

Sonic Arts Gallery

The editor of Interval, has recently opened a gallery of sound sculptures. The Sonic Arts Gallery (612 F Street, San Diego, CA 92101) is located adjacent to downtown San Diego's Gaslamp Quarter. There are a number of galleries in the neighborhood, and the downtown area like most big cities (San Diego is now the seventh largest in the U.S.) is growing. The arts scene is ready for new blood and the sonic arts genre, blending the three parameters of sight sound and touch gives the art seeker something new...interaction and an experience. At the opening on September 17, there were 300 people excited and enthusiastic about the "Zounds" exhibit.

The first exhibit at the Sonic Arts Gallery featured four artists: Harry Partch, Arthur Frick, Ivor Darreg and Tom Nunn. Partch, of course, represents the beginnings of the "musician seduced into carpentry" idea and his Gourd Tree and Cone Gongs, typify his sculptural style and use of natural and found resources. The elements are douglas fir, eucalyptus, threaded rods, antique Japanese temple-bells ^{resonated by gourds} and two surplus bomb casings. Danlee Mitchell, owner of the Partch instruments, was busy all summer through the first week in October mounting the production of "Revelation in the Courthouse Park," in PHILADELPHIA. "Revelation" ~~which~~ was produced only once before at the University of Illinois in 1961. Mitchell drove the needed instruments ^{to Philadelphia} there in June and with only two trained players from the ensemble in San Diego, did the whole thing. It was the first East Coast production of a large Partch work in many years. The Gourd Tree and Cone Gongs were built in 1965 in Del Mar CA, so they were not needed for the "Revelation" production.

The two Frick pieces, Beepmobile and "Chinese Ruler," received quite a fanfare at the Zounds exhibit. The Beepmobile is a fibreglassed cornucopia fitted with two mouthpieces which make remarkably resonant ^{Frick} french horn and tuba like sounds. Also included (but not hooked up for the show) ^{are} were the Maserati air horns, as well as other bells and whistles. The "Chinese Ruler" is a boat-shaped instrument with rulers sticking out ~~at~~ perpendicular to the body every two inches. The sound is percussive and reminiscent of those ~~being~~ days ~~at~~ in grade school when creativity came out in ruler tunes. The piece ~~gets~~ a chuckle out of everyone, especially when the oars are explained as actually able to ^{move} the piece across the stage. Frick's ensemble has been used in a number of his spectacle-art productions. Both of these instruments were built in the late seventies.

The two pieces by Tom Nunn, a San Francisco sonic artist, Crustacean and Earwarg, show the development of ideas which began in the mid-seventies when Tom, Prent Rodgers, Jonathan Glasier and other grad students

from the University of California at San Diego were experimenting with improvisational forms and creating new instruments. The group, the ID (Improvisation Development) Project made a number of instruments of wood and metal. The Crustacean is an evolution of the Ving, which is an evolution of the Waterphone, by Richard ^{W.} ~~Waters~~ ^{available at the Sonic Arts Gallery}. The waterphone is two stainless-steel bowls welded together with a tube-handle and rods of different lengths welded all the way around. As the rods are bowed with a bass bow the sustained sound is altered by the movement of the water inside the bowls. The Ving and Crustacean are stainless sheets with rods mounted on balloons. The effect of these raited sounds are very spacial and the Crustacean ^{rests on three balloons and} sounds like it comes from the depths of the ocean while the Ving ^{resting on only one balloon} sounds more "outter spacey". The Earwarg, comes under the classification of an electro-acoustic percussion board. Originally Prent Rodgers, experimenting with different sonic ideas, came up with the Dry Spring in ID Project days. A board with strings, rods, combs, screws ^{or} and anything that when attached to a sounding board, would be amplified by means of a transducer (pick-up). The sound is very "gamelany" and works very well with the sounds of the others' instruments in the Zounds exhibition. *A tape of "Zounds" exhibition is available ~~the~~ Interval for \$7 plus \$1 postage and*

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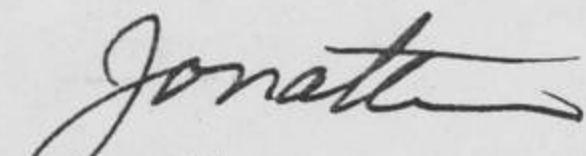
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the Journal but he is creating a stir and people are calling me from all over and dissuading me from handing over the reins to him. I would like to see Interval continue on a regular basis, but doing it for nothing and even supporting it for all these eleven years has worn me down. I am into a creative spurt myself, designing and building musical instruments for public use and the field is pretty much going under its own power. I feel great about what I have done, but it must be transferred to someone who is not going to make a big ego trip out of it.

One of my main projects and now, one of Intervals, is maintaining an environment for Ivor Darreg to work in. Two years ago Elizabeth and I brought him down from Glendale. If you remember, he was on the cover of the first Interval and you wondered if he was Partch's grandfather. Well, he has really flourished down here. We bought him a house like you did for Harry (although we retain ownership). He is on SSI and pays a reduced rent. Any way I will send you his yearly report which states that this was "the best year of my life." People from all over have been giving or loaning him synthesizers and he is making many demonstration tapes of microtonal possibilities. He is probably the main inspiration for upcoming microtonalists who are musicians and want to get the music out to the people. The next project for Interval Foundation is to make a video tape of Ivor and his instruments.

I hope this has been interesting. I am writing from the Sonic Arts Annex at 2400 Kettner. I finally have a studio to do instruments, business and the Journal. The next issue should be out by the end of the month if everything goes all right.

Thank you again for your continuing support.


Jonathan