

David Mash

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by CAROLINE HORN

David Mash wasn't always interested in technology. At a very early age, Mash saw himself as a guitarist. He started playing at 7 and was passionate about the instrument, performing through his school years and his time at the Berklee College of Music—even teaching guitar while he was still a student. But when he lost the use of his left hand due to an injury, he took up the synthesizer, sold his guitars, and began a new career as an electronic musician and a consultant to musical instrument companies on synthesizer design. From there, he designed the music synthesis department at Berklee. Fast-forward to the present: Mash designs and implements college-wide technology systems that provide both learning and administrative support (for example, enabling students to register or book a practice room). He also helps to manage the development of Berklee's City Music Network, a program that delivers free music lessons to youth in 15 cities around the country. Mash graciously made time to tell us about his career and his view of music technology.



STUDENTS IN
BERKLEE'S MUSIC
SYNTHESIS LAB

differentiate ourselves from other institutions and take advantage of contemporary approaches to teaching.

HOW HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO APPLY TO MUSIC LEARNING? I did a lot of reading and tinkering on my own. Where I could find mentors, I reached out to them. I went to a lot of conferences and just listened.

WHAT SOURCES DO YOU CHECK TO KEEP CURRENT? I read all of the music technology magazines such as *Keyboard* and *Electronic Musician* cover to cover every month, as well as the popular personal computing magazines like *Macworld* and *PC World*. Then I also pay attention to the academic computing world publications—all those geeky things.

HOW OFTEN ARE YOU STILL DIRECTLY IN TOUCH WITH MUSIC STUDENTS AND TEACHERS? Less than I would like. I do go to student meetings, though, and we also have student employees and I pick their brains.

WHAT IS AN IMPORTANT SKILL THAT YOU BRING TO YOUR WORK? I've gotten pretty good at large-scale project manage-

MA!: HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE YOUR PROFESSIONAL ROLE?

DM: I consider myself a futurist. My role is to envision the future and then to design a path to get there. So here at Berklee I envision how students will learn music and how teachers will teach music in the future and I find and build technological advances both in and out of the world of music that will create that future.

SO DOES YOUR WORK DEPEND ON WHAT'S BEING INVENTED AT THE TIME?

DM: Absolutely. I chaired the music synthesis department for five years during a very explosive time for synthesizers in the world—1984 to 1990 was right after the introduction of MIDI and the CD. This was a time of great innovation and change. I was riding that wave of change and helping the college make decisions about how we could

**CITY MUSIC STUDENTS
PERFORM AT THE
VICTOR MENDOZA
SUMMER FESTIVAL**



ment, which is really what has to happen if you're going to build the future: you have to think step-by-step about how it's going to get done.

TELL US MORE ABOUT THE CITY MUSIC INITIATIVE. The Berklee City Music Network connects Berklee City Music in Boston with like-minded music programs all over the country—including in Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles; New Orleans; and Seattle. The goal of the program is to provide kids with every opportunity to see their musical potential. This includes teaching and mentoring by Berklee graduates who live in their city.

Also, Berklee offers full-tuition scholarships to high school students enrolled at Network member sites through an application and audition process. The City Music Summer Scholarship enables the selected students, mostly juniors and seniors, to attend the Berklee Summer Performance Program in Boston

To further our reach, we've created a consortium among like-minded organizations that want to provide access to this kind of learning to the underserved in their locales.

Right now we've been targeting after-school programs. The long-term perspective is that we think we're creating a unique

approach to learning contemporary music that's designed for teenagers.

HOW HAS TECHNOLOGY FACILITATED THE CITY MUSIC NETWORK? We've taken the teaching materials and learning methodology that we developed for our Boston program and put it online: it's called the Pre-University Learning System Experience (PULSE). It's really the heart of the Network, and I'm building the online support system for it.

WHAT CAN MUSIC STUDENTS DO WITH TECHNOLOGY THAT THEY WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO DO WITHOUT IT? They can access resources that they wouldn't otherwise be physically able to get to: a great teacher who's not nearby, music that they might not otherwise hear, or other musicians with whom they wouldn't come into contact. All these things are enhanced by the technologies that we have now. Before you had to travel a great distance, at great expense, to have these things. Now we can bring them to people regardless of their location or their financial means, which is really exciting.

WHAT'S CUTTING-EDGE FOR MUSIC INSTRUCTION RIGHT NOW? I think

Internet2 is really exciting. It's a second generation of the Internet and it's in research mode right now. It's basically a very high-speed and very reliable way of connecting. It's exciting because it would support high-quality video and audio for distance learning that would bring together masters and disciples from all over. 🎧

