

SEAMUS NEWS

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

A Quarterly Newsletter

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2013 SEAMUS Award Winner, Laurie Spiegel

Composer, performer, and electroacoustic innovator Laurie Spiegel was the recipient of the 2013 SEAMUS Award. She was unable to attend this year's conference, but sent along the elegant, concise acceptance speech that follows. It was read at the conference banquet on Saturday, April 20, by SEAMUS President Mark Zaki, just after he announced her receipt of the award.

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Acceptance Speech by Laurie Spiegel - Winner of the 2013 SEAMUS Award

"What we do is inhabit the extreme edges of the known sonic universe . . . "

Thank you very much SEAMUS. That you chose me for this award is deeply meaningful, pleasing and heartening, especially during what's turned out to be a difficult period of my life - or else I'd be here with you right now to enjoy

all your company. I wish you a wonderful conference.

Over these very few decades we've seen electroacoustic music transform from being considered truly weird outsider stuff not

admissible in any music school to so mainstream that electronic means of musical creation are more likely the default than the exception. It's a very unusual project that doesn't involve any electronic means of working with sound at any or all stages of production. Electronic technology has become an integral part of every aspect of our present musical culture. Computers are integrated everywhere into music, as are recorded sounds, both from nature and man-made. We are now seeing a tremendous popular revivalist interest in analog electronic music and sounds and early electronic music technology. Even classic

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FROM THE EDITOR

I am pleased to print Laurie Spiegel's 2013 SEAMUS Award acceptance speech in this newsletter edition. It's brief, but elegant, and touches on several significant issues that have affected and continue to influence us as practitioners of electro-acoustic music.

The SEAMUS 2013 Conference was a huge success, thanks in large part to conference host J. Anthony Allen and his staff at McNally Smith College of Music in St. Paul, MN. There will be more about the conference in the next newsletter issue. Please have a look at the 2014 Conference description just to the right of my note here, provided by co-host Ronald Kuivila.

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

Steve Ricks

SEAMUS 2014

Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT

Co-hosts Ronald Kuivila and Paula Matthusen

SEAMUS at Wesleyan will present 12 concerts in Crowell and Beckham halls as well as 3 late evening concerts in the Memorial Chapel. For nearly 50 years Wesleyan's World Music program has been based on the credo that all of the World's music warrant close study and that any student of music should include a serious encounter with an unfamiliar musical tradition in their education. To that end Chapel concerts will focus on works that in different ways propose alternative understandings of electroacoustic music or engagements with other musical traditions. Resources available for these concerts include performance ensembles ranging from the Wesleyan Gamelan to the recently formed Toneburst Laptop and Electronic Arts Ensemble and the Chapel organ, which provides computer control of registration as well as note events. Proposals for collaborative works and frameworks such as interactive works designed for improvising instrumentalists, 'live coding' performers, and pieces that can be workshopped, rehearsed and performed during the conference with conference participants will be solicited. Emblematic of this last alternative will be a "bring your own object" realization of David Tudor's Rainforest that to be presented in the Zelnick Pavilion adjoining the Chapel as an installation and performance site. Rainforest, based on the image of a chorus of loudspeakers possessing their own unique voices, uses electromagnetic transducers to activate found objects and assemblages of found objects as loudspeakers. Rainforest IV, the version most often presents an immersive environment with many performers, sounds and objects. However, Tudor envisioned an alternative version where a large library of sound material is diffused through the objects but limited to more than two distinct sounds at a time. Contributors to the SEAMUS version will be invited to individually diffuse material, following those guidelines.

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studio analog tape techniques are making a comeback.

So has electronic music become sufficiently successful and mainstream that it no longer exists as a separate category of music? Isn't most music electronic in some ways at this point, our mission of establishing this broader range of sonic vocabulary, creative techniques, musical structures and ways of interacting with sound now having been accomplished? Is there no longer an "electroacoustic music" that is apart from music in general, our art having disappeared back into the larger one it emerged from like a wave into the sea?

I don't think so, actually. There is more to electroacoustic music than the techniques and the sounds and the ways we interact with them. There are also certain qualities that are both important and still very rare. One is the visionary nature of what we do - that we wanted, and still want, to express what there has never been a way to express, to hear sounds that have never been heard, and that we envision what doesn't exist. There is also a spirit of experimentalism, part science and part art, in which we hypothesize some sound or sonic fabric and a means to create it, and we do the work of finding a way to make it happen, and we test our hypotheses to see if it works and where it leads. We try ways of creating that are new and untested that may or may not work at all, technically or musically. And there is also the place this music comes from, which is partly imagination and partly a different way of hearing and experiencing the sounds of our world, an openness in listening that wants to be free of preconceptions and habits.

