The Northwest

C y b e r A r t i s t

SYNESTHETICS

by Amey Mazurek

Submit your senses to an interactive orgy of sound and graphics by Northwest CyberArtists called *Synesthetics*, 8 pm October 21, 22, and 23 at the Washington Hall Performance Gallery, 153 14th Avenue, Seattle. Tickets are $13.50 in advance, $15.00 at the door. Call (206) 782-2094 for more information.

Here's some highlights of the performers:

"I always like to have surprises," says **Einar Ask** of *The Same*, a musical MIDI-interactive group with whom his wife **Juli** performs as a dancer. She performs part of the set, changing sound with her movements by means of mercury switches. The rest of the set is devoted to the *Interactive MIDI Garden* where the audience can play along with Einar by walking through it. What's in the Garden is a mystery, probably even to Einar. "Once I got a hold of MIDItools, wow! I went nuts...The idea of using MIDI is not new...What's new is that any Joe Blow can do it now — which they don't, they get guitars and join grunge bands."

The authoress of this article *(Amey Mazurek)* will play didgeridoo, an ancient Australian Aborigine wind instrument that drones and resonates, providing a trance-inducing sound from layers of harmonics. The best didges, eucalyptus branches hollowed out by termites, come from Australia, making them really expensive. So I made one out of PVC tubing which works just fine; but for the show I will demonstrate both kinds of materials. (A special thanks to local didge importer Steve Perry for the loan of the Australian didge.) The sound of the didge, controlled by Brian Karr's MIDI glove, will move around the eight

speakers set up in the performance hall.

"We hear in 360 degrees, and I wanted to take advantage of it with as many sound sources as possible," **Craig Rosenberg** of the *Trans Aural Surround Capsule* said. Craig studies computer music and animation, human-computer interaction and VR environments at the Human Factors Lab at the University of Washington. The desire for spatially realistic sound came out of his human factors and VR studies. Also involved in the *TASC* is **Sam Maynard**, a sound engineer for studio projects and media applications, and a "disgruntled postal worker." (So watch your dog.) **Bill Currie** has played with a number of orchestras and touring bands, but now works as a fire protection engineer. **Shawn LeHay** is "a musical Einstein who often wears leather." **Matt Chamberlain** is a "dynamic personality who contacts extraterrestrial beings on a daily basis." (Does he talk to Shirley MacLaine?)

Chad Taylor, owner of *In Phase Productions*, is the designer of the lighting for Synesthetics. MIDI-controlled Intellabeams — which have full motion, color changing and pattern projection capabilities — will enhance each performance through their unlimited versatility. He has done lighting for bands such as Sex With Sarah, Kill Switch...Klick, The Same, The 5th Man and Underground Eskimos.

"They're a technical version of a shaman's rattle," **Stephan Schier** said of his *Mind Machines*. "You can access different states...I think it affects your imagination, dreams and intuition." Actually part of **Norman Durkee's** setup,

the Mind Machines are light sunglass frames set with LEDs that respond to music. Also according to Stephan, you can learn to relax while providing a workout for your brain.

"My intent is also to make a lot of godawful noise," **Bret Battey** said of his performance, which uses mechanical-sounding samples (shortwave radio, printing presses, etc.) set to algorithms developed for population growth and makes it largely improvisational and chaos generated. Bret, who has a "classically-informed aesthetic," sometimes mixes ensembles of traditional instru-

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OCTOBER MEETING: MONDAY, OCTOBER 4

THE ART INSTITUTE OF SEATTLE ROOM 717/718 2323 ELLIOT AVENUE 7:30PM

"OUR GUEST"

BRET BATTEY: "MAX FOR MACINTOSH AND INTERACTIVE PERFORMANCE"

BRET DEMONSTRATES THE GRAPHIC MIDI PROGRAMMING SYSTEM *MAX* AND DISCUSSES METHODS OF INTERACTIVE, ALGORITHMIC MUSIC SYSTEMS.

HE DESCRIBES HIS OWN *MAXCHAOSTIX* SYSTEM, A CHAOS-MATHEMATICS BASED MIDI-PROCESSOR DEVELOPED FOR THE SYNESTHETICS ART AND TECH FEST

PUBLISHER'S CORNER

by Steve Turnidge

One year ago this month I attended the CyberArts International Conference put on by Keyboard magazine in Pasadena. You are holding the direct result of my attending this eye-opening experience in your hands. I underwent a life changing experience, being filled with hope that one person can change the course of things for the better.

I was there over Halloween weekend; returning to Seattle on Monday, November first.

