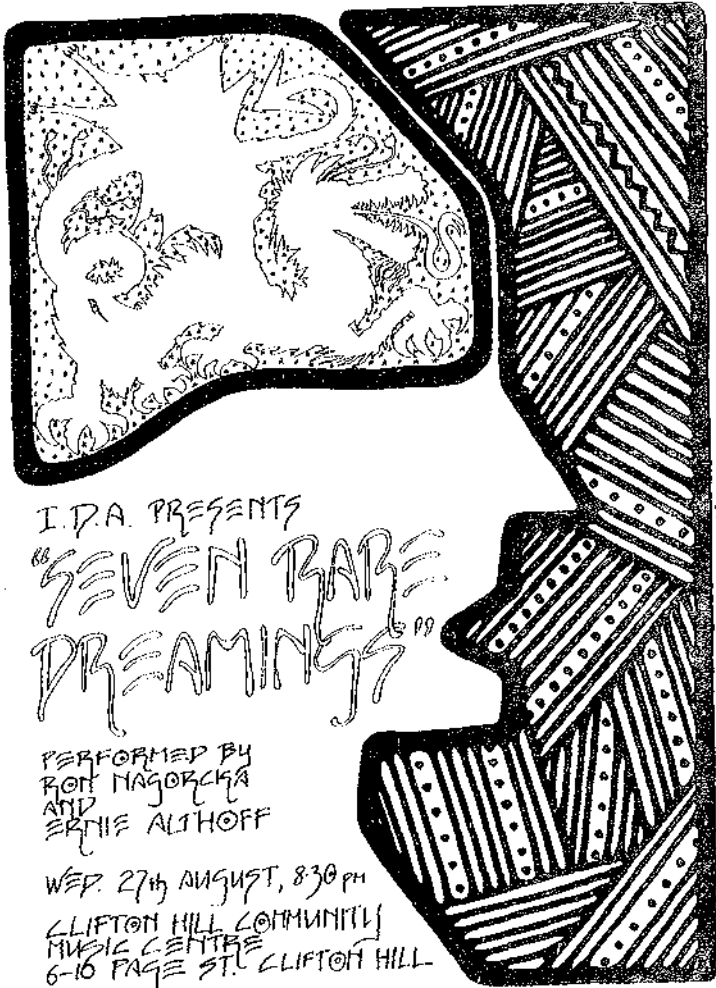
# "Formula: Disco"

Tonight's concert is an extension of some of the ideas from the "Asphyxiation" installation/performances at the Ewing Gallery, July '80. The article "What is this thing called 'disco'?" is or was the programme notes to "Asphyxiation". Tonight's 7 songs deal more specifically with the problem of "how does one construct disco music?" The act of writing becomes blurred with the act of duplicating; of regurgitating; of naming; etc. etc. Meaningless songs that imply a lot.



Song list : ① Autonomy ② Mutonomy ③ Anatomy ④ Mantonomy  
 ⑤ Monotomy ⑥ Anotomy ⑦ Mautonomy.

Clifton Hill Community Music Centre — Wed. Aug. 20th '80.



I.D.A. PRESENTS  
"SEVEN RARE  
DREAMINGS"

PERFORMED BY  
RON NAGORCHA  
AND  
ERNIE ALTHOFF

WED. 27th AUGUST, 8.30 PM  
CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY  
MUSIC CENTRE  
6-10 PAGE ST. CLIFTON HILL

I  
D  
A



Seven Rare Dreamings is a music-theatre event with a refreshingly rich array of aural and visual components, genuine humour and human warmth. This is no exercise in artistic abstraction or esoteric ritual, but an earthy exploration of culture and mythology, old and new. At one point in the performance it seemed to me that I could have been witnessing an ingeniously illustrated lecture in anthropology, such were the immediacy and symbolic power of the materials used. But this, surely, is the mark of good drama: that it presents or provokes mind-broadening insights about the human experience.

To the question: "What was it about?", everyone who was present would no doubt have given a slightly different answer. Ernie's explanation to me what that it was about the way powerful modern cultures encroach on and destroy the cultures of older societies. I took the piece to be also about the remarkable similarities underlying Aboriginal and modern Western myths: Great Lizards and Dragons; cave drawings and computer generated graphics; didjeridu, saxophone and computer generated drones; bull roarer with 100 Hz strobe effect (due to the incandescent lighting); stories, music and dances handed down by tribal elders and a somewhat fossilized councillor of the City of Melbourne pontificating on sculpture and traditional art; songs from the dreamtime and poetry dreamt up by Apple II; imagination and magic all round in the face of the unknown.

The sound materials were objects in the way a drone is an object: squeak from a texta pen, hum from the slide projector, didjeridu, the sound of a story being read, singing sticks, speeches, cymbal, transistor radio, computer drones, rattle-drum, saxophone with added plumbing, bull roarer, whispering, taped announcer voice and didjeridu, the Jesus Loves Me song - all of which are sounds with a high potential for dronality. Thus, we pay no attention to what is coming out of the transistor radio but we hear the sound of a transistor radio. And it was easy to ignore the text of Ron's story telling and hear his voice as a drone along with the projector hum and Ernie's squeaky texta.

Obviously the text was essential to the understanding of the piece, but where the text becomes too prominent and ceases to be part of the drone, it rockets us out of the dreaming and into the lecture theatre. This happened, I think, in some of the speeches which sometimes seemed superimposed on the music rather than part of it. The ideal would be to make the sound of the speech have a meaning as musical sound, not just a meaning due to the words.

I.D.A. have given us valuable insights into the compositional value of drones. Since any sound can become a drone and drones can be used in a musically convincing manner, sound-materials can be chosen for their culture/symbolic value without regard for their originality. Selection and assembly of the fragments are the foci of invention and the effort to make individual elements wonderfully striking in themselves can be safely dropped.

Paul Turner

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SEVEN RARE DREAMINGS - Interview with Ron Nagorcka (R), Ernie Altoff (E),  
and Paul Turner (P).

P: The question is: What did you think of my review?

E: I think you write extremely lucidly. I thought your first paragraph was terrific.  
(Laughter)

P: But this has really got nothing to do with it.

E: Oh well, what I got out of your review was that obviously you really enjoyed yourself that night. That's what really comes through: that you had a good time and you went home feeling good about what you'd seen.

P: Right. I thought it was a very rich concert with lots of material compared with some of your previous stuff that I've seen, which is probably why I liked it.

R: I was thinking there was nothing I particularly disagree with in the review. It was interesting to see the way you saw it. I was fascinated by your use of the word 'dronality'. You should get a prize for that. It's also interesting that I

thought it was one of the least drone-like pieces that we've done. I thought it was ... all over the place in a way. I found it interesting that you saw the done aspect of it. I mean, I think it's there. I don't disagree with you, but I hadn't thought of it that way at all.

P: I heard it as layers of drones or juxtaposed sections of dronally built-up things. What compositional ideas were in your minds when you put it together?

R: What I was really wanting to do for a long time was write a piece that seriously treats the didjeridoo - that doesn't just treat it as a joke or as an object of ...

P: Curiosity?

R: Yeah, curiosity's the word ... and therefore I had to put the didjeridoo into a context whereby it could be treated that way. It's interesting how the context of having a narrator and the didjeridoo and the computer really fitted well together; also I've been very interested lately in concepts of systems theory, trying to pick out the connections between things that very often seem fairly unrelated ... attempting to establish interesting connections between things like words about the didjeridoo or words about technology. Connections between a didjeridoo and a computer for instance, which obviously come from two very different thought processes. They're really, as cultural phenomena, very different things ... two cultures which sometimes seem almost as if they could never get together, they clash with each other so much ... and an attempt to get over that, to make them work together. I'm very pleased with the piece because I think it actually did that.

P: It worked in a totally different way from say, a piece like George Dreyfus' sextet for wind quintet and didjeridoo, which is trying to incorporate the didjeridoo into Western music, with Western music being the hero or the main protagonist ... and it's trying to absorb this other culture. But your piece seemed to be juxtaposing two cultures without being on the side of either one.

R: Yeah, yeah, true. I'm pleased you saw it that way because I was trying to do that. There's also quite a lot in the words of the piece - there's quite a lot of self referential stuff. There's a lot of talk about the didjeridoo. There's a whole legend about the way the didjeridoo originates. There's a lot of internal references to what I'm trying to do in the piece sound-wise and otherwise. So it has a lot of those connections - and they get pretty entangled - but I think part of the reason that it works is because all of those inter-connections are there ... even to the extent of playing really good native players on tape, to compare what they're doing with what I'm trying to do with the damned thing, which obviously is much less complicated - much less sophisticated. So in a sense I deliberately set myself up so I could be shown up by these better players.

P: Was there any political or social comment intention in the piece? Or was it really just a high art, pure ...

R: Ah, no I think it's very much a piece with a message ... a political message. I think that's right in the heart of the piece ... no apologies for that whatsoever. What do you think about that Ernie?

E: Yes ... I think it's far closer to a piece with message or messages, as ambiguous as you want to see those messages ... certainly not high art.

P: Do you see that as a problem - trying to say something which is political or some kind of social analysis; a problem in trying to combine that with music or theatre or make it into art?

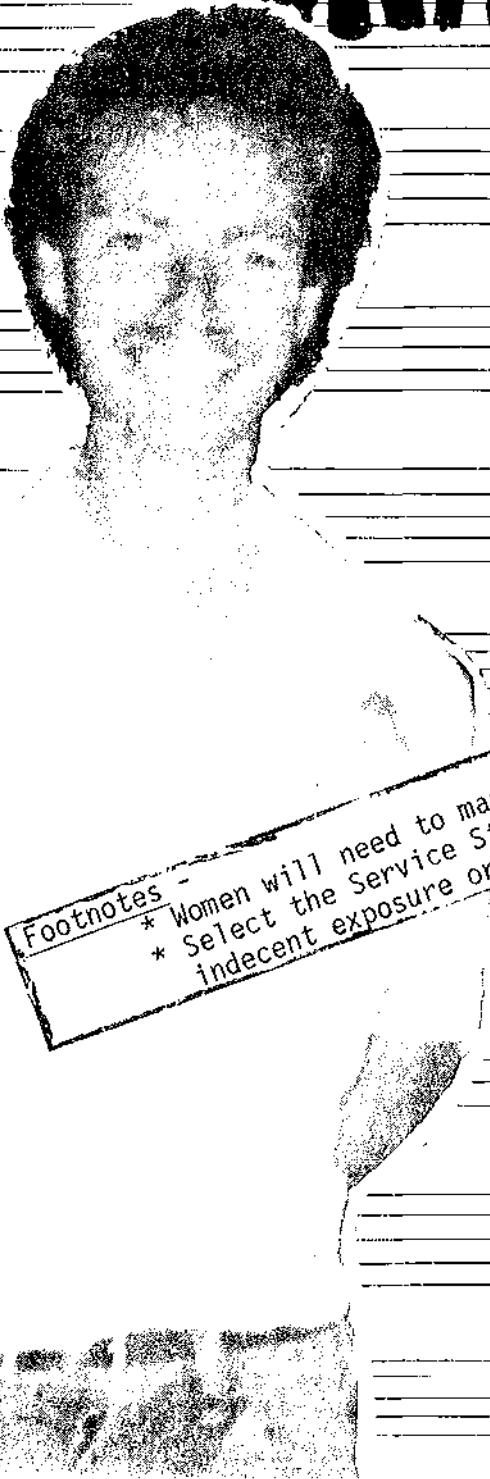
R: This is one of the interesting things about ... the reason that the piece is necessary. If I'd been able to say what I'm trying to say in that piece by writing an article for a political magazine ... there's in a way not a necessity for the piece. I think the piece says things that I couldn't possibly write in an article - because it tries to draw the listener in to the culture ... something as powerful as music to draw the consciousness into aspects of each culture through something far more powerful than putting words together. So, as Ernie says, the messages are ambiguous ... you can't really say what you're saying.

