

## David Rosenboom

### Narrative Style Biographical Statement

David Rosenboom is known as an innovator in composition for instruments, electronics, and multi-media, a virtuoso performer (piano, electronics, violin, viola, percussion, conductor, performance artist), a developer of computer applications in interdisciplinary performance, an author, an educator and is acclaimed for pioneering research in extended musical interface with the human nervous system. He was born in Fairfield, Iowa in 1947 and grew up on a farm near and later lived in Quincy, Illinois. He studied composition, electronic and computer music and performance with Salvatore Martirano, Lejaren Hiller, Kenneth Gaburo, Gordon Binkerd, Bernard Goodman, Paul Rolland, Jack McKenzie, Soulima Stravinsky, John Garvey and others at the University of Illinois and engaged in special studies in physics, systems theory, computer science, and experimental psychology.

In the late 1960's he was a Creative Associate Rockefeller Fellow at the State University of NY in Buffalo, Artistic Coordinator of New York's lavish multi-media palace The Electric Circus, co-founder of Neurona Co. (electronics R&D in the arts), and an independent writer/producer of music for television and other media. His music explored unique notation systems, extended instrument techniques, multi-media, theater, live electronics and improvisation in works like *A Precipice in Time*, *Then We Wound Through An Aura of Golden Yellow Gauze*, *She Loves Me, She Loves Me Not,...*, *And Come Up Dripping, To That Predestined Dancing Place* and *How Much Better If Plymouth Rock Had Landed On The Pilgrims*.

In the 1970's he moved to Toronto to teach at York University where he was a professor and co-founder of the Music Department, Electronic Media Studios, Laboratory of Experimental Aesthetics and Division of Interdisciplinary Studies. He also co-directed the innovative Aesthetic Research Centre of Canada. There he carried out extensive studies in information processing in the brain in relation to aesthetic experience and produced musical realizations as on his *Brainwave Music* album and in the books, *Biofeedback and the Arts*, *Extended Musical Interface with the Human Nervous System*, and *Selected Articles 1968-1990*. His music developed improvisation further as on the albums *Suitable for Framing* and *Collaboration in Performance*, performance art with the artists' collective *Maple Sugar*, applications of artificial intelligence to computer-aided live performance, *On Being Invisible*, and instrumental music, *The Seduction of Sapientia* and other pieces

In 1979-1980, he moved to California to develop a computerized keyboard instrument, the *Touché*, in collaboration with Donald Buchla and joined the faculty at Mills College, Oakland; where he became Darius Milhaud Professor of Music, Head of the Music Department and Director of the Center for Contemporary Music. He also taught music, interdisciplinary art, and artificial intelligence and co-founded an electronic arts program at the San Francisco Art Institute, 1981-1985, and taught a sound arts course at the California College of Arts and Crafts. He composed several collections of works exploring song forms, *Daytime Viewing* and

the album *J. Jasmine. . . My New Music* (both with Jacqueline Humbert), live electronics, *Future Travel*, new harmonic and melodic languages, *In The Beginning*, *Champ Vital (Life Field)*, and models of evolution with large-scale computer music forms, *Zones of Influence*, *Systems of Judgment*, and *Two Lines*. He also developed open form music further as co-founder of the performing group, *Challenge*, (with Anthony Braxton and William Winant).