Just recently I had started to attend NEMUS meetings. These meetings happened to fall on the first Monday of the month, which was the day I returned. Being very fired up and excited to share what had just occurred; I flew into the meeting at the Art Institute of Seattle. Meeting me there was a group of around five people interested in what I had to share, but more in wondering what direction they should take their group.

Some of the insights I shared that night had to do with personal integrity. The fact that in order to truly succeed at anything, you have to do just that one thing, and not split up your concentration and resources among many things. *(Since then I'm not so sure this is true...)* My force of conviction motivated the leader at the time to quit his day job and go into music full time with all resources focused on his specific goal. That process also involved his becoming detached from extracurricular groups like NEMUS.

There was a local music personality that night as guest speaker, so they gave me a rain check to share my full experiences with them the next month. Sometime into the month I received a phone call from the leader of the group asking if I would like to be "President" since he was cutting back all unnecessary responsibilities.

This was an interesting idea, matching the desire I had to bring together locally the kind of people I had such an amazing time with at CyberArts. The vision stayed with me. NEMUS had a targeted mailing list of future-looking electronic musicians. Rane Corporation had just sponsored the newsletter, putting all group financial worries aside. The Art Institute of Seattle graciously made a classroom available monthly. The only real challenge was to draw the wider population of those more generally interested in art and technology into the group.

I called many friends I had worked with over the years, and told new acquaintances just met at the UW HIT Lab. I called the people I met at CyberArts, to see their reaction to a local offshoot of their group. I mused on my goals and the future. Those musings went into the NEMUS Oscillator newsletter.

I visualized a bright future, where artists and artistically technical people work together to create a better world. Where idealistic individuals holed up in their multimedia studios could learn of the existence of others like themselves, synergistically collaborating to create better art, art with substantive content. I visualized creative experts from many fields learning from each other, breaking down barriers to communication.

Pop to the present — I seem to have realized my hope of changing the world. One person started this

change, but it takes many people to complete it. The group of people we have now are a healthy catalyst for understanding and creating the future.

This first year of the Northwest CyberArtists will be crowned with the Synethetics show. A show with local CyberArtists cooperatively creating a

SYNESTHETICS

ments and synthesizers, and other times improvises on interactive, algorithmic works developed with **IRCAM's** object oriented programming language, **MAX**. *(To be demonstrated at our October meeting... Ed.)* He continues to expand the possibilities for truly interactive, intermedia performance artforms.

Video artist **Julius Brown** is into creating with what he has internally as opposed to the tools he uses to realize his art. He interactively generates and projects large scale abstract visual images, utilizing a unique video and computer tool set developed through years of independent research. He also helped develop the *Mindlight*, a sound-responsive computer graphic system, and authored a computer language used to produce visual displays. He performs with Seattle band *Diamond Fist Werny*.

"I'd like to see a whole mental revolution...(a flood) that blows some doors open (for) a new mindset of music and art," **James Cobb**, Obscure Composer, said. "There's a lot of cutting edge...artists (who) feel like there's going to be a big revolution by the year 2000." James emerges every three years to test the marketplace and public temperament for signs of compatibility with his own avant-pop sensibilities and computer abstractions. He also writes for performance, studio, film and theater. His aesthetic sensibilities tend towards the Eastern simplicity of design and veneration of nature.

Jose Luis Flores, as Art Director for the Northwest CyberArtists, provides a lot of the personality of the group through his graphic creations. He is the designer of the Synesthetics posters, tickets and flyers. He is a freelance graphic designer whose recent projects include the *Bean Counters* exhibit catalogue and a playing card deck entitled *The Fine Art of Riding*.

"I seek to shift the consciousness of my audiences, which can be difficult to verify," **Steve Hawks** says of his video art. "But I have often heard viewers of my
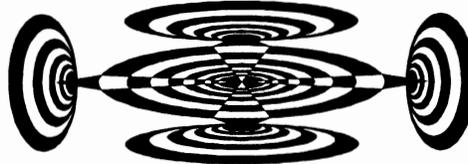
work say *'Whoa,'* a phrase usually reserved for telling your horse she's taking you someplace unfamiliar, and way too fast." Steve spent his childhood in Kansas watching the wind flow across fields of ripening wheat and dust particles floating in a single beam of sunlight. His *Mandalatron* video projections produce simultaneously expanding and contracting mandalas. His trance inducing interactive light sculptures, called the *Zoetrons*, can be viewed at the **Re-bar** on Monday's *7 Beats per Minute* show and at techno raves throughout the Northwest and Canada.

