



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

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Interview with Scott Wyatt

University of Oregon Professor and SEAMUS 2006 Conference Host Jeff Stolet conducted the following interview with former SEAMUS President (1989 - 1996) **Scott Wyatt**, an admired and respected composer, teacher, and champion of electronic music for decades through his service to SEAMUS and as Director of the Experimental Music Studios at UIUC.



Departments

From the Editor
Page 2

2016 Conference
Reflection
Page 2

Letter from President
Page 5

Member News
Page 14

Jon's Note
Page 18

SEAMUS Online
Page 24

Advertising info
Page 24

About the Newsletter
Page 24

"For me, the presentation of clear motivic gestures and their evolution through progressive development promotes more than just the sounds; it advances the work itself with an evolving energy, motion, direction, and the composed drama beyond that of the original sound objects. This remains a central concern for my compositional approach."

—Scott Wyatt

(Jeff Stolet prepared the following introduction and then posed the questions that Scott answers below.)

Professor Scott Wyatt has been a faculty member at the University of Illinois School of Music for 40+ years teaching composition, theory, and electroacoustic music, as well as serving as director of the University of Illinois Experimental Music Studios. He is an acclaimed, award-winning composer whose music is admired around the world. Among his compositions are Counterpoints (1992), Time Mark (1989), A Time of Being (1996), Private Play (1997), In the Arms of Peril (2001), Night Visitors (2002), On a Roll (2004), A Road Beyond (2007), and ComLinks (2010), all of which were selected to be on the SEAMUS Series CD. Professor Wyatt is one of my musical heroes, so it is a great honor and privilege for me to ask him a few questions and to learn from his replies. Scott, thank you so much for consenting to respond to my musical inquiries.

continued on page 3

FROM THE EDITOR



Hello SEAMUS Members!

Spring has sprung, and summer is not far behind. I hope it's been a productive winter and that you're looking forward to some time to compose, retool, or maybe even have a break.

My true introduction to electro-acoustic music occurred in 1993, when I showed up at the University of Illinois as a masters student. The reputation of the

Experimental Music Studios there was well established by that time, thanks in no small part to its director Scott Wyatt, and I was fortunate to learn from him and gain a foundation via his courses and private instruction that has been a great benefit to me. I'm VERY pleased to feature an interview with Scott Wyatt, conducted by Jeff Stolet, as the feature piece in this newsletter issue. As a former SEAMUS President and long-time producer of the SEAMUS CD series, Scott is well known in our organization. It's great to hear some of his current thoughts about composing, teaching, etc., as he leaves behind an amazing legacy and steps down as Director of the UIUC EMS.

I'm also VERY pleased to announce a new featured section: Jon's Note. SEAMUS elder statesman Jon Appleton will be contributing a regular column, and he invites responses/reactions/etc. that can be published in future newsletters.

SEAMUS 2016 Conference Co-Host John Thompson contributed a nice conference reflection (just opposite my note here). We look forward to SEAMUS 2017 at St. Cloud State University in Minnesota, hosted by our own President Scott Miller and his colleague Kristian Twombly, April 20 - 22, 2017.

As usual, there is member news (with more pictures! Take note, Adam V.)-- always great to catch up/keep up with what everyone's doing. We'll look forward to a review or two from Tom Dempster in our next issue, and ALSO welcome review submissions from SEAMUS members. Please contact me directly if you'd like to submit a review, either as a one-time submission, or on a regular basis. We appreciate member contributions to the newsletter and the organization in general!

All best for a productive and enjoyable summer, and I hope you enjoy this newsletter.

Sincerely,

Steve Ricks



SEAMUS 2016

A Reflection on the Conference From Co-Host John Thompson

I was asked to provide some reflection upon the 2016 SEAMUS National Conference that we hosted at Georgia Southern University in February of this year. Now that some time has passed, I think that I am mentally prepared to make that attempt!

The conference brought over 150 composers and performers to Statesboro, GA. We were fortunate to have some warm weather to offer while the bleak winter raged on in other parts of the country. Additionally, there was no shortage of Savannah and Statesboro beer selections and a preponderance of shrimp and grits dishes. These niceties provided a pleasant accompaniment to an abundance of current electroacoustic music, sonic art installations, and paper presentations.

As a past SEAMUS conference participant, I have often wondered if themes for the conference were necessary. As a host, it became apparent that while it does not seem to ride in the foreground, it puts into place an invisible scaffolding to manage the building of the conference. The Transvergence theme this year, guided whatever control we as hosts could exert over the tenor of the conference events. It remains to be seen, but hopefully the transvergent idea can slightly nudge the trajectory of future events toward the "islands in an alien archipelago, sometimes only accessible by leaps, flights and voyages on vessels of artifice."

For me, one of the highlights of this year's conference was the tribute to Ethan Greene, who passed away in September of 2015. His passing occurred immediately following his absence from the Root Signals Electronic Music Festival that Michael Olson and I organize annually. At Root Signals, we were slated to

(continued on p. 4)

Q1: Let's begin with a fundamental question. What is music?

For me, I consider music as being creatively organized sounds in time, combined to form artistic and dramatic expression, with more successful music incorporating a composed structure, flow, direction, progressive development, and drama. Music exists in many hybrid forms, and within a changing world having many diverse opinions, its definition lies with the individual; the composer, performer, conductor, producer, and listener.

With no malice intended, I differentiate music from sound art because of my composer preferences as listed above. These characteristics are often not the main concern of sound art, where space (and sometimes sound) rather than time, is emphasized.

