

SEAMUS NEWS

*A publication of the Society for Electro-Acoustic Music in the United States,
providing news, interviews, and announcements.*

A Quarterly Newsletter

2012/13, Issue No. 3- December/January

Virtual Panel

An email "panel discussion" with five past SEAMUS Award-winners:

Jon Appleton - Larry Austin - Joel Chadabe

Alvin Lucier - Pauline Oliveros

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Virtual Panel with five past SEAMUS Award Winners

Questions drafted by Steve Ricks and Anthony Cornicello

Jon Appleton, Larry Austin, Joel Chadabe, Alvin Lucier, and Pauline Oliveros respond to questions about electronic music. Answers to the various questions are preceded by the respondent's initials. Responses are in italics.

1. What was it like when you were starting out - what technology was available, what were the limitations, etc.?

audio instruments from physics laboratories. The only limitations, then and today, was the imagination of the composer.

JA: *The technologies available were reel-to-reel tape recorders and various*

LA: *My first exploration of electronic music began in 1964-65 in the studio*

established by Vladimir Ussachevsky in the early 'sixties at the American Academy in Rome. It was equipped with two stereo tape machines, a waveform generator, a reverb unit, and a mixer. In that period, when composers Bill Smith and John Eaton were in residence at the Academy, a Synket synthesizer designed and built by Paul Ketoff was added. I was given full access to the studio while in Rome on a sabbatical leave from the University of California that year and completed my first tape and tape-plus-instrument[s] pieces there. I felt no limitations to the technology I was provided, only the challenges It offered to compose in this new tape music medium.

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FROM THE ASSISTANT EDITOR



Hi SEAMUS members!

I appreciate Anthony's invitation to write my first Editor's note for this issue of the newsletter. It's a relatively short issue, but features an insightful "virtual" panel discussion with some of our most distinguished members: Jon Appleton, Larry Austin, Joel Chadabe, Alvin Lucier, and Pauline Oliveros. Their responses to the questions that Anthony and I drafted include thoughts about technology and how it has shaped their own work, teaching composition, and which composers and musicians influenced them most. Look for a follow up to this discussion in a future issue where I plan to solicit responses to this discussion from some of our younger members.

As usual, there is the Member News, which includes announcements of recent performances, recordings, and other member activities. Enjoy!

Steven Ricks



Conference Update

Conference participants selected for SEAMUS 2013 have been notified and a conference schedule is now available on the conference site through the following link: <http://blog.mcnallysmith.edu/seamus2013/conference-schedule/>

Travel and lodging information is now available at the following link: <http://blog.mcnallysmith.edu/seamus2013/travel-and-lodging/>

Registration for this year's conference will be available shortly. The conference will feature performances by *Zeitgeist*, and *Ensemble 61*, as well as the venerable Keith Kirchoff.

The Conference Banquet will be held at the Minnesota Science Museum. Weather permitting, the banquet will be held on a balcony with a wonderful view of the Mississippi River.

SEAMUS 2013 will be held at the McNally-Smith College of Music in Saint Paul, MN, from April 18-20. The deadline for placing ads in the conference program is March 1, 2013.

The official website is here: <http://blog.mcnallysmith.edu/seamus2013/>

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JC: I started in 1965 with Bob Moog, just at the beginning of analog synthesizers. We didn't notice any limitations. We did notice an enormous promise of expressive freedom. It was a great time.

AL: Tape recorders, various processing devices — white noise generators, ring modulators (we made our own), reverb, tape, splicing blocks, razor blades. I wasn't aware of limitations: just the opposite. We talked a lot about unlimited possibilities.

PO: When I was starting out as a composer in 1951 what technology was available to me was my musical instruments: accordion, French horn and piano.



Jon Appleton

2. Is there anything truly “new” happening in electronic music right now? If so, what is it? If not, what was the last, consequential “new” development/idea/innovation?

JA: *New technologically? Lots. New stylistically? Not much.*

LA: *Laptop computer groups seem ubiquitous.*

JC: *Yes, a better understanding of sound and a new sense of interaction.*

AL: I suppose you would have to say that the use of computers is a fairly new thing although I am not aware of any radically new forms or structural developments in this field that is on a par with, for example, Cage's use of chance, Bob Ashley's discovery that speech is music, phase as a building block, and certain composer's (including myself) explorations into room acoustics. Pauline Oliveros's continuing work in sending sounds and sights across long distances via the Internet is particularly promising.