I have worked in this field quite a long time and seen incredible changes, including the transition of many sounds and techniques from unique cutting edge instances to ubiquitously available resources. All those sounds and techniques that were once thought so strange then later came to be so widely accepted, they are not the real essence of what we are doing, what still sets us apart as electroacoustic composers. They are artifacts of what we have done, a trail we have left, not the essence of our process. What we do is inhabit the extreme edges of the known sonic universe, to dwell there and listen, to find and reveal or realize what may be there, to postulate and to populate those spaces, to listen openly to our individual imaginations and sonic sensations, to feel for what is so subtle or so complex or so fundamental or so authentically meaningful that it still evades being focused on, captured, described, expressed or shared.

- Laurie Spiegel

Member News

Seattle composer and Cornish faculty member **Tom Baker** will present an evening of all new electronic music on Friday, April 12, 2013, 8:00 PM. The program includes works for theremin, computer and dancer; film; interactive live electronics; experimental and electronic trio; and excerpts from a new electronic opera entitled HOLOS that deals with plastic surgery and a radical new twist on self-improvement. Tom is celebrating his 20th year as a working composer and musician in Seattle with this special night of world-premieres; he will be joined by some of his long-time collaborators and performing partners.

Julius Bucsis had his composition *I Am Who Am I* (fixed media) presented at the CSUF New Music Festival – WEALR 2013. *Spin Cycle* (fixed media) was accepted into the 60x60 East Coast Mix 2013. *Introspection* (English horn) was performed by Anne Goldberg in NYC in March. *Row Play* (piccolo and toy piano) was accepted by Emily De Padua and Mark Zelesky for a performance in Philadelphia in April.

Brian Belet's composition *Summer Phantoms: Nocturne* (piano and electronics, 2011), was published on the CD *Here (and there)*, Jeri-Mae Astolfi, piano, on the Innova label in January 2013 (Innova 846). The CD

also includes music by Phillip Schroeder, Ed Martin, Jeff Herriott, Tom Lopez, and Jim Fox. Astolfi performed the CD set on eight concerts in January and February during a Midwest concert tour, culminating with a performance at the SCI 2013 National Conference, Columbus, OH, February 14. The composition was also performed twice in the UK by Keith Kirchoff: Manchester Metropolitan University, Cheshire (Feb. 19), and University of Hull (Feb. 22). Kirchoff will also perform the work at SEAMUS 2013 in April.

Belet co-composed *Tessellation Rag*, a text-sound composition for two voices and Kyma processing, with Stephen Ruppenthal. The work was premiered by the two composers at the 2012 Kyma International Sound Symposium (KISS 2012) in St. Cloud, MN on September 14. They performed the work again on the 'Electric Pacific 2012: Mostly Homegrown' concert at San Jose State University on November 6.

Belet's *Distant Dream of Chapada Diamantina*, for alto flute, was premiered by Maria Carolina Cavalcanti in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on October 7 as part of a Vox Novus '15 Minutes of Fame' concert set. Cavalcanti performed the set again in New York City on a Composer's Voice concert, February 10.

Along with Patricia Strange (violin) and Stephen Ruppenthal (trumpets, flugelhorn, & voice), Belet (viola, voice, & Kyma processing) completed a successful concert tour with their ensemble SoundProof in October 2012. Along with master classes, lectures, and technical demos, SoundProof performed concerts at Bowling Green State

University (October 1), the University of Cincinnati, CCM (October 4), Ohio University, Athens (October 9), and the opening concert for the Electronic Music Midwest festival (EMM 2012, October 11). Their concerts included a new '15 Minutes of Fame' set (composers include: Mark A. Lackey, Jim McManus, Bruce Hamilton, Elaine Lillios, Christopher Lee, Julius Bucsis, James Caldwell, Brian Belet, Mark Phillips, Ken Paoli, Lanier Sammons, Steve Wurcer, Scott Miller, Michael Wittgraf, & Mark Soden Jr.); as well as other music by Jeffrey Stolet, Bruno Liberda, Mara Helmuth, Larry Austin, Bonnie Miksch, Brian Belet, and Allen Strange.

Belet's composition *Ion Trails (Cloud Chamber Storms, 2012)*, for percussion battery and Kyma, was premiered by Andrew Spencer at EMM 2012, October 13.

Belet's composition *Name Droppings*, for computer-processed voices, was performed on the 'Getting Nowhere' festival (honoring John Cage) at York University, UK, on November 16.