P: Do you want to make a comment about the hats and masks Ernie?



- E: (Laughter) I guess point one is: I enjoy dressing up and I've found that a good, very simple way of changing a character, of, if you're on stage, removing yourself from that idea of Ernie the performer. It's very easy to become ambiguous just by covering your face. Face is obviously the most recognisable thing, and if your going to cover it with something that suggests something else you're instantly another character. ... done that quite a few times now and hats and masks and a little bit of extra costume are the easiest things ... Considering the number of costume changes that were needed in that piece, hats and masks were the obvious answer. I wasn't using hats and masks because they were the easiest thing but ... the masks aspect is what I consider to be most effective anyway in that sort of thing ... making my own costumes, most people look at something that I've made and instantly can see from what it's been made of ... bits and pieces that they can find around their houses if they look. I guess I'm showing that anybody can do that sort of thing - you don't have to go and hire costumes.
- P: And using all those bits and pieces that are just lying around is a very nice social comment in itself.
- E: Yes. I'd much rather construct something than go out and hire it. As for the usage of the costume - I suppose what happened was that certain texts began to lend themselves to certain characters and it was just an effort to remove these characters from the character of narrator. Whereas there was a Ron on stage, playing didjeridoo, there never really was an Ernie. There was always narrator and characters. I'd say the only place maybe it was an Ernie was the saxophone playing bit, but otherwise the character up there was never Ernie.
- P: What were you going to say Ron?
- R: I was going to say it's a piece in which I really was trying to be myself, in an image of the world that surrounds me which is all over the place. And so Ernie is part of that all-over-the-place setting ... lots of things impinging on me and I just sit there and try to play the didjeridoo for the whole piece ... and so that concentrated effort to get something useful out of the instrument despite everything else that's going on around you - abstract symbolism. I was going to ask you - I don't think you talked about it: What did you think of the dragon slides?
- P: The dragon slides ... they didn't capture my attention a lot. They were sort of there as symbols and seemed to me to have some kind of significance to do with ... myths ... Western culture has its irrational aspects just like anyone else's.
- R: That's nice.
- P: Apart from that it was ... the visual thing enriched the whole piece. If you got bored with listening to one of the drones that were going on you could look at the dragon ... (laughter) ...
- E: We've done the piece twice now and a really nice feature of it is that both times a lot of people have come up and talked to us about the piece - far more people than have talked to us about other things that we've done. They've commented very interestingly about the way they've interpreted things and the way they've felt about things. Everybody's interpreted it completely differently and everybody's interpretations are completely valid. But just the amount of feedback that we've got from these two performances is really gratifying.

# JOHN CRAWFORD



## Footnotes -

- \* Women will need to manufacture 'race horse' bras from cut up jockettes.
- \* Select the Service Stations in advance, and do not get arrested (for indecent exposure or trespassing, etc.)

John's knuckles glowed an eery white as he nervously gripped the edge of the table in the Lygon Street bistro where we lunched that Friday.

"Honestly, Ernie, I just don't know what to do for Wednesday's concert", he said, rather distraughtly. "None of the planned pieces are coming together and they're nowhere near finished. My mynah bird's just died, and even my flagong player's walked out on me!"

"Not to worry, John", I replied good-naturedly, "you're bound to get something happening". Carefully I added a threatening overtone to my reply.

Five short days later, John Crawford presented a concert at Clifton Hill - not of music (it didn't happen) - but a conversation-cum-interview, a baring of the musical soul and subsequent searching within. After an introductory preamble explaining the lack of music for tonight, John stated he enjoyed talking about music, and would talk about his.

Then came the grievous confessions: John loved putting marks on paper in a great number of varied and ingenious patterns, permutations and systems, but the quandary came in seldom enjoying the sounds these marks represented. Did other people enjoy them? He didn't really know. Try changing your methods of approach, some of us hinted. Following this came a long and many branched discussion on writing/reading, subjective/objective, rational/irrational, good/bad, what-have-you/what-have-you-not - none of which I think helped John solve his dilemma. Try chancing your methods of approach, some of us hinted.

The strongest conclusion of the night was that John, Richard, Phil, David, Graeme, Paul, Ernie, Rainer and Mark all worked differently, but I guess we knew that all the time. I don't think John was particularly interested in our ways of working. John's aim that night was to see if he could find help in getting the bugs out of his system, not to assess the whole system altogether. He appeared (to me) quite adamant and convinced that his way of working was the right one for him. It was easier to blame the brain for being disappointed with the end result than the little black dots and the little black lines themselves.

I once played 'The Numbers Game'. I cut up four crossword puzzles and joined up the corners. Then I assigned musical values to the black and white squares and worked from top-left down to bottom-right, rigidly and meticulously. The result was a fairly uninteresting piece of music. I'm not saying that John's methods of working are as banal as this example; what I am saying is that I know what it's like to get so caught up in exploring the self-imposed rules governing the little black dots that one tends to lose sight of the fact that the end product is supposed to be MUSIC with the capacity of INSPIRING EMOTIONS. I hope John never lets his number-covered tracts obscure this. Music is made of sound, not of paper.

In this tripartite system of concert-review-resulting interview, John has jumbled the order by doing a group interview for Part 1. This review is valid for Part 2, but what do we do for Part 3? Interview John again? I think not. What we really need is the missing Part 1 concert, or at least some music or representation thereof.

And so:

JOHN CRAWFORD ESQUIRE is hereby and herewith COMMISSIONED TO COMPOSE three (3) pieces of MUSIC (the term being used in its broadest possible sense of terminology), the TITLES of these three (3) aforementioned PIECES to be chosen from the list immediately following:

1. Grappling with Control
2. A Nice Petrol Station
3. Thinking in Thoughts
4. The Sledgehammer and the Right-Angle
5. Sno Itatum Rep
6. An Element of Dryness

TWO (2) of these three (3) PIECES are to have their SCORES (again, this term is used in the broadest possible sense) written out in any way possible, but so as to be PRINTABLE in photostat form (xerography) and NO larger than 18 centimetres wide by 26 centimetres deep, to be handed in to the Editors of 'New Music' well before the next publishing date.

A reasonable and well-intentioned attempt is to be made in these three (3) works to deviate from the composer's normal or standard methods of approaching and tackling compositional practice, consequently metamorphosing or at least re-positioning along the applicable axes those qualities such as computational time, brain strain, etc. Which, when amalgamated, shall henceforth be known as the Work Factor (WF). If, in tackling these exercises, the WF exceeds 35% of the TOTAL experience of composing music pieces (TE), thereby forcing the Fun Factor (FF, where  $FF + WF = TE$ ) to below 65% of TE, then FORGET IT!!!

Ernie Althoff

#### STATEMENT

I accepted and rose (just) to Ernie's challenge, but "re-positioning" is not so easy, nor is it possible to force it and yet proceed in a real manner - the "forcing" is done by deeper powers than the intellect.

Further I believe good pieces to be complex or containing meaning in some way (a really simple thing can be complex), for it is in "complexity" that our enjoyment lies - as performer, listener etc., so work is not necessarily an evil thing.

Further, I enjoyed doing those pieces - or hope I will!

John Crawford

#### GRAPPLING WITH CONTROL - FOR ANY NUMBER OF PERFORMERS

Start humming (a unison of more than one performer), not too softly, any pitch, but when the voice begins to flutter or waver, or breaks to another pitch, immediately seize upon this as your improvisational material, ie. actively recreate your faltering. Continue to work in this way. Humming may (should?) progress to quite loud and active full voice singing.

The piece may be amplified and mixed, but develop some system of change using this numerical system.\*

5 2 1 4 1 5 3 5 5 4 2 4 3 1 3 2 5 2 1

\*eg. Levels of outputs, number of performers being amplified etc.

'Mistakes' are the core of this piece, the aim being to put slight pressure on your mistakes to transform little by little some existing material into a new continuum, new mistakes, new continuum, etc.

#### THE SLEGEHAMMER & THE RIGHT-ANGLE AT A NICE PETROL STATION

for Ernie Althoff

1. On or about the 16th November 1980, record from radio the advertisement for "Jockettes" concerning the last 10 winners of the Melbourne Cup. Transfer this recording to an endless cassette.
2. Learn the melody for the No.1 song on the Pop Charts for that week.
3. On a warm day, collect some friends (with whom you have arranged to buy the new "Jockettes" mentioned above)- and meet at a Service Station (see below), wearing only jockettes and gumboots (and the optional dark glasses and wig), walk along the street leading to another service station in a street at right angles to the starting point. The leader, with cassette deck over his shoulder playing the endless cassette, learns as he proceeds, the text of the advertisement and puts it into his learned (pop song) tune. Piece by piece he communicates as he learns, what he has learned, to the remainder of the group, who follow 'en masse', singing the tune back to the leader in call and response fashion.
4. If the group arrives at the second Service Station before learning the text, return to the first etc.
5. If the group learns the whole text before arriving at the Service Station, sing it over and over.
6. If the text cannot be neatly fitted into the framework of the song, the song can be cut short.

# THE LUNATIC FRINGE

The Lunatic fringe paper 1  
 everything on this is original except  
 for the things that aren't. 11/9/80

THE LUNATIC FRINGE IS NOT ANTI CONVENTION  
 IT IS NOT ANTI RULES

INJURY TO THE INNER EAR BY INTENSE NOISE,  
 a normal organ of Corti (guinea pig) showing  
 three rows of outer hair cells and a single  
 row of inner hair cells. Injured organ of Corti  
 after 24 hr exposure of noise levels typical of  
 very loud rock music (2000 Hz octave at 120 db)  
 sometimes

we are about noise, noise where you don't have  
 to acknowledge anyone elses existence.  
 FACTORS STIMULATING OBTUNE CONTRACTIONS: BOUTING  
 PARTICIPATION, 100% THE POSITIVE CONTRACTIONS NATURE  
 OF SEVERAL OF THE INNER, WHAT INITIATES  
 PARTICIPATION IS NOT KNOWN.

the lunatic fringe plays how the players are  
 most comfortable, obviously if we were anti music  
 we would still be bound by musical laws, the  
 lunatic fringe have their own rules, they  
 manifest themselves in the performance, these rules  
 come from somewhere, these rules, these performances  
 don't exist in a vacuum, what initiates this is not  
 known.



ERIC STEWART (POLYORB)  
 ANOTHER PHONEY SONG, THE TITAN  
 WITH LIES OF A FRONT, PATHOLOGI  
 NG LYRICS AND EXHAUSTED  
 MEMBER OF IO cc.

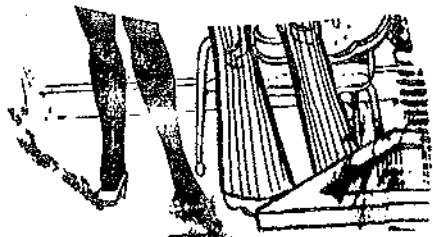
I want to hear your thoughts:  
 not your opinions,  
 NOISE... ISN'T YOU CAN RHYME,  
 YOU CAN DELUDY

if we hearious we are sad we are boring we hold all opinions on everything forever  
 . SOME OPINIONS will show a rise if we do nothing to deter them, while  
 others will sink it out even if we do everything to reform them. Wicked  
 people exist. Nothing evil except to get them apart from innocent  
 people. And many people, neither wicked nor innocent, ponder our reaction  
 to wickedness as a cue to what they might profitably do.

call it above man and time, Fred didn't spell his name,  
 energy is eternal delight... Blake,  
 the lunatic fringe is itself, not extensions of other peoples concepts,  
 we can analyse the hanging of a tin, we can burn that tin irregardless of  
 analysis.

we do not reject musical forms, we use forms we like to use, noise is a  
 particular favorite,  
 there are 40 people in the world and 5 of them are hamburgers,  
 captain beefheart,

eat shit motherfucker, .raymond x.