"I have an idea of what my toy does," **Brian Karr** said of his MIDI glove.

Gestures that the user makes are instantly translated by optical and magnetic sensors into sound or lighting effects. Brian is a research engineer at the Human Interface Technology Laboratory at the University of Washington. He's worked in spatial (3D) audio and specification of real-time, wide area networked, multi-participant environments. He has a deep interest in the use of new technologies for interactive multimedia art installations, networked multiparticipant performances, audience-performer interaction and virtual extensions to MIDI instruments for new avenues for expression. "By making these devices, you exist in little worlds that you create, and you can make music in there."

"With electronic music, you can explore areas that just haven't been touched on," according to **Tony Baird**. He owns *Native Artist Productions,* a MIDI pre-production studio specializing in audio for video and film. Tony programmed early 70's vintage synthesizers and has been using MIDI since its inception 11 years ago. He performs with his wife **Maria Baird** on synth and vocals, **Steve Sherrard** on synth and guitar, and **Mike Gillette** on electronic percussion. He strives for an alternative to the usual experimental, industrial or techno/disco avenues of electronic expression by bringing a 70's classic rock aesthetic to bear on his music. He was a winner of the first annual *Mixed on a Mackie* competition, and will appear on the Mackie Designs compilation CD. He will be releasing his own CD later this year.

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major production. We, as a group, have come of age.

I think it is time we can operate without the office of "president."

Since dues were abolished, we haven't had to deal with money, or a group treasurer. (We may want one in the future as we grow.)

The title "president" implies Robert's Rules of Order and the like. This isn't what I do. I'll still maintain the mailing list, help arrange guest speakers, and publish and mail the newsletter. If anyone wants to help with any of these tasks, that's great.

Our meetings can run themselves:

Tech checks occur spontaneously, informing the group who is there and sharing announcements — no need for "presidential leadership" there.

Our *Guest speakers* are drawn from the membership and their contacts.

The *Networking* time also occurs spontaneously, with everyone knowing what to do after the guest speaker.

It is time for us all to accept the responsibility of our group. Excercise the same word of mouth to bring more artists into the meetings. Show up monthly to support the group. If you see something that needs to be done... do it. Study and understand the present, anticipate and create the future.

This group has been made a success by the many people who have invested their time and have benefitted by the information shared. I'd like to thank you all and look forward in the next year to a broader, deeper group.

And if anyone can figure out what to call me... let me know.

NEWSFLASHES FROM AROUND THE NET

CYBERCULTURE HOUSTON 93:

December 10-12

CALL FOR ENTRIES

WHAT: CyberCulture Houston 93 will be the first annual exploration of computer art and of the social issues emerging in cyberspace. We hope to prove to the general public that creative behavior in the computer age is not limited to getting the best deal on the latest desk-top or avoiding Carpal-Tunnel Syndrome. At the same time, we hope to help this new medium gain greater acceptance and exposure in Houston's art community and the community at large.

SCOPE: Categories of works shown will include:

1. Graphic stills projected from slides and in hard-format. The latter format is prefered, as we have a limited number of slide projectors. This category includes not only "traditional" art, but also creative ray-tracing and fractal generation.

2. Computer Animation in VHS format. Preferably more artistic than commercial.

3. Tangible works made with or from computer bodies and/or electronic components.

4. Performance art dealing with human-computer interface.

5. Electronic Zines under 30-40K shown in hard-copy.

Also featured will be lectures and discussions on present and possible future issues related to this technology.

WHEN: Events will take place December 10th through 12th and the entries will be shown in the gallery for the next two weeks.

WHERE: At Commerce Street Artist's Warehouse, 2315 Commerce, Houston Texas.

ENTRIES: Please send entries to:
Cyberculture Houston
P.O. Box 52973
Houston, TX   77052-2973
voice: 1-713-227-8917
e-mail: cyber@fisher.psych.uh.edu

This is an open show and there is no entry fee, but if you want your work returned, please send return postage.

Some Local InterNet Access Sites

System Name: Seattle Unix Group
Type of Service: non-profit
Services Offered: Free e-mail feeds (uucp) to members ($40 - $125/year membership) A limited number of Usenet feeds are available. Access to source (and some binary) archives ftp server via uucp coming soon — again, only for members.
Equipment:
    Computer: Tandy 4000 (386DX-16)
    OS: Xenix
    Internet Connection: 56KB
    Modems:
Date Established: 1984
Rates:
Contact: Bill Campbell
    E-mail: slug@seaslug.org
    Dial-in:
    Voice: 947-5591
Trial Available:
User's Address: first_name.last_name@seaslug.org
Other Info: The primary objective of the group is to provide information and communications between members to improve their understanding and use of the Unix system.

