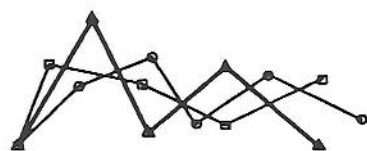


Chroma



*Newsletter of the Australian Computer Music Association, Inc.
PO Box 186 Post Office Agency La Trobe University VIC 3083*

**Number 19
January '95**

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In This Issue...

1995 A.C.M.A. Conference

Special General Meeting - 7th February, 1995

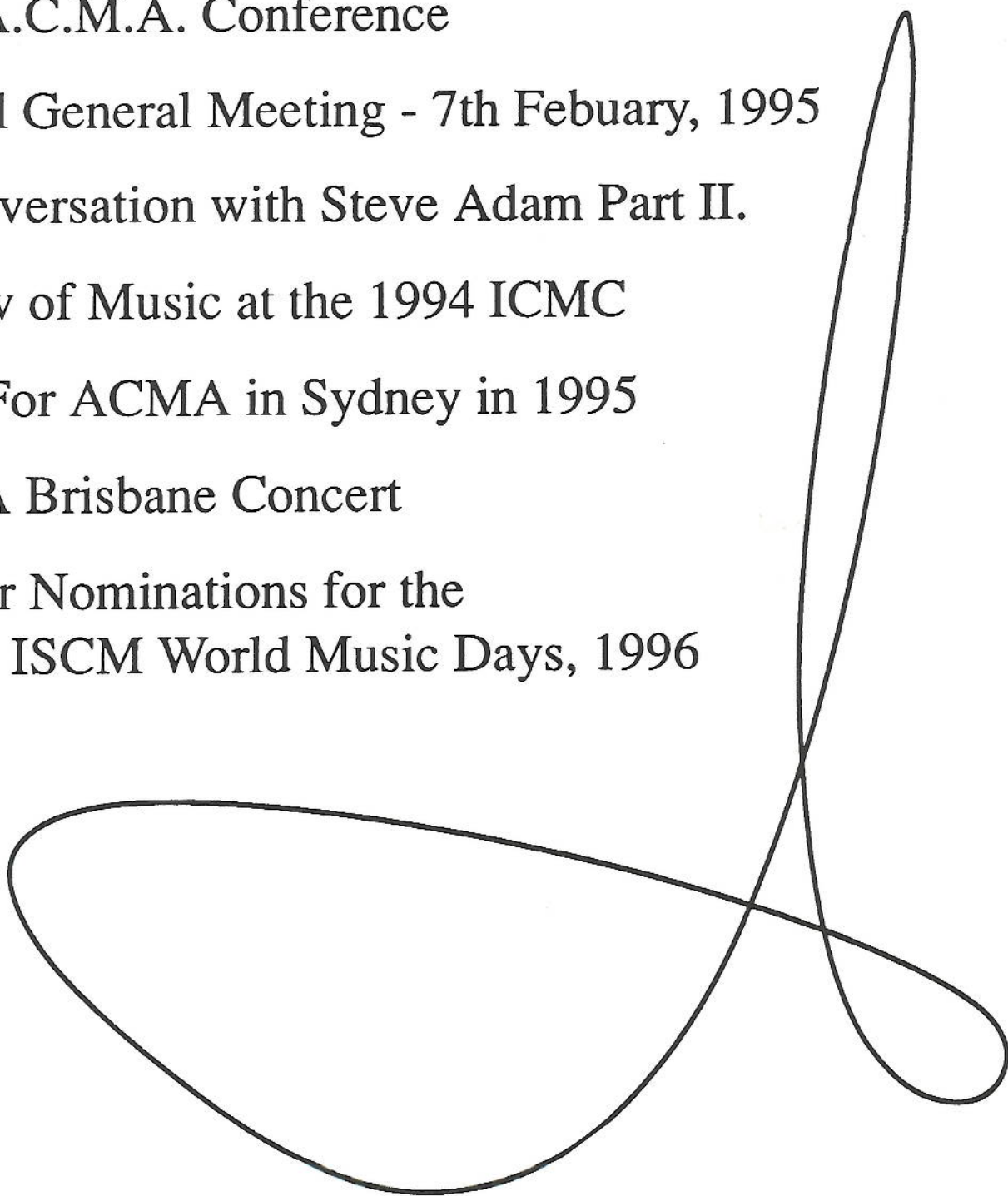
In Conversation with Steve Adam Part II.

Review of Music at the 1994 ICMC

Plans For ACMA in Sydney in 1995

ACMA Brisbane Concert

Call for Nominations for the
ISCM World Music Days, 1996



Contents

In Conversation with Steve Adam on <i>Chromophony</i> , electroacoustic composition, and much more. Part II <i>Lawrence Harvey</i>	3
1995 Australian Computer Music Association Conference	6
ACMA Brisbane concert	7
The International Computer Music Association Software Library & Central Resource Locator	8
Plans for ACMA in Sydney in 1995	9
Review of Music at the 1994 ICMC, Aarhus, Denmark <i>Anthony Hood</i>	9
Nominations for the ISCM World Music Days, 1996	11

From the Secretary...

1995 promises to be an exiting year for ACMA with the Melbourne conference, regular activities planned for Sydney, the release of our second CD, and a number of concerts scheduled for Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.

This issue of *Chroma* has been distributed to a number of lapsed members in addition to the current membership. I hope that those of you who have not yet renewed your membership will do so, as future issues of *Chroma* will only be sent to financial members.