In 1990 he assumed the positions of Dean of The Herb Alpert School of Music, Co-director of the Center for Art, Information and Technology, and conductor of the New Century Players at California Institute of the Arts, Santa Clarita. He was awarded the Richard Seaver Distinguished Chair in Music by CalArts in 2007. During this period he also had guest appointments at the University of Illinois, where he was awarded the prestigious George A. Miller Chair in celebration of the centennial of the School of Music there, in the Milton Avery Graduate Program at Bard College, the Center for Advanced Musical Studies at Chosen Vale, and Ionian University in Greece. While at CalArts he has continued to publish writings on music and related research, develop programs in interdisciplinary arts, perform as instrumentalist and conductor, and compose new interactive performance works, *Predictions*, *Confirmations and Disconfirmations*, and interactive media installation works commissioned by the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, *It Is About To . . . Sound and It Is About . . . Vexations* and produce new writings on his ideas about *Propositional Music*. He was in residence as a George A. Miller Visiting Professor in 1995 at the University of Illinois, School of Music, where his self-organizing multi-media chamber opera involving brain signals, *On Being Invisible II (Hypatia Speaks to Jefferson in a Dream)*, was premiered. During the later part of the 1990's he returned to instrumental composition inspired by ideas derived from models of evolution about how to transform musical shapes to produce a new kind of counterpoint. He composed two works simultaneously with these ideas, *Seeing the Small in the Large (Six Movements for Orchestra)* written for the Colburn Orchestra da Camera and Idyllwild Symphony and *Bell Solaris (Twelve Movements for Piano)* written for Katrina Krinsky. A microcosm of the harmonic system used in these works appears in a piece for multiple voices and freely realized harmonies, *Attunement*, on *Chanteuse*, performance artist Jacqueline Humbert's CD of new song forms.

In the 2000's *Four Lines* for instruments and electronic tracks extended some of the ideas about order and instability explored earlier in *Two Lines*. Methods for transformational counterpoint were used again in *Naked Curvature (Four Memories of the Daimon)* a kind of whispering chamber opera for instruments, voices, and interactive electronic systems composed for the California EAR Unit as a modular score organized in cyclical patterns of changing relationships among the performers inspired by the mystical writings of Yeats. Rosenboom's writings began to expand into explorations of theoretical physics, models of intelligence, and interstellar communication, connecting all this to earlier work in music and neuroscience and models of experimental composition. Influences from this research and evolving ideas about time lead to two works utilizing a new kind of scoring technique with notational *configuration spaces* that map musical relationships as *potentials* for performance realization. Two works exemplify this, *Zones of Coherence* with four

movements for solo or multiple trumpets written for Daniel Rosenboom outlining a dramatic transition from pure breath to virtuosic manipulation of tone and *Twilight Language* with four movements for solo piano written for Vicki Ray that also refer to a mystical language of ancient Tibetan *Siddahs* and images by the Tenth Century, Ch'an Chinese painter, Shih K'o. Another highlight of this period was the production of a new version of *Bell Solaris*. In collaboration with director, Travis Preston, this work was given an immersive imagistic setting with an ensemble of live video performers and a compositional expansion involving interactive software and additional, computer-controlled pianos. This work, *Bell Solaris (Twelve Metamorphoses in Piano Theater)* was presented with critical acclaim at REDCAT in Los Angeles in 2005 and continues to be developed for future international productions.

Rosenboom lives in Santa Clarita, California, where he works and teaches in a community of artists at CalArts and in the Los Angeles area, collaborates with his family of artists and musicians, develops new educational programs in music and interdisciplinary arts, performs internationally and helps direct an annual series of performance events at CalArts and REDCAT (Roy and Edna Disney CalArts Theater) in L.A., and maintains an international network of collaborative, collegial relationships and projects. He continues to compose, produce and release new recordings and work on his long-term writing projects, including a book on compositional modeling, *Propositional Music*. He is currently developing a new approach to opera as emergent interactive process with poet, Martine Bellen, in a new work titled *AH!*

More information is available at:  
<http://music.calarts.edu/~david>

### **Recent CD's with Rosenboom's Music**

*How Much Better If Plymouth Rock Had Landed On The Pilgrims*, first complete recording of all nine sections of major, historic work from 1969-1971. Featured performers include Swapan Chaudhuri (tabla), Erika Duke-Kirkpatrick (cello), Vinny Golia (winds), Aashish Khan (sarode), Daniel Rosenboom (trumpets & co-production), David Rosenboom (piano, electronics, & co-production), I Nyoman Wenten (Balinese instruments), William "Willie" Winant (marimba & Balinese instruments), two progressive rock/new music/metal bands from Los Angeles, Plotz! & DR. MiNT, master recording engineer, John Baffa, piano technician, Alan Eder, and others. CD booklet includes two essays, musical notes and analyses by Chris Brown, and "*The '60's as an Intellectual Monster*" by philosopher-writer, Sande Cohen. New World Records, 80689-2, 2009, double-CD  
<http://www.newworldrecords.org/>

