



# SCI

**Society of Composers, Inc.**

*... dedicated to the  
promotion, composition,  
performance, understanding  
and dissemination of  
new and contemporary  
music ...*

**NEWSLETTER CONTENTS**

**XXXIX : 1, January–February 2009**

**Resources**

*Learn about the Newsletter, upcoming SCI Events and our many online resources*



**Page 2**

**About SCI**

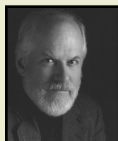


*Message from the Editors, members of the National Council/Executive Committee*

**Page 3**

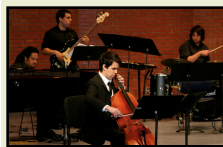
**Feature**

*Mark Phillips' Keynote Address from the 2008 SCI Student National Conference*



**Page 1**

**SCITings**



*Performances, Awards, Commissions, Honors, Publications and other Member Activities*

**Page 7**

**Editorial**

*Matthew McCabe discusses the role of a student composer outside the classroom*



**Page 8**

**Join SCI**



*SCI is an organization for composers. Our membership categories include full member, student member, retired member or life member.*

**Page 9**

**B E H I N D T H E M U S I C : H O W A N D W H Y I C O M P O S E**

**Behind the Music:  
How and Why I Compose**

By **Mark Phillips**  
Ohio University

I'd like to thank Tom Wells for the invitation to present this keynote speech. I am truly honored to be here today. As this is a national event, I feel an obligation to speak to you on a topic in which I have some expertise. I am not a theorist, historian, or philosopher... and I am definitely not a motivational speaker. I'm just a composer. So I have chosen today to speak on the only topic on which I am the world's leading expert: "How and Why I Compose Music." I will answer these questions by delving into three subtopics: Communication, Inspiration, and Collaboration.

**Communication**

For me, composition is not just about notes. It is about the communication of ideas and emotions. One reason I continue to be fascinated by composition is that, through music, a composer has a remarkable ability to communicate with listeners simultaneously on

multiple levels. A piece of music can appeal to the listener's intellect with its sophisticated and intricate patterns of vibrations; it can beguile with its palette of tone colors and timbres. At the same time, it can connect directly and powerfully with primal emotions, due to the low-level hardwiring between our ears and our brain that can bypass the intellect altogether. Melodies can burn themselves into your brain. Musical rhythms can elicit physical responses such as swaying, clapping, toe tapping, or even dancing. For ages, music has been used to set the tone for all manner of ceremonies and rituals. And of course, music can be humorous and entertaining, too. Anyone who knows my music is aware of the importance humor plays in it.

In the process of developing my own voice as a composer, I became passionately committed to breaking down many of the virtual walls that divide music into various styles. Categorizing music into discrete styles may make sense from a marketing point of view—and may even be useful as a pedagogical tool. But ultimately, I believe it shackles the art form and contributes to making music more of a commodity and less of an art. So I simply want to

flatten any artificial walls that separate me from a good idea or a valuable tool of expression.

For decades now, I have been developing a personal musical language which draws on a variety of music traditions—most notably the traditions of Western art music and various styles of American popular music. Of course, the concept of borrowing from American popular music is hardly a new idea. Many classical composers of the last century did it. But too often in works that I heard as a young composer, the borrowed elements—typically jazz-based—seemed to my ears to be only surface deep. They seemed more decorative than substantive, often lacking solid integration into the whole of the composition. So I became interested in developing a language in which the appropriated elements of popular music—in my case based more often in rock and blues—would be given deep roots in the whole of the composition. At times these elements may be pruned very closely, while at other times they are allowed to flower more fully.

Though I place a high value on the development of this personal language, I am equally committed to communicating with a broad range of listeners.

*(Continued on Page 4)*

...dedicated to the promotion, composition, performance, understanding and dissemination of new and contemporary music...

**NEWSLETTER CONTENT:**

| Resources  | Contribute  | Feature   | Activities  | Join SCI   |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| Learn about the Newsletter opening SCI Events and meet many online resources | Guidelines for submitting an article, review, or other item to the Newsletter | Review of the 2009 Region VI Conference by Scott Brinkman | Performances, awards, commissions, honors, publications and other accomplishments | SCI is an organization for composers. Our membership categories include full member, student member, retired member, or life member. |
| Page 2   | Page 2  | Page 3  | Page 4  | Page 6   |

**ANACRISIS:**  
Meet the New Assistant Editor for the SCI Newsletter

note from the editor / in related to how to become an editor for the assistant editor of the newsletter  
The journal of the composer and service to SCI  
qualifications for the position of assistant editor  
is responsible for the Member News & Activities  
editor of the newsletter operations may be sent  
directly to sci@composers.org



## About the Newsletter

Editors: Anthony Cornicello  
Benjamin Williams

Circulation: 1400

Access: available on the SCI website at  
<http://www.societyofcomposers.org/data/publications/newsletter/current.pdf>