PO: What is relatively new includes machine listening, learning and improvising.

3. What do you use these days - has your working method been changed by technology? Do you think you're writing differently as a result of newer technology?

JA: *I'm always using new technology and composing the same kind of music: my style.*

LA: *For my compositions I use my MacBook Pro. Of course one adapts to changing/improving technological developments. I would say that newer technology sharpens my composing techniques. I use synthesis software such as Logic Pro, csound, and SoundHack, continuing my work composing for instrumentalists and vocalists plus computer music and video with fixed media.*

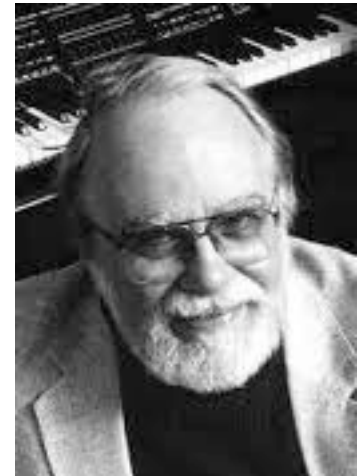
JC: I work with Kyma. Yes, it has turned the compositional process into a process of discovery and learning. Very interactive. Fast.

AL: *Mostly I am writing works for conventional instruments in response to requests from players and ensembles. Often I include pure wave sweeps to create vivid audible beating between the*

waves and the acoustic instruments. I don't create the waves but ask Bob Bielecki to do that for me. I don't have the knowhow or equipment to do it myself. I simply send Bob the pitches and timings. He sends me the results on CD's.

PO: I use my own custom software interface developed in MAXMSP in what I call Expanded Instrument System (EIS) with my accordion in hybrid electroacoustic improvisation. My working practice changes with the tasks at hand.

I am not exactly writing as most of my work is improvised. I have not found a notation program that works for me.



Larry Austin

4. Is there any type of technology (hardware/software) that you'd like to see in the near future - one that you think would impact the way you and others work?

JA: *I would like to see direct transfer and transformation of sonic material using only my brain.*

LA: *There are always new technologies being developed, mostly improving user*

interaction, always impacting the way I and others work.

JC: *Smaller and lighter.*

AL: *I am simply waiting to see what comes up.*

PO: *I would like a flexible intelligent notation program where I could do anything that I could do with pencil and paper.*

5. How essential is human performance in the presentation of electronic music? Are "tape" pieces valid in a concert context, especially given the current interest and activity in live-electronics, improvisation, not to mention the traditional practice of concert performances by humans?

JA: *Throughout European and American music there have always existed notated and improvisational traditions. Given the current cultural emphasis on visual material, simply listening to music has become less important.*

LA: *It goes without saying that humans are involved in every phase of the creation and subsequent performance of electronic music. In my own case, since I have specialized in electronic music plus performers pieces, that I rely on such human participation. And all of these pieces are intended for concert performance.*

JC: *It depends entirely on the particular piece. Performance is good for a proscenium hall.*

AL: *We always stressed live performance, even with tape. See Cages' Rozart Mix. But tape music concerts are ok too. Something mysterious about sounds flowing from speakers on the stage. No grimacing conductors either.*

PO: *The presence of human performers is essential for some audiences and not for others.*

Tape pieces are just as valid as any form of presentation depending on audience interest and circumstances.



Joel Chadabe

6. It seems more and more common for composers of electronic music to incorporate video/images in their work, at times through their own creation, and at other times through collaboration. Is this a good thing for the medium? Are there current (or not so current) pairings of music/sound with video/images that you find particularly successful or unsuccessful?

JA: *Composers usually are second-rate video artists. Video artists are usually naïve musicians. What seems to count is how much money these collaborations earn. Often they provide an opportunity for those who have little to say in either medium.*

LA: *You could say that the visual/sonic media have been around much longer than electronic music/video media...via the advent of the "talkies". So it's quite logical that such would be incorporated today in video pieces. From the*

beginning of my own work with electronic music, I called for theatrical/visual contexts in my work. I have collaborated with film makers such as Stan Vanderbeek, David Freund, and David Stout and have experimented with film and video imagery to a great extent. It comes quite naturally.