The term sound art is often used for practices of sound installations, some performance art, as well as sound sculptures, which are all valid art forms. William Hellerman supposedly first used the term in the early 1980's for a show he organized in New York, although I'm sure it has strong roots from the Futurists' fascination with noise and machines, and with breaking the boundaries of the past. To paraphrase Max Neuhaus' and Carsten Seiffarth's definitions, sound art is an exploration of sound in a unique space, and of the relationship of sound to and in a specific context of its hearing, thus turning space into place. Here is where definition and distinction



become blurred especially with acousmatique music.

There is no right or wrong here, just personal preference, and I prefer working with music composition rather than sound art.

Q2: Given your response above, what is electro-acoustic music and how does it provide a vehicle for what you do creatively?

Electro-acoustic music, within the context of contemporary concert art music, refers to a genre of music, whose compositional idea is specifically composed to require specialized electronic means for its sonic creation, assemblage, and presentation — that could not be created in any other manner.

I studied classical piano as a child, but soon began living a double life of playing keyboards and bass in

rock bands (as the Beatles and the Byrds dominated much attention at this time) during middle school and high school, while still studying classical piano. My family didn't have money, and so I learned to build speaker cabinets and amps to have access to gear. I was always fascinated with technology and music, and so for me, I was drawn to both the music and the equipment when I began hearing about "electronic music" while still in high school. In 1964 Bob Moog and others, such as James Beauchamp, Don Buchla, and Alan Pearlman, had introduced the modular voltage-controlled synthesizer and an excitement was in the air. While in high school, my only awareness of synthesizers was with their commercial and entertainment industry use, along the lines of Wendy Carlos' Switched On Bach, the Beach Boys, the experimental band Organisation (later called

(continued on p. 6)

(SEAMUS 2016 reflections by conference co-host John Thompson, cont.)

present Ethan's piece "Music for Large Array of Car Speakers at a Drive-in Theater," a unique work that situates the audience outside of the concert hall and the associated constructs, instead presenting the work in an outdoor setting. Working with the local radio station, we were able to present the piece in a manner close to the intended fashion. SEAMUS participants congregated in the parking lot for the listening experience, and/or to tune in to 91.9 and crank up their car speakers with doors wide open. The added bonus was that the powerful transmission of the FM signal was beamed to unsuspecting citizens of Statesboro and the surrounding areas, delivering them 8 minutes of surprise electroacoustic music! This experience was fulfilling in the way it challenged the standard format of works presented at SEAMUS and provided an experience that shifted into the public sphere. It was a good complement to our attempt to situate between the university, and the less traveled path of the community spaces of the Averitt Center for the Arts. Special thanks to Nathan Wolek for helping us with this effort.

There were, all in all, twenty-one concerts presented at the conference. A variety of spaces were put into play including two blackbox theaters, two concert halls, a planetarium, a space for a special wavefield synthesis presentation, and the Eagle Creek Brewery for late night musical acts. The high number of concerts resulted in part from a desire to keep the length of the concerts near an hour. Also, of importance to the hosts, was the effort to not have a listening room, but to present every work in a concert setting. This led to the first ever "Fixed Media and Drinks" concerts that I can recall in my brief tenure as a SEAMUS member. We feel strongly about the merits of this decision.

We were delighted to have, in addition to numerous excellent paper presentations, a few papers that addressed the transvergence theme. The sonic art installations for this year's festival were particularly engaging and, from an organizer's perspective, professional. And, speaking of professional, I must thank the graduate students of Georgia Southern, who formed the technical team for all concerts. The technical execution of the events was close to flawless, and that is a remarkable achievement! I applaud them for their hard work and for months of preparation. However, this preparation is not simply limited to the technical team behind the concerts, but also to the remarkable preparations of the SEAMUS composers and performers. The field has advanced by leaps and bounds when it comes to the stable and tested technological performance setups.

Looking back, what I recognize is the excellent community of musicians that comprise SEAMUS. There was no shortage of kindness delivered to us for our efforts to host the conference and, in general, there is a spirit of comradery and collegiality that is inspiring. We are privileged to have a vibrant and active community that is putting forward some amazing work. And so, cheers to all of this year's composers and performers, who made the 2016 SEAMUS conference one for the books.





LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear members of SEAMUS,

Having just enjoyed SEAMUS 2016 at Georgia Southern University, I would like to congratulate hosts John Thompson, Martin Gendelman, and Michael Olson for making it such a wonderful experience. I also thank all of the performers, technical crew, and of course, SEAMUS composers, for presenting so much fantastic music, installations, and papers. A particular highlight of the conference was a performance by our SEAMUS Award Winner, Pamela Z. At our banquet, we recognized our ASCAP/SEAMUS Student Commission winners, William Dougherty (first prize) and Jon Fielder (second prize), and this year's Allen Strange Award winner for best undergraduate submission, Mitchell Herrmann.

We also welcomed our newest elected and appointed board members, Eli Fieldsteel as Member-At-Large, Mark Snyder as Conference Recruitment Officer, and Jeff Stolet as Conference Policy and Guidance Officer, and thank Per Bloland and Keith Kothman for their service. Finally, I presented Scott Wyatt the SEAMUS President's Award in recognition of all of his work the past 25 years as Director of the SEAMUS Recordings; he is stepping down from that role after producing Music from SEAMUS, volumes 1 - 25.

Moving forward, we have many great projects underway, including a new SEAMUS Records imprint with New Focus Recordings, which will be distributed through Naxos. Our website development continues as we prepare to launch a SEAMUS store in the near future. And the dates and location of SEAMUS 2017 have been announced. Next year, St. Cloud State University will be the site of the conference, co-hosted by Kristian Twombly and myself, Scott Miller, April 20 - 22, 2017. We are very excited to have SEAMUS in Minnesota again, and will be publishing more information very soon.