## A firm but compassionate review

Before the concert began I read the program notes supplied by the "Lunatic Fringe". In it they laid down the premises on which they and their performance are founded -

"the Lunatic Fringe plays . . . . what initiates this is unknown".

This is a piece of pure rhetoric - conceptually incoherent yet assertive in tone and held together by the greatest cop-out of them all: <sup>MYSTERY</sup> When I say mystery I mean mystery as in the origin of the universe and not mystification as in the disguises employed by 'Art' to make itself seem more difficult, more important than it is. MYSTERY - the mystery of art, of the artistic impulse, of those rules of unknown origin that initiate the artistic process. It is at once meaningless and incontestable. How does one challenge a mystery? Its impossibly circular. However when viewed at the level of gesture (ie. their recourse to mystery and not the mystery itself) it becomes more palpable and its discussion more to the point, and so too the rest of the performance because . . . THE LUNATIC FRINGE ARE THEMSELVES A GESTURE.

At this point I feel I must say that my observation is in no way a put-down for it might otherwise be taken as such - the general expectations of any performance being what they are. This also applies to anything else I might say in the next few paragraphs that might seem questionable or unfavourable. Whatever is said about the performance will be as factually descriptive as possible and I ask you to accept it as such. When I get into discussing its motives and the 'initiating rules' I see at work, you are welcome to pour buckets of shit over me. Until then, just sit tight.

The 'Lunatic Fringe' are a music act. They use musical instruments. They do not play them but play at playing them - in the style of rock musicians in particular. The nuts and bolts aspect of musical performance are barely present in them (ie. technique, tuning, rhythm etc.) Any evidence of these things\* in an amateurish way either, for apart from a few serious attempts at consistent bass lines, there was no effort at musicality. However, it was sufficiently musical, sloppy though it was, to preclude it from being noise, as claimed in their programme. To my knowledge, noise in the context of a musical performance would have to be a-musical and that's too musical a distinction to be a concern of this performance. They are not about noise, but they were loud, jarring and haphazard. You could call it noisy, but it was not noise. There was a good deal of screaming and some incomprehensible lyrics. As I said, the format was a rock and roll one, with drums, guitars, bass, synthesizer, microphones. On top of this, at one point, there was a performance within a performance. One member locked into a cupboard, smashed her way out with a hammer while the others happily played in the background. On the cupboard there was a number of oranges which of course, rolled off as she hammered. Some of these oranges were even thrown to lucky members of the audience (that was all very mysterious so I won't mention it again). More screaming, more untidy playing, giggles from some, amp hum and so on. That is how I would describe the aural part of their act - now the visuals.

Firstly, there was a colour theme, orange. It seemed half-hearted but it was noticeable. Each member but for one had some orange in their clothing, three or four of them even wore identical loosely knitted orange jumpers. This might have a meaning but it's too mysterious to be interesting, so we'll forget it. All of them were unmistakably punk/new wave looking, except for one who looked surfyish. Their attitude was also punky - some of them in the bored young defiant mould, others grimly serious and a few carefree 'I'm-having-a-good-time, how-bout-you' types. Deeply assimilated self consciousness in them all. Each member moved about as he or she liked, just as they said they would in the program. All seeming to ignore each other but attending to the weavings of the one or two more prominent members in the group. These factors are not mysterious and you can see where they come from, so they're worth talking about, which I will do later.

To complete the picture it is worth mentioning that the "Lunatic Fringe" belong to a movement known as 'the little bands' whose style is called the 'North Fitzroy Beat'. The 'Little Bands' usually play in a small rock club to a sizeable

(\* is purely a consequence of the gestures associated with the particular instrument being used. They are not concerned with these things)

audience, largely consisting of friends and members of other 'little bands'. As far as I know, this performance by the "Lunatic Fringe" marks the first break from the fold by any of them. The origins of this movement are not mysterious, nor is their style. They are quite tangible as I hope to prove . . . YOU MAY NOW PICK UP YOUR BUCKETS.

At one level their activity is a mystery, just like breathing or parturition, as stated in their program . . . so big fucking deal. On the other hand, art nowadays is nothing if not a mental exercise. Anyone involved in it must make decisions as to the directions they will take, decisions involving taste, politics, morality, not to mention the tonnes of information we are exposed to by a million different sources every day. To stand behind the mystery of life can only be described as romantically wishful thinking, to put it politely. When a number of people come together to form a group, and when that group joins other groups in a movement interested in the same activity, there are obviously forces at work.

To begin with, the activity itself: sloppy underground rock music, requiring little or no musical skill. This stems from the first punk-rock movement. It was then realised that skillful musicianship did not make interesting music, but that good ideas even sloppily executed could be better. At that point sloppiness meant amateurish endeavour and enthusiasm. The "Lunatic Fringe" do not exhibit that enthusiasm but a diffraction of it. That is how they distinguish themselves from the first wave. They have removed the endeavour to play competently, leaving the sloppiness and a subverted enthusiasm. I say subverted because in the case of the first groups it was founded upon a new found self-confidence and a realisation that they were as good as anybody. That could not apply now because that ideology has long since become a style and an awareness of it as a style makes its recurrence something quite different. Which brings us back to the general nature of the "Lunatic Fringe".

I saw the performance as a partial reconstruction of the surface of the first punk/new-wave movement. Emptied of its ideology, and rightfully so, and with a shift of focus. The first movement said - we can play interesting music even with limited skills, let's form bands to do this. The "Lunatic Fringe" are not interested in making interesting music, but rather with simply being a band. Their produce is not their music but their union, which suggests to me that they have made art out of the intention to make art. The appearance, behaviour and attitude of this intention are their product. I think this is also largely the case with the 'little bands' movement, though not necessarily all the bands in it. And it stems from an over-saturated exposure and deep awareness of the whole punk/new-wave thing.

Since 1977 the punk/new-wave style has been stamped on everything from third rate bands like 'Jimmy and the Boys' to fourth rate products like 'Crunchy'. The intention to make good art has never occurred to any of these Johnny-come-lately's. To anyone who was ever aware enough to be inspired and excited by all the possibilities that punk presented, its present stylistic usurpation is very sad and frustrating. Hence the act of isolating that original intention and glorifying it in performance could be seen as an antidote to the status quo, and I'm sure it is to many people. To me it's too sentimental and retrospective to be effective in that way. The ingredients have been reshuffled, reduced and abstracted but it's still 1977.

R. Traviato

The Lunatic Fringe Interview

{ R : RALPH  
J :  
X :  
Y : }

- R: Before I start, I'd like to say that everything I said in that article is based totally on what was presented to me on that night; after watching you for a while I lost interest in what you were doing cause it became apparent you were just mucking around.
- J: Well that's what it turned into.
- X: Well it did have a certain structure.
- J: The thing just totally disintegrated, for me it turned into a cliché.
- R: I soon started concentrating on your presence, that seemed to be the thing that stood out.

X: As people?

R: No your image, the activity you were involved in, that was the only way I could grab what was going on.

J: I think I should mention the original idea behind the 'Lunatic Fringe' was to get a bunch of assertive people with a bunch of ideas who might at any one time take a performance over and things would start happening. It has never eventuated. I'll still work with these people but I'll pursue that original idea on my own. I'm often at logger heads with that idea, like I haven't got many rules that I fall back on but when I'm on stage all these rules appear.

R: On that level what you said in the programme was a denial of your immediate history and in what you did there were many traits drawn from that history.

Y: It wasn't conscious. The converse of what you said would have been to have something worked out before hand and to that extent what you said was true because we were up there without any conception or foundation really.

R: Right, and when you're up there like that you're leaving yourself prone to all those influences.

Y: You see that happened largely because it's so hard to organise with so many people.

J: But it's not always like that, we recently did something at Melbourne Uni that was very structured and it struck me that your review seemed to be about the 'Lunatic Fringe' and not just the performance.

R: I didn't mean that and that's the point of this interview, to put me in the picture.

J: I had this idea for a group and it's really hard to express.

X: It's a personal thing for you?

J: But it's not a whim or a taste thing. It's something I've got to work on.

Y: And you don't think it will involve other people?

J: No me and Terry have the same idea.

Y: We've never really talked about it.

J: It's not talked about.

Y: Maybe we share an attitude but we just don't know but it shouldn't require having Ralph here for us to talk about it.

R: Group therapy, yeah! I'll be the psychiatrist.

R: Let's talk about the 'Little Bands'.

J: I think it all started with Stuart (Primitive Calculators). He just went around asking friends to form bands. And I think the first time we went public was at the Champion and then it was big business mate.

Y: Yes it turned out to be very successful for the people who ran the venues.

J: Originally it was a burst of people who'd never performed before who had about 10 minutes of ideas. Now they've run out of ideas but it just keeps going.

R: It's so confused now, I think it just exists at a stylistic level not as an energy anymore.

J: What the 'Little Bands'?

R: No, not them, but the whole punk/new wave thing. It's interesting that you say the 'Little Bands' have run out of ideas.

J: It's very incestuous but it's not producing big things, just people getting on stage in a comfortable situation with people they know whereas before there were about 5 pockets of 'Little Bands'. It was all different groups, now we've merged, everyone knows what everyone else is doing.

R: It seems to me that a thing like the 'Little Bands' has a limited life anyway, as it's more of a starting point. (All: yeah, yeah, yeah.)

J: About that mystery idea, when you said we were talking rhetoric you didn't seem to give us credit for being aware of it as rhetoric.

R: No, in calling you a gesture I was saying that you were aware, that there was no content.

J: As far as music goes we do aim for musical content.

R: Yes but it seemed to me that you didn't care what was happening.

J: The members of the 'Lunatic Fringe' should have a genuine desire to not just get up and play cause I could do that with any old band and it's not just to create but it's to get up and in the act of playing and creating to resolve something or expose something and it's got to be a genuine



cornered rat type desperation somethings got to happen.

R: You want something real to happen on stage, that's sort of a contradiction.

J: I don't get ya.

R: The contradiction is that the stage is an artificial setting.

J: No but the thing is to use that setting.

R: Yes, but the trouble is that there are all these rules and precedents that can be applied to produce certain effects and responses, so it's artificial.

X: Well because people tend to bring along all the baggage of their previous experiences.

Y: You can't help that, but it's stupid. It's just like masturbation cause you know that certain actions will produce certain effects. It's just not honest or genuine.

J: But that's a very clinical and moralistic approach. What's wrong if you know you're pushing the right buttons?

R: Well it means that what you're doing is not an emotional interaction, but an application of theatre.

R: It sounds like you're trying to achieve something intimate.

J: Yeah, I suppose, but it's more like trying to produce something where people couldn't say did that or didn't that happen?

R: Something that couldn't be questioned?

J: Yeah.