As of January 1st 1995, Membership to ACMA will be provided for one year from the date of registration. This is in contrast to the fixed financial year system which had previously been in place. Members who paid in 1994 have twelve months membership from the date we received payment. In future a membership expiry date will be clearly printed on the mailing labels.

•Please note that there has been a small increase in the membership fees, see the attached membership form for details.

Ross Bencina

Chroma is edited by Roger Alsop, Ross Bencina
and Thomas Stainsby

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are available at \$2.50 each, with a compilation of
issues 1-9 available for \$18.00.

Acknowledgements:

Thanks to La Trobe University Music Department for the
use of their computers in compiling this news letter.

ACMA Special General Meeting

Date: Tuesday 7th February 1995.

Time: 6.30pm

Locations:

Sydney:

Sydney Conservatorium of Music
109 Pitt St
Sydney

(Someone will be waiting in the foyer to let people in.)

Melbourne:

Chairperson's office
3rd floor Music Dept.
La Trobe University
Bundoora.

On Tuesday 7th February 1995, at 6.30pm, at the locations listed above, the Committee will convene a special general meeting for the purpose of amending the Constitution by the insertion of the following clauses, or some appropriate modification of these clauses:

REGIONAL BRANCHES

(1) With the approval of the Committee, regional Branches may be formed of Members of the Association. Each such regional Branch shall adopt a set of rules of procedure which shall be approved by the Committee, and communicated to the Association. The Rules of the Branch shall include provision for the election of a Convener and a Secretary, and such other officers as are considered necessary.

(2) Each regional Branch may conduct activities in furtherance of the objects of the Association.

All members are invited to attend. Communication between the two locations will be conducted via telephone, and possibly an E-mail connection.

If the constitutional amendment permitting regional branches is passed, the Sydney meeting will then become an inaugural meeting of the Sydney Regional Branch of ACMA, with the purpose of electing a local Committee.

For further information contact the Secretary

In Conversation with Steve Adam on Chromophony, electroacoustic composition, and much more.

Part II

Lawrence Harvey.

The second and final part of a conversation between Steve Adam and Lawrence Harvey.

LH: *Is there a clear distinction between processing and compilation? Processing is more like the pre-compositional manipulation of sound, whereas the actual compilation is the point at which you stop the process, and define the final life of a sound.*

SA: This may be true for electroacoustics, but in a commercial studio, for a commercial project, processing is very much part of the compilation stage. You record the band, and then do the mix down. I guess you could say it's processing, but it actually happens after the compilation in this instance. This brings up an interesting point. If you are working in the tape medium, you really need to have a sensibility about the studio, and the classical studio techniques. They are very important part of the whole compositional process. Of course now with the computer, there is an overlap of these functions where more and more studio functions are finding their way into the computer. It is however interesting to note that what some people consider as a multi-track facility, is for others a compositional facility.

LH: *Given historical working methods - we study, and learn, and resort to, or not resort to - they are very different to a commercial studio. Yet the equipment and techniques are being defined by those commercial environments, and are then handed to the composer to deal with in what ever fashion, at least in Australia, where we don't have electroacoustic research facilities of any comparable size and nature to say Europe or North America.*

SA: I think that's true. I've seen a few places in Australia, and the rest of the world. They are not gigantic, but there are a lot more resources, and personnel dedicated specifically to computer music. Often you may think they are misguided in terms of what they are pursuing, but they are still dedicated to some aspect of work in the area. We have got a very small field here and that will change, but it doesn't seem to be happening very quickly. There is a different attitude in the commercial music world, to the way the different machines are used, and it seems to be a very fixed mentality. It bothers me, that in commercial television, the backing music to programmes and advertisements has become so boring, all just snippets and grabs which are becoming cliché and strongly stereotyped. Once all these less accessible techniques become mainstream they will go the same way..

LH: *Techniques such as...*

SA: One evident technique now, that is reaching saturation, is granulation, and perhaps to some degree, real-time vocoding and phase vocoding. Mainly granulation, and perhaps the more involved filtering processes that are not generally available on commercial signal processors. If you spend more time in the language of sound - even if it doesn't have a clear or singular language - then these things are potentially more accessible to abuse, its the currency.

LH: *When you make these processes available back to a community that is always clamouring for a new titillation, it is not really interested in pursuing certain compositional implications, rather "does this process assist me to make more money quickly?"*

If that's the feedback loop, how does that have an effect on those other sounds?

SA: If I was completely broad-minded, I would agree that there is a subset asking "will it make more money?" but also a subset asking "will it make more sounds?" Yet this is just as dangerous, because this body of people who work building up this music, predominantly library music as far as I can tell, will just thrash these techniques. The saving grace may be that there is still a bit of currency left in the idea of using musical language predominantly based on pitch and rhythm, which they do. No matter what the sound-world, they still return to these dinky little chords and rhythms, which is the musically expressive bit. There is a different relationship to the sounds. While, yes, they are interested in the sounds, no, they don't see the sounds in themselves quite the same way. I'm not sure what the difference is, but any piece of music that comes back to harmonies and emotive scene-setting atmospheres are missing the point, as far as the art of sound goes. That's not to say that everyone does it.

LH: *We are quite clear to say that they are not trying to do that, but there are certain implications for other people and the listener. It does however present a window to jump through to ideas of the listener and the forums in which the types of music you are interested in, are being performed. The monotonous argument that this music is being written for a small elite...*

SA: There is a lot of time wasted on this argument, and my standard response is that the studio is the only contemporary music instrument, and the computer is the extension of that. This whole area is much more focused in the nature of sound, and we can again relate it to the commercial music technology and the output it engenders, which predominantly still speaks the traditional tonal language. Even a shift toward the spectro-morphological, is still, by pressure of the programme makers or demographics, a harmonic, tonal, rhythmic matrix over which this other stuff is being laid. There is a drum beat - no matter how interesting the lush layers get, you can be sure it will return to the drum beat at some stage. The more alternatives to the mainstream in terms of dissemination and content, the better, even if they aren't particularly viable.