With best wishes,

Scott L. Miller
President, SEAMUS



Kraftwerk), and Jean-Michel Jarre's early efforts. By 1970, I was a freshman in college at West Chester University studying music education and piano performance. Here I was given access to a new

music was foreign to me, yet I was very much drawn to it. In my sophomore year, my composition teachers at that time included Larry Nelson and John Melby, who challenged me compositionally and

does not sound as if it was created easily. Technology has advanced to the point that it produces good sound quality easily in comparison to the early days. Many students and composers new to electroacoustic music are drawn to the accessibility and the ease of generating output. This, coupled often with a lack of investigation of what determines art status and even higher audio quality production, results in many elemental compositions and performances. I have tried to combat this by continually challenging my students and myself, to avoid the obvious and the elemental, with respect to concert art electroacoustic music works. Electroacoustic music has satisfied my desire to work with art music and technology.



Scott Wyatt working with the Moog synthesizer in 1970 at West Chester University

Moog Series 900 modular synth that had no manual! At that time, no one there knew how to use it. Fortunately, I had enough experience with bands and building equipment that I began trying to figure out the beast by writing up a user manual for both faculty and students. Keep in mind this was before the Internet. Information had to be obtained the old fashioned way. I was simultaneously introduced to the music of Babbitt, Cage, Hiller, Subotnick, Stockhausen, Varese, and Xenakis, which for me, was a different kind of excitement, and I wanted to find out how and why this creative form existed. This

musically. I was fortunate to have access to a fairly large studio complete with army surplus microphones, the Moog, two Scully two-tracks, and a Scully half-inch four-track, that gave me opportunities to explore both concrete and synthesis. In the long run, this degree of enthusiasm, exposure to new music composition, aesthetic challenges, and access to technology, and its inherent problems, launched me into a long relationship and career.

Skipping over several decades to today, I enjoy the challenge of working with technology and attempting to create a work that

Q3: In your 1998 article "[Gestural Composition](#)" you describe the design and use of sonic gestures along with their transformation and development as a basis for an electro-acoustic composition. Can you take us through your thinking about sonic gestures that culminated in that article and also any evolution that your ideas have under went during the past seventeen years? In addition, do you regard the gesture as you describe in this article as a central element of your compositional method?

In order to answer your question, I have to refresh my memory and reread part of the article. The article states, "many American

electro-acoustic works are often concerned with the use of pitch as one of the primary compositional focal points. While I consider this a valid approach, I have been interested in the design and use of sonic gestures that are not immediately based upon pitch as the obvious focal point. These gestures can be concrète and/or electronically generated, and I have no prejudices for either, that are much further processed and shaped electronically to create new identities that transform and develop throughout the designed course of the composition. This approach, with its roots in both traditional concrète and synthesis

techniques, takes on a time-based sculptural performance that affords the listener a desired opportunity to discover the interplay and development of molded sonic events, without the interference of pitch as the primary factor. Attention turns to gestural evolution and gestural development within a host space or spaces. Some have labeled this approach "gestural composition" or "sound mass composition," and while other approaches are often pursued within the University of Illinois Experimental Music Studios, "gestural composition" has maintained a major presence during the Studios' 50+ year

history.

All too often, I hear a lack of clearly defined compositional motives and very little progressive development of these motives within electroacoustic music works. For me, the presentation of clear motivic gestures and their evolution through progressive development promotes more than just the sounds; it advances the work itself with an evolving energy, motion, direction, and the composed drama beyond that of the original sound objects. This remains a central concern for my compositional approach.

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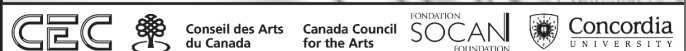
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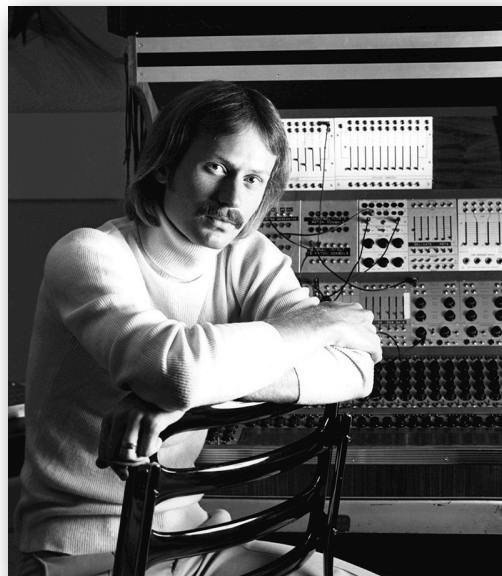
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Q4: It appears to me that a great deal of the initial material of your compositions originated as sound from our acoustic world. Can you comment on your preference of using sampled audio as the basis of so many of your compositions?