# SPLINTER FACTION

A little after 8.30 Rainer and Elaine burst into CHCMC with armfuls of equipment and wine casks. In a frenzy of action they set up for the concert while everyone wondered why the huge rush? After about ten minutes work Elaine was pouring wine into paper cups while Rainer turned on an incredibly loud sine wave done that filled the whole room to such an extent that I began to feel decidedly uncomfortable. I had just begun to sip my wine (hmm ... a fruity piece of pretentious fizz) when Elaine grabbed me from my seat and introduced me to a total stranger ("err ... come here often?"). Both Elaine and Rainer were now moving around, pouring drinks, introducing people and prompting conversation which proved to be incredibly hard in the sound environment created by the sine wave. Everyone's voice sounded like a Dalek, and as I moved around the room surprising changes happened to my perception of the sine wave and the peoples voices, due to the rooms acoustic properties. After a short while this violent juxtaposition of wine and cheese ritual and incredibly volatile sound environment makes most spectators uncomfortable and uncertain. A few people left the room. A certain Mr.X tried to turn the sine wave volume down only to be told to 'piss off' by the Splinter Faction Group. Someone I know asks "is this the concert?" It is this sort of uncertainty and unease that I feel the Splinter Faction Group is after in this piece. Putting the audience in a situation they don't usually expect to be put in. Everyone performs. As part of the audience I found this quite interesting to be part of. The whole piece had an element of surprise depending on how each person reacted to the situation they were put in. After around thirty minutes the wine and sound stopped and that was it ... so it seemed except Rainer and Elaine made the quickest exit I had ever seen in my life, nearly destroying half the equipment in the process.

*Robert Goodge*

RG - Robert Goodge  
ED - Elaine Davies  
RL - Rainer Linz

RG: Well, what do you think about the review?

RL: Well, I think it was good, very descriptive.

ED: Well, I thought it was neat.

ED: Is there anything else you'd like to ask?

RG: Well, the piece reminded me of a type of 'happening' situation ...

RL: No, I don't think so. I can understand how you might see it that way, but really a happening is something quite different.

RG: In what way?

RL: Well, the early ones for example, depended almost entirely on simultaneity in the sense of, like, sensory bombardment if you want to look at it that way.

RG: So the concept of direction's important?

RL: Right.

ED: Yeah, well lack of direction tends to presuppose a particular mode of perception. You know how it is, we're able to by-pass those modes and initiate a more direct approach.

RG: Don't you think though that audiences find your messages are obscured?

RL: We never have audiences for our pieces.

ED: The onus of interpretation is on the audience. It always has been and always will be. I mean, I could say something as straight forward as 'There's a black cat' and people will ask, 'what colour is it?' I think it's the height of arrogance to spoonfeed an audience. What kind of an artist ego-trip is that?

RL: Yeah, we're not pretending we're omnipotent benefactors. I mean if people want to walk into a concert situation and switch off, that's their responsibility, not ours. I mean, there's nothing wrong with it only that they shouldn't blame the piece for their own inadequacies.

ED: I wish I'd said that.

RG: It just seems to me that people tend to feel uneasy when everything's obscure to them.

RL: Well Christ, we don't put the amount of work that we do into our pieces so that everyone can have an evening of fun and games.

ED: Well take Brecht for example. He wasn't interested in giving the audience 'pleasurable entertainment'! I mean he wanted the audience to remain distanced so that they could intellectualize his message(s).

RL: I think we get the same result by using the opposite means.

ED: People still don't understand Brecht.

RG: Do you mean that you intentionally set out to obscure the ideas behind your pieces?

RL: No!

ED: I think all our processes are quite clear.

RL: Take the other pieces we've done at La Trobe for example, I mean everything there was very exposed and I think made pretty clear. People only saw ambiguities because they only saw each gesture in isolation.

ED: I think it's a lack of focus.

RL: Right.

RG: Well, don't you think it's your fault in the way you organise the connections?

RL: No, it's quite clear from the outset that we're doing a piece and not a haphazard

series of unrelated events, the connections are made by virtue of that very fact, also because there's a homogeneity of gesture type.

RG: Just to change the topic of conversation. Why did you call it 'Free Drinks'?

RL: We tend to use wine as a stimulant.

ED: We only used it because we couldn't get any cocaine.

RL: Ha ha!!

ED: Tee hee!!

This interview was scripted and performed  
on November 5th, 1980.

You have just read a scripted-discussion between Robert Goodge and Splinter Faction. Needless to say, the concept (though not the content) of a scripted-discussion is in blatant opposition to the structural editorial that constitutes this very magazine. As a speciously contrived democratic gesture, we have printed this discussion anyway. In return, we also print the following editorial comment:

66 NEW MUSIC primarily deals with instigating a dialectic context for coming to terms with the inherent yet often neglected problematics in the areas of writing and performance within Art. A naive spurt of "anarchy" (such as the above scripted-discussion) can thus easily be seen to be limp in its inability to tackle its own political implications, and romantic in its desire for an historically constructed image of art (i.e. dada, Brecht, etc. etc.) that avoids a present-day context. The urge for such an anarchistic gesture actually conceals more precisely a pathetic wish for individualist freedom - a stance that for all its pure intentions is essentially blind, producing only self-indulgent, theatrical, and impotent actions and ideas. Considering that Splinter Faction are in reality MUSIC STUDENTS (i.e. institutionalized education, etc.) it is no wonder that their blindness causes them to see something like this magazine as being oppressive and restricted to their "creative" urges. One can only wonder how anarchistic they are in their final exams at university? 99

# LAUGHING HANDS

LAUGHING HANDS - "TAPES - INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVELY"

Laughing Hands was not playing live, but presenting tapes of group and individual pieces. Unfortunately their car had broken down and they were unable to bring the stage props they had intended to use to liven up the visual aspect of the concert.

The group pieces were of the usual high standard, highlighting the bands expertise in creating spontaneous music with the accent on interesting electronic timbral configurations and funky rhythms. The individual pieces were not all that startlingly different in type to those usually presented by the group collectively. Perhaps this indicates why the group can so successfully operate in an improvisational format that relies on a highly developed interpersonal familiarity. The individual pieces did however seem more inclined to follow developmental type structures rather than the more static structures, the group improvises, perhaps due to the fact that the pieces were not improvised in real time but were conceived by a single member and recorded by multi-track recorder.

*Robert Goodge*

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RG: Robert Goodge  
PS: Paul Schutz  
IR: Ian Russell  
GH: Gordon Harvey

RG: Okay lets talk ... Have you got any plans to play other venues than Clifton Hill?

PS: We want to do lots of different things. We would even like to play at places like the Paradise Lounge, etc.

RG: Hmm ... how would you approach playing at that type of venue?

IR: We would approach it from the point of view of the audience, slip into their mould.

PS: Yes, if the audience were all wearing smoking jackets and windcheaters ...

RG: You'd play surf rock?

IR: Well, we would be more rocky and rhythmic let's say.

PS: And we would rely heavily on pre-recorded tapes. Our next show at Clifton Hill is going to be very largely pre-recorded tapes. In fact, I don't know why we even bother to play live, I think its much more satisfactory to play tapes for the whole concert, but I think sometimes the audience feels cheated by this approach.

RG: I think its more personal to play live - don't you?

PS: No.

GH: Not really.

RG: Also from my point of view I couldn't be bothered to play it exactly right and tape it. I think its much easier just to get up there and play it. Who cares about mistakes, etc.

GH: I guess there's also a certain amount of a thrill for an audience to see a live performance. There's always that danger of the performer making mistakes, especially with what we do we might not play very well on the night.

PS: So that assumes the audience derives a great deal of enjoyment about the possibility of failure?!

GH: No, I mean ...

IR: It's like watching a sporting event I suppose.

RG: Well, I feel more comfortable and feel its much easier to do something live in most cases.

PS: I think its different for us because everything we do we tape. I would say Laughing Hands makes tapes rather than play music. Playing the music is as far as I'm concerned just a means of making a tape. The only reason I play music is to listen back, I don't play music for the sake of playing it, I play it for the sake of hearing it.

GH: That's where our live performances fall down, we don't feel motivated by playing live. We feel more comfortable at home.

RG: Are you unhappy about the visual side of concerts in general then?

GH: Yes. That's one reason why we have started using tapes because we were really worried about the image we were putting across ... getting up there, sitting and playing and being totally involved in the playing, not really giving the audience anything interesting visually.

PS: We would absolutely give our eye teeth to make and show films involving the music, that's what we are working towards. But at the moment it is too expensive for us. The perfect Laughing Hands concert has never happened; as far as I'm concerned an adequate Laughing Hands concert has yet to happen. I object in music like ours to seeing the performers, it really is distracting.

GH: The thing is people tell us 'Oh, this music made me think of something', and they usually mention a visual image etc., and I think seeing us playing the music is going to inhibit their ability to conjour up images.

PS: But the major thing is the anticipation of what's coming up. I hate giving visual clues. I think the essence of strong 'image' music is surprise. I think sitting down to listen to a record is so much better because you can't see what's going to happen. Hmmmm ... maybe we should buy Hoyts?

RG: Do you have any plans to include other senses as well as the visual one? Perhaps smellavision? ... Err, well, anyway I mentioned the bands use of funky rhythms. Any comments?

PS: Yes - we wanted to play music that is more rhythmic. Our roots are in rock'n roll and we don't see ourselves as contemporary music.

RG: So you see yourselves as 'pop' performers?

PS: Well, not 'pop' ... perhaps boardly. And also I should point out that we don't have any specific ideas about anything, or specific inclinations about anything and we never consistantly hold through with any particular philosophy or project, and I would also like to point out that we are 100% absolutely, utterly and completely irrational. And loving it.

GH: I'd like to interview you about the article you have just written on us. I was very intrigued because you seemed to be very impartial and almost deliberately impartial. In other words, what you said was a straight description of what happened. Were you avoiding saying what you thought?

RG: Well, I did try to avoid value judgements in the review.

GH: Why? I suppose it's not a bad thing, but I'm just puzzled about the approach most people take to writing these things. Do they have an opinion they are deliberately withholding?

RG: Well, I don't think personal opinions have much meaning in a review situation. Everybody reacts to the music differently, and I think the review should just be a vehicle for the discussion about the music. Comments like 'it was terrible' are too easy to make ...

PS: But I think this idea of the reviewer as God idea is really overdone.

GH: I don't think you'd discourage people from seeing us by saying 'This concert was really atrocious'!

PS: It's really awkward because for the people who saw the concert there's little point in describing it. But for someone who has not seen it, it is the best thing.

GH: The thing I find most interesting about playing to people is to get the different reactions they have to it. How they really feel.

PS: Anyway, we better finish up ... er, maybe we could add that if anyone would like a take of any of Laughing Hands past exploits we will be glad to oblige for a small fee.

RG: Also - when's your new record coming out?

PS: Early December or late November. It's called 'Dog Faces' and also uses a lot of pre-recorded tapes in an improvisational way, perhaps we should have discussed it in relation to what we said earlier. Oh well ... END.



# THE DAVE & PHIL DUO

The Dave and Phil Duo gave a concert of two halves, one of which was the result of a formal, structural and rehearsal approach, this half was enjoyable and successful. The second half of their concert was an improvisation for two synthesizers. This may have been interesting for an educated ear, however it could hardly be described as enjoyable as it verged on boring. (Enough said.)

David and Philip began the first half of their concert with a recital of the tunes of their EP of piano duets. Only three of which were actually played on the night but having listened to the record on a few occasions it is possible to write about the set of four. This set of four pieces consists of two written by each member. Here arises the issue of the function of the Dave and Phil Duo; do we see a creative collaboration or a machine assembled to perform pieces for two pianists? However, when played in succession the four duets are enjoyable as light music, not in the least discordant. It is interesting to note the differences between the pieces whereby in Philips' the two pianos seem to be used to play the same melody, thus creating the effect of one complex instrument. In comparison David's pieces make us conscious that we are listening to two pieces because he writes distinct parts for the two instruments. While listening to David's pieces we are constantly reminded of the use of two musical phrases coalescing and separating at deliberate intervals, you listen and think "oh, yeah: A B A B A B etc." while with Philips tunes there seems to be one melody to like or dismiss.