*Future Travel*, digital re-mastering of 1981 compositions for one of the first digital keyboard instruments, *Touché*, piano, violin, percussion and *300 Series Electric*

*Music Box* from Buchla and Associates, all played by Rosenboom. A newly re-edited version of *And Out Come the Night Ears* with material never before released for piano and *300 Series Electric Music Box* is also included, New World Records, 80668-2, 2007, <http://www.newworldrecords.org/>

Brainwave *Music 2006*, re-release of classic works from the original 1976 album on A.R.C. Records, together with a new recording of *Four Lines (Two High)* (2001) for electronic tracks derived from auditory event-related potentials in the brain doubled by violin and oboe lines performed by Rosenboom and Libby Van Cleve, EM Records, EM1054CD, 2006, <http://www.emrecords.net/>

*Bloodier, Mean Son* (trumpet virtuoso, Daniel Rosenboom performs world premieres of diverse new trumpet works, including two by David Rosenboom), Ninewinds Records, NWCD 0238, 2005, [www.ninewinds.com](http://www.ninewinds.com) & [www.danielrosenboom.com](http://www.danielrosenboom.com)

*Suitable for Framing* (forms of freedom for two pianos, mrdangam and kanjira, with J.B. Floyd and Trichy Sankaran), Mutable Music, 17517-2, 2004, [www.mutablemusic.com](http://www.mutablemusic.com)

*And Come Up Dripping* (oboe extended techniques and interactive electronics, with Libby Van Cleve), published with the book, *Oboe Unbound*, Scarecrow Press, Lanham, MD, 2004, [www.scarecrowpress.com](http://www.scarecrowpress.com)

*Chanteuse, Songs of a Different Sort* (new song forms performed by Jacqueline Humbert with electronic soundscapes, arrangements and compositions by Rosenboom and others), Lovely Music, Ltd., LCD 4001, 2004, [www.lovely.com](http://www.lovely.com)

*Invisible Gold* (classics of live electronic music involving extended musical interface with the human nervous system), Pogus Productions, 21022-2, 2000, [www.pogus.com](http://www.pogus.com)

*Music from-On Being Invisible II (Hypatia Speaks to Jefferson in a Dream)* (selections from a self-organizing chamber opera for brainwaves, speaking voices, musicians, and multi-media computer performance), on *Transmigration Music*, Centaur Records, CRC 2490, 2000, [www.centaurecords.com](http://www.centaurecords.com)

*Two Lines, David Rosenbom and Anthony Braxton*, (music for winds, MIDI piano, and interactive software), Lovely Music, Ltd., LCD 3071, 1995, [www.lovely.com](http://www.lovely.com)

*A Precipice in Time*, (for percussion, saxophone, cello, piano-celesta, and sound rotation), on *The Virtuoso in the Computer Age-I*, Centaur Records, CDC 2110, 1991, [www.centaurecords.com](http://www.centaurecords.com)

*Systems of Judgment*, computer music system and auxiliary instruments, Centaur Records, CDC 2077, 1989, [www.centaurrecords.com](http://www.centaurrecords.com)

Some other sources for Rosenboom's music and writings are:

Frog Peak Music: [www.frogpeak.org](http://www.frogpeak.org)

Electronic Music Foundation: [www.emf.org](http://www.emf.org)

CDeMusic: [www.cdemusic.org](http://www.cdemusic.org)

Leonardo on-line: <http://www.leonardo.info/>

American Music Center: [www.amc.net](http://www.amc.net)

NewMusicBox: [www.newmusicbox.org](http://www.newmusicbox.org)

Leonardo Electronic Almanac, Electronic Monographs:  
<http://leoalmanac.org/resources/emonograph/index.asp>