

Flinch your way to stardom

DETAILS are still somewhat sketchy, but word has it that at least one local manufacturer is considering production of a new musical instrument that makes melodies out of moving muscles.

Developed at the American Institute of Physics and called a **Biomuse**, the device is attached to a performer's skin by means of electrodes, and taps the tiny electrical discharges caused by muscle

movements to make a variety of sounds.

We haven't heard one of these in action yet, but to hear Institute neurophysiologist Dr Hugh Lusted talk, you'd imagine the results are nothing short of symphonic. "When a muscle moves, be it a blinking eyelid or a tightened fist, a whole population of fibres contribute to that move, each with its own special electronic signature. By translating these into audial phenomena, a virtually endless range of notes and tones can be created.

"Every human body contains more than enough impulses to make up an entire orchestra."

Biomuse inventors say they saw it originally as a way to help handicapped people make music, but have since realised that such a device might appeal to just about anybody, including professional musicians.

If it sells at a decent price, we're going to get one for the Man in the Next Office, whose regular musical offerings consist only of castanet crackles every time he levers himself from his chair and the odd impromptu concert after a lunch of beer and bears.