Robert Fleisher's *Loretto Alfresco*, a vintage (1970) musique concrète tape piece featuring multi-speed found percussion (premiered at the inaugural NYCEMF in 2009), appears on the SEAMUS 2012 Miniatures ("Re-Caged") CD released early in 2013. Another archival tape piece featuring piano interior sounds, *Dans le piano*, was premiered at Electronic Music Midwest (Lewis University) in October, where *Loretto Alfresco (piccolo)* was also heard in the 60x60 "EMM Mix" installation. In November, *Loretto Alfresco (piccolo)* was heard again during the 2nd Composers Concordance festival at New York's Spectrum. *Dans le piano* was most recently heard during the SCI national conference at The Ohio State University on February 16. The following weekend, Fleisher's *Five Songs from Carl Sandburg's "Prairie"* were performed by soprano Belinda Andrews-Smith and pianist Sarah Ramsey (piano) during the 5th "Tutti" festival at Denison University (Granville, OH). *Altro Alfresco* (premiered at SEAMUS Miami in 2011) most recently appeared online as part of the Audiograft festival "Jukebox," curated by the Sonic Art Research Unite (SARE) at Oxford Brookes University (UK).

Lawton Hall was in residence briefly at STEIM in Amsterdam this past summer, and as a result, has been working more on hardware approaches to music-making, as opposed to more software-based work. Specifically, he's been using MIDI-controlled vintage 35mm slide projectors as instruments. He has

completed three main projects using this new system, and exploring "nostalgia" has become a central focus of my work because of this technology and the imagery created with these projectors.

The first is a video piece called "(Talea et) Color for Myron Laskin". This used 7 projectors and the audio in the video has very little processing. Video and program notes are here: <http://www.lawtonhall.com/projects/talea-et-color/>

Second, Hall was commissioned to create an installation called "Cyclic Histories (for M.L.)" using the projectors at a gallery called Sensorium in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This featured 4 projectors, which threw images onto the windows of the gallery, so it could be seen from the street, as well as inside the gallery. I also created some interactive light sculptures for this installation. Photos and program notes are here: <http://www.lawtonhall.com/projects/cyclic-histories/>

Third, and most importantly, **Lawton Hall** released a CD in conjunction with the installation, called "Spirits of the Age". This album represents the most advanced work I've done with the projectors to date, and features improvisations I recorded using projectors and Max. I also released this album in limited edition handmade cases at the Sensorium gallery. The album can be heard and purchased here: <http://lawtonhall.bandcamp.com/album/spirits-of-the-age>

Michael Rhoades recently unveiled an entirely new web site dedicated to his work as a composer/theorist, painter, philosopher and writer. There you will find 140 full length mp3 tracks from his 18 audio projects as well as photographs of each of his 200 paintings. There is also a Philosophy section that includes a "Quotes with Drilldowns" page and much more.

Most recently Michael has completed a new 4.1 audio project titled, Hadronized Spectra (the LHC Sonifications). As the name implies, employing parameter mapping sonification, all score material for the project was derived from data generated by proton collision events that occurred within the Atlas Detector at the Large Hadron Collider. To hear the entire project, nine tracks totaling around 55 minutes of music, visit the web site and drill down from the "Music" tab to the "Discography/MP3s" link and then click on the CD or DVD case pic at the top of the page. That will take you to a page dedicated to the project.

Michael would love to visit your school to provide a discussion and/or concert. Discussion topics could include Algorithmic Composition, Sonification, Score Synthesis and Creativity.

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Adam Vidiksis recently premiered an excerpt of his work *Transfigurations* for orchestra and live computer processing at the Ethical Society of Philadelphia. He recently performed *synapse_circuit* for solo percussion and live electronics at the Athens Slingshot festival in Athens, GA. He will perform *synapse_circuit* again later this month at the National Student Electronic Music Event. Adam is curating N_SEME 2013 at Temple University. This event will bring 50 electroacoustic composers from around the world to Philadelphia for six concerts and four paper sessions over two days, and will feature a keynote address from Ge Wang. In April, Adam will be

performing his work at the NYC Electroacoustic Music Festival, a Network for New Music concert in Philly, and the SEAMUS conference, and will premiere his new work *Sympathy* for SATB choir.



Craig T. Walsh's composition *Sugar Touch*, for alto sax and electro-acoustic music, was released as a digital download on Aleppo records in 2012 (CD Baby, iTunes, Amazon, etc.) with Todd Rewoldt, saxophone. Here's a link to my personal website:

<http://cfa.arizona.edu/ctwalsh>

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