

## The Cambridge Companion to Electronic Music

Musicians are always quick to adopt and explore new technologies. The fast-paced changes wrought by electrification, from the microphone via the analogue synthesiser to the laptop computer, have led to a wide range of new musical styles and techniques. Electronic music has grown to a broad field of investigation, taking in historical movements such as *musique concrète* and *elektronische Musik*, and contemporary trends such as electronic dance music and *electronica*. This book, winner of the 2009 Nicolas Bessaraboff Prize, brings together researchers at the forefront of the sonic explorations empowered by electronic technology to provide accessible and insightful overviews of core topics and uncover some hitherto less-publicised corners of worldwide movements. This updated and expanded second edition includes four entirely new chapters, as well as new original statements from globally renowned artists of the electronic music scene, and celebrates a diverse array of technologies, practices and music.

Nick Collins is Reader in Composition at Durham University. His research interests include live computer music, musical artificial intelligence, and computational musicology, and he is a frequent international performer as composer-programmer-pianist or *codiscian*, from *algoraves* to electronic chamber music.

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The Cambridge Companion to  
**Electronic Music**

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(France), International Electroacoustic Competition Ciberart (Italy), two prizes in Concours Luigi Russolo (Italy), and two first prizes in the International Rostrum for electroacoustic music. [www.natashabarrett.org](http://www.natashabarrett.org)

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**John Richards** explores the idea of Dirty Electronics, which focuses on shared experiences, ritual, gesture, touch and social interaction. In Dirty Electronics process and performance are inseparably bound. The 'performance' begins on the workbench devising instruments and is extended onto the stage through playing and exploring these instruments. Richards is primarily concerned with the performance of large-group electronic music and DIY electronics, and the idea of composing inside electronics. His work also pushes the boundaries between music, performance art, electronics, and graphic design and is transdisciplinary as well as having a socio-political dimension. [www.dirtyelectronics.org](http://www.dirtyelectronics.org)

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**Mary Simoni** is a composer, author, teacher, pianist, consultant, arts administrator, and amateur photographer. She is currently the Dean of Humanities, Arts & Sciences at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Professor Emerita, Performing Arts Technology at the University of Michigan. Her music and multimedia works have been performed in Asia, Europe, and throughout the United States and have been recorded by Centaur Records, the Leonardo Music Journal published by the MIT Press, and the International Computer Music Association. She is the recipient of the Prize in Composition by the ArtNET Virtual Museum and named semifinalist for the American Prize in Composition—Chamber Music. Her music is frequently recognised by Vox Novus. She has authored several books, *Algorithmic Composition: A Guide to Composing Music with Nyquist* co-authored with Roger Dannenberg and published by the University of Michigan; and *Analytical Methods of Electroacoustic Music* published by Routledge. She is a Medal Laureate of the Computer World Honors Award for her research in digital music information retrieval.

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orchestras, aesthetics of music technology design, and education at the intersection of engineering, art, and design. Ge is the author of the ChuckK music programming language, the founding director of the Stanford Laptop Orchestra (SLOrk), the Co-founder of Smule (reaching over 125 million users), and the designer of the iPhone's Ocarina and Magic Piano.

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## Chronology

- 569–475 BC Pythagoras leads the elitist *mathematikoi* and *akousmatikoi*
- 1026 Guido d'Arezzo's vowel-to-pitch mapping procedure for composing melodies for texts
- 1626 Francis Bacon describes the 'sound-house' in *The New Atlantis*
- 1734 Louis Bertrand Castel builds a prototype *clavecin oculaire*, the first light organ
- 1738 Jacques de Vaucanson's flautist automaton is exhibited
- 1757 Johann Philipp Kirnberger's *Allezeit fertiger Polonoisen und Menuettencomponist* ('The always ready Polonaise and Menuet Composer'), a musical dice game
- 1761 Jean-Baptiste Delaborde builds the *Clavecin Electrique* in Paris
- 1843 Lady Ada Lovelace describes the possible musical applications for Charles Babbage's machine in *The Sketch of the Analytical Engine*  
 A. Seebeck formulates the *rate theory* which states that neural firing patterns encode the periodic structure of auditory stimuli
- 1857 Leon Scott invents the *phonoautograph*
- 1864 Innocenzo Manzetti invents a 'speaking telegraph' for his musical automaton
- 1876 Alexander Bell's (controversial) telephone patent  
 Thomas Edison invents the carbon microphone
- 1877 Co-invention by Charles Cros and Thomas Edison of the phonograph  
 Ernst Werner von Siemens invents the loudspeaker
- 1881 Clément Ader demonstrates stereo broadcast with the premiere of his Théâtrophone, conveying music from the Paris Opéra to the World Expo
- 1897 Thaddeus Cahill patents the *Art of and Apparatus for Generating and Distributing Music Electronically*
- 1898 Valdemar Poulsen patents a magnetic *Telegraphone*, which can both record and play back sound
- 1899 William Duddell invents the *Singing Arc*
- 1906 Cahill finally builds the Telharmonium  
 Lee De Forest invents the triode vacuum tube (which he calls the *Audion*), allowing controlled amplification; ironically, Cahill could have used this invention to make the Telharmonium much smaller!
- 1909 The Tel-musici Company combine a telephone exchange with a music room; they are bankrupt within a few years, just like Cahill