Scott Wyatt (1978) with the Buchla synthesizer at Illinois

Early in my career, I spent a great deal of time with sound synthesis, not only through my initial work with the Moog, and later, the Buchla synthesizer, but also with sound synthesis programs Music 4BF, Music 360, and later with MIDI driven by Vision and Digital Performer sequencer software. Almost all of my early works were synthesis based. I began to embrace concrete as a way of exploring sound by looking for and harnessing the natural energy that lies within an acoustic sonic event. Currently, I record all of my initial sonic material within a studio setting to capture and sculpt as much of the life of the sound as possible rather than working with downloaded samples. Trying to



Scott Wyatt recording Foley sounds for his composition *On a Roll*



discover the essence of the characteristic gesture of a sound is a revealing and an exciting process. It leads to further future discovery and compositional opportunities. I endeavor to record sounds and capture the sonic essence with what I consider to be the highest quality which is determined by mic selection, placement, and positioning through careful monitoring. At times, achieving high quality does not involve the most expensive mics or the highest sample rate or bit rate, but more careful listening, good recording techniques, and some unorthodox recording approaches. I record generally at 44.1 kHz / 16 bit to avoid having to go through a conversion process. Capturing the lifeblood of the sonic moment is the key, and very much part of the chase. This discovery process often leads me to carefully alter the sound later in an effort to accentuate the gestural characteristic of the sound. In thinking about this approach now, I believe my time with synthesis has given me experience to sculpt and process my recorded material.

Q5: I spent a year and a half in Eugene, Oregon working out at a local health club to a playlist of your compositions. When I hear your music the impeccable balance between the musical elements, the detailed spatialization, the musical nuances that are revealed, and the sheer amount of time within each composition that I, as the listener, am placed in a state of musical anticipation, I am completely awed. The anticipatory moments often lead to spectacular and

satisfying articulatory moments. Please describe for us how you think about the creation of these musical elements?

My dear Jeff – we need to work on your playlists for the gym!!!

I begin by sketching out a basic structure based upon whatever idea is behind the work. I endeavor to clearly define all aspects of the compositional idea(s) including contrasting motives, a developmental plot, and potential dramaturgy. After recording my initial material and going through a discovery process of altering them through an array of hardware and software, I begin assembly of the skeletal framework through to the end of the piece, within a stereo context. I revisit the structural design, existing temporal activity, various twists and turns of the plot, any dramatic extensions and shifts, and spatial designs. Much of this is done on paper against the timeline of the work. While some of my works incorporate an underlying narrative, all of my compositions revolve around the energy and pure development of the gestures and motives. The developmental activity needs to present the listener with a sonic rollercoaster ride of unexpected shifts and drama, while also having concern for continuity of presentation. I then attempt to engineer/realize sound movements (translations), the many shifts of environments, and juxtapositions of depth proximities that often take many hours of studio time. I have found this actually requires a well-

designed studio with very reliable monitoring at consistent listening reference levels. Any sounds that move within the space must initially imply such movement, and for me, this is engineered manually rather than using any multi-channel panners, and characteristics of the movement often need to be exaggerated. Additional attention is required to prevent other sounds and sonic events from masking the main sonic translations. The engineering of the sound translations and various host environments have to be believable. Too many times composers'/engineers' intent is not realized effectively. It is worth striving for this level of achievement.

Q6/7: Is there a musical work that most influenced your technical approach to the composition of electro-acoustic music? Along the same lines, what composition inspired your musical work the most?

My guess is that I have been influenced by a variety of works and composers for musical elements, compositional design, spatial exploration, and engineering prowess. A few earlier works that come to mind include Morton Subotnick's *Touch* (1969) because of his pioneering four-channel sound design, control signal process, and synthesis work, John Chowning's *Turenas* (1972) with his amazing simulated Doppler shifts and depth proximities, and Lars-Gunnar

Bodin's *For Jon*, *Fragments of a Time to Come* (1977) with its intriguing narrative and very high quality engineering. Some of the spatial translations created by Salvatore Martirano with his 24-channel *Sal-Mar Construction* (1972-75) also inspired me with my early research and initial engineering attempts with spatialization. Herbert Brün's *SAWDUST* series (1976-78) drew remarkable focus to gesture and progressive development of gesture. Mario Davidovsky's *Synchronisms* greatly influenced my compositional thinking with my instrumental compositions involving electroacoustic accompaniment. Mid-career strong influences came from discussions I had with Kevin Austin of Concordia University and with Jonty Harrison of the University of Birmingham (UK) concerning diffusion and spatialization aesthetics and practice. This, and the overall influence of the electroacoustic masters, my past teachers, my colleagues at the University of Illinois and within SEAMUS (including your music – Jeff!), and many of my students, has motivated me to continually expand and refine my compositional and engineering abilities.

Q8/12: Do you have any routines or preparatory rituals that you employ to help you perform your compositional work? Are there special conditions you create for yourself to establish the most favorable environment in which to compose? Do you mine

philosophy or other arts as inspiration for your musical creations?

Well – deadlines are motivational!! I never really had dedicated creative time due to the constraints of my University position supervising and managing our large studio facilities and the usual teaching overload that demanded even more time commitment. For me, I had to learn efficiency and focus. All of this was very much a balancing act between family, the University job, and career pursuits. I am sure you have experienced this continuing saga. I found that compositional motivation is enhanced when some extra musical idea or notion that strongly interests me, becomes a driving force that propels me to want the composition to exist. This could mean the composition is programmatic, at least for the composer, or that there is an idea fostering the compositional elements, design, and/or structure that is the *raison d'être* for the piece's creation. This was the approach taken with *A Time of Being* (1996) dedicated to the memory of those who perished on that day at the Oklahoma City bombing, *In the Arms of Peril* (2001) presenting a sense of impending danger just prior to 9-11, ...and *nature is alone* (2005) in memory of the victims of the Chernobyl accident on the 20th anniversary of the disaster, *A Road Beyond* (2007) created in response to the death of a close friend, *All At Risk* (2004) concerning the Iraq

War, and *ComLinks* (2010) where I offer a sonic commentary on our so-called connected society. I spent time researching the subject at hand, defining terms, defining plots and subplots, storyboarding, and considering elements of drama prior to working with notes and/or sound. This degree of preparation assisted me with efficiency and focus for both composition and studio realization.