Frequency of Publication: bimonthly

Newsletter Contact Information:

Anthony Cornicello  
Eastern Connecticut State University  
Shafer Hall, Room 109  
83 Windham St  
Willimantic, CT 06226  
(860) 236-3892  
[cornicello@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cornicello@sbcglobal.net)

Benjamin Williams  
504 Hemston Ct  
Gahanna, OH 43230  
(330) 268-2590

[benjamin@williamscomposer.com](mailto:benjamin@williamscomposer.com)

For other SCI business:

Society of Composers, Inc.  
P.O. Box 687  
Mineral Wells, TX 76067-0687  
[secretary@societyofcomposers.org](mailto:secretary@societyofcomposers.org)

Copyright © 2008

Society of Composers, Inc.  
All rights reserved.

## How to Submit Items to the Newsletter

**Articles:** The Newsletter welcomes submissions of articles to run in future issues. Articles, if accepted, may be edited for length and content. Please include a photo with all submissions if possible (photo may be of author).

**Member News + Photos:** Please send all member news and activities with a photo. Submitted items may be edited.

**Ideas/Suggestions:** The Editors welcome any other ideas or suggestions.

Submit to the newsletter via email at:  
[newsletter@societyofcomposers.org](mailto:newsletter@societyofcomposers.org)

## Upcoming SCI Events

### 2009 Region VI Conference

February 26–March 1

The Bass School of Music at  
Oklahoma City University  
Oklahoma City, OK  
Host: Edward Knight  
[\[eknight@okcu.edu\]](mailto:eknight@okcu.edu)

### 2009 National Conference

April 2–4, 2009

Sante Fe New Mexico  
Host: Steven Paxton  
[\[spaxton@csf.edu\]](mailto:spaxton@csf.edu)

<http://composers-conference.csf.edu/>

### 2010 Region VI Conference Spring 2010 (dates TBA)

Kansas State University  
Manhattan, KS  
Host: Craig Weston  
[\[cweston@ksu.edu\]](mailto:cweston@ksu.edu)  
Submission deadline: TBA

See our website at

<http://www.societyofcomposers.org/>  
for more details.

## Internet & Email

[www.societyofcomposers.org](http://www.societyofcomposers.org)

The SCI website is an up-to-date source of information:

- Conference dates and submission guidelines
- Contact information and links to member webpages
- Student chapters and opportunities
- CDs and journals produced by SCI
- Details on SCI such as membership options, listings and contacts for officers, regional structure, by-laws, newsletter archives and more...

## SCION

SCION is a listing of opportunities on our website exclusively for members. It is updated on a continual basis so that it may be checked at any time for the most current notices. In addition, members are emailed on the first Monday of each month to remind them to visit the site for new or recent postings. The large number of listings is easily managed by a table of contents with links to the individual notices. In-depth coverage; contest listings in full; all items listed until expiration; this is a valuable resource that you may print in its entirety or in part at any time.

John Bilotta, SCION Editor  
[scion@societyofcomposers.org](mailto:scion@societyofcomposers.org)

## [scimembers]

**scimembers** is a member-driven e-mail mailing list that is intended to facilitate communication between members of the Society on topics of concern to composers of contemporary concert music. It conveys whatever notices or messages are sent by its members, including announcements of performances and professional opportunities, as well as discussions on a wide variety of topics. For more information, including how to join and participate in the listserv:

<http://www.societyofcomposers.org/data/publications/listserv/listserv.html>

## NATIONAL COUNCIL

### President

Thomas Wells  
*Ohio State University*

### Region 1

Scott Brickman  
*University of Maine at Fort Kent*

Beth Wiemann  
*University of Maine*

### Region 2

Anneliese Weibel  
*SUNY-Stony Brook*

Daniel Weymouth  
*SUNY-Stony Brook*

### Region 3

Harvey Stokes  
*Hampton University*

Bruno Amato  
*Peabody Conservatory*

### Region 4

Mark Engebretson  
*University of North Carolina at Greensboro*

Paul Osterfield  
*Middle Tennessee State University*

### Region 5

Mark Phillips  
*Ohio University*

Frank Felice  
*Butler University*

### Region 6

Eric Honour  
*University of Central Missouri*

Ken Metz  
*The University of the Incarnate Word*

### Region 7

Bruce Reiprich  
*Northern Arizona State University*

Glenn Hackbarth  
*Arizona State University*

### Region 8

Charles Argersinger  
*Washington State University*

Patrick Williams  
*University of Montana*

### National Conference Host

Steve Paxton  
*Sante Fe, New Mexico*

### Student Conference

Ball State University

### President Emeritus

Greg Steinke



*Anthony Cornicello*

## Message from The Editors

As promised, we are pleased to feature as the front-page article this month the keynote address from the

2008 SCI Student National Conference given by Mark Phillips. We hope you enjoy it as much as the students at the conference.

