

Biography: Chris Brown

Chris Brown (b.1953) San Francisco based composer, pianist, and electronic instrument builder, studied composition with William Brooks, electronic music with Gordon Mumma, and computer music with David Rosenboom. He is currently Co-Director for the Center for Contemporary Music (CCM) at Mills College in Oakland, where he teaches also teaches Composition and Electronic Music.

Chris Brown's music is known for its unusual sonorities derived from electroacoustic instruments he has invented ("Alternating Currents", 1983); the use of live, interactive electronics to extend the sonorities of traditional acoustic instruments ("Iceberg", 1985; "Hall of Mirrors", 1987; and "Lava", 1992); the contrast between mechanized automated electronic sound environments and the spontaneity of free improvisation ("Snakecharmer", 1986); and applications of new technology in performance that change the roles of musicians to each other and to their audience ("Role'm", 1988 ;"Chain Reaction", 1990; "Wheelies", 1992; and "Talking Drum", 1995).

Chris Brown performs as a soloist, as well as in collaboration with some of the most innovative new music composer/performers of today. Many of his instrumental works with interactive electronics were composed first for the ensemble "ROOM", which also includes the renowned percussionist William Winant, saxophonist/composer Larry Ochs of the Rova Saxophone Quartet, and computer music specialist Scot Gresham-Lancaster. He is also a founding member of "THE HUB", a computer music band whose six members are all designers and builders of their own hardware and software instruments; they program their individual instruments to share musical information and to interact with each other in live performance, creating a new genre known as "Computer Network Music".

Chris Brown has performed his music throughout the U.S., Canada, and Europe, including at five different New Music America Festivals, at the STEIM Symposium on Interactive Composition in Amsterdam, the Bourges Festival of Electroacoustic Music in France, the Taktlos Festival in Switzerland, the Moers Festival, Tage for Live-Elektronische Musik Basel, the Cabrillo Music Festival, ISEA95, SoundCulture '96; and for broadcasts on West Deutsche Rundfunk in Cologne, BRS Radio Switzerland, and Danmarks Radio, Copenhagen. Other performances have included Composer's Forum in New York, LACE in Los Angeles, a collaboration with Relaché in Philadelphia, and duo concerts with William Winant at the Kunstmuseum, Bern and the University of California/San Diego. He has received commissions for works from the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, the Rova Saxophone Quartet (supported by a Meet the Composer/Reader's Digest grant), the Abel-Steinberg-Winant Trio, and from the Wallace A. Gerbode Foundation for "Lava", an evening length work for brass, percussion, and electronics.

Chris Brown's solo recordings include the CD "Snakecharmer" for Artifact Recordings in 1989, and the 1995 release "Lava", on John Zorn's Tzadik label. As a member of "The Hub" he appears on "The Hub - Computer Network Music", and "Wreckin' Ball", also on Artifact. His music is also featured on "Room", the debut album for this group released in 1989 by Sound Aspects, the 1992 release "Hall of Mirrors" on the Music & Arts label, and on the Computer Music CDCM anthology. vol. 18, distributed by Centaur. He performs as a pianist as a member of the Glenn Spearman Double Trio on two CD releases from Black Saint: "Mystery Project", and "Smokehouse", and on Larry Ochs' 1996 release "The Secret Magritte". His performances with original electroacoustic instruments are featured on Wayne Horvitz' 1988 Elektra release "This New Generation", and as part of Butch Morris' Conduction #11 on New World Records.