LH: *By what avenues do you see the feedback about the music that you have written?*

SA: Fairly limited in general. It's the computer music concerts, symposiums, 'Synaesthetics' of the country, which, for recent times, wraps up every event. The Linden concerts/workshops - I see them more as informal gatherings - I see as very valuable. Radio is limited again. Outside Warren Burt's programme on 3PBS, [ed. no longer broadcast] there is very little.

LH: *Lets just dream for a moment...What context would interest you, for your pieces?*

SA: Dark rooms with perfect sound systems. Getting people listening. People say my music is very visual. That may mean its better not to work with other media but I would like to take my ideas to experiment in multi-media, although perhaps not with the material of this piece in particular. I think the problem with multi-media is that it's like O.J. Simpson, it's like the whole world. We jump on these ideas - "multi-media" - what have you got? a computer which plays back sound, and plays back pictures. Well, we've had projectors, videos, all forms of animation - admittedly it's a little easier to do on the computer. About the only thing that's different is that multimedia is, or should be interactive, and only interactive in as far as the possible outcomes have been coded into the work. That's the only thing about it that's tricky, outside of that anyone can generate this stuff. The problem with that is, that everyone will generate it. Anyone can be a multi-media author now, so everyone will try. I'm a little concerned what it implies for those people that consider themselves artists in this media, or any media for that matter.

LH: *It comes back to the question: If everyone is authoring then who is reading?*

SA: Yes, exactly. Who is reading?

LH: *Keeping the question in our field - if everybody has the right to a say, who has the right to listen? If the whole domain becomes smeared with this babble, how do you do you listen in that?*

SA: We could argue that this is an elitist view, that this is in fact how the power basis of commercial exploitation of artistic domains happens. There is a system that produces this material, and then it is released to the consumers, and now the consumers have the systems to be authors, producers. In some ways I don't think it's a bad thing, but it's the Benjamin problem - art in the age of mechanical reproduction. Now we have art in the age of multi-media reproduction, which is scarier. Maybe the whole notion of pre-produced art will be devalued, maybe it will bring back some aesthetic of live performance. At least for tape, for music that can be shuffled around, live performance has a certain uniqueness now, even though it's generally limited to those signal processes that we can get going in real-time, or to good old instruments, heaven forbid.

LH: *That's an interesting question for you, because you were working in various types of gesture interface and live performance, and then made a decision to move into non real-time composition. Why is that?*

SA: I don't think I've completely left real-time performance behind, but I find studio composing satisfying because you can construct your own little world very perfectly with these pieces. Maybe a fascistic tendency, but I think composing is a fascistic tendency - you want to set up this domain, you want it to be very specifically what you have designed. With performance, there is always that variable, that possibility of failure, of not achieving the right sounds, or not expressing what one wanted to express. There is something good in that, but I'd like to think there is something good in performance, even in the tape piece, it's just the way it's relationship to time is different. You may watch a play, which is performed on the spot, and you may watch a movie, and what you have is this juggling of these refined, carefully rehearsed and staged performances. But you still need that level of communication for that performance to be an effective communicator. In the same sense, a tape piece can use that side of performance, but also can draw on the non-performable. Those aspects of musical time that are simply not reproducible live.

LH: *I've often had this argument with instrumental composers, who I find are the least receptive to listening to electroacoustic music, because they tend to have an immature notion of performance, in the way they need this instantaneous feedback and affirmation that 'yes' that sound came from that wooden box. Watch me scrape it again.*

SA: Isn't that bizarre! We are still playing with wooden boxes. On one hand we have these evolving notions of cyber-space and virtual reality where basically all our whole psychology, our whole sociology is pretty much about the non-physical. And then you've got this strong physical thing. In some way its great. We're still playing with these boxes, admittedly well refined and designed boxes with strings on them. But, there is a much broader sound world to which we are exposed and if we are talking about equal opportunity, then all sounds should have a chance to be music. They don't easily become part of the palette without technology.

LH: *And it is also a knowledge of the field. I saw Warren Burt's performance at Dance-House the other night. And that was an instance where he was using a lot of small interfaces on a table, and only if you watched him very closely could you make some association between a gesture from a finger and hearing a sound.*

What I find when listening to live electronic music is that I am listening to a musical nervous system in action, or a musical feedback system in action. And with someone as experienced as Warren, that can be a fascinating and infuriating process, but I think there is still a conceptual leap to make away from a juvenile view of gesture and sound. How do you approach that?

SA: A couple things on what you said. I think that you can impart . . . its a matter of listening because I guess with the electroacoustics you've got the idea that well yes there is this gesture in certain sounds and they are very obviously starting points to take things away from the whole gestural movement or the whole gestural world.

There's two different things about gesture. One is the physical gesture. And the other is the gesture implied by the sound or sounds. Physical gesture is dramatic and the musical gesture is also potentially dramatic but it calls up the ideas of surrogacy that Smalley is or was into. With some sounds they have an identifiable cause and as they become further removed or further unnatural sounds, then the question asked is 'how did this sound arise?'

Well, the whole studio is a gesture, the fader is a gesture. The fader is a continuous controller. The mixer, real or otherwise is a set of polyphonic continuous controllers.