xvii *Chronology*

- 1913 Luigi Russolo writes his manifesto *The Art of Noises*
- 1920 Lev Termen invents the Theremin
- 1924 Ottorino Respighi combines a phonograph playing alongside an orchestra in *Pini di Roma*.
- 1928 Fritz Fleumer invents the magnetic tape recorder in Germany  
 Maurice Martenot invents the *Ondes Martenot*
- 1929 Friedrich Trautwein invents the *Trautonium*
- 1930 Walter Ruttman's *Weekend* is an early precedent in juxtaposition of fragments of recorded sound,  
 Paul Hindemith and Ernst Toch hold a multiple turntable concert of *Grammophonmusik* in Berlin, with young exchange student John Cage in attendance
- 1931 An electroacoustic montage is created by the sound department of Paramount Studios in Hollywood, for the film *Jekyll and Hyde*
- 1932 In Oskar Fischinger's film, *Tönende Ornamente* (Ornament Sound), the soundtrack is created by drawing directly onto the optical soundtrack
- 1933 The theremin is used by composer Max Steiner to expand the timbral palette of the orchestra in the film *King Kong*
- 1936 Varèse publishes his manifesto *The Liberation of Sound*
- 1937 John Cage delivers his lecture *The Future of Music: CREDO*
- 1938 Orson Welles' *War of the Worlds* radio play successfully deceives its audience into believing a Martian invasion is taking place  
 Johanna Beyer's *Music of the Spheres* is composed, with parts for three electrical instruments and two percussion instruments
- 1939 Cage begins working with live electronic sound in his piece *Imaginary Landscape No. 1*
- 1944 Egyptian-born Halim El-Dabh experiments by electronically processing recordings made with a wire recorder, a medium that predated tape
- 1946 *The Schillinger System of Musical Composition* is published posthumously  
 Raymond Scott writes the patent disclosure for the 'orchestra machine'
- 1948 At the French National Radio-Television (RTF), Pierre Schaeffer experiments with mixing pre-recorded sources on various turntables and creates *Etude aux Chemins de Fer*. The RTF studios eventually host the Groupe de Recherches Musicales (GRM)  
 Claude Elwood Shannon publishes *A Mathematical Theory of Communication*
- 1951 Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henry compose *Symphonie pour un homme seule*, a landmark in musique concrète  
 The Studio für Elektronische Musik at West German National Radio (WDR) is founded in Cologne  
 Percy Grainger invents the *Kangaroo Pouch Machine*