JC: *Images can provide a substitute for performers. But otherwise it depends largely on the room setting.*

AL: *I sometimes feel distracted by collaborations between the visual and the audible unless they are integral to each other. In my sound installations the visual aspect comes directly from the needs of the set up. I would never add a visual component to enrich the experience.*

PO: *Combining sight and sound or audio and video is an art. Those who practice this combination can be more or less successful. If successful then it is a good thing!*

A couple of pieces come to mind from San Francisco Tape Music Center days where sound and image combinations were happening and inspired the Rock 'n Roll generation: Ramon Sender's Desert Ambulance with visuals by Anthony Martin and Morton Subotnick's Mandolin also with visuals by Anthony Martin.

7. It's almost impossible to imagine a music student arriving at a university without at least some experience with computers, digital media, electronic equipment, etc. With what sort of pedagogical opportunities and/or advantages does this present educators? Does the assumed "knowledge" students have about various electronic media present any challenges in teaching composition?

JA: Most music students arrive at a university with the desire to become famous performers. Few arrive with the desire to be composers. There is value in looking closely at all kinds of music. What will be useful to a young composer is impossible to predict. My experience is that students will learn the technology they need with ease if they are interested in that genre.

LA: It's both a blessing and a curse: a blessing because these students have overcome any fears about the challenges of technologies and a curse because they usually have not explored the really important implications of depending too heavily on same.

JC: No, it's better. Students start at a better place.

AL: The students are much more prepared to listen and understand what is going on.

PO: Pedagogical opportunities and advantages certainly can be enhanced by the presence of skills that don't need to be taught. Facilitating creative uses of these skills is the challenge for educators.



Alvin Lucier

(re. "Does the assumed 'knowledge' students have about various electronic media present any challenges in teaching composition?")

PO: Not necessarily. It certainly depends on the approach that the educator has to teaching composition.

8. Follow up to the last question: what is the best way to approach teaching "Electronic Music Composition" to young composers?

JA: I'm old fashioned. I ask them to compose short pieces in a variety of styles and approaches, e.g. musique concrete, Max-MSP, conceptual works, etc.

LA: Provide the student composers with models of excellence in the genres of electronic music through the decades. Teach critical analysis of such models.

JC: Make them familiar with new models for music. Critique their works.

AL: Play them pieces that you love and get them to participate in performing and making their own pieces.

PO: Provide young composers with access to well equipped studios and facilitate a community of interest in creating music with electronic means.

9. Is there another question you wish would have been asked that you would like to pose and then answer?

JA: What do your students think?

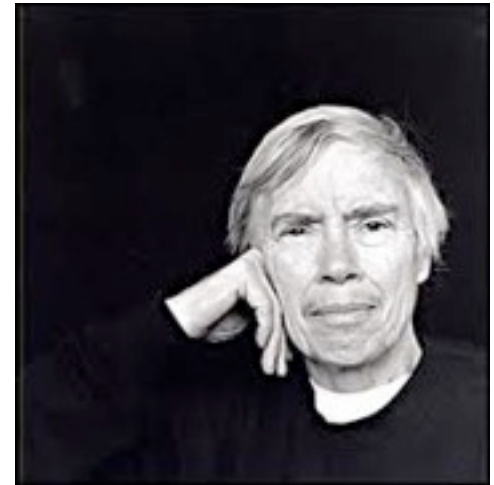
LA: My question would be: "Other than the present composers on this panel name four of your favorite composers who have influenced your own work." My answer would be Karlheinz Stockhausen, John Cage, Paul Lansky, and Morton Subotnick.

10. I'd like to pose Larry's question to all of you—"Other than the present composers on this panel name four of your favorite composers who have influenced your own work."

JA: There are so many composers who influenced my instrumental and vocal music that it would be impossible to name just four. I cannot name any composers who influenced my electro-acoustic music. Those whose work I admire have taken quite a different direction from my own, e.g. John Chowning, Frank Zappa, Jean-Claude Risset, Lars-Gunnar Bodin, Beatrice Ferreyra and Steve Reich. They are/were also close personal friends. We rarely spoke about each other's work. There exists/existed an unspoken yet palpable mutual respect for our originality, imagination, craftsmanship and seriousness of purpose.