Q9: You've shared a number of things with us, can you tell us what you think makes a musical composition a success?

Well, my question in response would be: from whose perspective: the composer, the performer, or the audience?

My best answer to you is that I gauge the degree of success for my own compositions based on the comments and reactions received from my colleagues in the field and those reactions of my students whom I feel are both informed and experienced. I also count general audience reaction in this overall mix. Obviously, I have to sign off on the quality of my own work, but I also have to keep in mind the overall reason why we create. It is both a personal and social act. We create because we want to, but most of us also want our creations heard, and in some cases, also seen. This sense of exhibiting our creations through public performance allows us to display our wares, as well as share the end result within a social

context that is very different from individual listening. The collective reactions we receive from our colleagues and audience members provide us with additional information we can use to determine the success of our creation beyond our own perspective, which is valuable information.

Q10: Which of your electro-acoustic compositions do you find most satisfying?

This is difficult to answer, as most of my works have a very different focus. Some of my earlier works remain close to me due to the amount of time they took to realize, involving very old-school techniques. Time Mark, for solo percussionist with electroacoustic accompaniment, has been a favorite due to the interplay between the percussion part and the accompaniment along with part of the accompaniment being positioned behind the audience. In the Arms of Peril was a response to the tension I felt within the country just prior to 9-11 – it is now dedicated to the many victims. On a Roll took more than 1000 hours to realize but was very effective with spatialization and 3D encoding in the long run. All At Risk, for video with 5.1 electroacoustic accompaniment, still receives a remarkable response from audience members as they read riveting email from a news correspondent friend embedded with military during the Iraq war. Perhaps one of my

favorites is All Sink featuring the playful sounds of my dishwashing skills – don't let my wife know...

Q11: What's the most challenging aspect of creating a fixed media electro-acoustic composition?

Creating energy; making the sounds, the gestures, the environments, the performance itself come to life through both composition and engineering. I work very hard to create extra energy especially with fixed media works.

Q13: I found it rather striking that as a Professor Emeritus at the University of Illinois that you still listed your teachers in your professional biography. Can you talk about what your instructors meant to you in terms of what they taught you and how you have employed what you absorbed from them?

It has been my experience that many people do not express "gratitude" to others. I am truly thankful for the time my teachers spent with me and for their knowledge passed on during the many lessons. To this very day I am sincerely appreciative of their teaching, their time, their influence, and their support of my effort both during school and long after I graduated. All of them played a strong influential role in my development. These teachers include Richard M. Smith (Audubon

High School – helped me initiate a strong passion for music), Larry A. Nelson (West Chester University – helped ignite my strong interest in composition, orchestration, and synthesis technology), John Melby (West Chester University and University of Illinois – taught me serial composition techniques and computer music composition), Herbert Brün (University of Illinois – offered discussions and lessons about gestural composition, cybernetics, and misuse of language), Ben Johnston (University of Illinois – introduced me to just-intonation), Salvatore Martirano (University of Illinois – offered discussions and lessons on the music and compositional techniques of Dallapiccola), and Paul Zonn (University of Illinois – offered composition lessons plus a strong focus on orchestration techniques).

Q14: Aside from the economic factors, can you tell us why you teach and what you enjoy the most about teaching?

I have always enjoyed teaching and working with students. For me it has always been enjoyable to exchange ideas and knowledge, and to get to know them on a personal level. While we may have had some similar experiences, I welcome the differences. I try to present myself as being open, personable, and caring individual, and not better than anyone else in the room. I approach them as colleagues, and that we all have something to offer to each other.

While there has always been subject matter and information to present, getting them involved with the creative process, interpretation, decision-making, and problem solving with the hands-on projects has allowed them to approach creativity, technology, aesthetics, and professionalism at a very personal, individual, and real level. I shared many of my own experiences and compositions with them to show both problems and successes, as I have always wanted my creative output to display the attributes we discussed in classroom conversations. It has always been my hope they would realize the amount of dedication and hard work that is behind a creative work at this level.

Q15: You have a number of accolades, but what do you want your legacy to be?

Overall I have been a very small cog in a rather large wheel, and so I think my influence has been minimal in the grand scheme of our world of electroacoustic music, however I do hope that I have brought about a more involved level of awareness of and



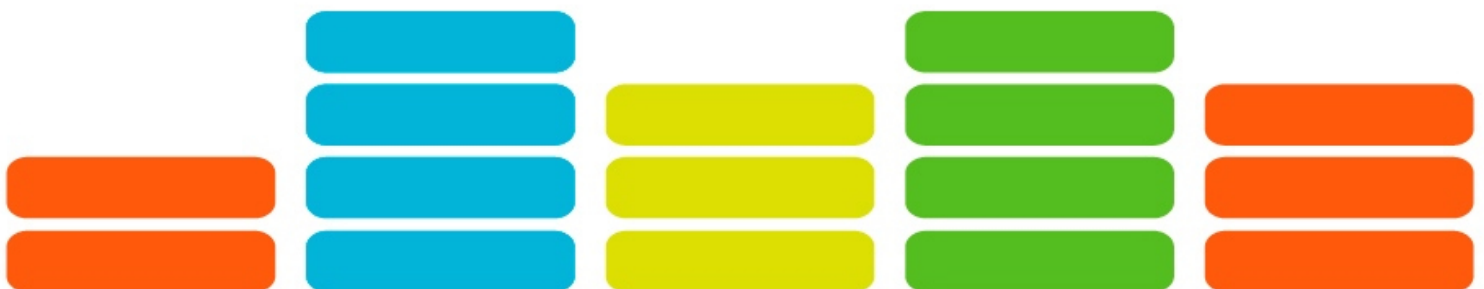
commitment to musicianship, artistry, and professionalism that could and should be part of these creative works. I have experienced so many changes in technology during the course of my career, and today, the technology is very accessible and permits cool sounds to be achieved easily, yet all too often, elemental ideas and/or experiments are presented as being a work of art. It is my hope that we raise the bar of what art can and should be, and challenge ourselves to meet this objective. This has been a part of my message passed on to my students and colleagues - perhaps this

message could be part of my legacy...