I worked a lot with this, that's why I initially got into the idea of the video camera system. Basically it is a 32 by 32 matrix, which really shoots down the whole idea of continuous controllers straight off. It switches in and out depending on the level of contrast in the image the camera sees. I've got it connected to MAX and it is possible to get continuous values out of it, but it doesn't work very well because there is always some necessity for interpolation. But what it is like is having a whole lot of keyboards which you've got elbows for. So its somewhere in between the two, its really a very big bank of one off switches, actuators if you like. I generally play it by moving my hand, and work with clouds of sounds, or flocks if you like; in that it is very hard to control a single event, but its very easy to generate large masses of sound, were your instantly in the world of Xenakis perhaps or at least some aspects of what Xenakis was doing.

But the idea of gesture is a problem in electroacoustics because again unless you have a real-time system, you don't get that tactility and if you do then you're playing an instrument. But coming back to this idea of the studio, there is this potential for so many independent motions that gesture is there, even if it becomes stretched out, even if its amplified in time and slowly evolving, what I like to call evolving texture.

I find the relations between texture and gesture very interesting because it links the environment to the instrument, the environment to gestural performance. They are kind of boundaries, they are at the extremes. I spent a lot of time thinking about and playing with the notion of having sound which is continuously evolving, and its really a mixture of gesture and texture. And yet it relates as strongly to the idea of the fader as to any instrumental practice, where we really only have the glissando on those instruments which make it possible.

LH: *I think it was Kundera who said that none of us own gestures, that they exist independently of any particular body. Which is sort of where Denis Smalley is coming from - that we can recognise gesture independently of source.*

SA: Yes, well there is an innate recognition that through our culturation or our upbringing . . . like why do we all smile, when something's funny, yes smiling is something outside of us all in that sense, just as crying is.

LH: *It seems to me that much electroacoustic music has thrown off any direct linear relationship to say the last hundred years of music. Given that against the dispersion of music of other cultures, do you see that your musical net is being cast more widely in terms of the things that influence you or is it still reasonably Eurocentric? Do other musics speak to you at some level?*

SA: Having a Greek background, that's inherently part of me anyway, that the tradition of the Eastern musics, which very strongly influenced most modern Greek music, whether the Greeks will admit it or not. Having this Greek upbringing, there is already this particular sensibility about the nature and function of music. I'm not really strongly influenced by that but, I think it has some kind of residual effect. Perhaps on my use of dramatics. I like the theatre of sound, I like the sense of drama, of going somewhere, of resolution and frustration. We were one of the first generations that had TV all our lives and our concentration span has been effected. We are post-modern people, or post what ever it is . . . post a few stages after this. There is a different sense of motion, of development. I don't relate very strongly to the European tradition, which is not to say I relate more strongly to anything else.

LH: *Its not a binary relation.*

SA: No, I do in some ways. I was very attracted to the romantic school of orchestration and perhaps to the Russian period of Stravinsky. Very strong influence. I like the power, I like the strength, the complexity.

LH: *Yes, that emotional and acoustical force composers drew out of the massively parallel processor: the orchestra. . .*

SA: Fantastic. I think this cultural push for the new, like this world music idea is a bit of a problem. Because it is really a desperate scramble, predominantly from the fringes of the pop world to come across new and interesting things. But what they eventually do when they get really good at it is sound like the cultures from which they have derived or integrate that material strongly into the "global musical culture". The latter is probably the big worry, there's always the spectre of artistic colonialism. Compositionally, I don't really have a strong desire to delve into the domains of other cultures. There is far too much right under my multicultural nose to concern myself integrating or becoming integrated with the musics of cultures of which I have little understanding. So if I use these materials and these sounds of other cultures, yes, they will remind someone of this, but that may not be the primary intention, it may be more likely that the sounds have a certain shape and motion - reduced listening. I'm just as happy to go out and record a tram. And if that's perceived as a cultural statement, so be it. I was working in my kitchen with this whole idea. Its really from the school of musique concrete, so in that sense its European. I may grow out of this phase, but it speaks to me right now.

This interview was transcribed from an original DAT recording at 44.1 kHz using the ACME aACE system.*

**aACE = audio-to-ASCII Conversion Environment*

A.C.M.A. conference '95

An international conference on the composition and aesthetics of electroacoustic music.

Friday 9 June, 1995 to Sunday 11 June, 1995
Faculty of Music, University of Melbourne

The Australian Computer Music Association (ACMA) in association with the Faculty of Music, University of Melbourne is holding its 1995 conference, in Melbourne. The conference will include concerts, paper sessions and an open forum on the composition and aesthetics of electroacoustic music. Within this framework, papers and compositions are being called for presentation at the conference. Details for submissions and the conference are outlined below.

A.C.M.A. Conference '95

Dates: Friday 9 June, 1995 to Sunday 11 June, 1995

Location:

Faculty of Music
Royal Parade
University of Melbourne
Melbourne, Victoria
Australia

Early registration:

By May 12, 1995, is \$70. A cheque or money order made payable to ACMA Conference, 1995 may be sent to:

Australian Computer Music Association, Inc.
PO BOX 186
Post Office Agency, La Trobe University
Bundoora 3083
Victoria Australia

Full Registration:

Registration at the conference is A\$90. Only cash, cheques or money orders made payable to ACMA Conference, 1995, will be accepted.

Please note that credit cards cannot be accepted for early or full registration.

