

Michael Gerzon: 1945-1996

Source: *Computer Music Journal*, Winter, 1996, Vol. 20, No. 4 (Winter, 1996), p. 8

Published by: The MIT Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3680407>

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# Announcements

## Willi Studer: 1912–1996

The inventor of the Revox and Studer tape recorders, Willi Studer, died in Switzerland in March 1996 at the age of 84 years. This self-taught man made his company a world reference for high-quality electronics equipment. Willi Studer traversed an exceptional path through life, advancing from lowly servant to industrial pioneer. After his apprenticeship with a precision mechanic, he studied electrical theory and radio circuits on his own. By the 1930s he had designed a longwave radio that was sold under the names Sondyna and Televox.

In 1948 he founded his own enterprise for making magnetic tape recorders and professional mixing desks. The three-motor Studer 27 was the first tape recorder sold by the new firm. His products were sold for the first time under the name Revox in 1951. The Revox name quickly became world renowned in the domain of amateur and professional recording studios.

By 1964, the Studer company produced its first four-track tape recorder, which was shipped to producer George Martin for the production of the famous *Sgt. Pepper* album by the Beatles. After that, the market for recording expanded spectacularly, so that by 1986 Studer-Revox employed over 2,000 people with annual sales exceeding 220 million SFr. The company owned production centers in Regensdorf (Zurich) and in the south of Germany, as well as numerous field offices in other countries. In 1978 Willi Studer was awarded an honorary doctorate from the Federal Polytechnical Institute (ETH) in Zurich. He retired from the business in 1990. A biography on Willi Studer has just been published by Oesch Editions of Zurich.

## Jerry Hunt: 1943–1993

Jerry Hunt was born 30 November 1943 in Waco, Texas and died on 27 November 1993 of lung cancer at his home in Canton, Texas. He attended North Texas State University and worked as a pianist through 1969, performing in concerts of contemporary music. He also worked as a technical consultant for audio and video instrumentation and manufacturing, and served as music director and composer for many video and film production companies.

Jerry Hunt is best known for a series of performances, begun in the 1970s, which feature theatrics and live electronic music based on an “interrelated electronic, mechanic, and social sound-sight interactive transactional system.” During the 1990s, Jerry Hunt took on several collaborative projects, working with performance artist Karen Finley, visual artist Maria Blondeel, and composer/software designer Joel Ryan. The collaborations with Karen Finley brought him a wider audience and led to his role in the National Endowment for the Arts “Forbidden Four” scandal during the early 1990s.

A central theme in Jerry Hunt’s work was shamanism as a cultural precedent for the agents of modern technology. A lifelong student of mysticism and the occult, Mr. Hunt’s theatrics were themselves highly suggestive of ceremonial practice, featuring stylized movement and gestures, and incorporating handmade props such as staffs and rattles, often assembled from found objects. The accompanying music was typically produced by a complex array of computers, synthesizers, and sensors programmed to respond to Jerry Hunt’s stage motions. These systems were notable for their built-in random fallibility. A particular gesture or movement might—or might not—cause an audible change in the music. The

scheme worked frequently enough to reinforce the faith of the “believers,” but failed often enough to reinforce the disbelief of the “skeptics,” in much the same way as real religion. [Text adapted from the O. O. Discs catalog.]

## Michael Gerzon: 1945–1996

Michael Gerzon passed away on 6 May 1996. He was 50 years old and had suffered from severe asthma for many years. Mr. Gerzon graduated from Oxford University in 1967 and did postgraduate research in axiomatic quantum theory there. He has done extensive research in psychoacoustics and was awarded a fellowship from the Audio Engineering Society for work on directional psychoacoustics in 1978. He also had extensive practical live recording experience in classical, jazz, improvised, and rock music, including a number of commercial releases.

Michael Gerzon was the co-inventor of the Soundfield microphone, and was deeply involved in its development. He also was the main inventor of the Ambisonics technology for surround sound, under the auspices of the British Technology Group. In this capacity he formulated all mathematical and physical models of Ambisonics, for which he was awarded the AES Award of Excellence in 1992. According to his associates, Michael Gerzon had endless creativity, ideas, and enthusiasm for the things he did. He did not need much for himself and truly worked out of enjoyment, together with a strong sense of mission.

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