



## About This Issue

Natasha Barrett's composition *Little Animals* appeared on the compact disc *Computer Music Journal Sound Anthology Volume 22*, which was included with the Winter 1998 issue. Her article in the present issue explains the compositional thinking that underlies this piece. The composer explores several topics familiar in acousmatic circles, while revealing her own approaches. Of primary concern, for example, is the relationship between musical and extramusical or allusive contexts, and how these relationships unfold over time during and after listening.

A markedly different approach to composing is to employ algorithmic composition software to generate pitches and rhythms. The article by Kenneth McAlpine, Eduardo Miranda, and Stuart Hoggar constitutes a basic tutorial on stochastic algorithms and cellular automata, combined with a presentation of the authors' own composition program, CAMUS 3D.

On numerous occasions, industry has adopted models for producing musical sound that are technically inferior to those already in use for many years among the computer

music community. MIDI is only the most prominent example of such a standard. In an attempt to reverse this trend, the MIT Media Lab has contributed to the MPEG-4 standard by integrating into it a sound-synthesis language derived from that well-known workhorse, Csound. Eric Scheirer and Barry Vercoe's article in this issue describes this new language, called SAOL. The authors assert that the inclusion of SAOL in an international standard will lead to "an explosion of opportunities for musicians and technologists."

The guitar has been a popular subject of research in physical-modeling synthesis, as evidenced by several articles in *Computer Music Journal* over the years (most recently, Volume 22, Number 3). In the present issue, Giuseppe Cuzzocoli and Vincenzo Lombardo discuss a physical model of the classical guitar that incorporates a model of the performer's finger (both flesh and nail) as it interacts with the string.

Our final article describes Vincent Lesbros's trio of software applications for editing and synthesizing sound. The first editor uses a time-

versus-frequency representation that is similar to a sonogram. The second editor operates on models of coupled springs; the author explains that these are not true physical models, but intuitive models designed for sound synthesis. The third editor, known as Sound Potatoes, manipulates trajectories that can be applied to the movement of nodes in a coupled-spring network.

These feature articles are followed by an extensive set of reviews, collected and edited by James Harley. The event reviews include two commentaries on the 1998 International Computer Music Conference in Michigan. A new category appears in this issue's Reviews section: films. Steven M. Martin's documentary film on Leon Theremin is evaluated, as is a movie about electronic dance music. In addition, our reviewers have contributed their assessments of six books (including Curtis Roads's *Computer Music Tutorial*) and six compact discs.

The concluding section, Products of Interest, announces the availability of numerous software and hardware packages, as well as some publications and recordings.

*Front cover:* A composite illustration of two contrasting approaches to composition. An excerpt from the graphic score of Natasha Barrett's *Little Animals* appears among various squares generated by Camus 3D's Game of Life and Demon Cyclic Space algorithms.

*Back cover:* A vertiginous view of Michelangelo Lupone contemplating his *Wave Guides* installation at the Corpi Del Suono festival, discussed in the News section of this issue.