JC: It's hard to answer Larry's question re particular composers. Everything I've heard has influenced me. No particular style. I've known so many people that were wonderful and interesting musicians, and I've learned from all of them.

PO: Edith Gutierrez (my mother); Yoko Ono.



Pauline Oliveros

Member News

In October 2012, **Elizabeth Anderson** premiered her octophonic acousmatic work *Solar Winds* at the *Visiones Sonoras Festival* (Morelia, Mexico) <http://visionessonoras.org/index.php?ver=2012&lan=es&secc=home>. The idea for *Solar Winds* sprang from a desire to honor the astronomers of the ancient Mayan culture near the end of 2012, the conclusion of a Mesoamerican Long Count calendar. The work is inspired by Dungey's open magnetospheric model according to which Earth's magnetic field lines are connected to

interplanetary ones carried by solar winds. The Dungey model offered an intriguing starting point for the sonorization of these non-sounding phenomena in the acousmatic realm.

Solar Winds will receive its European premiere in Brussels, Belgium on February 27, 2013 at 8 pm at the Espace Senghor concert hall. The concert, which is organized by Musiques & Recherches, will also feature other international acousmatic works. Elizabeth Anderson will give a pre-concert talk about *Solar Winds* at 7:15 pm.



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Jon Appleton is teaching composition and counterpoint at the University of Hawaii (Manoa) during their Spring, 2013 semester. SEAMUS visitors are welcome: jonapple@hawaii.edu

Julius Bucsis received the Excellent Achievement Prize from the Musicacoustica Beijing 2012 Composition Competition for *I Am Who Am I* (fixed media). *In the Interest of Time* (fixed media) was accepted into the Tutti New Music Festival 2013 and the SEAMUS 2013 conference. *A Glimpse beyond the Event Horizon* was presented at KCSoundwalk 2012 in October. He performed a set of original compositions for electric guitar and computer at the National Electronics Museum in November. *Convection* (violin) was performed at a concert in New York City in December as part of the *My Dad's Violin* film project.

Kyong Mee Choi's recent activities include:

- *THE ETERNAL TAO*, a multimedia opera, will be published by PARMA recordings (Ravello Records) on January 29, 2013.
- *Inner Voice* for cello and electronics will be published at the 2012 SEAMUS CD 22 collection.
- *In Void* for four hands and two pianos won the Tempus Continuum Ensemble's Competition 2012.
- *Spatial Relationship in Electro-Acoustic Music and Painting* will be published in Korean at the Korean Electro-Acoustic Music Society Computer Music Journal Emile in December 2012.
- *It only needs to be seen* for guitar and electronics was performed at

the 12 Nights Electro-Acoustic Series, Miami, FL, November 16 2012.

- *Slight Uncertainty is Very Attractive* for flute and electronics was performed at the inner sOUNScapes concert series in Norman, Oklahoma on November 12, 2012.
- *Ceaseless Cease* for clarinet and electronics was performed at the Electro-Acoustic Barn Dance Festival on November 8-10, 2012.
- *Inner Space* for cello and electronics had been selected for the IAWM Annual Concert 2012, and was performed by Ensemble Pi at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) as part of the Livewire Festival of Contemporary Music on October 28, 2012.
- *Sublimation* for marimba and electronics was performed at the Electronic Music Midwest on October 12, 2012
- *Ceaseless Cease* for clarinet and electronics was performed at the Lipa Festival in Iowa, on October 9, 2012.
- *Tensile Strength*, co-commissioned work for electronics, was performed at the 2012 Soundcrawl Festival in Brick Factory, Nashville, TN on October 6-10, 2012
- *It only needs to be seen* for guitar and electronics was performed at Miami Dade College, Miami, FL, on October 4, 2012.

Card I
Taylan Cihan, circuit design
Andrew Lucia, body design

Card I is an analog synthesizer conceived with the objective of an electronic instrument that is as responsive to an improviser's momentary decisions as an acoustic

instrument would be. Presented in a notably aesthetic body, *Card I* provides a tactile control over sound through metal plates carved into the body of the instrument, which are connected to the circuit inside, allowing the performer to control the sound through physical contact. In addition, *Card I* also embodies a number of photocells that respond to the environmental light, allowing the performer to alter the sound through hand gestures, and magnetic switches that enable the circuit to be rapidly controlled with magnets hovered over the body of the instrument. *Card I* will be competing at the Georgia Tech's 2013 Margaret Guthman Musical Instrument Competition to take place in April 11-12, in Atlanta. In addition, *Card I* will be presented in the SEAMUS 2013 conference through informal improvisations in various locations over the coffee, lunch, or dinner breaks.