Submission of papers:

Submissions of abstracts are invited for the paper sessions. Abstracts will be anonymously refereed. The focus of the conference will be toward the composition and aesthetics of electroacoustic music. Composers are invited to submit papers within the following broadly defined areas:

•the relationship between research and development in software and/or hardware and composition.

•composition and performance environments; this may include software environments or multimedia and other cross art form environments, composing for theatre, radio, sound installations, animation or film.

•the pedagogy of electroacoustic music. A consideration of the techniques and concepts that adequately equip the musician with the interdisciplinary skills required for electroacoustic music.

Timetable:

Friday - Official opening and evening concert
Saturday - Papers and evening concert
Sunday - Papers and lunchtime concert

Submission deadline:

Submissions for papers in abstract, maximum 300 words, compositions and performance proposals are to be postmarked no later than Friday 10 March, 1995.

Return of submission tapes:

Please include a self addressed envelope if you require submission tapes to be returned.

Notification:

Notification of selection for both papers and compositions will be sent to successful applicants on or before Friday 7 April, 1995.

CD Release:

It is planned to release a CD of selected works presented as part of this conference.

Music Shop:

In conjunction with local and international retailers, a range of CD's and books will be on sale at the conference.

Submissions to:

ACMA 1995 Conference
PO BOX 186
Post Office Agency, La Trobe University
Bundoora 3083
Victoria, Australia

Conference Coordinators:

Lawrence Harvey
harvey@music.unimelb.edu.au
Alistair Riddell
amr@farben.latrobe.edu.au

Accommodation & travel information:

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Faculty of Music
University of Melbourne
Royal Parade, Parkville 3052
Victoria Australia
ph: 61-3-344 7508
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email:harris@music.unimelb.edu.au

(continued next page...)

(95 A.C.M.A. Conference continued)

Guidelines for DAT submissions and performance projects

- Tapes are to be recorded at a sample rate of 44.1 KHz.
- Leave 30 secs at head of tape.
- Ensure there are no clicks on the tape from the transfer.
- Label the tape and case with the composition title, composer name, duration of piece.
- Record in absolute time.
- A programme note for the piece.

For a live performance submission, please supply a recording of a previous live or studio performance. Or else some other excerpts of previous work and a description of the proposed performance for this conference.

The Faculty has a range of available equipment, applicants are asked to clearly outline the performance set-up they require. Where possible, applicants are requested to supply their own equipment, a list of equipment that will be available from the Faculty Studio is listed below.

Computers:

The Studio's of the Faculty are Macintosh based. Available for use in performance will be 2 * SE 30's, a IIFX.

Hardware:

Korg Wavestation
Proteus Procussion/2XR
Proteus /3World
2 * Akai S1100 samplers
Yamaha TG 77
Disklavier upright piano
Disklavier grand piano
Yamaha SPX 1000
Yamaha SPX 900
Lexicon 300
MIDI wind controller
2 * JLCopper continuous controllers
Tascam DA30
Sony D-10 Pro (44.1 kHz & 48 kHz available as playback)
Sony PCM 7050
16 channel Alesis ADAT

Software: (for performance and papers/demonstration)

MAX
Patchwork
M
SVP
Q-base
ProTools & SoundDesigner

Other hardware/software requirements may be possible. If these are required please contact the conference coordinators.

ACMA Computer Music Concert

Brisbane on Sat. 8th April.

Institute of Modern Art.
Time: 8.00pm.

ACMA members are invited to submit tapes for performance (or could appear live if in Brisbane).

Submissions [on DAT tape]:

Andrew Brown
QUT Academy of the Arts,
Locked bag 2,
Red Hill 4059.

Further information:

Andrew Brown: email browna@QUT.edu.au

ACMA Contact List

To contact the committee, any of the persons mentioned in this issue or for any other information, Electronic mail can be sent to :

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ralsop@klang.latrobe.edu.au or...
stainsby@klang.latrobe.edu.au

or fax:

(03) 479 3651 (c/- music dept. La Trobe Univ)

or write to:

ACMA, Inc.
PO Box 186
Post Office Agency
La Trobe University VIC 3083

oz-computer-music is an electronic mail list serving the Australian computer music community. To subscribe to oz-computer-music, send the following E-mail message to:

listserv@latrobe.edu.au
subscribe oz-computer-music

1995 ACMA Committee

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The International Computer Music Association Software Library & Central Resource Locator

In an ongoing effort to centralise information about computer-music software and to expedite coordinated progressive research in general, the ICMA is developing an online Software Library on the Internet.

The Library was initiated by Roger Dannenberg of Carnegie Mellon University and is located at Dartmouth College under the joint sponsorship of Jon Appleton, Director of the Graduate Program in Electro-Acoustic Music at Dartmouth College, and the ICMA. Robert Newcomb, an independent composer/researcher, is acting as Software Librarian.

The Library is stored on a Dartmouth College UNIX machine in the form of several text files. It is available for downloading via anonymous FTP from host Dartmouth.edu (IP Address 129.170.16.4), directory pub/ICMA- Library, by email through ftpmail, and on the WWW at URL:

<http://coos.dartmouth.edu/~rsn/icma/icma.html>.

The WWW version allows for direct retrieval of files listed in the library, and navigation to a growing number of archives, forums, newsletters, and related home pages - all accessible from a single Central Locator!

These software listings are maintained for the benefit of the computer music community and in no way should be taken as an endorsement of any kind. The ICMA does not make any warranty as to the accuracy of these listings, nor does it maintain any control whatsoever over the listed software.

For further information, please contact:
ICMA-Library@dartmouth.edu.

For Sale

Mac II 5/40 with Apple 21" 2 page Monochrome monitor. \$2,200 o.n.o.

