

Siggy: music with a murky laugh

by Sue Kautsky

The East Side is full of strange interesting people. Sigmund Snopek III, affectionately called Siggy, happens to be one of them. He's the type of person who throws away the covers of jig saw puzzle boxes to make putting the puzzles together more interesting.

Siggy, composer, arranger, producer, poet, studio musician and concert musician, is studying composition at UWM under Dr. John Downey. He recently premiered an original symphonic poem, *Orange Blue*, which was performed by the Milwaukee Symphony in combination with the rock group Integrated Light and Sound (ILS).



Siggy, 21, is now working with the Putney Synthesizer, creating his latest sound. "Virginia Woolf," his album produced at Studio East, will be released in May. The title song, based on the suicide of Virginia Woolf, who drowned herself to escape the horrors of World War II, begins gently and culminates in the experience of fright. It is, in part, an eerie listening experience befitting the mood of a candle-lit room.

Siggy writes music as his form of communication to others. When working with ILS he described his music as "pure energy moving with the visual images bringing a greater understanding of form and emotion through eye and ear." He said his work was "taking sound and giving it meaning through timbre, pitch and direction."

His music can be described as a combination of classical, rock and avant-garde. It is refreshing, awakening, and often moody with undertones of frantic emotion. Paging through his sheets and sheets of music, one might see his notes in the margin: "like a bursting bubble," "with melancholia," "a sombre murky laugh" "new vigor." No one could more avidly describe his music than Siggy him-

self.

His approach to writing music is now more intellectual than emotional, to get away from the "soppy romanticism," he said in a recent interview. "Rather than sitting at the piano feeling the music, I compose at the table with no feeling," said Siggy. The emotional level is just there, he said, and his music turns out sensitive to his surroundings.

Electronic music is still a new field, said Siggy and he utilizes what he learns as he progresses. In this light, his schooling is a very important and compatible part of his music. Technically, he feels he has improved, and with more awareness, he's learned how to control what he has to work with rather than letting it control him, said Siggy. He uses a mathematical-like chart, a 12 tone system, to help create the irregular intervals heard in his music.

Siggy, former leader of the Bloomsbury People, now leads his own group called Sigmund Snopek III, with James Gorton, Byron Wieman, Ding Lorenz, Jim Paolo, and Peter Parkman, fellow composer.

One of his gripes is the Top 40 bubble gum sound and commercialization in music. Although he feels music should be heard by all rather than a small group of intellectuals, his music is becoming more complex, he said. Siggy feels listeners need to be open minded. He likes his audience, "totally awake, ready to take in new things." He said audiences should pay more attention to what they are listening to because "music only exists when you hear it, unlike a painting which is there for a long time."

Siggy and Peter Parkman have been copying parts and assisting John Downey in his "Symphonic Modules Five" to be performed in Uihlein Hall this coming Saturday and Sunday. The modules are entitled, "Module I, Domes-Purple, Cylinders-Emerald, Spheres-Yellow, Parallelograms-Aqua, and Trapezoids-Orange."

On April 26, Siggy will be performing in "Music From Almost Yesterday" at the Fine Arts Recital Hall in a theater piece entitled "Meeting Place." It is done to pretaped electronic and concrete music and deals with, as Siggy put it, "creatures of the night coming alive in the orgasmic explosion of sound and motion."