For more information: http://taylancihan.com/card_I.html

Charles Norman Mason's electroacoustic work, *Metaman* for video (Sheri Wills), violin, and digital audio has been performed by several different violinists including Karen Bentley Pollick at the Firehouse Space in Brooklyn and in Seattle at Chapel of Good Shepherd Center and Kris Miller at the Electroacoustic Barn Dance at the University of Mary Washington in Virginia. This year Dr. Mason was named chair of the theory and composition department at the Frost School of Music of the University of Miami. Also, Mason developed a new Master of Music degree at the Frost School of Music called MM in Digital Arts and Sound Design that began accepting student applications in the fall of 2012.



David Mendoza's *Séance* for violin and electronics was selected for performance at both the 2012 SCI Student National Conference and for the 2013 SCI National Conference at Ohio State University. *Séance* premiered at the Emerging Composers Concert this past October during Festival Miami. Mendoza's electro-acoustic chamber piece *Inner Cycles* co-written with Rodrigo Bussad, and Liza Seigido, will have its second performance this Spring at the Subtropics Experimental Music Festival.



advantage of this unique situation and recorded my original works. It is rare to have fine musicians regularly rehearse and perform my pieces.

OGOGO bones consisted of George McMullen, Lane More, and myself. George is an accomplished studio recording artist and jazz trombonist. His performance experience and recording experience are truly impressive. Lane is a fine trombonist and excellent musician, now residing in Australia. It was a pleasure to rehearse and perform with this group. Both were accomplished musicians with performance skills that included interpreting early music, jazz improvisation, and an understanding of new music and new music improvisation techniques.

Bonescape was released on August 2012 on the NineWinds label. It is available on Amazon and CD Baby.”



The following is from **Rodney Oakes**:

“Composed for electronics and a trombone trio, *Bonescape* consists of original compositions for OGOGO Bones. From 2007 to 2011, OGOGO Bones presented a series of concerts that consisted of Medieval and Baroque music, plus my original works. For the second half of the program, the group would add a rhythm section and perform jazz standards. All of this required regular rehearsals. In January of 2011, one of the trombonists, Lane More, moved back to his homeland, Australia. Before Lane left, I took

As featured composer at the Sound and Computing Conference 2012 in Copenhagen this past summer, **Judith Shatin's** compositions *Grito del Corazon* (improvising ensemble and electronics); *Cherry Blossom and a Wrapped Thing*; *After Hokusai* (clarinet and electronics); and *Sic Transit*, for percussion and CADI (Configurable Automatic Drumming Instrument) were all performed at Den Frie Center of Contemporary Art. CADI is the creation of Scott Barton, Steve Kemper and Troy Rogers, through the company [EMMI](#) they started as graduate students at UVA.

Among Shatin's recent electroacoustic compositions is *For the Fallen*, commissioned by Italian trumpeter Ivano Iscari. Scored for trumpet and electronics made from processed recordings of the Maria Dolens bell in Rovereto, Italy, it was recently performed at *Mondi Sonori* in Trento, Italy, and Mr. Iscari will record it this coming spring. Originally fashioned from canons melted after World War I, the Maria Dolens is one of the largest ringing bells in the world. A new version, for alto sax and electronics has been commissioned by the young saxophonist Jason Laczkoski, who will premiere it January at the International Saxophone Congress. Meanwhile, her *Penelope's Song*, for soprano sax and electronics has been on tour by Italian saxophonist Enzo Filippetti, who performed it at the *Suono Immagine* Festival in Milan, at the Latvian Academy of Music in Riga, at the Santa Cecilia Conservatory in Rome, and in numerous other locations. Finally, *Rotunda, a Living Portrait*, her collaboration with filmmaker Robert Arnold created from images and sounds of the Rotunda collected

over the period of a year, has recently been released on DVD. Winner of the Best Experimental Film Award from the Macon Film Festival, it continues to be shown at a variety of venues, most recently at Christopher Newport University. An excerpt can be experienced on her website (www.judithshatin.com).