Tascam MS-16 16 track multitrack recorder with dbx noise reduction and auto locator/remote controller. Tascam M520 mixing desk 20x8, 4 aux sends + 16ch monitor. Tascam MTS-1000 midiizer synchroniser with parallel interface for MS-16. \$7,900 o.n.o.

For further information contact Chris Lai on
(03) 479 2414 during working hours.

Plans for ACMA in Sydney in 1995.

ACMA Sydney has three things definitely planned for 1995.

(1) The colloquium series, started in the second half of 1994 under the name "Sydney Colloquium for Research in Electro-Acoustic Music", will continue. The plan is to have about one meeting a month, starting in March. The meetings will be on Tuesday evenings, and will be held at various institutions.

(2) ACMA Sydney will be presenting a concert in the "Thursday at 5.15" series organised by the Music Department, University of Sydney. Date not yet known, but in the first half of the year.

(3) It is planned to run a one-day electro-acoustic workshop in conjunction with CPCF (Contemporary Performers' and Composers' Fellowship) in July or August. This would be similar to the one run in 1994.

We also have vague ideas about tape listening sessions and so forth. Ideas, and offers to organise things, are welcome!

Call for Pieces

The proposed one-day electro-acoustic workshop mentioned above is a chance to have pieces involving conventional instruments performed. It is expected that an ensemble will be available: piano, violin, cello, flute, clarinet (also bass clarinet), percussion. Electro-acoustic pieces for any combination of these instruments (and possibly voice) are welcome.

Contacts for ACMA Sydney

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Gordon Monro: monro_g@maths.su.oz.au

or write to:

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School of Mathematics and Statistics
University of Sydney F07
NSW 2006
Tel: (02)-351-3814

Review of Music at the 1994 ICMC, Aarhus, Denmark

Anthony Hood

I came away from the 1992 ICMC feeling a little disillusioned. In San Jose, there were only two or three pieces out of 90 or so presented that seemed to be successful both technically and aesthetically. There was a certain sameness to the timbres and the musical gestures, and a lack of subtlety in the way sound material was structured. Most of these electro-acoustic works seemed to lack a sophistication that one takes for granted in other forms of music (in any genre).

This year, the general consensus of those delegates I spoke to seemed to be that the quality of the music presented at the 1994 ICMC in Aarhus, Denmark, was higher than at previous conferences. From 65 pieces presented, I personally found about half to be interesting, and a handful I thought to be quite memorable.

My favourite work of the conference was "In Emptiness, Over Emptiness" by Canadian composer Michael Matthews, who is based at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg. This work for voice and tape was an ICMA commission receiving its first performance, part of a projected larger music theatre piece "Old Woman of the Bones". Visually stunning, the piece was wonderfully performed by Canadian soprano Therese Costes, all in black and red hurling a "fiery broom" while maintaining control of some difficult melodic writing. The voice was wholly integrated with the soundscape created on the tape (with such a close correlation that many thought Costes was miming to a pre-recorded voice). The completed work is something to look forward to.

Another piece I liked very much was Katharine Norman's "Trilling Wire", which cleverly combined tense clarinet fragments with some interesting textures on tape. Technically proficient and well-structured, it confirmed for me Norman's place as one of Britain's leading composers in the genre.

In many of the other works for live performance and tape, the soloist or ensemble seemed to inhabit a different plane to that of the computer-generated tape, with little or no interplay between the two either structurally or timbrally. Even the way some tapes were mixed or the instruments amplified seemed to exaggerate this effect. A typical example was the work by Riad Abdel-Gawad, from Egypt. He gave a virtuosic and exciting performance on violin, playing mostly with the bow on the fingerboard behind his left hand. This was combined with a tape part that used traditional drums and the like, but which seemed irrelevant to the gestures of the violinist.

This piece was also typical of a number that perhaps stretched the definition of "computer music" by having taped material consisting wholly of recordings of acoustic instruments, with seemingly no processing. I personally do not subscribe to the thesis that because a tape part could be played live by an instrumentalist it is somehow better that it be done that way.

(continued next page...)

(continued from page 9)

I did think Frances White's "Winter Aconites" would have worked better had the tape been replaced by another instrumentalist, in this case a vibraphone player. This would have given room for a freer interplay between the percussionist on stage and the vibraphone on tape. Nevertheless, this was one of the really memorable works of the program. Dedicated to John Cage, with whom White worked for some time, this was a gentle, sparse piece demonstrating a subtlety and expressiveness absent from many other compositions.

Another work inspired by Cage was Heinrich Taube's clever "Gloriette for John Cage", a relatively short piece at 4 minutes (most other works were between 10 and 15 minutes in length). Composed for mechanical organ but presented from tape, it used an algorithmic chance process in which the likelihood of the notes CAGE slowly emerge out of a harmonic background of G dorian.

In some of the works for larger ensemble, the players did not always cope with the difficulties of performing with a tape part that did not respond to their own performance nuances. This was particularly noticeable in Elena Kats' "Clocks", one section of which seemed to come a little unstuck. Apart from this lapse, the orchestra and conductor performed "Clocks" proficiently and with real enthusiasm. The composition, with orchestral gestures "triggered" by recorded clock sounds quite different to the instrumental timbres, successfully avoided a problem other composers had in their works for this combination, being that the orchestra itself is a very versatile synthesis engine, and the tape part was often lost in the overall textures and seemed almost redundant.