In terms of conferences, it won't be long before SCI members

will be gathering from around the country and world to

meet once again for the 2009 National

Conference. This year's conference

will be taking place in Santa Fe, New

Mexico, under the

direction of Steven Paxton (see *page 2* for more details). Even before that is the Region

VI Conference that is being hosted by Edward Night at the Bass School of Music at

Oklahoma City University. Hopefully you will have a chance to be at one or both of these great events.

As always, there are announcements of other events that have featured music by SCI composers over the past couple of months in the *SCItings* section of the *Newsletter* (*page 7*).

If you have any news of your own—Performances, Awards, Commissions, Honors, Publications, etc.—we would be glad to hear from you so that we can share it with the rest of the *Newsletter* readership. Information on how to submit is also available *on page 7*.

There is a lot going on with our members at this time—and that is wonderful news!

*Anthony Cornicello*  
*Benjamin Williams*  
*Editors, SCI Newsletter*



*Benjamin Williams*

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### Chairman

James Paul Sain  
*University of Florida*

### Editors, Newsletter

Anthony Cornicello  
*Eastern Connecticut State University*

Benjamin Williams  
*The Ohio State University*

### Editor, SCION

John G. Bilotta

### Editor, Journal of Music Scores

Bruce J. Taub

### Producer, CD Series

Richard Brooks  
*Capstone Records*

### Manager, Audio Streaming Project

Thomas Wells  
*The Ohio State University*

### Coordinator, Submissions

Lee Hartman  
*University of Delaware*

### Representative, Independent Composer

Anne Kilstofte  
*Phoenix Arizona*

### Representative, Student Chapters

Nickitas Demos  
*Georgia State University*

### Representative, Students

Alexander Sigman  
*Amsterdam, The Netherlands*

### Coordinator, SCI/ASCAP Student Competition and Grants

Kari Juusela  
*Berklee College*

### Webmaster

Mike McFerron  
*Lewis University*

### Web Content Manager

Matthew McCabe  
*University of Florida*

### Chair Emeritus

William Ryan  
*Grand Valley State University*

(Continued from Page 1)

Of course these two ideals can pull in opposite directions. The more personal the language, the more problematic communication with a large audience becomes. But I believe this is not an insurmountable problem, as the following story helps to illustrate.

Years ago, I watched Andy Kaufman do an extraordinary stand-up comedy routine on *Saturday Night Live*. The routine included a series of jokes littered with punch lines. An audience member was even drawn into the act as a volunteer participant. But what made the routine so remarkable was the fact that, for its entire length, Andy did not speak a single word of intelligible English—in fact, not a single phrase in *any* language known to anyone in the world, except maybe Andy himself. Yet the audience was laughing uproariously and precisely at all the “punch lines,” even though no one had any clue what the “jokes” were about.

What made this routine work was the audience’s familiarity with the structure and conventions of the standup comedy monologue—and Kaufman’s superb ability to articulate that structure using only vocal inflection, timing, and body language. The success of this routine demonstrates how powerful the role of structure is in communication.

So while I do hope that the inherent logic of my idiosyncratic personal language will be comprehended and appreciated by sophisticated listeners, I also desire to communicate at least on some level with a wider audience. One of my goals as a composer is to write music with such force and clarity of structure that listeners will appreciate and perhaps even laugh at my “punch lines” even if they are unable to comprehend the “vocabulary” and syntax of the personal language I have developed to express my ideas.

The communication and perception of large-scale structure is largely beyond the scope of a setting like this, for it would take some very long audio examples to demonstrate. Instead, today we will take a look at some smaller musical ideas and some tiny flashes of inspiration to show how they are used to create interesting musical passages and coherent smaller-scale musical structures.

Since I am addressing a group of *student* composers, I thought it might be interesting to begin with a couple of examples from *Turning*, which won the 1988 Barlow International Competition for New Orchestra Music. I composed the work during the period that spanned the end of my student days and the beginning of my professional career. The title, by the way, refers not only to this career turning point, but also to the fact that the piece is pivotal in my stylistic development. It is with this piece that I emphatically veered away from the course I’d been on, following closely in the footsteps of my mentors, and truly began to forge my own identity as a composer. If you listen to the entire piece, you can actually hear the music take a big turn during the transition between the first and second sections. The title is also a bit of an insider joke for conductors, since for the last few minutes of the work, they will be frantically turning pages just to keep pace with the music.

*Turning* begins with a very simple idea—a major second—essentially *Do-Re*.



This two-note motive, first sounded by Trumpet 1, is imitated heterophonically by most of the orchestra and sequenced in a pattern where each new major second is a minor third above the previous one, so that eventually a diminished scale emerges. This gradual ascent is then answered by a much more rapid descent through some of the same pitches used in the ascent.



(muted brass; upper ww's; upper strings, etc.)

