

Alternative Mirror

Ambient Music

Part III

A Column By Roy Parkhurst

This is the third and final column on Ambient Music. This time I would like to answer, in the context of my commentary, some of the questions I ended with last time.

Pop music means "popular" music which indicates an economic or commercial consideration. As we all know, the success of "pop" varies greatly. There is usually a "style" mainstream, and also under ground movements, especially in rock and jazz. Rock is probably the biggest commercial pop industry with millions and millions of dollars wrapped up in its production and promotion. I do not wish to comment on the industry in general, only to consider aspects of it.

The current "underground" movements are too varied and numerous to really talk about. Some obvious examples are "art rock" and "new wave." Ambient Music is just one portion of the underground scene, though it is slowly emerging into the public eye. (Any real test of the market is to make observations on this "emergence" and to be in the marketplace (I work part time in a record store) and to talk to the consumer public (of which I cannot avoid no matter how hard I try.)

First of all, there is a consistent, though small market for Brian Eno, including his Ambient Music. Albums like "Music For Airports" has had a surprising impact on the public considering its obscurity and minimal promotion. I see several copies of Ambient recordings sold every month, not to mention the difficulty of keeping any kind of complete catalog in on Brian Eno at any given time. Just as Eno has reacted against certain "conventions" in rock, a segment of the public has also.

The disappointment however is that this consumer public does not have better taste or a more refined esthetic sensitivity, they like it because it's "nice." I hear these people walking around buying Eno and copies of the Pachabel Canon in D Major because it makes for nice, inactive, unobtrusive background music. Even a perfectly intelligent, fellow employee of mine said to me that he listened almost exclusively to new wave and no longer had the urge to listen to Classical music "except when I study sometimes."

I found this somewhat frightening, that a Brahms symphony served no other function than to fill an otherwise empty sonic space, a music which requires the utmost concentration and intellect reduced to a calming drone. This same mentality at

much more exaggerated levels is one of the primary motivations in the purchase of Brian Eno and other things like Gregorian Chants.

There is a distinct trend in the "non-listening" listener out there. For example, Steve Halpern, a California "composer" associated with the notorious "Spiritual Frontiers" crowd is another writer of consciously passive music. Halpern has suggested that music's real goal is to enhance our health (align our Chacras in Frontier language.) Basically, he is talking about "music therapy," something for people suffering from autism. The concept of "art" has become meaningless and irrelevant to him and his followers.

I find this concept very disturbing, and though I believe that Brian Eno does not intend this narrow interpretation of his music, that is the apparent effect it has had on consumer America, because I know from experience that Eno's Ambient Music, Halpern's Zodiac Music, and Pachabel's Canon is gaining considerable popularity among a similar crowd. The public has in this attitude destroyed the true value of this music. This is not a sign of an emerging artistic sensibility, it is in many respects a decline and ultimately indicates an anesthetized culture moving toward a dangerous apathy. I hear cries of "artsy fartsy" out there but I do not even bother to talk to those people, they're the ones missing out.

The future of music, at one level, lies in the attitude of the public and they will affect the further evolution or decay of music. At another level it comments on America in general. I am not ignoring all the intelligent people who honestly appreciate the cause of quality music, but there, as there has always been, is a large portion of the public which is dangerously blind and unconcerned with the survival and perpetuation of artistic endeavors.

The music scene, as any artistic medium, reflects upon the society in which it is developing. A book could certainly be written on the current sociological condition from the perspective of the arts. All I can do is appeal to the public to open their eyes, to be educated. I am still convinced that too many students go through schools missing the whole point, the implications of knowledge. I do not want to editorialize out of my element, I only hope to present a picture that is viewable by everyone.

Next time: fun and more sociology when I do a series on "Dungeons And Dragons" and the gaming industry. Until then, be ambient.

Looking for the right price

By John Mottern

This is not the town of Milwaukee or the vineyards of Southern California, but some of us still take an interest in nippin' the ole Spirits. Since this is the case, and since we are economy-minded students, it is prudent that we know where to get the best for our bucks.