P.S. Q15.5: You drive a yellow Corvette, please tell us about your interest (obsession) in fast cars?



I always wanted to get to work quickly, and then after the long day at work, boogie on home, while enjoying the driving experience... After all of these years, patience, at the end of the day, still eludes me.





Member News

Christopher Bailey released the album *Glimmering Webs* on the NewFocusRecordings label. It is a collection of solo piano music. Most of it is acoustic, but the first track, *Composition for S#!††¥ Piano, Drum Samples, Concrète Sounds and Processing*, features live MAX/MSP engine(s), and was performed on SEAMUS 2014. A somewhat different version of the piece (which is somewhat indeterminate) was featured on the recent SEAMUS Interactions! album.

Glimmering Webs can be found on the [NewFocusRecordings](#) site, or on [Bandcamp](#).

Brian Belet's composition *Ion Trails (Cloud Chamber Storms)*, for percussion and Kyma, was performed by Andrew Spencer at San Jose State University, CA on November 3, 2015. *Language is (slithering) in no particular order*, (text-sound composition co-written and performed with Stephen Ruppenthal), for two voices and Kyma, is included in the Digital Poetry Exhibition (part of the Studio 300 Exhibition) at the

BYTE Gallery, Transylvania University, Lexington, KY, ongoing 2015-16. *Cross-Town Traffic 2.0*, for any number of smartphones and tablets (co-composed with William Walker), was premiered at San Jose State University on February 23, 2016. Walker and Belet will present a technical paper and also perform the work again in early April at the Web Audio Conference [[WAC 2016](#)] in Atlanta, GA. Kai Schumacher is performing *Summer Phantoms: Nocturne*, for piano and computer-processed piano sounds, in planetariums throughout Germany on February 20, 25, 28, March 3, & 6 ([YouTube trailer](#))

See: www.BeletMusic.com for details.

Orlando Jacinto Garcia's *Conversations with Harry* for bass clarinet and fixed media will receive it's world premiere at Jorge Variego's solo recital being held on March 8 at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville and will receive it's Latin American premiere at the Festival Latinoamericano de Musica taking

place in Caracas, Venezuela, May 22 through 29. The work was completed at the Visby International Centre for Composers (VICC) on the island of Gotland Sweden as part of a residency realized by the composer last August. The work consists of samples of Harry Sparnaay's playing as referenced by the title.

Garcia also recently received a Knight Foundation Arts Challenge grant to create a new evening long interdisciplinary work focusing on the theme of sea level rise. The work which will be premiered during Art Basel 2017 in Miami Beach will include video, electronics, instruments, voices, and movement and will be created by an interdisciplinary team that in addition to Garcia includes a choreographer, video artist, architect, and poet.

Mitchell Herrmann was awarded the Marshall Scholarship, the most competitive undergraduate fellowship in the United States. As a Marshall Scholar, Herrmann will spend two years in the UK studying electroacoustic music at

the University of Manchester and De Montfort University. Herrmann's previous awards include the SEAMUS Allen Strange Award, the Franz Liszt Scholarship, and the Klang International Competition, as well as a recent publication in the journal *Organised Sound*.



Mitchell Herrmann



SCSU and EMMI musical robots

Per Bloland as guest composer and presenter, who gave lectures on his Electromagnetically-Prepared Piano project. The culminating concert presented Bloland's *Of Dust and Sand*, performed by pianist Shannon Wettstein Sadler

and saxophonist Kyle Hutchins, the premier of Kristian Twombly's *as if it possessed no self-induction*, for fixed-media and robots, and Scott Miller and Troy Rogers' *Finally, Détente*, and ecosystemic improvisational composition for Kyma and musical robots.

Troy Rogers with the EMMI and SCSU robots

February 22 - 27, **Scott Miller** and **Kristian Twombly** of St Cloud State University hosted the third annual MNMade Festival, a celebration of handmade electroacoustic music. This year again featured SCSU alum and music roboticist **Troy Rogers**, who was in residence for the entire week, working with students, faculty, and community members on composing for and with musical robots. This year included





Scott Miller's new CD, [*Diary of a Left-Handed Sleepwalker*](#), will be released on the Panoramic label April 8, 2016. The recording is being released as the work of Three Free Radicals, which is Miller and guitarist Mart Soo, a major figure in the Estonian free improv community. Miller and Soo recorded the album at Peeter Salmela Studio in Tallinn, Estonia during an epic day of improvising, recording, and bitter cold weather in January 2015.

On March 11, **Benjamin O'Brien** presented his paper "From Instrument to Controller," which discusses digital technology and its effect on the electric guitar, at the 4eme Journée des Jeunes chercheurs du GREAM in Strasbourg, France. While there, he also co-conducted a SuperCollider workshop at the Conservatoire de Strasbourg. On April 1, Benjamin will present "Inscribing Sound Forms," a paper based on doctoral research, at the Journées d'Informatique Musicale, Centre National de Création Musicale d'Albi-Tarn. He will premiere a new vidéomusique work at the Cité de la Musique in Marseille (April 26).

