

## Intermedia-Day

### Mind-to-mind music starts a happening

By JOAN LOWNDES

It was like being on the banks of the Ganges on a misty evening among thousands of worshipping pilgrims. And yet we were seated on the floor of the Vancouver Art Gallery listening to the compositions of Richard Anstey.

The occasion was the first special events scheduled as part of Electrical Connection, the week-long continuum of mind expanding experiences devised by Intermedia.

Although Tuesday's event was billed as a concert it could more aptly be described as a sound and mist environment. Richard Anstey, who used to play with Al Neil but who has been associated with Intermedia from its inception, stood in the center of the main gallery with his soprano sax.

Around him were the other instruments he plays: contra bass, zither, toy piano, mouth harp, chanter and electric base.

Hunched over an electric guitar was his brother Robert, while Harley McConnel swayed above the percussion. On the table to the left were the electronic tapes recorded by Ed Jorden, which through their overlays would enlarge the work of the trio to an orchestral richness.

Incense drifted over the audience. The lights went out. And then the greatest magic happened: from a dry ice machine bursts of mist were squirted to the audience, obliterating them and rolling back over the performers who became mere silhouettes - "apparitions", as the event was titled.

Barriers between the audience and the performers, the whole formal concert situation, vanished, enabling the music to penetrate mind-to-mind.

The first piece, called "Hymn", reflected strong Indian influence and a number of teen agers present instinctively assumed yoga poses of meditation. To interweaving electronic background Richard Anstey swayed as he wielded his soprano saxophone, working up an ecstatic rhythm.

This was followed by Parth Galen - Tolkien's enchanted forest. Tinkling Chinese-like music gave an important roll to the percussion, while Richard Anstey plucked, precise sounds from the Zither.

The ear could discern nothing of what we would call a motif, leit or otherwise. Then we were drifting once more into a contemporary western mode as the drum beats became more empathetic, with the wails of souls in torment whirling about from the tapes.

As Richard Anstey again picked up that sweet sax. echoes of ragas returned. but I could not tell when we emerged from Tolkien's forest into the third and forth composition: "Suite Bye and Bye - electronic collage" and "Old Fashioned Medley - dedicated to Al Neil.

Not wishing understandably to break the mood, the musicians played on without interruption. Too long. It became purely abstract sound, loud and piercing and somewhat monotonous.

Even the young people, who can tolerate sheer volume far better than their elders, slowly rose from the floor, picked up their cushions and melted away - apparitions in their turn.

A pity, because Richard Anstey has a style of his own, unlike the Dionysiac frenzy of Al Neil flowing with far greater lyricism.

Todays events include Dave Rimmer and Dennis Vance in a short lunch time chamber concert of electronic and collage tape music and voices, this evening Vancouver poets Varney, Gilbert, Bissett, Razutis, Copithorne and Spears will read from their work.