xviii *Chronology*

- The Columbia Tape Music Center, in New York, is started by Luenning and Ussachevsky. It would later become the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center in 1959
- Louis and Bebe Barron compose *Heavenly Menagerie* in their studio, months before the more famous Cologne Studio is established
- Bernard Herrmann uses theremins as main instruments with the film orchestra in his score for *The Day the Earth Stood Still*
- Schaeffer investigates spatialisation with the *potentiomètre d'espace*
- 1952 Schaeffer publishes a syntax for musique concrète in the treatise *Esquisse d'un solfège concret*
- Monique Rollin's *Étude Vocale* (1952) is an early musique concrète study
- Cage is composing *Williams Mix* (completed by 1953); the realisation takes a team of tape splicers (in reality, Louis and Bebe Barron) many months
- 1953 In Milan, the Studio di Fonologia is established. In Tokyo the Electronic Music Studio for Japan Radio (NHK) is opened
- Herbert Eimert composes *Struktur 8*
- 1950–4 Varèse composes *Déserts*, which combines an ensemble of live instrumentalists with tape
- 1955–9 Lejaren Hiller and Leonard Isaacson experiment with using a mainframe computer to algorithmically generate musical scores, composing the *Illiad Suite* for string quartet in 1956
- 1955 Iannis Xenakis publishes *The Crisis of Serial Music*, critiquing integral serialism on psychological and statistical grounds
- 1956 Louis and Bebe Barron create the first purely electronic film score for *Forbidden Planet*
- In the Netherlands, the Center for Electronic Music is established within the Philips Research Laboratory
- Stockhausen's *Gesang der Jünglinge* combines concrète and elektronische
- Xenakis completes the first granular study: *Analogue B*
- 1957 In Warsaw, the Studio Experimentalne is established at Polish National Radio
- The Bell Telephone Laboratories host the first digital music experiments: Max Mathews programs the first sounds ever generated by a digital computer and creates *MUSIC 1*, the earliest programming environment for sound synthesis
- 1958 The BBC Radiophonic Workshop is founded, after years of effort from Daphne Oram in particular
- Xenakis designs the Philips Pavilion at the Brussels World's Fair for which Varèse composes *Poème électronique*; Xenakis also provides *Concrèt PH* for the interludes between shows

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- In Santiago de Chile, the Laboratorio de Acústica is used for the earliest electronic music in South America
- Raymond Scott invents and begins development of the Electronium, an algorithmic composing machine without a musical keyboard
- In Toronto, the University of Toronto Electronic Music Studio is founded
- 1958–60 Stockhausen works on *Kontakte*
- 1960 Andrej Markowski creates, at the Experimental Studio in Warsaw, electronic music and sound design for *The Silent Star*, directed by Kurt Maetzig
- Raymond Scott composes a completely electronic soundtrack for the *Vicks: Medicated Cough Drops* commercial
- 1961 The Norsk Rikskringkasting (NRK) in Oslo allows its studios to be used for the earliest experiments in electronic music in Norway
- Kelly and Lochbaum design an algorithm to simulate the human vocal tract
- James Tenney creates the plunderphonic tape piece *Collage #1 (Blue Suede)*, sampling and manipulating a famous Elvis track
- 1962 In Buenos Aires, the Laboratorio de Música Electrónica associated to the Instituto Torcuato di Tella is founded; in Ghent, Belgium, the Institut vor Psychoakoestiek en Elektronische Muziek; in East Berlin, the Experimentalstudio für Kunstliche Klang und Gerauscherzeugung, Laboratorium für Akustisch-Musikalische Grenzprobleme
- 1963 Gottfried Michael Koenig's *Projekt 1* program is devised, for automatic aleatoric serial composition
- 1964 Stockhausen composes *Mikrofonie I* for amplified and processed tam-tam
- Jean-Claude Risset visits Bell Labs for the first time and uses MUSIC IV to investigate the timbre of trumpets
- 1965 Steve Reich creates his first phase piece: *It's Gonna Rain*
- Alvin Lucier creates his *Music for Solo Performer*, the first live electronics piece to use amplified alpha brainwaves
- 1967 In Gordon Mumma's composition *Hornpipe* an analogue device analyses and amplifies the resonances of the hall in which a performer is playing the French horn, thus predating interactive machine-listening systems
- John Chowning discovers Frequency Modulation sound synthesis
- 1968 MUSIC V becomes the first computer music programming system to be implemented in FORTRAN
- David Tudor composes the first of his *Rainforest* pieces, featuring a multitude of objects acting as loudspeakers dangling directly from their cables