System Name: seanews
Type of Service: non-profit
Services Offered: e-mail and limited Usenet news (1 hour/day limit)
Equipment:
    Computer: Intel 486/33
    OS: Xenix 2.3.2 in transition to Windows NT
    Modems: Hayes Ultra 144, Telebit Worldblazer, PPI 144, Digicom Scout+
Date Established: 10/91
Rates: free
Contact: Bill McCormick
    E-mail: billmcc@seanews.akita.com
    Dial-in: 206/747-NEWS
    Voice:
Trial Available: Yes
User's Address: user@seanews.akita.com
Other Info:
    SEANEWS is provided as a free public service, and so does not provide the level of support and facilities that commercial services do. There are no games, very limited files, etc. On the other hand SEANEWS has up-to-date Usenet news and excellent mail-handling capability.

System Name: Eskimo North
Type of Service: commercial
Services Offered:
    Provides e-mail and news feeds, interactive use, and Internet connections.
Equipment:
    Computer: Sun 4/280 + Sun 4/330
    OS: SUN/OS 4.1.3
    Internet Connection: T1
    Modems: USR Sporster 14.4k + Telebit World Blazers
Date Established: June of 1982
Rates: $13/month, $30/qtr, or $96/year.
Contact: Robert Dinse
    E-mail: nanook@eskimo.com
    Dial-in: FOR-EVER (206/367-3837) Seattle, 742-1150 Everett
            838-5913 Des Moines, 927-3218 Tacoma
    Des Moines and Tacoma lines should be in operation 9/23/93.
    Voice: (206) 367-7457
Trial Available: 2 weeks free
User's Address: user@eskimo.com
Other Info:
    Eskimo North provides Internet telnet, ftp, irc, Mud's, talk access. We carry a full Usenet News feed including groups local to other parts of the world. We have readnews, rn, trn, vnews, tin, tass, nn, and unidel news readers. We have BSD mail, elm, mush, and pine mailers. Shells include sh, ksh, csh, tcsh, bash, and zsh. We have most GNU utilities including gcc 2.45, for use and for download. We archive other files for many systems as well as graphics, sounds and text. New users login as "new", no password required.

WATTS UP

by Einar Ask

This week, in preparation for the upcoming Northwest CyberArtists performance, Steve Macatee asked me to find out exactly how much power I would use to operate my live act. I made some interesting discoveries that I previously hadn't thought too much about. It seems I have made some energy conscious decisions in becoming a modern musician.

Three and a half years ago when our first child was brand new and it was approaching "Earth Day", I was on the edge of going environmentally insane. I

QY-10

Mackie 1202

was concerned about the future like all new parents, and I wanted to do what I could to ensure that my son would at least have a good example to follow, so I became a vegetarian. I rode my bike to work — and that's 46 miles round trip, mind you. I was serious. We outfitted the house with compact fluorescent bulbs and carefully watched the power consumption elsewhere in our home. I bought rechargeable batteries and three chargers — one of them is a solar charger. I even built and used a solar box cooker. I tried to step lightly on the earth.

And to conserve electricity, all I did to express myself musically was play acoustic guitar.
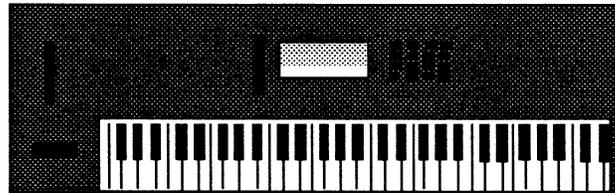
While I enjoy playing acoustic guitar, I couldn't help thinking

about the electronics that I had in the closet. I had some old — er, I mean *vintage* — gear like a drum machine and some analog synths and my old Tascam
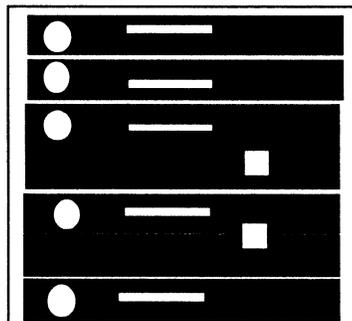
MIDI
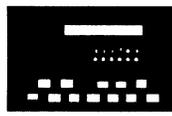
01/W

Rack Gear

Portastudio. Finally I couldn't keep myself from the need to do electronic music again, so I blew off the dust and called Steve Turnidge for advice on buying new, energy efficient equipment to complement my old gear. Armed with his advice and several issues of Electronic Musician, H&SR and Keyboard, I made some purchases. Now I call my basement studio *The Submarine* because of all the lights and knobs and buttons and screens surrounding me when everything is up and running.