Following their piano duets Dave and Philip presented five vocal pieces. This was interesting as vocal pieces are a relative novelty at Clifton Hill. The five pieces were cohesive as there was consistent possibly persistent, use of taped material mixed with live vocals. Groupings are possible: the first three pieces were composed so that what was sung or spoken on stage paralleled the accompanying tape, this resulted in a wide or 'full' aural effect. In a sense it was a bombardment of the repetition style of composition. To begin with was a piece in which Dave and Phil chant Da, Da, Da, Da, Da, Da, continuously to the rhythm formed on the pre-recorded tape. Possibly there was a change from one note to another. Next a word piece in which on tape is two voices reading the same set of words, - unsynchronized; on stage this is repeated but with another degree of unsynchronization; giving a dramatic four channel effect. Listening to this piece we hear the way two people read the same words differently; wonder if there's any point at which we're meant to detect a complete phrase; admire the complimentary red and yellow clothes these two boys are wearing and return to the hypnotic use of repetition. 'Gregorian chants' is an easy comparison to make in reference to the third piece. This involved direct and taped voices singing slow mournful sounds creating a large spatial effect reminiscent of monks in a monastery singing a mass; contrasting with the fresh faced lads before us.

Finally two more pieces in which there is a difference between the two sound sources. The fourth piece begins with a single voice singing the 'theme song' of the composition but played in reverse. This has a feeling of a small solitary being singing to himself in a mysterious language. (Consider perhaps the effect of having left only one voice on the tape for the entire piece.) The first voice is then joined by a second more dominant one which reiterates the first. On stage the tape was accompanied by dirge-like singing of 'you must remember this, a kiss is just a kiss' etc. again the two voices are unsynchronized; until almost the end. This was the most effective piece of the whole evening, because of the range of sounds used and also the emotional connotations of such a presentation that tune. Finally we hear a tape of two voices chanting 'Cha, Cha, Cha'. This was accompanied on stage by Phil asking overly solemnly 'Do you want to dance with me . . .' whilst both of the Duo performed hand-clapping to the same rhythm. The loud rhythm of the clapping and the tape combined really well whereas the voice seemed to be making a conceptual point rather than adding to the success of the composition.

The likeable thing about the Dave and Phil Duo presentation was an obvious interest in structure; is this individual though or joint endeavour? Perhaps there was an excessive use of repetition. Still, in general the first part of the concert was captivating: (is this audience manipulation?). Possibly also the visual presentation; two figures similarly dressed, holding notebooks, chanting together was a solid equation of a musical interest - Simplicity, pleasantry and a degree of order.

*Jo Fletcher*

D: David Chesworth  
P: Philip Brophy  
J: Jo Fletcher

NB. This interview was originally unwittingly recorded on a defunct tape, thus the transcription below is from a rather 'difficult' re-run. In this second interview there was little indication of my original struggle to come to terms with the working philosophy or process or these two boys.

J: Do you two want to say anything about the review?

D: Why didn't you mention the last piece?

P: You found it boring?

J: I did find it boring. I didn't mention the last piece in detail as I felt I could say what I thought of it very briefly. For me it didn't work as well as the vocal pieces did; it distracted from what the vocal pieces were trying to do.

D: You were saying it was just sort of aimless playing?

J: It sounds aimless.

D: So that's it, it sounds aimless.

J: That's what I disliked about it.

D: We weren't trying to be aimless. We were trying to do something but quite a few people thought similarly to you; that nothing was happening.

P: You explained the actual structure of it, and Jo said "but I couldn't see that; but you obviously understood the structure because you did it".

J: Well I knew the structure of the composition.

D: But I understand now that Jo originally said "it was aimless", meaning it sounded aimless.

J: Yeah, I could see there was probably some attempt at structure but it didn't come across and if it doesn't come across relatively readily it is aimless.

P: I said something about the problems of trying to listen to something like that piece, and compared it to looking at abstract type paintings, which is like a mass of garbage.

D: I think to an extent you have to know what to listen for.

J: That's the whole issue of the moral value of playing music for people with a specific type of education.

P: Grammar.

D: It also comes back to familiarity. If you hear more than one piece from that area you're able to...

J: Distinguish.

D: Also build up a sort of understanding.

J: I think major reason for my boredom was that because I enjoyed the first part, the second part seemed tedious like; "why do I need to sit through this", when the first part worked really well.

D: We didn't actually set out to be tedious, there are tedious pieces but I don't think that was.

J: I know it wasn't deliberately tedious, even I could tell that Philip was playing structured bits and David was working with those sound or signals to transform them, but the overall effect doesn't change greatly, thus it becomes tedious.

P: It's got a very slow pace, which means you've got to concentrate your listening perspective more.

D: All the pieces before the synthesizer piece were very short and concise and the structure was really sitting on top. Whereas in the synthesizer piece it was more...

J: More hidden?

D: The structure itself was the music you heard. You can't really pick out two parts to it, you can't really say what is being done. It's more just a purely aural thing but even that didn't seem to be terribly successful.

J: The clock ticks. How do you operate as a Duo, is it a mechanism for pieces that you write individually or is it something where you're sharing a lot of creative ideas?



- D: We usually work on our own with an idea of what sort of thing we're working towards. Pieces are written individually.
- P: The piano pieces are individual songs written for a piano player with four hands, so the two of us play. Everything's written with a knowledge of the other person's expertise with the piano, voice or whatever.
- D: We don't usually combine unless we're offering advice on the other person's piece as far as performance goes. We probably worked together more in the final piece than we did in any of the others.
- J: That's what was interesting about it. Cause you've different ideas about writing music, which is evident in other pieces like the piano pieces, perhaps that's why the synthesizer piece didn't seem to work as well because Philip was playing formal bits and David was trying to abstract it as much as possible.
- D: We had an idea of what it would finally sound like before we actually did it. Maybe we should have become more familiar with the combination of the two.
- J: That was what I thought; that if it had been played more often it might have been much more successful because the second time I heard you perform it it sounded better. Philip, did you have an idea of what the synthesizer piece would sound like, or not because you don't envisage those type of things?
- P: I don't think I had an aural idea of what it would actually sound like, but I had,...
- J: Had an idea of how you were going to approach it?
- P: Exactly. Of how to build it up and drop it back down.
- J: When you decide to do a 'set' of pieces such as in that concert a set of vocal pieces; had you decided (and I don't mean this as a piece of musical terminology), that they were all going to be repetition type pieces? Or did it just turn out like that?
- D: We don't consciously set out to do repetition pieces 'cause the area of repetition leads onto ideas like minimalism.
- J: I've said, I'm not talking about terminology. Just did you mean them all to come out with that very similar structure: tape in the background playing something quite similar to what you are doing on stage?
- P: They were all organized around the idea of writing simple amateurish vocal pieces for four voices and each piece dealt with a single cameo type of idea or aspect or concept of handling four voices. Some have an obviously repetitive base, others are quite freeform; like the one called 'slush', the Gregorian Chant thing, and 'When Time Goes By' is more of a process piece than anything.
- J: What do you mean by process piece? It changes?
- P: There's something happening, like you hear a backward tape playing and you find out later that what we're singing on top of the tape is the same song but more drawn out.
- J: Yeah, that's the piece I like best; probably because it does change, there seems to be more to react to. In the other pieces you like initially what's happening then you have to listen to the same thing for the whole duration of the piece.
- P: So when you say repetitive you really mean non-progressional?
- J: Yes I do.
- P: Static type of pieces?
- J: Yeah; it's not offensive though. I was just wondering if you'd decided to do that?
- P: Probably no. But for my pieces I can see an inability to make a singular idea progress; cause I don't really like that, and I can't do it too well anyway.
- J: That brings up the difference between the way the two of you write music, David's "Time Goes By" pieces was the only piece where the progression was evident enough for me to really enjoy it. There's also the question of saying you're going to do something and not changing from that concept regardless. I was wondering if either of you ever do something and think really this would be better with only three or two voices or one voice? But because you've previously decided to do pieces for four voices

- do you write them four voices regardless of them working better another way?
- D: When I approached the task of writing those pieces I didn't actually think of those exact requirements. I look at it from the angle of what could be done with voice and then applied the other bits.
- J: (To Philip) You just use four voices 'cause there's four voices?
- P: Yeah, I set up the restrictions at the beginning 'cause it saves me from having to think more.
- J: Do you make any qualitative judgements after you've done pieces?
- P: No.
- D: I do look back on some things I do and see them as still working or maybe not working. In the case of most of the Dave and Phil stuff I don't really. I think that's because of the way composition is approached in that area; you do a task and then it's done.
- J: We've sort of discussed this before, but were you both equally interested in doing the improvisation piece? And were you conscious of how the audience was going to cope with that piece or were you thinking, "oh yeah, it's a Clifton Hill audience, everyone will know what synthesizer music sound like, so it doesn't matter if it's a bit difficult"?
- D: Did we know how the audience would cope with the piece?
- J: Did you think: This piece is going to sound very different to the rest of the pieces? This isn't going to be so obviously structured, it's going to be much harder to listen to; it'll be harder for the audience to grasp what's going on? Do you think about that or do you subconsciously know most of the people there will be used to listening to things like that? Or you don't care cause that's the sort of piece you wanted to do?
- D: It was the sort of piece we wanted to do. We didn't anticipate a lot of people would like music anyway. We didn't have any idea about what the audience would think of it.
- P: I regarded it as a gambling experiment, which we tried out. In terms of it being an experiment with sound (the stuff I do with Dave and Phil Duo I regard primarily as sound, as music); there's nothing I can really say about it. I wouldn't every worry about an audience in terms of experimenting with sound like that. I would in other contexts but not in the context of improvising with synthesizers.
- D: I really like rehearsing, most of the time; having things really polished. At the same time I really like the uncertainty of performing when you've got some sort of spontaneous thing working.
- J: I'm also referring to a complete performance, one that musically is exactly written so that it's done more perfectly if it's practised more.
- D: The piano pieces definitely weren't rehearsed as well as they should have been.
- J: Do you think it's important to present something really well?
- P: Is the piece more successful if it's better rehearsed and we've got more control over it?
- J: Yeah, you've got more control over the actual piece and therefore possibly the music is better communicated to the audience.
- P: I don't really like rehearsal that much.
- D: I like rehearsing.
- J: Do you think it makes things work better?
- D: I like a degree of uncertainty, it keeps you on your toes. I probably haven't answered your question.
- J: No you haven't.
- D: I think rehearsal's pretty important when the piece exists as a piece in itself and you've just got to be able to communicate it.



**RAINER  
LINZ**

**C  
AMPBELL**

**JOHN**



**+ MUSIC 4**

The concert starts out with Rainer, Elaine and John on stage. No introductions or titles to any of the pieces are given, in either half of the concerts. Why? To mystify the audience? To set them ill at ease? To establish an alienation? Or to establish the sound as its own presence? After the first half when I asked Rainer and Elaine who did what and told them I liked what they did, they both seemed pleased, so I don't think that they wanted the sound to exist on its own - it seemed that they wanted to be one with the sounds they made. So I don't think that establishing the sound as its own presence was the reason for not introducing who they were and what they were doing. Maybe it was just sloppiness - not thinking about how to present that aspect of the musics. On from the etiquette to the music. 5 Art Songs were played - the first two by Elaine and the last three by Rainer, with Elaine on voice - so heavily distorted by the electronics and played by a loud-speaker on the audiences left that all sense of any word meaning was lost; Rainier was on electric guitar and John Campbell on electric bass. The songs were loud, violent and aggressive - but short, and beautiful. The usual sense of utterly facistic physical oppression I usually get from loudly played music was totally absent from this performance, because the pieces were (a) short, and (b) beautifully formed. Not even the most extreme violence could hide the gentle delicate sensitivity that lived in these lovely art songs. A loving tension was created between the crude noisy presentation and the underlying drive. I wonder? Is the tension a desired thing that they're working with, or are they afraid that if they showed the delicacy and gentleness on its own, they think they'd appear to be either too weak or sentimental? Maybe I'm off the beam here, but I'd like to know how they view the dichotomy in these songs.