There was a bias against works for tape alone at this conference, even though the majority of works submitted were for tape (and my suspicion of this was confirmed after a chat with one of the music jury). Having the services of the Aarhus Symphony, the Cikada Ensemble and the Royal Danish Ballet, the organisers wanted to make full use of these ensembles. Nevertheless, there was a reluctance to present tape music in a concert format, even at an event such as this, and no-one had found a satisfactory alternative. Even Trevor Wishart seemed embarrassed when introducing his piece, apologising that there was "nothing to look at".

The tape works that were presented at this conference did seem weaker than those involving live performance. In many, the soundworld created was uniformly harsh, the timbres were uninteresting, the frequency spectrum was unbalanced, often with a lack of top end on heavily filtered sound, and gestures seemed glued together with little thought given to a larger structure. There is often mention, particularly in Europe, of the "language" of electro-acoustic music. I do not like this concept, but accepting it for a moment, I would argue that many composers are using this language in a clichéd and uninteresting way, particularly in tape works. It worried me that so many lost their audience (consisting of the true believers anyway) within a minute or two of the start of their composition.

Two exceptions must be mentioned. Trevor Wishart's monumental "Tongues of Fire" is an extraordinary work. Realised almost entirely on an Atari using the Composers' Desktop Project system with a small hard disk, it begins with a tiny amount of source material - a few vocal utterances, and then explores it for a full 25 minutes. Considering it may take several hours to manipulate just a few seconds of sound on the Atari, particularly using Wishart's favoured phase vocoder software (and I know this from personal experience), the patience and creativity he showed in the realisation of this work over four years is remarkable. Wishart had no need to apologise for the work's length - it was far more interesting than many pieces one third as long.

Ake Parmerud's "Jeux Imaginaires" was a beautiful piece, that seemed to somehow transcend its electronic origins. Technically superb, all the sounds seemed completely organic, although "impossible". Like Wishart, Parmerud limits the source material, this time to bells and some string sounds, but sustains interest over a full 11 minutes, carefully controlling the development of his material.

The biggest ovation of the conference went to Melbourne's Stuart Favilla and Joanne Cannon performing "Alpana". Normally for two light harps, this version was presented on one light harp and bassoon. The light harp had received much attention through the week after their poster session, and so the performance was keenly anticipated, particularly as the work had been selected for inclusion on the ICMC conference CD. Of the alternative controllers demonstrated through the week, the light harp certainly seemed most expressive (particularly compared to the "claws" which I thought were terrible). "Alpana", based on raga, was refreshing after a succession of noisy, aggressive works. By chance, it preceded Larry Austin's "Rompido!", which was inspired by pieces of granite being torn apart - quite a contrast!

At the end of the conference, there was a late night computer jazz concert, which I thought was a bit disappointing. The American saxophonist William Trimble displayed some virtuosity in Allen Strange's "Velocity Studies IV: Flutter", derived from Charlie Parker. The electronic part seemed to be completely irrelevant to the sax, although my listening was probably hampered by sitting directly in front of a loud speaker. In Henning Berg's improvised piece for trombone there was an obvious interplay between instrument and computer, and it was also refreshing to hear a piece that did not take itself altogether seriously.

The final work was a full multi-media event, commencing at midnight out in the bar area, organised by the Danish musician Fuzzy. Taking soundbites and images from the week and featuring, at one point, our own Gordon Monro, this was a chance to relax, unwind, and have a chat with that computer music composer from Argentina or Iceland whom you've been dying to meet...

Call for Nominations for the ISCM World Music Days, 1996

ACMA has been asked by the Australian Music Centre to nominate two Australian electro-acoustic works (by different composers) for consideration for submission for the ISCM World Music Days in Copenhagen, 1996.

Please send your nominations of one or two works (by yourself or others) by 20th January 1995 to:

Gordon Monro
School of Mathematics and Statistics
University of Sydney F07
NSW 2006
Email: monro_g@maths.su.oz.au
Fax: (02)-692-4534

Please include some information about the work(s), and why you think they should represent Australia at the ISCM. Works can be pure tape pieces or involve conventional and electronic instruments, including interactive computer systems and new interfaces/instruments.

Multi-media pieces (with multiple slide projectors, video or film) are also included.

Nominations will be considered by the ACMA committee, who will then make a recommendation to the Australian Music Centre. Note the early deadline!

(Unfortunately nominated works are not guaranteed a performance.)

CDMC (Documentation Center for Contemporary Music)

From: Michel Fingerhut <Michel.Fingerhut@ircam.fr>

The current issue (no. 30, Jan-Mar. '95) of the quarterly newsletter of the CDMC (Documentation Center for Contemporary Music) in Paris, France, is now available on IRCAM's WWW server (<http://www.ircam.fr/index-e.html>). It is in french.

Contents (partial):

- new scores, recordings, magazines, books, at the CDMC
- contemporary music news: research centers, festivals, concerts (some with free entrance), opera, musical theater, ...
- information for composers (competitions, awards, reading panels, openings, conferences, tutorials, grants)
- information for interpreters (workshops, competitions)
- the music publishing scene

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International Computer Music Association announcements.

The International Computer Music Association announces three new projects for 1995. The first, Bits n' Pieces, is a collaboration with ARTnet on a project which will be of interest to all ICMA members. The basis of the project is the creation of a ninety minute collection of computer music compositions to be placed in a virtual art museum and made available for public performance via the WWW. The last ARRAY, Vol. 14, #3, featured an article about ARTnet's activities (page 10).

