



**January 1993**  
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## **Welcome to the Future**

By Steve Turnidge

There is good news in this month's Oscillator.

Over the last two months, we have recognized a vacuum that needs filling. Multimedia artists, electronic musicians, and human interface researchers (virtual reality, alternate controllers) are working towards their own visualized futures, futures that are defined by their work and the range of information available to them.

These are disparate futures, all as different as the various fields in which they work. If the information that these different fields have available to them is shared between them, the visions of each artist can converge for stronger, more informed works.

We now have a way to realize this shared vision. There is a way we can grow as a group and attract informed people—by making a connection between ourselves and CyberArts International.

CyberArts International formed in 1990 with the express goal of bringing creative minds together with each other and with the latest tools available to them. The group holds an annual conference, the most recent of which drew 4013 people from eleven countries. I also attended this conference and the ideas I learned there will work excellently in this very diverse northwest arts community.

In the last month we have been in contact with the CyberArts International staff, and have the honor of becoming the first local chapter. So, this is an announcement of the new name for NEMUS—CyberArts Northwest. The proposal we made to

CyberArts International follows, and this is also a proposal to all of you.

### ***Beginning of proposal:***

To: CyberArts International Staff

We are excited to share our vision for a "CyberArts Northwest" group with you. Actually, the group is active now. We hope to form an affiliation with your national organization, since we're all in this together. Our vision is to bring at least 100 gurus and 100 apprentices together, for a total of 100 people. We want to learn from one another, share our work, and play together.

We believe a CyberArtist

*...is a local universe problem solver*

*...stays aware of new technologies*

*...does not take the present for granted*

*...becomes an expert with tools already at hand*

*...desires to share information*

*...maintains a mental state of ignorance*

*...seeks and learns new forms of communication*

*...is willing to add new dimensions to their work*

*...can separate hype from reality*

### **Our Vision**

#### ***Synergistic Interdisciplinary Shared Vision***

Seattle is rich with researchers and artists specializing in Multimedia, CyberArts, and Virtual Worlds. Many of us with personal visions and goals are discovering a common thread that binds us all together. Our goal is to find a shared vision, and focus our individual efforts as we converge to a common effort. If we can harness the

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**Proposal**—*continued from page 1:*  
excitement expressed by our membership, we believe the results of our joint efforts will outweigh the sum of all our individual parts. We also recognize that a lot of exciting work is being done outside Seattle, and we wish open ourselves and our vision to include everyone.

### **Breakdown The "Information Class Hierarchy"**

A key goal is to liberate CyberArts technology from the research labs and "fringe circles" and into the hearts and minds of the general public. We hope to make CyberArts accessible to everyone, regardless of background or technical abilities, through dynamic meetings with our growing membership, and public performances.

### **Live In The Now**

Many of us spend a lot of time dreaming about the future. Well, the future has arrived. Our membership is working to become experts with today's tools, to create the art and tools of the future. Rather than pushing tomorrow's envelope, we wish to celebrate what flows through us today - with an eye on the future.

### **Why "CyberArts Northwest"?**

An affiliation with CyberArts International gives us:

- ...a direct connection to the international CyberArts movement
- ...sets the example for other grass roots chapters to form
- ...credibility to draw other high profile CyberArtists to our meetings and performances
- ...gives us greater exposure for our work

### **End of Proposal**

This proposal was accepted by CyberArts International, and we have support from many key players at the national level.

One of the changes this presents is the abolishment of dues. If you want to pay

money to the group, find out what others are doing and support them in their work. If the group needs money, we have the talent and skill required to put on a fundraising performance.

The future is here! Time to play.□

## **New Meeting Structure!**

By Steve Turnidge

### **First Third:**

**Tech Check:** An updated introductions section. At this time, people will introduce themselves, share the top cool things they found out in their explorations of the last month, tell of their current projects, and ask any questions they have that a group this diverse is likely to be able to answer.

### **Middle Third:**

**Guest Speaker:** This is when Amazing Humans get up and share their VISION. So far this year we have: January 4, 1993: Brian Karr of the UW Human Interface Technology laboratory (3-D sound for Virtual Reality); February 1, 1993: Stephen Schier (Brain Machines; he'll wire up the room with flashing glasses—light and sound research) March 1, 1993: Craig Rosenberg—Developer of the MIDIBird—a six-degree-of-freedom position tracker mapped to six MIDI control messages. Playing this is a religious experience!

And when they happen to be in town, people like Linda Jacobson (Editor of the CyberArts book), Dominic Milano (Conference Chair of the CyberArts Conference), Mark Lacas (President of Lone Wolf, Inventor of MediaLink), Craig Anderton (Evolutionary Agent of Change), Jeff Berryman (Executive Director of the Centre for Image and Sound Research in Vancouver), Damon Wooten (Golder Group, MegaMedia Artist). The list goes on! Let us know who you would like to have as a guest speaker, we'll try to get all interests represented.

### **Last Third:**

**Networking:** This will allow the membership to answer each others questions and connect, given clues by the Tech Check. Also time for the guest speaker to (fill in the blank) with the members.□

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Nemus,

Could you please run the following classified ad in the next available issue of the Nemus newsletter:

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Craig Anderton is having a mail-order "garage sale": MIDI gear, signal processors, drum machines, recording equipment, electronic components, etc. Send self-addressed, stamped envelope for complete listing to PO Box 966, Ukiah, CA 95482.

