

# These Avant-Garde Musical Scores May Stimulate Both Eyes and Ears

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Beethoven and Bach may have been happy with violins and pianos, but at Massachusetts Institute of Technology they're celebrating composers who work with jackhammers and tape recorder parts.

This weekend, MIT's Hayden Gallery will start a month-long exhibit of scores for avant-garde music and audio compositions. These scores range from compositions using pictures of common objects that musicians can perform intuitively to a flow chart for a computer program that produces music from random numbers.

## Question of Visual Interest

Kathy Halbreich, director of exhibitions at the gallery, says that when plans were developed a year ago, a student-faculty advisory board questioned whether musical scores could be visually interesting.

But Kevin Concannon, a guest curator, promises these are different. The computer program, for example, is very colorful, with yellow, pink, green and blue hues on a black background. One modern piece by William Hellerman shows a musical staff being squeezed out of a toothpaste tube and glissandi suggested by water droplets splashing from a bottle.

While music readers might be able to imagine the sound a traditional composer seeks by reading a conventional score, com-

positions exhibited in the MIT show won't give much sense of the effect of a performance. That may not matter however. With "pieces in this show, an infinite variety of end products could result from the same original idea," Mr. Concannon says.

## Recording of a Fire Siren

For example, the score for a composition called "M-M-Manhattan" consists of a photograph of the pattern generated on an electronic synthesizer screen by a recording of a fire siren. The jagged pattern is keyed to an accompanying drawing of the New York skyline. The photo only represents the total composition, and there isn't any reference to the recordings of jackhammers and Mayor Ed Koch that are included when the piece is actually performed.

Then there are preliminary drawings for a composition in which eight turntables play a random selection of lines from a 64-line poem. And there's a diagram of how an artist creates audio anagrams in French, Spanish and English from the word "Juanita" by recording the word on tape, stretching the tape along a violin bow and then playing it on a tape recorder head mounted on a stringless violin.

One composition seems particularly appropriate for MIT. The score describes a performance in which ascending and descending glissandi parallel and contradict a reading of Newton's laws of motion.