In the beginning of this passage, the orchestra is essentially playing follow the leader, with Trumpet 1 as the leader. Eventually the strings take over the leadership role. Of course other things are going on too, such as a notated wind chime effect in the piano and metallic percussion. But that’s all just window dressing for the basic underlying ascending gesture, which just about any listener can sense and comprehend on some level. [Audio Example 1 (all audio examples are available at [http://www.coolvillemusic.com/SCI\\_NewsletterExs.html](http://www.coolvillemusic.com/SCI_NewsletterExs.html))]

After a series of intimately scored solos that also focus on the ascending major second, we come to another ascending gesture. And as before the ascent is followed by a smaller descending gesture.



This ascent differs from the first one by having a slightly larger interval between the ascending major seconds. Instead of a minor third we have a perfect fourth. As a result the passage ascends more steeply. It also ascends more steadily, in a more direct line, so that it takes much less time to get to the top. [Audio Example 2]

So we have these two very clearly articulated rising and falling gestures that serve as bookends to this opening section. Except for perhaps the prominence of major seconds plus the overall soft volume and registration, almost everything else about these two ascending gestures is different. I’ve used these two passages, because I think they demonstrate my point that composition is about the communication of gestures, shapes, or structures. In other words, it’s about *ideas*—even when, as in this case, no extra-musical ideas are involved. Composition is no more “about notes” than poetry is “about letters.” In my view, both are “about” ideas. Notes, or letters, are just a means of communicating those ideas.

While we are on this issue, I'd like to talk about the importance for composers of learning to work at both extreme ends of the scaling factor. By that, I mean it is important to think BIG—so that your music is about big ideas and exhibits a comprehensible and interesting overall structure that can hold a listener's attention. At the same time it is important to zoom in and focus on the smallest level of the raw materials you are planning to use in your composition. The challenge is to strip away as many layers as possible from your germinating motives in order to get at the most basic essence of your idea. To the extent that you can reduce your generative material to its most elemental level, you will have more flexibility in what you can build and where you can go with your music.

In the previous examples, if I had conceptualized that the essential building block for my opening was an ascending diminished scale, I don't think I ever would have come up with a closing gesture that had anywhere near the sense of summation or the sweetness of resolution as the one I have. The reason I was able to do so was because I was also working simultaneously at both a lower level—with a pattern of ascending major seconds—and at a higher level of abstraction—with a simple, basic ascending gesture. As a result, it was much easier for me to come up with two such different ascending gestures and to make the case to my listeners that, despite their differences, the two passages complement each other and belong together in this piece.

## Inspiration

I'd also like to talk a little today about the topic of inspiration. I had a mentor who was fond of saying that all music is inspired and influenced by other music. I have no doubt that he is right. If Debussy had never heard a note of music in his life, would he have been inspired to compose *La Mer* simply by a visit to the seashore? I don't think so. So let's just agree that all music is inspired—at least in part—by other music. Beyond that, many if not all composers are sometimes inspired by other things as well. For me, the whole subject of inspiration is a bit mysterious. I don't claim to understand it all that well, nor do I want to try to analyze it too much. What I try to do is remain open and receptive as much as possible, so as not to miss a good inspiration. In this regard, I think it helps that I have flattened all those artificial walls between styles of music. I can,

however, talk about past inspirations that have had a significant impact on my music. And today I'll share a few of the more unusual instances.

Late in my college career, I began studying electronic music, thinking it just might help me find a job. (And indeed it did.) Little did I realize, in the beginning, that it would also play such a major role in shaping who I have become as a composer. Beyond the fact that, over the years, my electro-acoustic music has been widely performed and recorded, in a very direct way it was working in the electronic studio as a graduate student at Indiana University that helped me begin to come to terms with the schizophrenia that had characterized my musical personality for many years. While I was going to school studying to be a good composer—preparing to inherit and carry forward the traditions, techniques, and language of influential 20th-century composers and mentors—I found that on weekends and nights when I wanted to unwind or cut loose, the sound track was almost always rock, blues, reggae, or jazz ... almost never Boulez, Cage, Stockhausen, or Crumb. Working in that analog studio during grad school brought out the latent "rocker" in me. In turn, it challenged me to find a way to channel some of that energy, excitement, fun, and yes—*tonality*—into my instrumental music.

While working on *Turning*, I was also playing around in the studio with sub-audio rate frequency modulation. Frequency modulation, as many of you may know, is the principle behind FM radio broadcasts. It involves remotely controlling the frequency of a carrier wave oscillator with a program signal of some sort. In simple sound synthesis models, it's often another oscillator that serves as the program. Using a sub-audio rate program oscillator, this technique forms the basis of many familiar primitive synthesizer sounds heard in very old video games. Here are a few common examples [Audio Example 3]:

1. *Basic FM (with two sine waves)*
2. *Wild vibrato (with faster program)*
3. *"Normal" vibrato (with attenuated program)*
4. *"Sci-Fi" effect (positive-going sawtooth program)*
5. *Cheesy laser (negative-going sawtooth program); square wave trill*
6. *Lower pitched square wave trill*
7. *Octave "trill" (with increased amplitude of program)*
8. *6/8 ostinato (rectangle wave program with duty cycle of 2:1)*