John Campbell then read a poem about his first musical experiences all being tied up with radio, records and other media and his experiences with new music as a thing which only existed in live performance. His comment at the end, when he played tapes of two simultaneously broadcast new music radio shows, really called to mind much of the soul-searching I think I can begin to see emerging at CHCMCM as it gets bigger and more successful. Is new music, perhaps, a laboratory music - ie., one which exists best in extremely intimate circumstances? Whatever, John's piece brought up many of the issues involved in any music's search for a context.

Finally, the set closed with '64 Events' for electric bass and piano (this time) by Rainer, played by Rainer and John. Sparse piano chords with the bass usually playing a bottom note, sustaining. The bass had the real melodic and timbral interest here, the piano being accompaniment to its slow, drawn out rumbling melody. Nice. But Rainier had the piano arranged so that he was invisible to the audience. Yet there was a lot of interaction going on between he and John, as was obvious from watching John. Was this an example of John's desire for a music that could ONLY happen live? And was Rainier's invisibility a tease? Hmmm.

The second set was the final performance of MUSIC 4 as a group. Since I had never seen them before, I don't want to trash them out here. I have heard that they did some good work in the past. This concert wasn't one of those occasions. And that seemed fairly obvious because the group's energies had played themselves out. At least they now know when to quit. Rainier, David Chesworth, John Campbell, John Crawford and Mark Pollard, first did a whistling piece with a slow degradation of (1) interval, (2) overall pitch (it drifts down) and (3) timbre (the whistles wear out). During this piece I noticed that a clock has been ticking loudly during the entire concert. Why was it there? Then they do a humming piece, which featured a nice duet between John Campbell with a loud steady hum and John Crawford with a wavering voice. Finally all five did a theatre piece with five independent actions taking place. Mark Pollard showed a very live theatrical presence in this, the first real energy I had seen in this half of the program. In general the set seemed weak, unrehearsed and lacking in that so vital energy and dedication which made the first half such a pleasure. Too bad. Perhaps the individual MUSIC 4 people can redefine their direction and come up with something more exciting in the future. I'm waiting.

Warren Burt

On Nov. 6, 1980, we held a long conversation about the concert with the members of Music 4 and Elaine Davies. The conversation touched on all the issues raised in my review. Due to limitations of space and time, however, we only present the following excerpt:

WB- Warren Burt  
RL-Rainer Linz  
ED- Elaine Davies  
JC-John Campbell

WB: Throughout the whole concert, why didn't you tell who did what?

RL: If I remember what happened, right at the beginning I said "OK, John's going to introduce it," and John said, "No, Elaine's going to do it," and Elaine said, "No, Rainer's going to do it."

JC: I.E. these things have to be planned.

RL: And it just ended up that nobody did it. And it just stayed like that.

ED: I kind of like it, myself.

WB: Yeah- its my own head- and I realize its something wrong I do, but I get really edgy when I listen to a piece of music and don't know who's taking responsibility for it.

RL: I don't know- When the Modern Masters show came to the Gallery a few years back- there were all these schoolkids and they all had little lists with them and they would dash thru the exhibition ticking off names on their lists-

WB: I'm not talking about that- that's another disease- collecting names. I'm merely saying that when I'm listening to something I want to establish a personal link between sound production and a person - removing the art from the anonymity of the market place and making it utterly personal.

ED: I kind of like the reverse- that ambiguity.

WB: When I asked about the delicacy/noise contrast in your songs was I off the beam or what? Do you want to work with that contrast?

RL: Well, talking about aggression and loud music- the reason I had the guitar up loud- the voice had to be amplified because I wanted the guitar loud- and the reason for that is it has a much nicer sound when its up loud- you have much more control over the sound, you have more sustain- you can get a much fuller sound, you have a much nicer attack- you can hear the plectrum hitting the string- you don't hear that when it's played softly- and its that sort of subtlety of timbre I wanted- that's why it had to be loud...

WB: But volume can be deceptive. Our ears have an automatic gain control- which allows us to get used to certain levels of sound- perhaps the way to set volumes is to leave the area for a while and then return when your ears are again sensitive to a wide range of dynamics. But volume isn't my main point- I really felt the songs were delicate and "well-formed arguments"-

JC: Yeah, I was wondering about that- You talk about delicate sensitivity and call them Art Songs- but you haven't said why you call them Art Songs. And I'm wondering why they have this impression on you of being delicate.

WB: It's a hard thing to verbalize, but, you can hear a form, you can hear a structure, and, if you've studied Shenker and you've learned to listen in that way- you can hear a structure as it curls itself up at the end- and everyone of those pieces had that very gentle delicate sense of resolution no matter how simple or aggressive the overlying sounds were.

JC: So you're saying the tension is between the composition and the performance?

WB: No I'm saying the tension was between the underlying structure (well-formed statements) and the orchestration (the distortion).

RL: Well, the distortion of the voice resulted because we had no control over the sound system- we had to use the speakers that were there- we had a Realistic amp, and that was going thru a tape recorder, which broke down, so we had to grab another one and connect it with crocodile clips-

WB: So you would have wanted to have the words intelligible?

RL: Yeah!

WB: I think I understood maybe two words in the whole thing!

ED: I think that's wonderful!

WB: Yeah- that's another element that intrigued me in the masking of these songs.

RL: Yeah, well, that's just due to all the technical problems we had. We had no control over levels, so when we realized that that was the way it was going to go, we went ahead with it.

WB: That's interesting because of the whole concert, I felt that the first set of songs were the most together, the most well-rehearsed

RL: They were. We've done those songs quite a bit before.

WB: and I felt they were the most together in terms of equipment. But in fact, I now find I was wrong, that technically, the whole thing was a screw-up.

RL: Well, yeah.....

# VISCOOUNT

EXTRA  
MILD

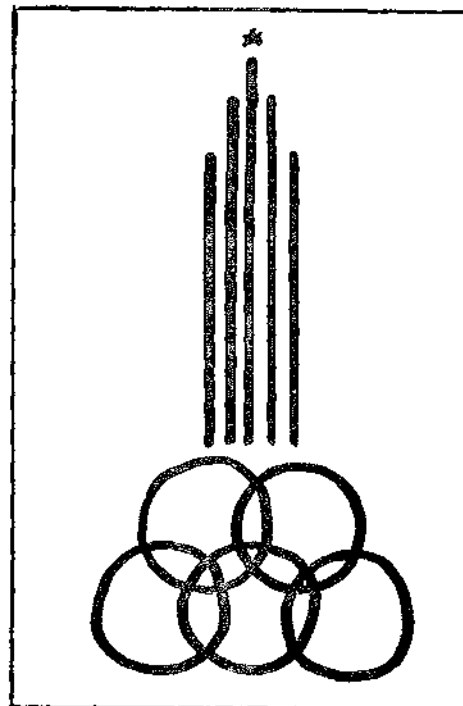


# AsphATION

George Nelson gallery: 2nd floor union house  
Melbourne University.

July 8-31

Installations:  
July 8th - 5:00  
Mon./Fri. 10am/6pm  
Wed. 10am/6pm  
Performances:  
Tues. July 8th 8:15pm  
Wed. July 15th 8:15pm  
Tues. July 22nd 8:15pm



"THEY DON'T MAKE ICECREAM LIKE THEY USED TO, DO THEY?" - Noted towards the films of

Having to write on a body of films after a single screening may often lead to certain generalisations about the film work. In the case of the film work of Phil Brophy/ →↑→ (already the problem of authorship), the writing project is doubly problematic. By the very construction of the film work, the physical materiality of the films are in constant flux. Of the four films which comprised the session at the CHCMC, three have a separate cassette tape sound track. Because of the total technological separation of transmission (on the one hand the tape deck, on the other the film projector) the image track and the sound track can never have the same given relation on each progressive screening. The technological separation of image track and the sound track also provides for a degree of manipulation; for example, one could substitute tapes on each new screening and thereby produce a whole set of new meanings for the film. Or one could project the film reel without the accompanying sound tape; the possibilities are multiple. What's important is that there can never be any constant and fixed meaning and relation between image and sound. These film works have to a degree, thrown into confusion the very notion of the 'specific properties of film' - can the recorded cassette tape as constituting the 'film' sound track be seen as a component of the filmic system? To say the least one finds oneself at a certain 'historical' juncture - has the filmic system now been technologically expanded? This is by no means an idle question, it is bound in wider considerations - ideological and economic.

The second intervention within the area of film technology, effected by these film works, is the use of Super 8 as opposed to that of 16mm. film, which has traditionally been the medium focused upon by the 'independent cinema'. Super 8 makes the medium of 'film making' more technologically accessible. As one watches these film works they seem to make an utterance: "You too can make a film." That is a political statement. →↑→'s film wrest the cinema away from those practitioners who would have us believe that the cinema can only ever be embroiled in the idea and function of industry, capital and technical know-how. The 'dominate cinema' (the institutionalised method of film making) will always remain dominate as long as we continue to believe its myth that it takes a certain specialised technical knowledge (in this country 'education') to be able to make a film. Are not Film Schools and film school student films there to reaffirm the myth? The ideology of Art gives us a language, a grammar, by which we speak the art-work, a kind of '15 Steps by which to judge artist merit'. →↑→'s films fail on all accounts within this established criterion of artistic merit (a significant feat in and of itself).

→↑→'s films don't have a pretention towards artistic excellence (and in film this means technical excellence), nor do they counter that by striving to be 'bad' films. But rather they see through the bullshit myth of artistic excellence, a myth which keeps the medium within the hands of the dominant practitioners. That's a question of economics. But maybe you can't afford 16mm. film stock, but maybe you can Super 8? Most of us have ideas, but a technological brick wall has been placed in the way of ever finding textual articulation for the ideas. →↑→'s films confront that situation, they show us a way to get around that brick wall. Certainly in terms of Australian film culture, →↑→'s films, for the reasons mentioned above, occupy a unique position. Perhaps theirs is a new cinema.

I have left a more particular discussion of each film for the performer/writer discussion which follows.

Rolando Caputo

- 
- A: "Documentation of the 'ASPHIXIATION' installation - Ewing Gallery, July 1980." (Super 8 - Color - Sound : 12 min.)
  - B: "Opening Ceremony Of the 1980 Moscow Olympics as televised by HSV 7." (Super 8 - Color - Sound : 9 min.)
  - C: "Some Lost Advertisements." (16 mm - B+W - Sound - Dual Projection - 20 min.)
  - D: "The Phantom - No. 692" (Super 8 - Color - Sound : 35 min.)



(This discussion is thirteen pages of hand-written transcript that was edited down from thirty-six hand-written pages. Printed here is the latter two-thirds of the discussion. Omitted is the first third of the discussion, which basically talks about the structural, political, and economical implications of the technological separation between the film's sound-track and image. Space has allowed us to only print what we have printed.)

