

New music definitely 'plugged'

■ A new age of music will be played at Clapp Recital Hall Friday.

By T.J. Besler
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Iowa City will be introduced Friday to electronic music that is completely computer-processed and devoid of live performers.

Sounds are taken from CDs, previous compositions and the real world in this new age of music. The sounds are then manipulated by a computer until they are unrecognizable from the original.

"This is the music of the future," said Lawrence Fritts, UI professor of composition and director of the Electronic Music Studio. "There are so many possibilities with the computer that we are just now discovering."

The musicians represent seven countries and include professors, graduate students and undergraduate students from the UI, as well as professors from other universities.

"We think it's important to mix it up," Fritts said.

While electronic music may not be the first thing that comes to people's minds when they think of the UI, it has been a successful field for many students here. Some students have gone on to teach at such institutions as the University of Illinois and New York University, as well as write books and create their own software.

Fritts said that even working as director of the music studio is a learning process.

"I am constantly going to festivals and hearing others perform styles that are new and interesting to me. These, in turn, inspire me in composing my own music," he said.

The UI has four studios with

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advanced computer technology in which the students work, including Dimitri Papageorgiou, a student in the Ph.D. composition program.

"With the technology we have, we are able to take CD soundtracks, among other things, and perform processes such as time expansion, modulation and convolution (using properties of one sound to control another)," Papageorgiou said.

"It's a lot like morphing a picture. We just let one sound flow into another."

Although composing this music involves a number of intricate process-

es, Michael S. Cash, one of three undergraduates participating in the performance, has a much simpler approach.

"Like many things, it's a lot of trial and error," Cash said. "I never know the outcome when I begin. I just manipulate the sound, and then I keep some stuff and throw other stuff out. I do this until I hear something I like."

The music studio is part of a requirement for a composition major, and even if the student's primary interest isn't in electronic music, it's still considered to be helpful, Cash said.

"I'm more into writing traditional compositions, but being able to do this helps me with that," he said. "Once you dissect a sound, it takes on a new perspective."

The concert, which will have 16 compositions, each with a different style, is scheduled to be held Friday in Clapp Recital Hall at 8 p.m. It is free to the public.

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