This last one proved to be very inspirational and led me into areas of musical expression that I may never have otherwise discovered. In the studio, I was creating passages on a large modular analog synthesizer that sounded like this. [Audio Example 4]

These experiments led directly to the second section of *Turning*. [Audio Example 5]

As I ponder the influence of a simple studio experiment with Frequency Modulation on one of my signature accomplishments as an orchestral composer, I am reminded of the work and theories of Edward Lorenz, the recently deceased pioneering meteorologist and chaos theorist who developed computer models for predicting weather. He achieved pop culture fame for popularizing the "butterfly effect," which suggests that a butterfly flapping its wings in Brazil might be responsible for (eventually) setting off a tornado in Texas. The longer I compose, the more resonance this notion has for me. In addition to having a grand plan or a well-developed sense of form and structure, it is important for an artist to be sensitive to the sometimes very small, delicate, and fragile inspirations that have the potential to turn into a tornado of artistic expression.

## Collaboration

Collaboration with performers often plays an important role in my music, as this next work demonstrates. True collaboration is a great source of unexpected inspiration... and clearly my composition for trombone and electro-acoustic music, entitled *T. Rex*, would never have sounded anything close to the way it does without the help and inspiration of my collaborators.

First, I recruited John Marcellus—world-renowned trombonist and world-class character, well known for his crazy antics. [At the world premiere of the work, on the stage at Eastman, he insisted that his entire trombone studio come out on stage and dance the macarena during a reprise of the last movement. I have heard stories that he has done subsequent performances in an actual *T. Rex* costume!] With John's help, I recruited several more trombonists and sent out blank DAT cassettes along with instructions to record any sounds they could make with their trombone. I got back hours of unedited trombone playing from which I extracted a large collection of little gems that I thought might be useful. [Audio Example 6]

So as you listen to the next example from the last movement of *T. Rex*, be aware that everything you hear comes from some sort of trombone sound. And virtually every sound is put in place by hand, by playing a note on a keyboard sampler loaded with weird sounds or played by the live trombone soloist. I should add as a disclaimer that NO trombones were injured or damaged in the making of *T. Rex*! **[Audio Example 7]**

## More Collaboration and Inspiration

As with almost anything that is good in moderation, you can sometimes have too much inspiration. This was the case with the next piece I'd like to share with you, where the ideas I wanted to express were so big and so numerous that the task seemed quite impossible for a while. Yet, in another instance of this "butterfly effect," it was a series of two unrelated and unexpected life experiences that finally put the whole piece in perspective and allowed me to compose *Dreams Interrupted*.

Commissioned for a premiere in Memphis, Tennessee, *Dreams Interrupted* offered me a good excuse to search for inspiration in the city's rich musical and cultural heritage, which includes W. C. Handy and the vibrant Beale Street blues tradition, the seminal Sun studio recordings, Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement, and much more. I even had composition students in Memphis running around town recording source audio for me to use. Before long, though, I was drowning in a sea of "inspiration," but getting nowhere on the actual composition until I visited the city a few months before the premiere. Too early each morning, a really loud alarm clock went off in the hotel room adjacent to mine and kept up its obnoxious, rhythmic bleating for a solid

hour or more. Somewhere in the haze of extreme sleep deprivation and frequently interrupted dreams, I found the narrative for my personal and idiosyncratic tribute to Memphis and to the memory of Dr. King. I eventually came up with a series of five movements entitled: *Wide Awake*, *Sweet Dreams*, *Sleep Walking*, *Whole Lotta Wakin' Goin' On* and *Lullaby*.

Here is an example of some source material, W. C. Handy's *Memphis Blues* from the early 1900s, that I had no idea how to include until that alarm clock went off next to me in Memphis. **[Audio Example 8]** This song supplied the generative motive for my movement entitled *Sweet Dreams*. **[Audio Example 9]**

Around the same time, I had the privilege of attending a performance of Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*. (If you don't know the work, do yourself a favor, go out and learn it right away!) The piece has a very dramatic movement in which all four instruments are playing in unison or octaves throughout. As I sat there listening to this movement, I thought to myself ... hmmm ... wouldn't it be fun to compose passages like that for a much larger ensemble. And thus was born the first movement of *Dreams Interrupted*, entitled *Wide Awake*—complete with "obnoxious" alarm. **[Audio Example 10]**

At one point, I had in mind actually trying to record my own interviews with Memphis civil rights activists on the topic of Martin Luther King. But this simply proved to be impossible to arrange any. I was also pretty sure it would be problematic for me to get permission to use recordings of Dr. King. I really wasn't sure I wanted to anyway, as they are so powerful on their own that they could easily overpower the music. Besides, if did I use them, my composition would no longer be the personal statement I was looking for. So instead, I conducted long interviews with a couple of my colleagues on the Ohio University faculty who had grown up in the south during the civil rights era. You will hear recorded excerpts from these interviews toward the end of the piece. You will also hear the voices of the very diverse group of commissioning musicians as well. In the end, I am glad that I was unable to get those other interviews. I believe that the voices and stories you will hear are much better for my piece. I'm reminded of a lyric sung by Mick Jagger:

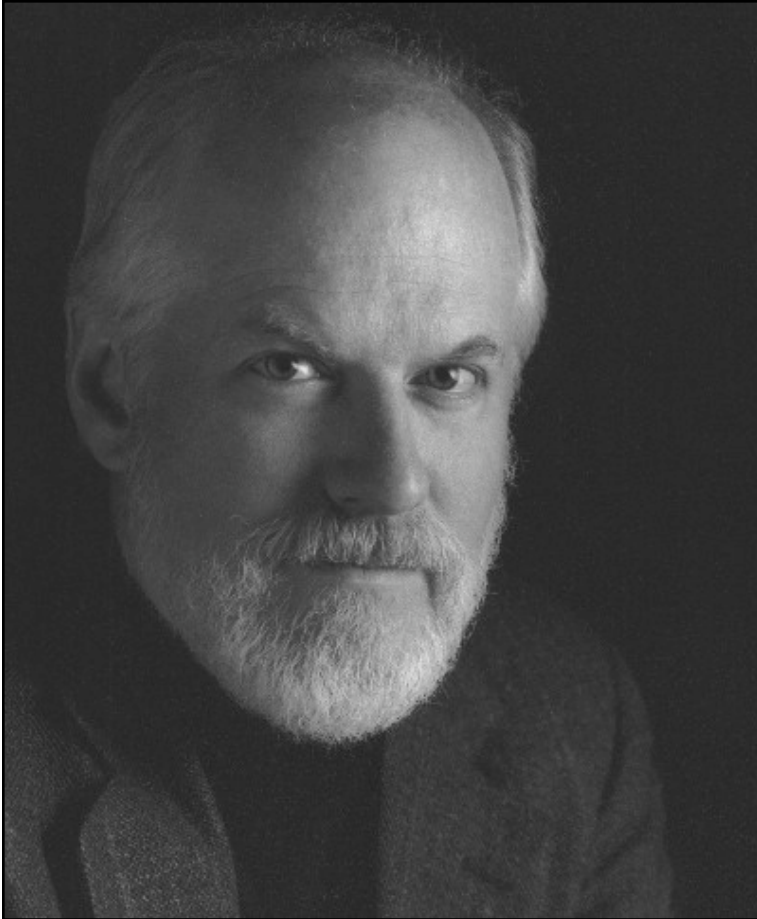
*You can't always get what you want  
But if you try sometimes you just might find  
You get what you need*

We will conclude by listening to the last two movements of *Dreams Interrupted*. The first of these is *Whole Lotta Wakin' Goin' On*, which is basically a sort of recapitulation of *Wide Awake* (which you just heard), but it is played in a style indebted to those early Sun Studio recordings of pianists like Ike Turner and Jerry Lee Lewis. The second one, entitled *Lullaby*, is based on a popular spiritual. Though I don't actually make use of its text, those of you who recognize the tune may also realize that its text is also about a dream. **[Audio Example 11]**

Thank you for your time and attention. I will conclude with a series of challenges for all young composers in attendance:

- Think BIG
- Always be on the lookout for butterflies..., and
- Strive to make your music about something.

Mark Phillips  
phillipm@ohio.edu



## SCItings

### Member News and Activities

*Performances, Awards, Commissions, Honors, Publications and other Member Activities.*

#### Ken Davies

Davies' 10 minute work, *Three Pieces for Bass Trombone and Piano*, has won the 2009 Eastern Trombone Workshop National Trombone Composition Competition. In addition to a \$1000 prize award, the work will be premiered March 21, 2009 at the ETW Workshop in Ft. Myer, VA by Chicago Symphony bass trombonist, Charlie Vernon. The ETW, under the sponsorship of the U.S. Army Band, is one of the nation's foremost annual trombone festivals. The work will be published by Kenvad Music and will be available in summer 2009.



Ken Davies

#### Mark Zuckerman

Zuckerman's opera, *The Outlaw and the King*—presented at Rutgers in December—was featured on the New Jersey Network's "State of the Arts" program January 16, 19 and 21, 2009.

#### Ying-Chen Kao

The dynamic New York/San Francisco-based chamber ensemble REDSHIFT (Jeff Anderle, Clarinet/Bass Clarinet; Andie Springer, Violin; Emily Popham, Violin; Rose Bellini, Cello; Isabelle O'Connell, Piano) premiered Kao's *Surreal Perception* January 29, 2009 at the Towson University Recital Hall Center for the Arts in Towson,

MD. *Surreal Perception* was written for REDSHIFT.

#### Elizabeth R. Austin

At The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., on February 1, 2009 there was a piano recital, featuring Mendelssohn's music, in the 300th anniversary of his birth (1809), given by Ulrich Urban of Leipzig. Mr. Urban included Austin's *Puzzle Preludes*, including the premiere of the *Puzzle* citing a passage from Mendelssohn's music.