- R: Okay, we will skip this technological side for a minute and talk more specifically about each film. The film I had the most problem with was the documentation of the Ewing Gallery. In a sense, I found it interesting. That certain play with space, the elimination and the expansion of certain spatial relations in terms of the objects represented and just in terms of the camera movement also. I've seen those kinds of games played elsewhere. Really, I'm not quite sure what to make of that film.
- P: Well, it's funny because...well, let's speak of intention for a while. The thing was -
- R: It doesn't have to be intention. I'm not asking for the intentions. But I'm asking: "What's your relationship to that film?"
- P: Okay, the relationship. What actually happened at the Ewing Gallery set up - and what was very important about the installation - was the space. Everything about it had a lot to do with the segregation, the splitting up. The installation was based on splitting up all the musical elements of what constitutes disco music and representing them together, but still so that they could be seen as being split up. So you had all the instruments in each different cubical, and different sounds coming from each different cubical. It was sort of a mathematical thing:  $A + B + C + D + E + F = \text{disco music at a discotheque}$ , plus those paintings and fluorescent lights and wide spaces equals chic and sexy fashion. The way we set things up on angles and everything was very sparse and stylistic, in the sense that it had that feel about it. Each photo took on an instantly 'dramatic' feel about it. Like, the way it was framed made it look like a real glossy magazine type of thing; and you realize only a film would really give that sense of the space to everything involved in the actual installation. The only way to have seen that thing was to have walked around it, and get the sounds coming out from different areas. And, okay, we'll film it and do a documentary; and what was funny, was ideally it would have been good to have used or be dictated by conventions of realism, so as to filmically recreate 'you' walking around that space. But, what I tried to do was base it on real time for one thing, so that the time of the film is the same time that you would have taken to walk around the gallery like that. But, also at the same time I wanted to show...the film wanted to show exactly how the paintings were done, how the instruments were set up there. In a sense, to de-glamourize the whole set up. Like, all the paintings look fantastic until you look at them right close up and you see all the messy brushstrokes. The instruments were designed by the people who designed them to look very flashy, and once we show them close up you begin to see the way we got the letters marked on the keyboards, and the sticky tape, and the fucked-up condition they're in. It sort of succeeds in that the film has got a really nasty 'cheapness' about it with this really home movie technique of trying to zoom and focus the bloody thing. The camera had a macro lens on it and everytime you wanted to use the macro lens to get close enough, you had to switch it and then you had to totally refocus it. All the problems arose in trying to do that in real time. So, the film in itself over-rode the actual attempt to recreate one walking around the installation. But, on the other hand, the 'sloppiness' of the movie is, I think, good, in terms of 'de-slicking' what the actual movie is showing. But of course, you can't totally disregard certain things, as you said: the space thing and those certain out of focus plays. I'll say that all the out-of-focus bits are totally unintentional. When we looked at it, it was pretty obvious to all of us that it had a real "avant-garde" feel about it. But that was just unfortunate. That's all I can say (Laughs). It was just that bloody macro lens (Laughs). Not many people went to the installation, that's why we made the movie.
- M: ey didn't go to the installation, so we brought it to them.

R: Okay. The other movies. I said to you before that I thought that there was, well, we can't really call it a thematic, but there's something which links up all the movies. That's the question of what you take to represent or not so much what you take to represent, but the kinds of images that appear in the film. I said that they are absolutely culturally saturated and they are. With the Phantom it's obvious. The Phantom comic strip almost has a kind of myth of its own, and it's got all kinds of meanings which are already determined before you come to the work. The ad movie also. What is more culturally saturated than ads? Even in a sense it's like the documentation at the Ewing Gallery too, if you take the initial performance, that itself was dealing in images about the construction of images elsewhere - about disco music and clothing and the art work. So, in a sense you recreated again an image of an image of an image. And that's also the case with the Olympic games film. Why do you take those kinds of images?

P: Well, the thing of cultural saturation is also obviously inductance, like an ideological saturation, and also in some cases a technical saturation, and just through out using it again. For example, the Olympic movie is a film from a T.V. from the actual event - just on the technical side of it...Why do we do that?...I'm not sure why we do it, we do it in everything. In everything we do there are a lot of link ups; different ideas from different areas that would all meet for us to take this basic procedure of using already culturally determined images to give them different contexts for 'our' usage of them, rather than 'pure' creation. First off, there's that thing of "I don't see that we create anything". None of the band is involved with creating when we're doing work for the band: it's always remanufacturing, which it obviously is. And that's because no one within the group is a strong patronizer of the creative act in art, of the artist as a fantastic human being, and of artistic intention. This obviously is a way around it. For instance, someone once asked us: How do you write your music? And I said a smart arse thing that did make a bit of sense, I think. For example, when we do rock music, I said "I try and let the history of rock music write me". It's a Barthesian type of thing. It's putting Barthes in practice, in a sense. I'm not sure if there's a definitive answer for why we do it. There are natural inclinations. It could be primarily through a rejection of other procedures of, say, us getting together and improvising music with notions of pure sound. Even with a film there'll be someone that will, say, make abstract movies, or animation type of things, totally not dealing with representational images. Obviously, you've got all those levels: you've got abstract movies, then you've got above that your representational movies, and above that you've got, say, us (or below that) using already manufactured representational images. Not many people pick it up. For example, when we do rock music they think we're just playing rock music; when we do minimal music they think we're artists doing minimal music. When we do these things they don't realize we're involving that second level of a history to the foreground by not disguising it under notions of creativity, because basically creativity is a method of hiding the history of that act. You do a painting and you create because of the originality that is given to it; it almost seems to stand there irrespective of the history of how it got there.

R: Basically, you're interested in this sort of a determination when you mention sounds.

P: Of us being used rather than of us creating. That would be a fundamental answer of the "why". Especially in the work involved in the band. Of course, our side of it, each of us individually would do things or feel things where there would be a sense of creativity involved personally, to that person. But in terms of a band in the arena of performance to an audience, and in a circle of attention, none of us adhere to creating in that sense. It's much more that we can't really feel faithful to that individual type of ethic. If I have to work out a song, it doesn't feel at all that it comes from me. The same with a lot of things. I do not see it as my property or an extension of my personality. It's critical writing that makes personality extensions. Like art history is based on the extension of these shmucky objects into the human being. I just don't feel any empathy with that, and no one in the band feels any type of empathy like that when we are involved in the production of anything that we do. So, there is a definite rejection of that level of production. I've got a funny

feeling it may have stemmed initially and naively from Pop Art. Everyone in the band likes Pop Art, and all of us liked it at a time when we didn't know anything about it. But there was something there that we liked about it. And I can see a lot of connections of what we do with Pop Art. But now, at this stage, I also see a lot of problems with Pop Art which I didn't see when I first was attracted to it.

R: The ad film is very pop 'artish'...

P: Yeah, it is. It's the most purest in its usage of found forms, the others are a bit more complex in seeing the actual form there. Pop Art was not actually involved with culturally determined images, but replicas of representational images. Pop Art would not just do a new representation of the Phantom; they would use the convention of representation of cartoon form of the Phantom in a painting.

R: Like Lichtenstein....

P: Yes. They used the actual object unchanged and just simply put it in the context of art. That's what a lot of Pop Art was about. The Warhol newspaper prints where you just get the actual technical object and shift that object into that medium. The ad films are obviously like that because the objects are the actual bits of film that were shown on television - they are actually the ad film. We haven't technically done anything to, well, the actual piece of film itself.

R: Although you've done a lot to it in other ways. The way in which they have been edited. Spliced across two screens; the use of the voice over, which comments. And even if you take an image like an ad which is culturally saturated, what happens in your movies is you import all those kinds of cultural meanings into the film. But you give them another set of meanings also by the whole process of editing them in a certain way, by the process of that voice over...

P: And there is a tension between those two sets of meanings. They are both there. It's obviously not the original set of meanings, and it's not just also the way we've constructed the film's set of meanings. It's both of them together, fighting it out. Perhaps we can talk about the ad film. What I wanted to do is have fragments of ads, edit them all out, and just have semantic little blocks, and have the two projectors get a density of meaning, conflicting with each other - yet another level of tension and conflict. Also, to insert black leader tape, black spacing so that these semantic blocks were really clearly defined as just snatches and blocks of themselves. Like a tableau effect. The semantic blocks had a kind of tableau effect, where they were just isolated there, and then gone. We knew we wanted to have a text, a counter-text. The first consideration was to have a text that would, in a sense, surface the discourse of these ads, because the discourse is not on the surface. It's that speaking that is underneath a set of images like that, especially in an ad - I mean an ad has got to have its discourse so low down that you'll never find it in a million years. We wanted to have a text, and this was very ideally suited to the tape-recorder, in terms of a technological separation. You would also have a discourse separation, where there would be voices talking about what the audience is watching. In much the same way where we would be sitting here at home and watching an ad, and discuss how disgusting it was whilst it's happening, saying: "Look at that! You know what they are actually saying there? They are using this as that, disguising that by taking that over there and trying to get us to see it as this". And one of the texts went like that, and we watched it, and we watched all the films and it was really easy to speak the discourse. But the discourse of the ad had surfaced, because the discourse, the idealogical discourse, for example - we are talking about a dated concept of the dominate ideology, but let's just use it - surfaced quite clearly because it was now the eighties, and this ad was made in the seventies - a decade difference. Obviously all the clothes were different, and everything was really funny and 'daggy'. But there were a whole lot of other things. In particular, the use of the female in a lot of the ads was very clearly sexist. You could even see the patriarchal things very clearly. We saw this and immediately there was a problem: how do we have a text that is meant to bring to the surface the discourse of the images of a film when the discourse is already on the surface because these ads are out of date? We could do it with some current Big M ads, but we realized we

couldn't do it with ads from the early seventies. It was really a big problem because we were looking at each ad and writing down, for example, with a cigarette ad, we had things written as:

"cigarette as symbol of international friendship;  
buy a cigarette and you buy international friendship"

We thought that idea was just useless. We could have done it, but it would have been very redundant, and just wouldn't have worked. It would have been the conflict between two re-surfaced discourses. But we thought how could we show in 1980 these ads from 1970, these images from 1970. Pop Art died ages ago. Gone is the time where you could safely and innocently pluck an image from another time era, and then say "ooh! ehh! ahh! isn't this fantastic!" There is still a jaded pop-type decadence around now in art that still cuts out pictures from bondage magazines from the fifties and sticks them in paintings. That just doesn't hold now, I don't think. We could show these ads, and everyone would enjoy them, everyone would laugh at them. The question becomes: "Why do we show them now?" But more importantly - how do we articulate the reaction? The inevitable reaction to something that's 10 years old like this. So we kept talking about them as we were watching them. Trying to get to the bottom of why they looked daggy. And it just suddenly hit us while we were watching them over and over again...With all these ads, Marie and me had remembered almost everyone, just from watching at whatever age I would have been at that time. And our perception of them now is totally different to how I remembered our perception of them was then. And this was interesting because the whole thing came up: if we look at, in particular, current children's toys ads now, the toys, to us, look totally unattractive. It doesn't seem as though we could get any pleasure out of them, even if we tried to imagine ourselves as being kids. I can't imagine getting a plastic truck like that, and if the ice-creams then tasted better than they do now. But it dawned on us that we were actually talking about not the objects themselves, for example, the ice-cream or the plastic truck, but of our perception, and more particular our perception of the advertising. When we were 10 years old, we'd see the ads on T.V. and they would look exactly as how they were meant to look i.e. natural. If we see a toy, we'd want the toy, we see the ice-cream we go buy that ice-cream, and that ice-cream was nice. The mysterious question is: has ice-cream changed? Or, is it that now we

are so wise and cynical that we can see through ads now? Which is true, of course, we can see through ads now. But, the funny thing is, people's inability to distinguish between their perception, and the memory of their perception of things. To distinguish between that era and the actual object itself becomes dangerous, in a sense, to the extent where the text, the text in that film said how things aren't like what they used to be. Ice-cream doesn't taste as good as it used to. What has changed is the maturity of perception, or a different kind of perception, because kids still want toys like these ugly plastic dolls that look like mutants. Of course they look unattractive to us because they are ideally not meant for us. But that whole movie was about that. How people tend to forget that their perception does change, and that specifically relates to things, when at a younger stage 'of our lives' (laughter) we could never see through fabricated naturalism. Now it's a bit easier, but then it wasn't. So what has only changed is we've gained an ability to see through naturalism, but through gaining that ability to see through the way ads try to fabricate naturalism and realism, we've forgot those actual issues. We see the ads now and they look bad, the ads then were much better. Well, that's bullshit, because advertising is advertising, and it never fuckin' changed.