2015 was a very eventful year for **Sylvia Pengilly**. Just to hit the highlights, her video, *The Syntax of Chaos*, was presented at SEAMUS 2015, and *Sometimes I Forget to Breathe* was presented at NYCEMF 2015 with virtuoso Esther Lamneck playing the tarogato. Esther also played the same piece at Molloy College in November. *Maze* was included in the NOMADES concert, curated by Claudia Robles-Angel, at ONOMATO art gallery in Dusseldorf, Germany, in July, 2015.

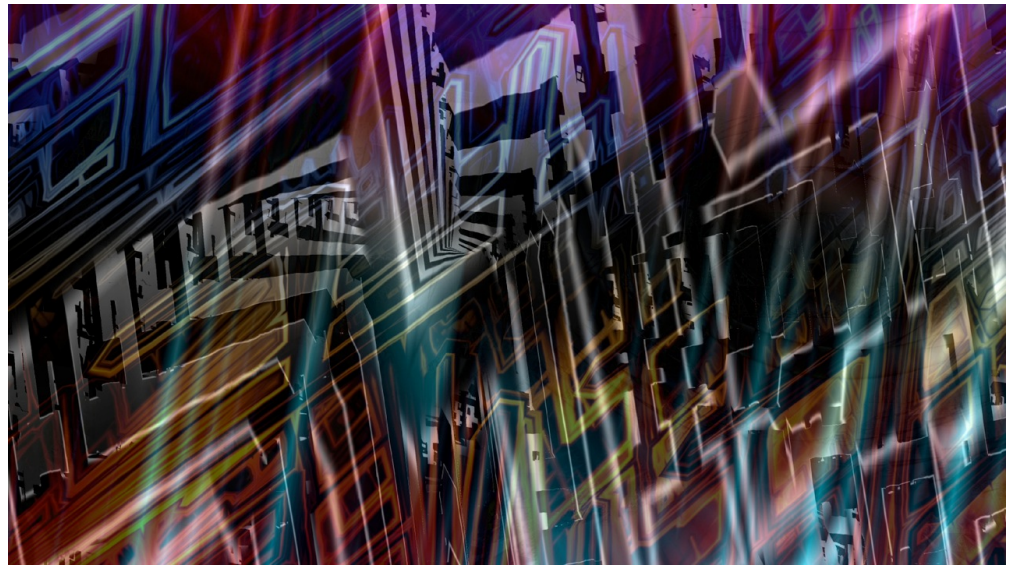


Image from Sylvia Pengilly's piece *Maze*

In September, 2015, "Maze" was screened at the Los Angeles Center for Digital Art, Los Angeles, and in October, it was awarded first prize in the "Fresh Minds" festival at Texas A&M University. Of particular note is that the students, rather than the faculty, get to judge the videos as part of their course work. Many kudos to Jeff Morrison for initiating such an innovative program. Also in October, "Maze" was shown in Juarez, Mexico, as part of the "MUSLAB" festival.

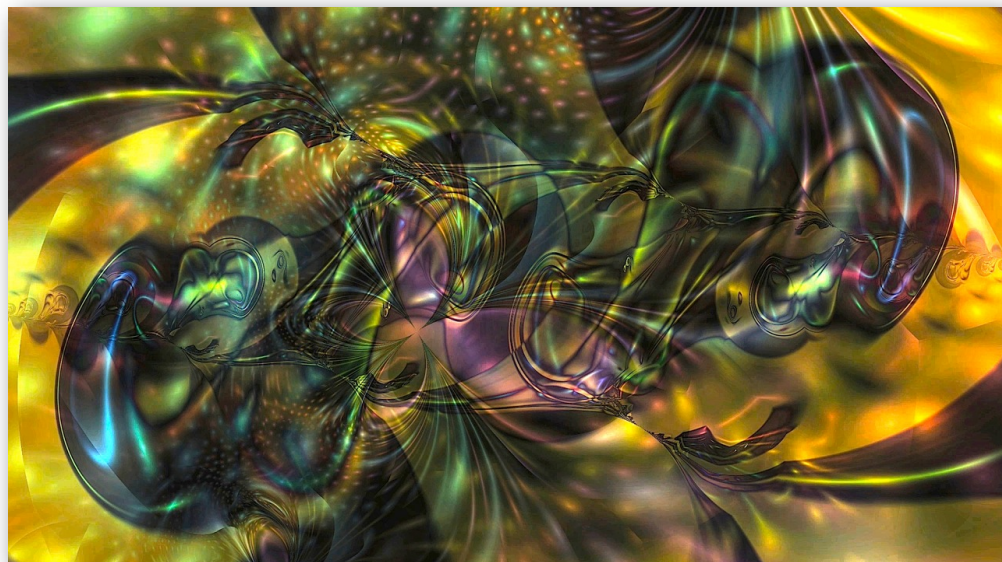
O'Brien's work *For Borges* will be at the "Dada Lives!" exhibit in Cincinnati, Ohio (April 29-June 3). From August 11-28, Benjamin will be at the OMI International Arts Center in Ghent, NY, as part of the International Music Residency program. His chapter in *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Virtuality* is now available at Oxford University Press, Amazon, and other registered vendors.

Steven Ricks and Christian Asplund (RICKSPLUND duo) performed a set of improvised live electronics at STEIM in Amsterdam in June 2015. The duo heads to Toronto and Kitchener/Waterloo, Ontario, in May 2016 to perform at the International Society for Improvised Music (ISIM) conference there.