#### Piotr Szewczyk

Szewczyk's string quintet *The Rebel* was featured on NPR "Performance Today" January 30, 2009 as performed by Sybarite Chamber Players. It also featured a short interview introducing the piece.

#### Tadd Russo

February 6, 2009, Cleveland's freshest new music ensemble, FiveOne, premiered Russo's experimental blues piece, *Burning Riverside Blues* at the Cleveland Public Theatre.

#### Craig Weston

February 9, 2009, "Celebrating New Music" at the Kansas State University All Faiths Chapel Auditorium included the premiere of Weston's *Stehekin Sonata* for clarinet and piano.

#### Greg Bartholomew

The new Langroise Trio CD that features Bartholomew's "String Trio for George Crumb" received a great review. The reviewer says, "You will enjoy this work immensely and want to hear more by this 'youthful' (50 years old!) composer."

The complete review is available at: [http://www.musicweb.uk.net/classrev/2009/Feb09/Langroise\\_Volante\\_5721.htm](http://www.musicweb.uk.net/classrev/2009/Feb09/Langroise_Volante_5721.htm).

The CD is available for purchase at [gregbartholomew.com](http://www.gregbartholomew.com) (<http://www.gregbartholomew.com/cd.html>).

#### Steven L. Rosenhaus

On April 26, 2009 Rosenhaus will conduct the Carson City Symphony in the premiere of "Birkat haChamah" ("Blessing on the Sun") at the Carson City Community Center. He will also conduct a preview performance on April 25, 2009 at the Oats Park Art Center in Fallon, NV. The one-movement work was commissioned in celebration of the orchestra's 25th anniversary.

The February issue of *The Instrumentalist* includes an article by Rosenhaus on various types of music publications including facsimile, urtext, critical and performance editions, as well as transcriptions, arrangements and hybrids.

Volume 1 of "The Etude Project," a series of original graded performance etudes for chamber ensembles, will be



commercially published in 2009. The Etude Project is being written for the U.S. Navy School of Music, which trains Navy, Army, and Marine musicians for placement in military ensembles where ever they serve. Volume 1 will consist of five books (C treble/bass clef, Bb, Eb, F and Percussion); subsequent volumes will be for specific chamber ensembles (wind quintet, brass quintet, etc.).

Rosenhaus is also mentioned in the recent paperback edition of Dr. Oliver Sacks' "Musicophilia" in a footnote to be found in the chapter on "Musical Hallucinations."



Steven L. Rosenhaus

## How to Submit SCItings to the Newsletter

**Member News + Photos:** Please send all member news and activities with a photo. (Submitted items may be edited.)

Submit to the newsletter via email at: [newsletter@societyofcomposers.org](mailto:newsletter@societyofcomposers.org)

## Get Out of the Music Building!

By **Matthew McCabe**

For the last three years, I've been working steadily on my Ph.D. at the University of Florida. Our program requires external course work, and after taking the only course in music psychology in our department, I chose cognitive neuroscience as my external field. With no previous experience, I was waived into upper-level classes, spent weeks reading and catching up on topics even the undergraduates could regurgitate on command, and even joined a research lab unit in the College of Public Health and Health Professions headed up by a speech pathologist and cognitive neuroscience researcher.

Our lab was invited to present a talk at the 37th annual International Neuropsychological Society conference in Atlanta. The topic of the presentation directly relates to my dissertation, and I put in several hours of work on the presentation for our principal investigator. I approached the trip with great excitement, and was eager to see another discipline's gatherings. I also wanted to see what role music was playing at the conference, since a big part of the reason I pursue topics such as these is to serve the interests of music in the larger world. I've always seen connections between my compositional actives and a whole host of outside things, and this was an opportunity to see if anyone else shared in my pursuits.

Upon arriving at the conference I downloaded a PDF of the program and glanced over it. After a few minutes of finding nothing, I decided to do a text search on the document. The term "music" yielded no matching results. Needless to say, this is not shocking. Neuropsychology is a clinical field, concerned with assessment and recovery from tragic accidents or helping individuals live with hereditary syndromes. Still though, it seemed odd that it wasn't there.

Having been around these types of presentations before, I tried the word "auditory". Finally some results started showing up. Many of the incidences of the word "auditory" in the program booklet were in reference to language, the human trait that still reigns supreme over most sub-fields of psychology. Auditory learning, attention, and working memory were all covered in several papers. Interesting topics to say the least, but there was still no mention of anything musical.

It was at this point that I began to feel incredibly displaced. Loneliness set in as I spoke with a few people, and found little interest in what I was doing apart from "What instrument do you play?" being asked about a dozen times.

On the bright side, new inroads into the topic of creativity are starting to appear. At least from the standpoint of neuropsychology, creativity and creative thinking are excellent ways

of examining brain function and recovery. The Torrance Test of Creative Thinking for Adults is a widely used test that assesses fluency, originality, flexibility, and elaboration, and gives insight into areas of potential damage.