The area food stores, Big Star, Best Way, and the Open Pantry are in walking distance from the college and are well stocked with wines and beer. The following are price comparisons of some selected brands:

	Big Star	Best Way	Open Pantry
Gallo White Rhine 1.5 L	2.69	3.91	
Taylor Lake w/r 1.5L	4.09	4.45	
Boone's Farm Wild Mt.	1.49	1.59	
Boone's Farm Country Quencher	1.29	1.41	
Andre Extra Dry Champagne	2.89	2.93	3.80
Taylor Extra Dry Champagne	5.45	5.93	
Stroh's cans	2.09	2.09	2.49
Stroh's bottles	2.25	2.31	2.77
Budweiser cans	2.25	2.27	2.77
Budweiser bottles	2.25		2.77
Heineken bottles	4.59	4.28	5.25
Pabst cans	2.25		2.77
Pabst bottles	2.09	2.27	
Schlitz cans	2.25		2.77
Schlitz bottles	2.25		
Michelob bottles	2.53	2.56	3.35
Michelob cans	2.53	2.56	

Huck's Delicatessen is a good place to get imported as well as domestic beers. The prices there are of course higher because it is a restaurant.

About the Wine

The Gallo and the Taylor are both good all purpose wines. They go well with meals or cheese and can easily be served alone. They offer an alternative to more expensive dinner wines.

The Boone's Farm as well as the Reunite wines have but one purpose and that is to be drunk. They would ruin any meal and enhance nothing but your spirits. They are very sweet and nice on ice.

For the student with money there are no limits.

A Word to the Wise

If you have too much fun, there is a recipe in the infirmary booklet, received by all Guilford students, *Your Guide to Basic Health Care*, which will help restore you to good working order. Also coffee and a cold shower give you nothing but a clean, wide awake drunk.

N.C. Heritage Arts Festival

Saturday Nov. 8

All activities will be in Founders

- 10:00am-5:00pm Stained glass workshop
- 12:00pm-5:00pm Crafts fair
- 12:00pm-1:00pm String band
- 1:00pm-2:00pm Walter and Ethel Phelps
- 2:00-3:00pm Gwen Ledbetter
- 3:00-3:30pm Contests: Pie baking  
Cake baking  
Tobacco spitting
- 3:30pm-4:30pm Fiddle Puppets and Back Porch String Band
- 10:30pm-1:00am Square dance with Fiddle Puppets and Back Porch String Band

The Craft Center is sponsoring a stained glass workshop. Steve Lapping will be the artist/instructor. Steve owns Lapping Stained Glass Studio on McGee St. There will be a slide show and lecture on Wednesday night at 7:30 in the Craft Center. On Saturday, Steve will conduct a workshop on how to do stained glass. For more information, call 852-1696.

A combination of bluegrass and old-time music will begin the North Carolina Heritage Arts Festival. This band is formed by Tim Maxwell, Gary Silverstein, Rick Spackman, and Susan Ide, who joined together in old time tradition to put together an hour of music and fun. Tim (banjo, guitar) and Rick (mandolin, guitar) played last year in the WareRidge Ramblers. Gary Silverstein (mandolin, banjo, guitar) plays with the Swamp Cats.

The Fiddle Puppet Clogging team will demonstrate various clogging techniques and then will teach all interested folks how to clog. This will be a unique opportunity to learn this traditional dance style of the Appalachians -- come on out and get warmed up for the square dance!

The square dance will be held in Sternberger Auditorium. It will feature the music of Back Porch String Band and the clogging and calling of the Fiddle Puppets. The cloggers will also instruct dance -- beginners need not feel shy. Come out for a fantastic time! Refreshments will be available.



Evening concert

Dana Auditorium

- 8:00pm Swamp Cats
- Red Clay Ramblers

Tickets will be on sale in front of cafeteria for \$2.00 with I.D.