



History of Electronic Music at the University of Iowa

presented by Jonathan Wilson

The Electronic Music Studios of the University of Iowa was born from a Master's Thesis project of an Arbitrary Waveform Generator by James Cessna. Through an initial discussion with James Van Allen, James Cessna, Himie Voxman, and Philip Bezanson in 1964, the program emerged from obscurity with the loan of equipment from the Department of Physics and Astronomy, the Collins Radio Company, and homemade devices. Fifty-three years later, this collaboration became one of the most successful interdisciplinary projects between the Department of Physics and Astronomy and the School of Music. It led to the transformation of the Composition Program and the studios themselves evolved into a nationally recognized center for what was then a young medium. Even today, its legacy lives on through its students who have reaped the benefits of the program and made successful careers for themselves in various areas around the country from the development of studios at smaller colleges to work for film industries in Hollywood and New York.

This history of the Electronic Music Studios shall be discussed through the professors who have directed this program, its facilities, its assistants who maintained the facilities, its students, its guests, and its music.



Jonathan Wilson is a recent graduate of the University of Iowa and former adjunct faculty member at St. Ambrose University. Jonathan received his Master of Music and Bachelor of Music degrees in music composition from Western Illinois University. He has studied with Josh Levine, David Gompper, Lawrence Fritts, James Romig, James Caldwell, Paul Paccione, and John Cooper. He has also studied conducting with Michael Fansler and Richard Hughey. Jonathan is a member of the Society of Composers, Inc., SEAMUS, the Iowa Composers Forum, and the American Composers Forum.