

reo recordings of ocean surf, forest wind, and whale song to compositions written and executed entirely by computer programs, such as Larry Fast's *Synergy: Computer Experiments, Vol. 1* (1980). Somewhere in the middle is a range of electro-acoustic music by composer-performers such as the American Steve Roach (*Structures from Silence*, 1984) the German Chaitanya Deuter (*Nirvana Road*, 1984), the Greek Vangelis Papathannasiou (*Chariots of Fire*, 1981), and the Japanese Kitaro (*Silk Road I & II*, 1986), as well as solo acoustic piano improvisations, arrangements, and compositions by the genre's commercial heavyweight, the Windham Hill label's George Winston. Solo flute recorded by Paul Horn inside the Taê Mahal, vocal multiphonics recorded by David Hykes in a French cathedral, hammer dulcimer by Laraaji recorded with electronic echo by Eno in a studio – such are the varieties of new age music. Most of it shares a tranquil atmosphere, a non-developmental nature, a focus on tone color as a primary element of musical expression, and a high level of unabashed diatonicism and consonance.

Eno's direct contributions to this genre are manifest: his records sit in the bins alongside the rest. More difficult to claim unequivocally is his position as one of the founders of the genre. The minimalists of the 1960s came first, but it may well have been Eno's original, popular ambient records of the late 1970s, as much as any other single factor, that got the ambient sound in people's ears, that provided the foundation for and impetus behind a thorough exploration of a new realm of musical possibilities.

The Music's Beauty

Let us return to the paradoxical questions raised at the beginning of this book. Is Eno's music divinely simple or merely simplistic? Is it primal and elemental, or primitive and elementary? Posed thus, such questions do not admit of easy answers, because Eno's music is designed to operate on many different levels. In his progressive rock, there is certainly the level of harmonic primitivism, though not quite the "three-chord primitivism" of which Rockwell wrote in connection with the rock and roll of the 1950s. But what a wealth of other levels in Eno's songs: verbal irony and word play, musical nostalgia, contemporaneity, and futurism, experimentation in different kinds of compositional processes, and a number of different song-types – assaultive, pop, strange, and hymn-like, none of them used quite conventionally, and taken together adding up to a rich variety of expression.

Eno's ambient music is likewise multi-levelled. At one level is its apparent surface simplicity, unassertiveness, and high degree of consonance – hence its suitability for use as an ignorable background "tint." But Eno has simultaneously succeeded in his effort to pack enough subtle musical information into his ambient pieces to enable them to stand up to close, repeated listening.

Francisco, under the direction of Anna Turner and Stephen Hill, Eno has reportedly written a fan letter to the show, which reads in part, "If I'd been offered the chance to design a late night radio show, I don't think I would have come up with anything closer to my own taste." See Rod Smith, "What is Spacemusic!," *FM 91 Public Radio* (California State University, Sacramento, Feb. 1987), 5. Anna Turner and Stephen Hill also publish the catalog *Spacemusic: Music by Mail, 1986*, a 97-page annotated listing of hundreds of LPs, CDs, and cassettes. The first issue of John Patrick Lamkin, ed., *Music of the Spheres: A New Age Music & Art Quarterly* (Taos, N.M., 1986), came out in early 1987.