

# *A festival in another genre*

**By James D. Watts Jr.**  
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**C**omposer-musician Joseph Klein finds music in the most mundane places - in the hum of an electric razor, for example, or in the interaction of traffic lights and pedestrians at an intersection.

"The music that interests me the most is music that's concerned with stretching boundaries and mixing media," said Klein, who teaches at the University of North Texas in Denton. "Such music forces you to consider things in different way, look at things with a different perspective. It challenges audiences to think, instead of just letting pretty sounds just wash over you."

Traffic lights and pedestrians play a pivotal role in one of Klein's compositions, "Outdoor Music IV," which is to be presented Friday as part of the New Genre Festival, sponsored by Living Arts of Tulsa.

Four trumpet players will take up posi-

tions at the corner of Archer and Main streets, just north of downtown Tulsa. Each trumpeter will have specific notes to follow, the duration of each phrase dictated by the changing of the traffic lights.

While the trumpets play - improvising here and there, sending out answering *blats* to a passing car's horn, what have you - four other performers will take to the crosswalks, following the commands of the "WALK - DON'T WALK" lights as faithfully as the trumpet players adhere to the inevitable rhythms of red, yellow and green flashes.

"It's certainly one of the most structured of these pieces that I've done," Klein said. "There is a definite arc to the music. Each player starts out with a single note and with each measure adds another note so that by the middle of the piece, they have played all 12 tones in the scales. Then we start taking away one note with each bar, so that it moves from order to chaos to order again."

As for the pedestrians, Klein said he wanted to add a visual element to the so it would work similar to a ballet.

## ■ Preview

**Event:** The 1996 New Genre Festival, presented by Living Arts of Tulsa

**When:** Thursday-Saturday

**Where:** Living Arts Space, 19 E. Brady St., and environs

**Admission:** Shows, \$5 per person; galleries, free.

"If it were just trumpets playing, it wouldn't be as effective," he said. "This way, there is continuous action. When this piece was performed the first time (at a college in Lexington, Ky.), some of the people observing the piece started walking with what I call the 'virtual pedestrians.' And we had cars passing through the intersection that would honk their horns, and the trumpets would answer."

"That's what this piece is all about - about artists responding to their environment and to each other," Klein said.

See Genre on H-8

# ... Genre

Continued from H-1

Klein's efforts to stretch boundaries and mix media could also serve as the credo for the New Genre Festival, being presented Thursday through Saturday in the environs around the Living Arts Space, 19 E. Brady St.

This is the fourth year Living Arts has presented its New Genre Festival, which showcases experimental, interdisciplinary work by contemporary visual and performing artists from throughout the region.

Last year marked the first time the festival drew participants from beyond the Tulsa city limits; Klein was one of those who answered the call for entries.

"The great thing about this particular festival," Klein said, "is that Steve (Living Arts artistic director Steve Liggett) pulls in artists from so many different genres and disciplines into a single place. All these people and ideas come together, play off each other, become inspired by each other, and it's always exciting to be involved in something like that."

The festival will begin with galleries opening *en masse* along Brady Street between Main Street and Boston Avenue. Hours will be 5:30 to 10:30 p.m.

The Living Arts Space will host a myriad of exhibitions. Tulsa artists Dan Mayo and Carter Hall will have, respectively, a photo-collage/painting and a mixed-media sculpture on display. Tulsa performance artist Ruperto will create an performance-environment piece about the sense of isolation felt by those with HIV. Norman Akers, whose work was a

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highlight of the recent Native American Invitational and Masters exhibit at Gilcrease, will have a mixed media work titled "Lost Heart in the Age of Reproduction" and the San Antonio-based group The Highlight Zone will present the audio-visual installation, "Tlacaoel."

Devena's Gallery, 13 E. Brady St., will forego its usual fine photography to serve as home to works by Tulsa artists Cynthia Brown, Byron Shen, Janice Bawden and Nancy Smart, and Oklahoma City artist David Crismon. In addition, San Antonio artist George Cisneros will create a new "audio environment" installation, which will involve sounds being broadcast from the roofs of the Brady galleries to ricochet off the Bank of Oklahoma Towers, so that the sounds continually seem to move and change.

The Tulsa Artists' Coalition's Alternative Gallery, 9 E. Brady St., will have Tom Pershall's "Urban Earwig" on display, and the Ceramic Arts Gallery, 23 E. Brady St., continues "Intimations of Ecuador," a show of works by Tulsa artist Laurie Spencer.

The galleries will be open throughout the run of the festival.

At The X-Space, the building formerly known as Xenophon, 20 E. Brady, will be showings of two acclaimed video artworks. "Water and Power" by Pat O'Neill, won the grand prize at the Sundance Film Festival in 1989, and was one of the top prize winners at the recent Dallas Video Festival. "Obsessive Becoming" by Daniel Reeves also took honors at the Dallas festival. The show begins at 8 p.m., and admission is \$5.

Friday will be devoted to new

music and performance art works, held beginning at 8 p.m. at The X-Space. In addition to Klein's "Outdoor Music IV," which will be performed just down the road at Archer and Main streets, the Friday show will feature two other Klein pieces. "IcarUS At the caBARet VoLtaire" is a piece for two guitarists that, Klein says, "parodies the guitar and guitar playing. It's a bit like watching the skeleton of a rehearsal by two musicians, with all the rough edges intact. It also is about the frustration some musicians have when dealing with contemporary music." The other piece, "Ritual IV," Klein describes only as a "work for amplified razor."

Other performers taking part in the Friday performance include three Tulsans — Michael Pearce, Stephanie Hacking and Carolyn Steinhoff Smith. Pearce's "Self-Help" mixes poetry and theater, Hacking will present an excerpt from a dance work titled "The Elicit Labyrinth," and Smith will offer a performance piece called "Meditation." Two

Denton, Texas, artists also will be featured. Man-Mei Wu will contribute a multimedia dance work for three performers titled "(D)3," and Darin Au will perform "Geekin' Out With the Composer Goons (Answering Machine Mix)," in which he uses a computer to synthesize music out of answering machine messages.

Admission is \$5 at the door.

Headlining Saturday's activities at The X-Space will be PeACh, otherwise known as The Performance Art Church, an Austin, Texas-based company. PeACh will present "Hello Dali — A Surreal Revue" that spoof famous artists and art styles.

Two former Tulsa artists — Franklin Wassmer, once a member of Tulsa Ballet Theater now living in Washington D.C., and Walt Kosty, now living in Berkeley, Calif. — will return to Tulsa to present new works.

Also scheduled to perform are Tulsa artists Charlotte Rhea, who will present a collaborative piece created with her 11-year-old niece, and the Virtual Theater Troupe.