UNFORESEEN MUSIC: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTES OF JIM HORTON

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This autobiographical text by the late composer Jim Horton (1944–1998) was written in 1996 as documentation of the composer’s artistic activities, musical thought and philosophical outlook. The bulk of the entries pertain to roughly a 30-year period, from January 1967 through May 1996.

Horton was a computer music pioneer who was active in the San Francisco Bay Area. His early work with microcomputers, beginning in 1976, was startlingly original. He incorporated ideas from artificial intelligence and radical music theory into his compositions and performances right from the very start. He was the first composer to postulate the idea of using computer networks to make music and created the first network music performance, with artist Rich Gold, in 1977. Horton—along with Rich Gold and me—co-founded the world’s first computer network band, the League of Automatic Music Composers, in 1978. He was also one of the first composers to use a computer to experiment with just intonation. Jim used the computer as an active partner in the musical process rather than an inert tool.

The Horton text not only captures the flavor of Jim’s thought but also something of the spirit and vision of the experimental music tradition in the Bay Area. Readers are encouraged to browse the on-line text and comment on the ideas and activities found there. Expanding the contents in this manner would be very much in keeping with Jim’s working philosophy. Readers will also find a rich source of information and commentary regarding Bay Area experimental music at The History of Experimental Music in Northern California <http://tesla.csuhayward.edu/history/>, a million-word archive of texts compiled by Jim in the years before his death.

NOTICE

LMJ Reviews

Owing to space limitations, the Reviews section for this issue of Leonardo Music Journal can be found on the LMJ web site at <http://mitpress.mit.edu/e-journals/Leonardo/lmj/lmj9reviews.html>. These reviews will also be published in print in the next issue of Leonardo, Vol. 33, No. 1 (2000).