The **University of Massachusetts Lowell's Contemporary Electronic Ensemble** explores the electronic production and manipulation of music in a live ensemble setting. Students incorporate synthesis, signal processing, sampling, etc. into a musical framework. Besides performing from the constantly expanding repertoire of electronic music, students are encouraged to create original compositions and arrangements for the ensemble. A public performance is given at the end of each semester.

This past semester's concert featured new prototyped instrumentation with the help of Makey Makey units. (<http://www.makeymakey.com>) Makey Makey is a kickstarted prototyping interface that allows students to mock up new instrumental interfaces and automatically maps them to the "asdfgh" keys of a normal typing keyboard. The middle row of a keyboard typically is the "musical typing" portion of many Digital Audio Workstations or music composition programs. With the use of Makey Makey's the students were able to moc up new instrumentation and apply sounds in real time with relative ease.

This semester's prototype instruments included:

- Drum actuators:
- Chess board
- Electronic Music stands
- Ultrasound machine repurposed
- Fretless bass modification
- Water Piano
- Hi-five carpet
- Diner Table

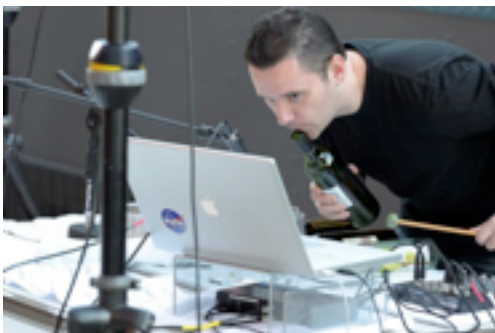
This semester we also experimented with broadcasting the concert live via UStream which led to over 60 unique views.

For questions or submissions, you may email @ [Michael Testa@uml.edu](mailto:Michael.Testa@uml.edu)



John Villec presented a concert of Multimedia works by SEAMUS members as part of the 2012 CSU, Sacramento Festival of New American Music. Works presented were composed by Steven Snethkamp, David R. Witzling, Mike Crain, Brian Evans, Bret Battey, Jerod Sommerfeldt, John Villec, Jeffrey Hass, and Dennis H. Miller.

Adam Vidiksis recently performed his *Mitochondrial Dreams* for percussion and electronics at the Electroacoustic Barn Dance, Soundcrawl, and a number of other places around the country this fall. This work, along with his recently completed, *synapse_circuit*, also for percussion and computer, will be featured in a showcase of Adam's music this January in Philadelphia presented by Local Arts Live. Adam's *Abandonment Issues* was recently set to choreography and performed as part of Point of Departure dance company's Mixed Drinks performance.



