

contact

Contact: A Journal for Contemporary Music (1971-1988)

<http://contactjournal.gold.ac.uk>

Citation

Stone, Carl. 1975. 'The New Music Collective'. *Contact*, 11. pp. 33-34. ISSN 0308-5066.

© **CARL STONE**

The New Music Collective

11

The New Music Collective was founded in the spring of 1974 by four young composers who share common ideas and musical goals, and who wished to develop an alternative to the institutional nature of new music in the United States. Our activities include the operation of a studio for electro-acoustic music, the design and construction of electronic music equipment, the realisation of both individual and collective tape compositions, and a performing ensemble, the Negative Band.

All four members of the NMC studied at the California Institute of the Arts, using the tape studios and working with faculty members, especially James Tenney and Morton Subotnick. During that time, we discovered that we held in common views about the nature of contemporary music, as well as its social functions. It seemed to us that the centralisation of new music at educational institutions placed that music in an essentially counter-productive context, especially in the case of composition on tape, a medium demanding expensive equipment rarely available to private individuals. In order to free ourselves from the necessity of associating with an academic institution we formed the Collective, and set about making a self-sustaining centre for our work. After ten months of activity, we can report initial successes and prospects for the future.

To begin with, we are approaching completion of the first of two synthesizers to be built by the studio. An analog modular system is in the final stages of construction, and is already being used in the Negative Band. It utilises the latest integrated-circuit technology to achieve maximum versatility at minimum cost. In addition to this synthesizer, we are currently using a hybrid system comprising Buchla 100 series modules and studio-built equipment. This synthesizer will eventually be replaced by our own, similar in nature to the first. We are also in possession of efficient tape recording equipment to produce high-quality stereo recordings.

The Negative Band, the performing arm of the Collective, was formed in the spring of 1974 as an independent ensemble. At that time, it consisted of six members, including three of the NMC founders. In May of that year, the Band presented the West Coast premieres of three improvisatory works by Karlheinz Stockhausen: Kurzwellen, Set Sail for the Sun and Right Durations. Two of these pieces should now be available on an LP released by Finnadar records.

The ensemble presently consists of the aforementioned three members, and utilises two synthesizers and alto saxophone, as well as miscellaneous percussion. We are now performing only our own material, composed by individual members and by the group as a whole.

The Collective has also assembled a package of the four most recent tape pieces composed by individual members of the group: Distensions, Pt. I, Allbriton Bull, The Loud Piece and Concret IIIc. These pieces represent our personal efforts and musical concerns; they exhibit, perhaps, some common aesthetic criteria and decisions. Although we work individually, and in different areas at times, we all enjoy and respect each others' work; this respect is the essential base on which the Collective rests. We consider this appreciation and voluntary association to be the best foundation from which to compose music, better than the accretion of possibly unsympathetic personalities and aesthetics at a more traditional institution.

The members of the New Music Collective are as follows:

Paul Taylor, composer of The Loud Piece and synthesizer player in the Negative Band, is the member responsible for the design and construction of the studio synthesizer.

Earl Howard, whose latest work is Allbriton Bull, plays the alto saxophone in the Band and composes musique concrète.

Carl Stone, whose work has been played around the world, is the composer of numerous tape pieces and film soundtracks, among the former Distensions, Pt. I.

Jonathan Weisberger plays synthesizer in the Negative Band, composes musique concrète (Concret IIIc) and is beginning work on the second of the two Collective synthesizers.

The New Music Collective is now moving to New York City where it will continue its activities. We are currently negotiating with Finnadar for a second album, to consist of individual tape works. We are all currently working on tape compositions and several of us on works for other media. We hope to continue to design and build equipment for the realisation of our ideas.

We are interested in receiving questions and comments on our work, and anyone wishing to communicate with us, either with requests for information on any of our activities or with regard to obtaining tapes for performances of electronic music may contact us at this address:

The New Music Collective,
24700 MacBean Parkway,
Box RL 20,
VALENCIA,
California 91355,
U.S.A.