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- Raymond Scott invents the first 'drum machine', *Bandito the bongo artist*
- Jean-Claude Risset creates a catalogue of computer-generated sounds at Bell Labs including guidelines to synthesise different musical instruments using MUSIC V; Risset also composes *Computer Suite from Little Boy*, utilising auditory illusions
- Wendy Carlos' *Switched-On Bach* achieves popular success, promoting Robert Moog's modular synthesisers
- Lee Scratch Perry sets up his Upsetter record label – the Jamaican sound system and studio scene is a fertile backdrop for the development of dub and the remix
- 1969 Max Mathews builds the GROOVE system to connect a computer to an analogue synthesiser
- First performance of Lejaren Hiller and John Cage's *HPSCHD*, for massed audiovisual forces
- Luc Ferrari's *music promenade* manipulated field recording
- 1970 Pierre Boulez founds the Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique (IRCAM)
- 1970–2 François Bayle's *L'expérience acoustique*
- 1971 Richard Teitelbaum's piece *Alpha Bean Lima Brain* involves the transmission of brain waves by telephone to control jumping beans
- Wendy Carlos creates the electronically instrumental score for *A Clockwork Orange* by Stanley Kubrick
- Hiller and Ruiz develop the first computer simulations by physical models, of instrumental sounds
- John Chowning describes techniques for the computer simulation of moving sound sources that are based on the Doppler effect as well as reverberation effects
- Tonto's Expanding Head Band release the psychedelic and progressive *Zero Time*, composed with the expanded Series III Moog synthesiser
- 1972 Salvatore Martirano builds the *SalMar Construction*, a realtime generative electronic music instrument.
- F. Richard Moore, Gareth Loy, and others at the Computer Audio Research Laboratory (CARL) at University of California at San Diego develop and distribute an open-source, portable system for signal processing and music synthesis, called the *CARL System*, modelled after *UNIX*
- Eduard Artemiev produces the electronic score for *Solaris* by Andrei Tarkovsky
- Pong* by Atari becomes a mass gaming phenomenon
- 1973 The Composers inside Electronics collective is formed
- DJ Kool Herc is experimenting with turntable mixing at parties in the Bronx

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- 1974 Paul De Marinis builds *Parrot Pleaser*, an automatic music composing circuit intended to be played by a bird  
 Curtis Roads writes a program with MUSIC V implementing granular synthesis  
 François Bayle establishes the Acousmonium loudspeaker orchestra
- 1974–9 Laurie Spiegel develops the *VAMPIRE* (Video And Music Program for Interactive Realtime Exploration/Experimentation) system
- 1975 Michel Waisvisz unleashes the Cracklebox synthesiser  
 John Appleton produces the prototype for the Synclavier
- 1976 Denis Smalley writes *Darkness After Time's Colours*
- 1977 *The League of Automatic Composers* is founded by Jim Horton, John Bischoff and Rich Gold  
 Ben Burtt coins the term 'sound designer' to reflect his contribution to the film *Star Wars*  
 Hildegard Westerkamp creates *Lighthouse Park Soundwalk*
- 1978 Atari releases the Atari Video Music audio-visualiser  
 Brian Eno creates the ambient music installation *Music for Airports*  
 Kraftwerk create their *The Man-Machine* album, touring with robotic mannequins  
*Space Invaders* by Toshihiro Nishikado is the first game to have continuous music throughout  
 Trevor Wishart composes *Red Bird: A Political Prisoner's Dream*
- 1979 Merzbow starts his Lowest Music and Arts record label to release his music on cassette
- 1980 Fonction d'onde formantique (*FOF*) sound synthesis (or formant wave function synthesis), is developed at IRCAM by Xavier Rodet, Yves Potard and Jean-Baptiste Barrière
- 1981 The launch of Music TeleVision; MTV appropriates the existing term VJ for their presenters, starting a parallel use of this descriptor, later fully reclaimed by live club visual artists
- 1981–8 Boulez works on *Répons*
- 1982 David Jaffe's *Silicon Valley Breakdown* utilises an extended version of Karplus-Strong synthesis
- 1983 The *Musical Instruments Digital Interface* protocol (MIDI) is established  
 The Yamaha DX7 is released and becomes the first widely accessible digital synthesiser  
 Double D and Steinski win a remix competition with the first of their influential cut and paste *Lessons*
- 1984 Paul Lansky develops *Cmix*, later to become *RTCMix*, an extension for realtime use created by Brad Garton and David Topper  
 Yasunao Tone begins 'wounding' CDs through the application of perforated Scotch tape