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Thanks very much. Also enclosed is a short piece you might want to publish, in response to two of the articles in the December issue. Very best, Craig Anderton

## One Possible Path to the Future

by Craig Anderton

John Hokenson's article "Where Do We Go From Here?" and Steve Turnidge's "Playing in the Future" both touch on the ill-defined, yet obvious, change that's transforming music and the arts, and the need to adapt to change. I have a few comments on what the nature of this change might be. To me, technology has allowed greater productivity and higher quality. We all may bitch about computer crashes, but word processing lets me write faster (which often encourages creativity), and allows for unlimited editing to improve the quality. MIDI and digital technology make it possible for anyone to put together CD-quality music in a spare bedroom, meeting quality standards that were unattainable at any cost only a few years ago.

What have we done with the extra time and options? Become generalists. When I started using the term "electronic musician" in 1979, it was an attempt to define musicians who crossed over boundaries—such as synth-playing guitarists with

recording studios. Yet some boundaries were still tough to cross back then: despite my interest in the arts, for example, computer animation was way too expensive to consider, as was video gear. Now those barriers are falling, and I find myself doing such things as making music keyed to video scripts, and coming up with useable animations in a few hours on inexpensive computers to go with the music. As the process of making art has become easier, we have the option to either become experts in a limited number of fields, or spread ourselves (hopefully not too thin!) over a variety of fields. Both are valid approaches, depending on one's personality. Organizations like Nemus can bring both types together, with the generalists providing direction to the specialists, and the specialists sharing expertise with the generalists.

I think it's also important for an organization like Nemus to go beyond music field to look at the arts in a broader sense. At this point, music is a fairly limited field—just ask the music instrument manufacturers who have watched revenues fall year after year. Yet the people who make Sound Blaster cards don't seem to be feeling the pinch. Some assume this means that music should be marketed to the masses, but music is a discipline, and there's a big difference between just playing notes and making satisfying music. However, people will always have a desire to doodle, hum tunes, and point cameras at things. Put those elements together into a creative environment that's not too hard to navigate, and I think you have a pretty good idea of the direction art will take in the future—complete statements in multiple media, sometimes done solo, but often done as collaborations of specialists in various fields who come together to realize a common goal.

Not being able to attend Nemus meetings due to excessive distance, I don't know any other member's feelings about

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**Future**—continued from page 3:  
the future of the organization, but if nothing else I hope you find these thoughts useful as data.□

## Evolve or Die

by Einar Ask

Hi!

If you have been reading the Oscillator lately or have attended the last two meetings, you may have noticed a broadening of the direction of this group. You have heard of new tools for our trade that are being developed or have recently entered the marketplace. This article is for those of you who may have joined NEMUS to get some practical help and encouragement from fellow members regarding your current music and equipment. I'm talking about the stuff you have *NOW*.

Let's face it, some of us just won't be spending any more bucks on new equipment for a while. Don't get me wrong. Frugal as I need to be, I still enjoy all the Cybertalk and flash and new toys and all, but I understand that some of us barely had the money to get that dream keyboard, let alone the bare necessities to participate in this art form. And I understand the importance of being current on all the new possibilities, but this group should not be just for those who have the bucks. Even CyberArt is still art, and art should not be limited to the "special few."

I would like to hear more discussion that ties in the analog years of synthesis. I would like to discuss early MIDI synths which are very affordable these days. Members who have been collecting equipment over the years have likely dealt with problems you may be having now with some seemingly obscure, but very cool sounding synth. Many of us who are entry-level users could gain from hearing that some of their equipment could be used in the future. I must add here that every new piece of equipment or software that has been added to my collection lately has

greatly increased the use of my old equipment.

Now, most importantly, please don't be intimidated by the growing numbers in this organization. I hope that we can all learn from each other at the meetings and particularly in sub-groups that we could potentially form. The larger the group gets, the more likely it is that if you have a problem, someone will have the solution. Also, it is more likely that you can get good feedback on your music from someone who is working in a similar vein. (If that's what you would like.) I hope that we can begin forming these smaller groups soon to discover what bubbles of knowledge we have bobbing around out there.□

## From The Editor

Behold the future—for it is us! Perhaps not words your high school English teacher would approve, but a fitting statement for NEMUS-soon-to-become CyberArts Northwest.

We as electronic artists stand at the portal to a world ready for evolution. The division between music, video, computer animation and virtual reality is becoming blurred. Creation is becoming a participatory experience—interactive software allows the user to modify the video-audio-animation product at will. At what point is the work considered "finished"? When the video and audio tracks are laid down for inclusion on the CD-I disk? When the user has rearranged it? When the user loses interest and discards the disk?

"Creation" is given new meaning with this merging of technologies. What may evolve out of the maelstrom remains to be seen—but I intend to be there when the birth occurs.  
—John Hokenson

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The logo for RANE is displayed in a large, bold, black font. The letters are contained within a thick, black, rectangular border that has a slightly rounded, industrial feel. The 'R' is particularly large and stylized, with a thick vertical stem and a curved top that extends into the border.