At home I sequence on three platforms and shuffle MIDI data around between them, depending on my needs. The three levels of sequencing range from simple to sophisticated, and the power

required to run them increases with the complexity. So things are set up so that I can turn on just parts of my system at a time, and unused gear can remain off while I work on other instruments.

My first level of power consumption: 8 Watts.

I have mentioned the wonder of portable MIDI before. My most energy efficient component in the studio is the Yamaha QY-10. It uses six rechargeable AA batteries, or a low draw adapter. I do a lot of preliminary sequencing on this unit while chasing kids around the house, sitting on buses, or lying in hammocks. It has an eight track sequencer and lots of functional sounds to use to get the ideas down.
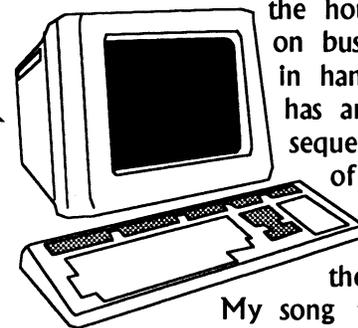
Computer

My song *"I Blame You"* was sequenced entirely on the beach on Vashon while I watched my son play in the sand.

My second level of power consumption: 20 Watts.

The Korg 01/WFD is a synthesizer which has a very powerful 16 track sequencer with editing capabilities and great drums and effects. I bypass the need to turn on a lot of external processing gear by using the 01/W to its fullest. It also has its own floppy drive so I don't need to power up anything extra to save information and as this is a self contained unit, I also enjoy the luxury of running an extension

WATTS UP

Continued from page 5

cord out to the yard to work outside now and again. It's very refreshing. I took the 01/W on vacation this year so that I could play with a beautiful view of the water.

What I sequence on the QY-10 I can record on the 01/W and then re-voice, introduce program changes, use effects, pan, copy, or cut and paste all I want.

My third level of power consumption: 400 Watts.

I can take the 01/W (or QY-10) MIDI output and record it to my computer's sequencer for more extensive sequencing. This is the easiest way to work. Unfortunately my computer is not energy efficient, just a standard mini-tower with most of the slots full, so I feel guilty – I really do – whenever I use it for long periods, but

it becomes necessary. At this stage I run external effects, additional synths and drum machines, mixers, amplifier, triggers etc. It is an absolutely beautiful display of blinking lights and screens I must admit, but I feel guilty for using that power!
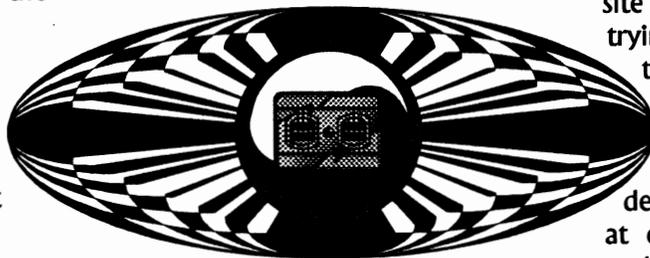
Which brings me up to why I thought about writing this article. I just saw in *National Geographic* an ad for IBM's new energy efficient computer (24 Watts!). For the first time I find myself daydreaming about something from IBM. A flat LCD screen, a small footprint (OK, so peripherals would have to be external) and an ergonomically designed keyboard. In the ad, I saw that the monitor was mounted

on a cool black stealth-like stand that I could almost see Captain Picard sitting beside! Of course a notebook computer would meet my energy conscious requirements, but what I find exciting about this ad is that they are selling energy conservation, instead of the opposite and more standard approach of trying to sell us the computer with the greatest power supply to handle all of our multi-media needs. I like the idea of having a computer on my desk that sits quietly and operates at cool temperatures. And with such futuristic style!

I know I'm a bit weird about this energy thing, but here's the deal — I can't see the point in wasting some finite resource, generating nuclear waste, or stealing water from fish, farms and folks just to make music. My impulse, after all, is to create, not to destroy; Ignoring how much energy I use would be a shame.

See ya, Einar.

Northwest CyberArtists

10802 47th Avenue West
Mukilteo, WA 98275-5098

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

FIRST CLASS MAIL