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- First attempts at automatic accompaniment systems from Roger Dannenberg and Barry Vercoe presented at the International Computer Music Conference at IRCAM
- The *Wabot-2* score reading and keyboard playing robot is completed, the first of a series of musical robots produced at Waseda University
- Early Chicago House recordings from Jesse Saunders, amongst others
- 1985 Laurie Spiegel develops *Music Mouse*  
 Paul Lansky's *Idle Chatter*  
 Detroit Techno provides one historical strand amongst many of electronic dance music: Juan Atkins had been recording in the duo Cybotron since 1981, and released his first Model 500 tracks in 1985; influences included electronic, disco and funk artists such as Kraftwerk, Giorgio Moroder and Parliament
- 1986 *Csound* is originally authored by Barry Vercoe and colleagues at the MIT Media Labs  
 George E. Lewis begins working on the *Voyager* interactive music system  
 The Akai S900 becomes one of the first (and possibly the most accessible) commercially available sampling modules for mass consumers
- 1987 The Hierarchical Music Scoring Language (HMSL) is authored by Polansky, Rosenboom and Burk
- 1988 Miller Puckette publishes his paper *The Patcher*; at IRCAM he develops this visual patching system into an interactive computer music programming environment called *Max*
- 1989 John Oswald releases the *Plunderphonic* EP and is later forced to 'recant', destroying all remaining copies, by the litigious music industry
- 1990 Max (later Max/MSP, then later still just Max again) is released commercially, becoming available to non-academic musicians  
 Public Enemy's album *Fear of a Black Planet* demonstrates the power of their sampled hip hop production, allied to strong political messages
- 1991 Nic Collins creates the piece *Broken Light* by hardware hacking CD players  
*Common Lisp Music* (or CLM), a sound synthesis language is written by Bill Schottstaedt at Stanford University
- 1992 Reed Ghazala starts publishing articles on 'Circuit Bending' in the journal *Experimental Musical Instruments*
- 1993 Björk's *Debut* is the first example of her many collaborations with electronic dance music producers

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- 1994 Autechre's *anti-EP* (particularly the third track, 'Flutter') is designed not to repeat in such a way as to confound recent anti-rave legislation
- 1995 The *Synthesis Toolkit* (STK), a collection of building blocks for realtime sound synthesis and physical modelling, for the C++ programming language, is authored by Perry Cook and Gary Scavone
- 1996 James McCartney develops *SuperCollider*, an environment and programming language for realtime audio synthesis  
 Miller Puckette releases *Pure Data*, a freeware program with a similar environment to Max/MSP
- 1997 Coldcut release *Let Us Play*, an extended CD including the live AV sampling demo *Timber*  
 Maurice Methot and Hector LaPlante start streaming algorithmic music live on the internet with *The Algorithmic Stream*  
 Introduction of the *Open Sound Control* (OSC) network music connectivity protocol  
 Ryoji Ikeda releases +/-
- 1998 Atau Tanaka and Kaspar Toeplitz install *Global String*, uniting space with cyberspace  
 The gameboy *Nanoloop* sequencer is created by Oliver Wittchow  
 Chris Watson releases *Outside the circle of fire*
- 2000 Tabletop tangible musical controllers such as *SmallFish* and *Jam-O-Drum* begin to develop; they would be followed by others such as the *reactable* and the *Audiopad*  
 Radiohead's *Kid A* openly assimilates electronica influences
- 2000–3000 Jem Finer's *LongPlayer* installation intends to run for a thousand years
- 2001 Chris Chafe's *Network Harp* uses network latency for sound synthesis
- 2002 *Chuck*, an audio synthesis programming language, is created by Ge Wang and Perry Cook  
 The *Shazam* mobile phone-based automatic music track recognition service is launched
- 2004 The *Firebirds* installation by Paul de Marinis reignites the use of gas fire loudspeakers  
 The *Vocaloid* singing voice synthesiser software is first released
- 2005 Nintendo and Toshio Iwai release the *Electroplankton* interactive musical video game
- 2006 The *Tomb Raider: Legend* game widely promotes adaptive audio techniques  
 Daft Punk's stage pyramid show is revealed at Coachella
- 2007 The iPhone is released, paving the way to low latency audio processing smartphone applications
- 2009 Björk's *Biophilia* is both interactive app and music release

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- 2010 The Turner Prize is given to sound artist Susan Philipsz
- 2011 Amon Tobin's ISAM stage show maps audio synchronized graphics onto a large on-stage sculpture  
The *Oramics to Electronica* exhibition opens at London's Science Museum
- 2014 The HTML 5 specification is finalized; an era of realtime web browser audio applications has already begun
- 2016 Daphne Oram's *Still Point* (1949) for double orchestra, pre-recorded sound and electronic processing via microphones is finally premiered, at the *Deep Minimalism* Festival in London