Perhaps the single presentation that brightened my trip was a paper examining the artistic output of a painter who had been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and received deep brain stimulation (a rather gruesome procedure where electrodes are used to essentially electrocute brain tissue in an attempt for therapeutic results). According to the paper, the DBS initially improved her creative output, but it sadly declined after the treatment.

I was still plagued with a sense of trouble on the car ride home. In these days of economic woes, where failing satellite radio companies and corporate mergers threaten to further dilute music's ability to reach people, it seems that our job descriptions must shift. If we are going to be stewards of both the new, vibrant music that is being produced today, and the storied history of past music, our involvement in outside fields must become a necessity. We must demand that music be a part of human research and rehabilitation.

As composers, we have a unique opportunity to be involved in spheres outside the concert hall. Arts in Medicine programs are springing up around the country, books are being written about music and the brain, and changes in technology and business are fine-tuning musical tastes to the individual. There is no doubt in my mind that we have a place outside of our practice rooms, and we have an obligation to young musicians in universities to train them to use their skills for something other than a degree that their parents think is useless anyway.

In neuroscience, the term "critical period" is used to describe the time frame in which learning can take place, and culture, language, and personality are solidified in a developing person's brain.

This is our critical period. Musicians must speak loudly about we already know: that music is one of the highest achievements our species has developed. It has therapeutic, aesthetic, philosophical, educational, and scientific capacities that run the risk of dying away without responsible caretakers and people willing to make a lot of noise. Going to this conference has only made me more determined to bang my head against the figurative wall, in an attempt to get out of the music building.

**Matthew McCabe**  
mlm@briar.escapement.net

### SCI RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

## iSCI: The Composers Perspective *The Internet Journal of the Society of Composers, Inc.*

SCI has launched a new on-line journal for the publication of music scholarship by composers and for composers, edited by Jason Bahr and Craig Weston. We hope to present the composer's unique point of view through an exciting mix of theory and analysis, "shop talk," pedagogy, and practice. This list is not inclusive: this is the place for colloquy on everything that matters to composers. Contributors are encouraged to exploit the multi-media possibilities of on-line publication.

**Jason Bahr**  
Mississippi State University  
bahrline@yahoo.com

### Call for Submissions (no deadline):

Please send submissions electronically to Craig Weston at [cweston@ksu.edu](mailto:cweston@ksu.edu). Also include an abstract of no more than 300 words describing your work. Abstracts should be submitted as an .rtf or .pdf file attached to an email. Works maybe submitted as traditional papers, multi-media presentation, podcasts or other formats. Past presentations from SCI Conferences are eligible. Inquiries are welcome—please address them to both editors.

**Craig Weston**  
Kansas State University  
cweston@ksu.edu



## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

For complete details, please visit <http://www.societyofcomposers.org/data/organization/membership.html>.

**FULL MEMBERSHIP** (\$55/year): Eligible to submit scores to the National Conferences, regional conferences, SCI Recording Series, SCI Journal of Music Scores. Access to the SCI Newsletter in electronic form. Optional subscription to [scimembers], the SCI listserv and all other SCI publications. Eligible to vote on Society Matters and in elections for the National Council.

**JOINT MEMBERSHIP** (\$75/year): Same benefits as full members

**SENIOR MEMBERSHIP** (\$27.50/year): Open to those 65 years of age or older, or retired. Same benefits as full members.

**ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP** (\$27.50/year): Open to performers and other interested professionals. Receives the SCI Newsletter in electronic form and can participate in national and regional conferences.

**STUDENT MEMBERSHIP** (\$27.50/year): Eligible to submit to national and regional conferences and to vote in society matters. Access to all SCI publications.

**STUDENT CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP** (\$17.50/year): Same benefits as student members, but only available on campuses having Student Chapters.

**INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIP** (\$25/year): Organizations receive hard copy of the SCI Newsletter and other mailings.

**LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP** (\$1100 or \$120/year for 10 years): Benefits the same as full members, for life.

## PUBLICATIONS

Publications include the *SCI Newsletter*, *SCI Recording Series*, *Performers CD Series*, *SCI Journal of Music Scores*, and **SCION** (monthly e-mail listing of announcements and opportunities for composers).

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements of contests, calls for scores, and other solicitation appear in the *SCI Newsletter* and **SCION** as a service to SCI members. While every effort is made to assure the accuracy of these announcements, SCI cannot accept responsibility for errors, misrepresentations, or misinterpretations.

P I X E L P E R F E C T : M E M B E R P H O T O S

## Pixel Perfect Photos of SCI Members

Photos By **Emily Williams**



*BSU Faculty Member  
Elizabeth Crawford*

### Photos from the 2008 SCI Student National Conference at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana.



*Christopher Biggs and Nick Omiccioli*



*SCI Student  
Composers and  
Conference Performers*