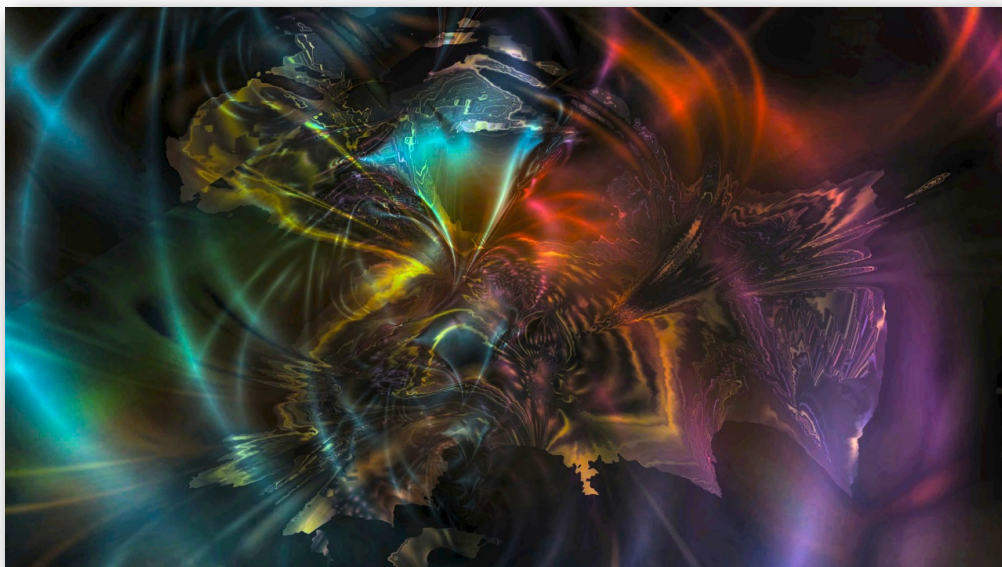
Another highlight for Pengilly in 2015 was collaborating with Dr. Hubert Howe in creating a video for his *Inharmonic Fantasy #4*. This piece will be presented at the National Sawdust Festival, part of NYCEMF 2016, June 5-7 in New York.

Finally, Pengilly's piece *The Syntax of Chaos* has been accepted for the 2016 Mediawave Festival in Hungary.

Gil Trythall's piece *Rima's Song* for fixed media and wind controller synthesis was performed by soloist Matthew Swallow on January 16, 2016, at the 38th International Saxophone Symposium at Shenandoah University in Winchester Virginia. His work *Tropes*, a poetic sound collage for laptop controller using Live9 software with simultaneous laptop screen projection was premiered by Gil Trythall on February 19, 2016 at the Southeastern Composer's League Forum at Campbell University in Buies Creek, North Carolina.



Stills from Pengilly's video for *Inharmonic Fantasy #4*



Gil Trythall



Jon's Note

Words on music, composing, etc., from Jon Appleton



Most of us have slightly different ideas about what defines electroacoustic music (or is it electro-acoustic music). Those of us who have spent or hope to spend our lives in academia most often have to justify the music in terms of research. Sometimes research does lead to new means of musical expression and distribution. Those of you in departments and schools of music know full well that few of our colleagues care about our music. We often survive there through mutual protection of our fiefdoms.

In my fifty years of supporting the art of electroacoustic music I've seen the art marginalized by commerce, by the need to prove it is a performance art-form (I was guilty of this with the Synclavier) often accomplished by including instrumentalists where none are needed or required, by including a rhythmic component to hold the attention of an audience that knows only pop music. There is something extraordinarily beautiful about electroacoustic music that expresses, for want of a better phrase, a sonic world that opens our ears and understanding to a music that traces its roots to *musique concrète*, imaginative timbres, sound-poetry, etc. I have not composed this music myself for a few years because I found I was repeating myself. Nevertheless, I listen to new electroacoustic works, mostly from the Internet. Multi-channel distribution can add an attractive dimension but expressive monophonic broadcast can be an aesthetic challenge for composers, especially in this era of rampant retro-mania.

This brings me to my second point: composers in academia. I was one myself but I am truly dismayed that most composers of my generation and younger who have found themselves in academia **no longer compose any kind of music**. The sinecure that is academia seems to kill creative instincts, especially after tenure is granted. Why? If these composers entered the field for recognition, they should have been making a different kind of music. Even though I have little more to say as a composer of electroacoustic music, I try to compose instrumental and choral music every day. Even though it is dismissed, as was my early electroacoustic music, what drives me is that life without composing seems to lack purpose. Music of all kinds is central to my being as sports are to athletes young and old.

My final point in this letter is a warning to composers who have established themselves in academia: don't let academic politics occupy the time you have for creative work. There will always be another meeting to attend, a colleagues' real or imagined slur, a promotion or grant you didn't get, another email to send or answer, etc. Stay focused on composing and, for this old composer, I hope it is electroacoustic music!

Your comrade in arms,

Jon



Recording Reviews by Tom Dempster



Tom will return with his next wave of excellent recording reviews in the Summer 2016 issue.

ALSO, if there are any other SEAMUS members interested in submitting reviews, either as a one-time submission, or becoming a more regular contributor, contact newsletter editor Steve Ricks:

stevericksmusic@gmail.com

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For SEAMUS Membership Dues and Inquiries:
LINDA ANTAS, VICE PRESIDENT FOR MEMBERSHIP
EMAIL: vp_membership@seamusonline.org

All other mail should be sent to:
SEAMUS
22815 FRAMPTON AVE.
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STEVE RICKS stevericksmusic@gmail.com

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