

Electronic Music Is Here To Stay, Composer Asserts

Electronic music is here to stay, the co-director of the Columbia-Princeton Music Center told an audience of about 40 persons Monday night.

Otto Luening, professor of music at Columbia University, spoke informally on "Electronic and Computer Music: Is It Here to Stay?" in the Senate Chamber of Old Capitol. His address was sponsored by the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa and the School of Music.

He said electronic music is a misnomer. It is not music, but an electronic medium for altering sound.

He said critics differ in their opinion of the new medium. Some think it is "the greatest thing since counterpoint." Others say it "sounds like you put your socks on under your skin."

After tracing the development of electronic music, Luening spoke of his own experimentation in the area.

He said that he had considered the possibility of electronic music in 1918. He experimented with acoustics and harmonic sounds and consulted authorities in sound reproduction during the 1920s and 1930s.

He said that he made no attempt to revolutionize music and was surprised that mechanically manipulated sounds have become part of the popular culture.

Working with Vladimir Ussachevsky, he composed music for both single instruments and orchestras in the 1950s. He said that electronic music should not replace musical instruments, but extend them. "I see no reason

to stop playing the flute and the piano," he said.

Luening said pop musicians use the techniques of electronic music very well. He cited the Beatles as using the technique "discretely to enhance, color and punctuate their music, not just to make it louder."

He said there was a rapid trend toward "instant electronic music," created by placing microphones and amplifiers on the instruments and manipulating the music as it is played.

Luening said computer music was another rapidly growing trend. He said engineers were very persistent in producing music "untouched by human hands." He played a recording of a computer singing "A Bicycle Built for Two."

He also played recordings of electronic music which he had composed. "Fantasy in Space," focused on a mechanically manipulated flute. "Poem in Cycles and Bells" was recorded by a symphony orchestra.

Luening founded the American Opera in Chicago and the American Music Center in New York City. He received a Guggenheim Fellowship for music composition.

He will lecture to classes in the School of Music at 1:30 p.m. today.

LEARNING BY OSMOSIS—

NEWBURN-ON-TYNE, England (AP) — John Matcalfe took out a library book titled "Expert Obedience Training for Dogs" so he could train his 4-month-old Alsatian, Guinness. The dog ate it.