7-22-1987

Intercom : 1987 : 07 : 22

University of South Florida.

Follow this and additional works at: https://digital.usfsp.edu/inside_usf

Recommended Citation
https://digital.usfsp.edu/inside_usf/302
Composers meet computers at USF's electronic music center

Students in the USF theatre department often hear strange sounds coming from the basement of their building. One day, they might hear Beethoven's Fifth Symphony played by an orchestra of harmonica players.

"It's one of the finest programs for computer music in the nation, and probably one of the finest in the world," said John Melby, professor of music theory and composition at the University of Illinois, and head of the electronic music program there.

"It's certainly the outstanding studio in the Southeast," said Marvin Johnson, professor of theory and composition at the University of Alabama. "And it commands favorably with other departments in the country. I don't know of anybody who does it better."

Both Melby and Johnson attribute the quality of SYCOM to the talent, vision and energy of its director, Dr. Brad Albers. Albers is only 34, but he's already headed SYCOM for 10 years. And in those 10 years, he's become a nationally-known figure in the electronic music world. "He's certainly one of the most respected authorities in the field," said Melby. "And, I might add, he's one of the most talented composers of computer music in the country."

(Among Albers' compositions: a baroque fugue that starts off slowly and accelerates at the same rate as an object falling through the air, ending at an unbelievably frenzied tempo.)

SYCOM has been growing steadily ever since Albers took over. Every year, 400 to 600 students pass through Alber's program, trying to learn how to make music with computers instead of musical instruments.

Why, you might ask, would someone want to make music on a computer? "A better question," Albers responds, "is 'Why not?'

For a student composer, computers open new worlds of opportunities. Before the dawn of computer music, a student who wrote a symphony of almost no chance of ever hearing it performed. But with computers, the student can closely approximate the sound of the symphony at a tiny fraction of the cost of hiring an orchestra.

For professionals, the benefits are even greater, Albers says. One computer musician can replace an entire orchestra of studio musicians. 'Touring bands can reproduce the sound of strings without the expense of traveling with a string section.' Albers says that Barry Manilow, in his "American Bandstand" program, is only 34, but he's already headed SYCOM for 10 years. And in those 10 years, he's become a nationally-known figure in the electronic music world. "He's certainly one of the most respected authorities in the field," said Melby. "And, I might add, he's one of the most talented composers of computer music in the country."

T. Terrel Sessums, Florida Board of Regents chairman, has announced a 30-member Search Advisory Committee to assist in the search for the University's next president. The committee is part of a two-stage process, in which the board solicits nominations and recommendations from people for whom the Florida Board of Regents has appointed. Vicki W. Ahrens, director of the University of Florida, has been appointed dean of the College of Liberal Arts, has been appointed dean of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

Julia Davis

Dr. Julia M. Davis, associate dean for faculty at the University of Iowa's College of Liberal Arts, has been appointed dean of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Davis, who is also a professor in the department of speech pathology and audiology at the University of Iowa, was selected from a pool of candidates. She assumes her new position on Sept. 1 and replaces Wallace Rus-