R: It's really hard to position in any kind of constant way the voices in terms of what they're looking at. There's some kind of fictional relationship set up as if the voices are somehow speaking as two people looking at these ads. The thing about the voices is that there is no constant relationship in terms of every ad and every comment they make. For example, there's at one point where I thought there's a kind of comment about: "Gee, I always wanted "creepy critter" or whatever...that almost places the voice in a relation to the image in terms of the way in which the image of that ad would have initially constructed the viewer, the desirer, the viewer to desire this

object. There's another comment about: "I don't like the way they make ice-creams now, they are too creamy." That voice there is not commenting on the image the same way the other voice was. They are kind of changing. Sometimes they seem to be situated as the ideal viewer of these ads, and sometimes it's a kind of way in which they are a comment on the ad.

P: No. Because: "Gee I always wanted a creepy critter" is a present tense recalling when that person was an ideal viewer. If say, when Maria said: "Gee I always wanted a creepy critter" she's talking about when she did want it. It's a very definite tense...use of tense.

R: Although that almost gets us into that whole issue about the transcendental 'I'. That the 'I' who is speaking can still retain or still be that same 'I' which possibly looked at these ads, ten, fifteen years ago. That 'I' is not the same. That 'I' that speaks about these ads is not the same 'I' which was constructed by these ads fifteen years ago.

P: But the text is pretty much temporally a 1980 perspective of these two people talking about when they were kids. Talking about things now and how they were then, because there is only one place that can be spoken of and that is in the 'now'. It's that they're talking about their shifts between how they were seduced and fooled by the advertising. The interesting thing about the film, which is quite funny, is that the text never asserts that whole thing of what the film is about, which is the difference between perception and the actual object that is being perceived, because I could quite easily understand someone seeing that movie and walk away from it and say: "Yeah, ice-cream really doesn't taste the same as it used to". But, more hopefully, people would go away from it and realize that one of the most stupid things you could ever say is: "Gee, things were so much better when I was a kid". It's a very self-deceptive type of thing. It just seems to impede exactly what constitutes your perception when you weren't "mature".

In terms of a temporal play, there is that temporal play, and then there's a real-time temporal play, with the sort of matching up the text, obviously of talking about what we're seeing now, but at the wrong time because that soundtrack was based on...well, we didn't watch the movie as we spoke the text. And we were just sitting there taping it, and just remembering the ads that we knew were in the film. We didn't know what the order of these ads were until we saw it, because all the editing was done blind. We just had two boxes and we were splitting up all the ads and just joining them together. And that's really strange because there's the present tense realm of the performance of what is the film. Then there's even a miniaturized sense of memory, visual memory, which is what the whole thing was about. And even when you watch the film and you remember the ad, you've got to remember the ad the voice is talking about, like about 3 seconds before it came. I don't think, the time we saw it, none of the texts actually matched up with the actual ad that was on either screen. So, there's a kind of double play there which is quite funny really. But that's essentially what that film is about. The editing also wasn't done randomly - it sort of looks random, but it's not. The editing was done on the semantic blocks that the ads themselves were constituted in. So, that you get clear blocks from each ad, you didn't just get an awkward snatch of it. You got 3 scenes from the ad, and we edited where the ads themselves had edit marks. So their sound overlaps, but there's no image overlap. We cut on the right spot and that obviously has its effect because the film would be a very different ad and much more haphazard. It looks very saturated and messy all over the place. But it would be a pure mess if it was just random editing at the visuals.

R: There's also that play in which if you see one semantic block of an ad on one screen, you won't get the rest of it on the same screen, you get a bit more on the other screen. So that you are completely jumping from one screen to the others, because in a sense any viewer is in a position in which they can try to put all these semantic blocks together, and reconstruct the ad. But as you watch, you have to switch from one screen to the other constantly to pick up every semantic block which belongs to that particular ad, and try and put it together. But you are completely prevented from doing that because you've got all those other semantic blocks belonging elsewhere which interrupt it. But in another way, because all adverts work on certain basic codes of

determination, there's a lumping together. Then the whole film virtually becomes a conglomeration of ads which result in one big ad.

P: Yes, exactly, because of the editing in terms of semantic blocks. That's the way ads work themselves, in semantic blocks. You watch a bit of movie on television and you get six ads, and just in those six ads you get the whole history of advertising no matter what six bloody ads they are. You will no doubt have a sexist ad; a patriarchal ad; a family ad (the history of what the family is); a very biased political ad; you'd have everything there. Who knows, that's the way they may program ads on television. It would be very interesting to find out: "Okay, we'll have a family ad here, a naked girl out here. Oh shit! We need another family act for later on. Look, ring up Tarax and see if they can get us another". So that they've got a natural flow of what the ads are. You're prevented from blocking it up, joining it all together. But, the only interest you'd get from joining it all together is just to see how that whole thing was put together. You wouldn't get any new meaning.

R: Shall we move onto The Phantom, which I think, in a sense, is probably the most problematic of the films. Strangely enough it's the only real performance film, seeing that the band is very much a performance band and plays on those concepts. Why one out of four films becomes a performance film?

P: Maybe because that was a mammoth, monumental epic.

R: Yeah. It looks as though it had been signed by Cecil B. De Mille. (Laughter)

R: It's also the only narrative film, if we use narrative in the classical sense...

P: Right. A conventional narrative with plot functions and...

R: Although what it does is to somehow foreground some of the processes of narrative - some of them. Like it's a skeletal narrative. As I said before it had similarities to Straub. You edit out almost all the padding which goes on in narratives. You leave in only these kinds of blocks because it very much functions in terms of, almost your term, semantic blocks, and each semantic block builds up to the next one, to the next one, etc. There is cause and effect, but it's not, say, emotional cause and effect, or psychological.

P: It's plot function.

R: Yes. It's purely plot function.

P: The Phantom is a disappointment on a lot of levels. What we forgot to put in the titles was that it wasn't a film about The Phantom, but it was a film about using a comic book as a narrative. But I don't think it's a parody movie. But, I could see people seeing it as a parody movie, or "let's send up the Phantom, it's so corny." That's pretty limp and I do not think it really comes out as a parody movie, even though it got out of our control. I described it to someone as "Lonesome Cowboys" meets the "Phantom". Just a movie that's very hard to watch in that sense. I could really go in much further about the usage of the comic book as a narrative, and the implications of using a medium which is illiterate, totally divorced from the act of writing and literature, and the history of literature. Using that as a basis for film, rather than literature, writing. The film is meant to be about that, but it "bombed". But there's a ray of sunshine. Over the holidays we're making a trilogy of love stories from English Teenie Bopper magazines where there's comic book sections inside it. And we're going to use them, and we'll make sure when you're looking at these movies you are looking at the usage of comic book narrative being put into film. These movies will succeed if you just didn't laugh at them at all. Humour is a dangerous thing, it can really get out of hand. I mean all our stuff gets out of hand because people just end up laughing at us, or just think that we're 'cute'. But, that's okay because there are other people that can get past that. That's the other thing I meant to mention about The Phantom when you mentioned Straub. I felt a very Straubian thing with it too, in that, especially with something like Othon. I relate the Phantom to Othon, (Straub would probably kill us), in that the plot functions seem so pure in their essence, in that you could do anything to a plot, but you'll always be able to follow it. For example, in Othon, they're enacting a classical tragedy play in the fuckin' ruins of Rome, with cars in the background. But they've got the right costumes on and there's all that play with the historical nature

of all the gestures, and actions that they're doing, and how your presenting it, but you can still follow the love story. And in the Phantom you can still follow the story. I mean the film is fucked everywhere, but you can go away and still tell someone about what happened in The Phantom, which is really strange. In a sense, the film still has that strong relationship with the comic, in that the comic is badly written and drawn, and the flow of the narrative is very incoherent, but you can still read it, as opposed to literature, which is coherently assembled and can be read correctly.

# WHAT'S ON?

The next issue of "New Music" comes out on January 21st. 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.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SAT. NOV. 1st / 9-6 pm: Anti-Music Tapes - One Day Festival ART PROJECTS - 586 LONSDALE ST. CITY</li> <li>● SUN. NOV. 2nd / 2-30 pm: Felice Australia Workshop/Concert. HAWTHORN GALLERY.</li> <li>● MON. NOV. 3rd / 8.00 pm: Warren Burt - "Moods" for video + stereo sound. CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE</li> <li>● TUES. NOV. 4th / 1.00 pm: Warren Burt + Herb Jercer. P.I.T. BUNDOORA.</li> <li>● WED. NOV. 5th / 8.30 pm: The Farns: "Well, why not?" CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE.</li> <li>● MON. NOV. 10th / 8.00 pm: Warren Burt - "Der Yiddisher Conboy" a film in English. CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE</li> <li>● WED. NOV. 12th / 8.30 pm: Laughing Hands. CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE</li> <li>● MON. NOV. 17th / 8.00 pm: Warren Burt - "If structure is an empty glass." (a film) CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE</li> <li>● SAT. NOV. 15th / 8.30 pm: New Music Benefit Concert - Videos by Chesworth/Randall/Bendinelli/Splinter Faction; →↑→; Laughing Hands; I.O.A.; Warren Burt. GUILD THEATRE - MELB. UNI.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SAT. NOV. 19th / 8.30 pm: * Paul Shurtz: "Erotica vs. Exotica" * The Strange Effect (AKA Artificial Organs). CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE</li> <li>● MON. NOV. 24th / 8.00 pm: Warren Burt: "Penguins" Slides/Tape + Readers. CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE.</li> <li>● WED. NOV. 26th / 8.30 pm: Herbie Jercer &amp; Chris Babingskas. CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE</li> <li>● MON. DEC. 1st / 8.00 pm: Warren Burt: "8-8's: 4 pairs in the shape of a piece." (computer &amp; electronics)</li> <li>● WED. DEC. 3rd / 8.30 pm: * Chris Wyatt * Homes, Lewis, Stamopoulos, Shmucki, etc. CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE</li> <li>● SUN. DEC. 7th / 8.00 pm: Fleckenman concert. MELBA HALL - MELB. UNI.</li> <li>● MON. DEC. 8th / 8.30 pm: Barry Veik + Judy Jaques. CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE</li> <li>● WED. DEC. 10th / 8.30 pm: Video Nite - Randall, Bendinelli + Chesworth. CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE.</li> <li>● MON. DEC. 15th / 8.30 pm: * K.G.B. * Chris, Robert + Ian. (improvisations). CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE.</li> </ul>
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- DEC. 17th WED. / 8.30pm :  
Les Gilbert  
CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE .
- MON. DEC. 22nd / 8.30pm :  
Douglas Ray: "Multi Media Event"  
CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE
- WED. DEC 24th (CHRISTMAS EVE!) / 8.30pm :  
→↑→ : "Wartime Art."  
CLIFTON HILL COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTRE.

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