

Electronic music disconcerting

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Music

A fit match was made between the enigmatic Electronic Music Studio presentation and Tuesday night's eerie combination of fog and rain.

The musical experience at Clapp Recital Hall was not the typical one. Live musicians did not fill the stage; instead only a sound system accompanied by an operator appeared.

Unfortunately, there is little objective criteria with which to judge the success of contemporary electronic music. From the subjective viewpoint then, the presentations cannot be described as enjoyable — some were intriguing and others quite dull.

The first piece was entitled "Involutions" by Steve Rogic. Sadly, at least for this listener, "The Lime Wants To Be Heard" by William Park, "These Pieces are Broken" by Douglas Fulton and "Attend" by Paul Wieneke might as well have had the same title as Rogic's work. The only things that could be derived from the pieces were a feeling of foreboding and the realization that they were entangled experiments in sound. You ended up feeling

like you were watching a horror movie with good sound effects. The major distinction among these works was that "These Pieces Are Broken" was by far the most violent work. Except for Paul Wieneke, all of these composers are UI students.

THE MOST successful piece was "Silent Dreams Against Silver Linings" by UI student Charles J. Hollister. Hollister used the electronic medium to create the only all-encompassing experience of the evening. First, the total darkness of the hall was gripping and soon one was also enveloped in sound. The piece controlled the listener; there was no opportunity for mind-wandering or yawning as during some of the other works. After the listener was hooked, the intensity and pitch of a wide sound lifted you. The lifting could be likened to that sometimes experienced when awakening from a dream and not knowing if the dream or the awakening is real

because the dreamer seems to be floating between the two.

"SNIPES IN BARS" by UI student John Cerreta was the most tonal piece of the evening. It began with the social chatter of a large group of people, with the chatter eventually overcome by the erotic beat of a rock band. This section bottomed out into emptiness, which was soon replaced by a kinky, disco sound. When that was washed away, a saxophone entered and was followed by more chatter and finally by a '60s rock sound. The rock was punched with saxophone notes and the punching eventually became a sax solo.

The snipe is a marsh bird which is highly valued as game. The mix of title, social chatter and distorted band music leads one to think the work was some sort of symbolization of the atmosphere or purpose of the bar scene. Whatever the symbolization, it was more comfortable to listen to this piece than to any other at the concert.

WILLIAM DEFOTIS' work, "Poem After," was not promising as it began. However, DeFotis masterfully in-

tegrated a text by Richard Herbert Howe into the work which added a great deal of intrigue to the sound experience. Single words — there, this, where, that, why — came at the audience from all directions and became linked into fragments which seeped words from Christianity.

Linda Bourassa, a former UI film major, produced "Tree Beasts." The work was interesting for the rhythm which drove throughout, even when it was not actually audible.

Ambition and discipline are surely part of the electronic music work of the composers. Perhaps in the future the composers could extend these qualities into producing more thorough program notes aimed at helping listeners comprehend what it is the musicians are attempting. No rule says sound should not be an entirely subjective experience. However, because there is little or no criteria with which to judge such music, the electronic music composer might well take the challenge of publicly setting out his own goals in a work and thereby enhance the sound experience and appreciation of listeners.