

# ENTERTAINMENT

## Composers experiment with sounds and brainwaves! Three York teachers are in vanguard of new music

By AGNES KNCHIO

It seems like a harmless enough activity: playing with electronic gadgets to produce sounds of infinite shape, depth and variety, with or without the aid of acoustic instruments or humans. This, seems to be the manner in which a small local pocket of subversive composers want to revolutionize the most primary relationship between people and their environment — their perception. David Rosenboom, Richard Teitelbaum and Michael Byron, members of the faculty of the department of music, have been working towards this goal individually and collectively anywhere from three to ten years now.

"Every pair of ears is unique," Teitelbaum quotes John Cage, the 20th century composer whose work

he claims has profoundly influenced his ideas, and indeed the thinking of most contemporary composers as well.

"Music seems to have built around itself a secret society of initiates, and high culture is still being dominated by institutions that hold up examples of 18th and 19th century 'museum', masterpieces as example, he says. "What a lot of us are trying to get away from is the push-button type of European music — where, if you plug in the right notes in the right order, the right emotional responses will result in the listener." Teitelbaum has considerable training and expertise in non-western music.

"There has to be a lot deeper commitment of individuals to extract ideas from the culture," says the 35-year old composer who is

anything if not serious. "But it is a lot easier to listen to the same Muzak in Massey Hall." At the same time he believes that the acceptance of "20th century ideas" will require a wholesale reorganization of society."

His own music, by his own admission, is "spiritual", draws on scientific tools, and has much to do with the meditative states of consciousness. As a graduate student at Yale, he studied the relationship of music and brainwaves, and when Moog's synthesizer was completed, he got in touch with him and spent a year studying the possibility of putting the two lines of enquiry together.

A native of Fairfield, Iowa, 28 year-old Rosenboom is now close to completing an instrument which will be able to do just that. Always heavily involved in computer science, electronics as well as music, Rosenboom's discovery came in the early days of biofeedback research. Biofeedback refers to the process whereby the individual can achieve control with the aid of a machine that signals when he produces the desired brain waves.

After ten years of work that involved research and design in new territory (he collaborated on the design of the hardware with the original creator of the "moog" synthesizer, Don Buchla of California), the computerized, or portable, live performance instrument will be ready by summertime and will work analogously to the human nervous system. There will be a many ways to use the instrument that as of yet has no name: one could connect electrodes directly to the head, play it manually, or even let it play itself.

As to just how it works, Rosenboom only smiles—there is no way of explaining briefly ten year's search. "Simply," he says, "the instrument looks for order in whatever information it is given, and develops a language for music from it." (He will be giving a lecture on this topic on Dec. 3, 4 p.m. in CLHF).

There is already a book and a record from this work, published by the Aesthetic Research Centre



Teitelbaum and Rosenboom discuss the future of music.

of Canada, of which all three composers are an integral part. Among some of their other publications that aim at keeping up with the state of the art is the Journal of Experimental Aesthetics and Pieces, and anthology of essays and current compositions, both of which are edited by the third member of the trio, 23 year-old Michael Byron. A one-time student of Teitelbaum,

Byron is a brilliant composer and musician in his own right, with a growing list of publications to his credit.

"The seventies will see a more subtle exploration of sounds and their relationships to each other", says Teitelbaum. The aim will be the expansion of the "threshold of both person and instrument", and to further push back the limits to the question: what else can we do?

## Engaging mime intoxicates

By RISHA GOTLIBOWICZ

What could be better than a sweet taste of wine? The answer is: the Celebration Mime Theatre from New York. I found myself just a little tipsy after their performance.

As part of the Performing Arts Series, they were received enthusiastically enough, with a standing ovation from some people. However, if some expectations were disappointed, it may have been solely because this particular theatre offered more than the silence of mime. Indeed, it succeeded using mime as a mere base. I found the evening totally unpretentious, lapsing neither into serious mime of the Marcel Marceau genre nor pantomime (of the Red Skelton type).

Tony Montanaro, the artistic director, has worked with this group for a mere two years, hoping to move away from silent mime. He had been with silent mime for more than a decade, but now he wants to make what he feels is a more profound statement by involving vocalizations as well as dramatics. In the particular sequence shown last week, the inspiration for ideas came largely from the actors themselves.

Opening with a number called An American Collage, they depicted various facets of life, which came across as a caricature of their own crazy lifestyle. It was lively and relaxing.

As an ensemble, the eight actors moved with ease and tuned into each other almost like a family. But there was no family friction

## A musical feast of real and rare

Tuesday, November 25, at 8 p.m., an evening of 16th century music will be presented by the Renaissance Band and The Early Music Studio in the McLaughlin JCR. Admission free.

Wednesday, November 26, the woodwind and brass students in the performance class present a concert at 7:30 p.m. in the Winters SCR. Admission free.

Peggie Sampson, one of the York Music department's claim to fame in the virtuosity department will give a rare performance on the viol da gamba, with Harvey Fink on the harpsichord in CLH F at 4 p.m. Again, admission is free.

here — just a nice steady flow between numbers. They were warm, bubbly, and exciting.

The mime technique was a focus for what verged on the old Commedia dell'Arte trickery and buffoonery. Perhaps the technique was best illustrated in a number called Industrial Revolution, in which the humming of sophisticated machinery, through the motion of legs, arms and heads, illustrated the dynamic of modern technology.

There was one instance of silent mime in The Birdwatcher. As with Marcel Marceau, this tiny event dramatized the actions of one character. He begins with his watching and ends with his being watched, then pecked at furiously by the birds: it became funnier with each successive ridiculous moment.

The Celebration Mime troupe impressed me from start to finish. Their antics were both relaxing and refreshing. They closed appropriately with a number called At the Circus. For, in the end, these eight performers came across as thoroughly engaging clowns.

## Considering Graduate School?

Consider the faculty, research facilities, students and programs of the Graduate School of Arts and Science of New York University; and the unmatched cultural and research facilities of New York City. A New York University counselor will be on the York University campus to talk about graduate work on

Tuesday, November 25  
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

at  
Placement Office  
contact the  
officer at (416)667-3761  
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