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eContact! is the CEC's online journal
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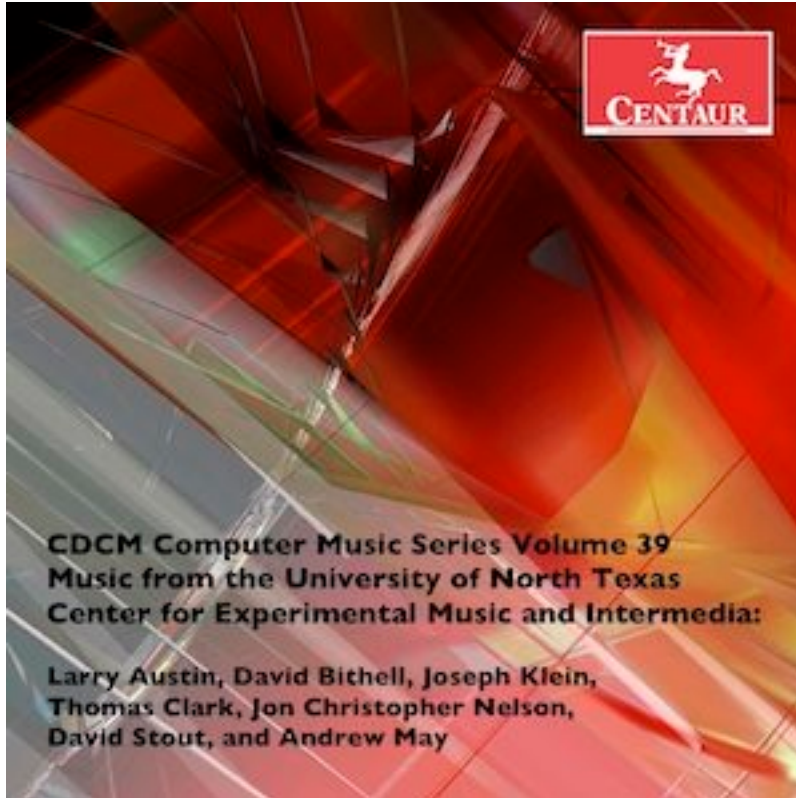
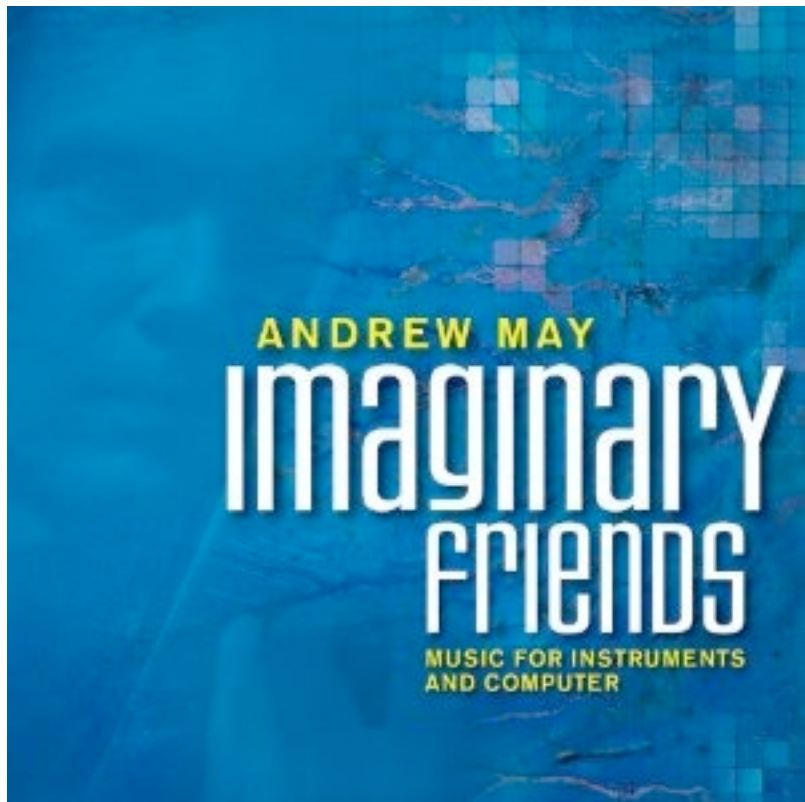
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CD Releases

Imaginary Friends, music for instruments and computer by **Andrew May** (University of North Texas), features performances by Shannon Wettstein, piano; F. Gerard Errante, Rachel Yoder, Deanna Brizgys, clarinets; Elizabeth McNutt, flute; Brett Reed, percussion, Jennifer Cobb, voice samples; Erika Eckert and Megan Tipton, violas; Judith Glyde and Marcelo Sanches, cellos; Andrew May, electric violin; and a wide variety of interactive computer music partners and computer-generated sounds. Ravello Records RR 7861; link to more information at <http://cemi.music.unt.edu/may> - or listen to samples at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fyUqzHOKz8>



The acclaimed CDCM Computer Music series recently released Volume 39: *Music from the University of North Texas Center for Experimental Music and Intermedia*. Includes works by Larry Austin, David Bithell, Joseph Klein, Thomas Clark, Jon Christopher Nelson, David Stout, and Andrew May. Performers include Patricia Strange, violin; Jeffrey Snider, Heidi Dietrich Klein, Patrick Gnage, Jonathan Greer, voices; F. Gerard Errante and Esther Lamneck, clarinet; Elizabeth McNutt, flute; Peter Kusek, steel guitar; David Bithell, trumpet. Centaur Records CRC3219; for more information or to purchase, <http://music.unt.edu/CDCM/catalog.htm>

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Please direct any comments to:

ANTHONY CORNICELLO: newsletter_editor@seamusonline.org or anthony.cornicello@gmail.com

All ideas regarding content are welcome. Please let us know if you'd like to participate in its production.