The IAMFREE (Internet Arts Museum) was established in California in 1994 under the Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation Law for public and charitable purposes. The purpose of this organisation is to create an international, contemporary music, art and literature museum available free and worldwide on the internet. ICMA views this as 1) an opportunity to be on the forefront and "test the waters" of what will be one possible future for new performance modes, and 2) a venue for ICMA members to get their music out to a different and wider audience. ICMA has been advised by both ASCAP and BMI any current and future licensing with them is non-exclusive. This means that composers currently licensed through BMI or ASCAP do have the right to enter into a direct licensing agreement for \$0.00 per transmission, if they agree to do so. For any works selected for this project currently licensed by another agency, the composer must notify that agency that the work will be licensed directly by ARTnet. Composers licensed by other agencies than BMI or ASCAP are advised to consult with the licensed agent. For your protection ICMA strongly advises that each composer clearly copyright any submitted work. This music will be available to anyone having the required technology and can be copied as easily as copying any other published or performed material.

ICMA's agreement with Artnet is as follows:

- An international jury of five ICMA members will select 90 minutes of music submitted by ICMA members
- The selected material will be MPEG compressed, maintaining the 44.1 sampling rate and stereo format by the Artnet staff.
- The selected material, collectively referred to as Bits n' Pieces, will be placed in the IAMFREE virtual museum for free transmission.
- Neither ICMA or Artnet shall be held responsible for any infringement of individual copyright as a result of any activities, transmissions or performance related to this or any other internet transmissions of the contents of the Bits n' Pieces collection.
- It is the responsibility of each composer represented in the collection, Bits n' Pieces, to secure individual copyright and such copyright will remain with the individual composer.

•ICMA will, in no way be involved in or responsible for licensing or contacting of the works contained in Bits n' Pieces, nor be involved in any licensing and/or performance fees paid or due to the individual composer.
Submission Procedures

•Works should be sent to: ICMA
Bits n' Pieces Project
2040 Polk Street #330
San Francisco, CA 94109
USA

•Works must be submitted on DAT or CD with brief program and/or technical notes (in electronic form if possible.)

• The composer must be a current member of the ICMA

•Works must be received by Feb. 1, 1995

Keep in mind that every minute of 44.1 s/r stereo sound takes approximately 1 meg of memory and about 40 minutes to download. You are not limited to a specific duration but this media suggests shorter works not exceeding 10 minutes. To provide a wide sampling of music the selection committee will give preference to works of shorter duration. Any technical details or questions regarding compression, transmission, licensing or the IAMFREE Museum can be obtained directly from ARTnet at:

ARTnet
P.O. Box 2383
Los Gatos, CA 95031 U.S.A.
info@artnet.org

The second project is the initiation of the ICMA Composers' Registry. This will be a database listing of works by our membership which are available for performance. All compositions can be accessed by composer, title, duration, media, instrumentation, keywords, etc. The first edition will provide opportunity for each ICMA member to list up to five compositions in a catalog to be posted on the World Wide Web. The Registry will also be available on the ICMA Bulletin Board, on disc as a FileMaker Pro Database and in hard copy as a printed catalog of works. It is planned that this registry will be updated every year. A tentative format for the database based on the recent ICMA Proceeding Index has been designed. The format will be finalised in consideration of the submissions received. Composition registration forms are available from ICMA.

There are current plans to include this registry in the international edition of Dokumentation Elektroakustischer Musik published by the Berlin Technical University. ICMA is providing this registry as a listing service only and is in no way involved in the representation, publication or distribution of the works.

Finally, the International Computer Music Association, in cooperation with Swets & Zeitlinger Publishers in the Netherlands, announces the establishment of the Swets &

Zeitlinger Distinguished Paper Award. The annual award will consist of a \$500 (US) prize and publication in the New Music Research Journal. The first award will be presented at the 1995 International Computer Music Conference, Digital Playgrounds, in September.

The selection process for this year will be as follows: The ICMC 95 Paper Selection Panel will determine their selections of the best paper from each of the Technical Session categories. These papers will be forwarded to the ICMA to be reviewed by a panel established by the ICMA Director of Research. This panel will include the ICMC Paper Selection Panel Chairman and a representative of Swets & Zeitlinger Publishers.

The International Computer Music Association is very appreciative of the support by Swets & Zeitlinger Publishers. This provides an opportunity for the labors of our members to reach an even wider audience in the field of technical applications in the arts. This award also provides for international recognition of the work of one of our members, and is an indication of the outstanding level of work being carried out by all of the members of the ICMA.

from Allen Strange

ICMA has just made arrangements with Folkmar Hein of the Technical University of Berlin to distribute his Dokumentation Elektroakustischer Musik in Europe in electronic form. This document contains data about European studios concerned with the production and/or the research and teaching of electro-acoustic music, as well as information pertaining to works conceived in those studios. The hard copy of this document contains 252 Studio Addresses, the Studio Work List contains 5,991 productions from 52 studios and the Composer's Work List documents 8,157 compositions. The current FileMaker Pro (Macintosh) is even larger.

Dr. Hein is making this file available to ICMA members through any not-for-profit institute, academy, organisation, etc. The price of the disk is \$10.00 (US) which only serves to cover the cost of reproduction and mailing. As you read this the Spring issue of ARRAY is being printed so this item will not appear in the ARRAY price list. You can order by just dropping a note, email or fax to ICMA with the appropriate check or charge information.

As mentioned in the Christmas Messages, the works of the Composers' Registry will be included in the next edition of DEME. Dr. Hein informs me that for that project he wants to try to get ALL of the works of the ICMA members included!! So get your personal catalogs in order if you wish to participate. We will let you know when this phase of the project begins. In the meantime please get your listing of up to five works for the Composers Registry in to us as soon as possible.