

Arts & Culture

The new sound of music

This weekend, the UI School of Music shakes things up with car alarms, French horns, and typical life sounds, all mixed together with the help of a recording device and a playback option.

By **Brigid Marshall**

THE DAILY IOWAN

Whether dancing at a club or simply bopping about to those Justin Timberlake beats, electronic music is everywhere. But the academic side of the genre pushes the envelope even further into new ways of writing and listening to music.

Using computer recording technology and a soundboard in the Voxman Music Building, the UI's Electronic Music Studio combines traditional musical instruments such as the piano or trumpet with fresh ways to create music from the sounds one hears every day.

From car horns honking to computer-generated blips and beeps, the Electronic Music Studio will present it all on Feb. 3 at 8 p.m. in Clapp Recital Hall.

"Electronic music is very much involved in pop music," said Israel Neuman, UI Ph.D. student in composition. "People aren't aware. The same software we use is being used to produce a Britney Spears album."

While Kanye West might be using the same Mac computer and ProTools equipment, the academic setting provides for a more well-rounded experience, said George Marie, a UI master's candidate in composition.

"When it comes to the electronic music, the stuff we do here is a lot more refined," he said.

However, the UI program's strongest component emphasizes taking music in new paths to develop a specific sort of craft for electronic composition.

"The direction the computer has taken us in general is much more experimental now," Neuman said. "You won't find anyone writing like Mozart or Handel anymore."

Israel, who is from Israel, will perform his work "Turn-arounds" during the nine-piece concert. The work features UI



Beth Skogen/The Daily Iowan

The Moog III (left), an analog synthesizer used to compose electronic music, is seen on Thursday at its location in the Electronic Music Studio of the Voxman Music Building. Electronic-music students will present their compositions on Feb. 3 at 8 p.m. in Clapp Recital Hall.

faculty member Jeffrey Agrell on horn, but takes a twist with Israel's unusual soundscape of electronic music.

"The original sounds from my piece are from the horn itself, but I started to manipulate the sound, and it doesn't sound like the horn anymore," the 41-year-old jazz musician said. "As a composer, I see the computer and all the instruments as my instruments."

Israel, a jazz musician, plans to move into the academic side of music following graduation. However, some students in the past have headed for Hollywood.

"My students have gone on to do this professionally. I have two students working in LA as film composers," said Lawrence Fritts, the director of the UI Electronic Music Studios.

Electronic music gained a foothold at the UI in 1963, a decade after it became the

CONCERT

UI Electronic Music Studios

When: 8 p.m. Feb. 3
Where: Clapp Recital Hall
Admission: Free

forefront of musical composition.

"It was during that sort of avant-garde period when people wanted to break away from the mainstream," Marie said. "The way I see it, composers now are writing new music anyway, and [the computer] is just another tool."

"The mainstream use of

electronic music shows acceptance of what we do here," Fritts said. "Take the show '24'; many of the sounds on the soundtrack are sounds that have been played by computers."

Tonight's concert highlights the compositions from last semester's Electronic Media Composition course including work from Neuman, Daniel Roeder, Minpyo Kim, Lieschen Mast, Seth Custer, Sandy Nordahl, Matthew Dotson, Zachary Fischer, and Fritts.

"Curiosity is a very powerful emotion," Fritts said. "It shows people want to be receptive when listening and hopefully, trying to understand."

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