

# PRESS KIT

What the Future Sounded Like

1 X 27 minute documentary (ABC TV)

Director Matthew Bate

Producer Claire Harris

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## LOG LINE

From Dr Who to The Dark Side of the Moon to modern day dance music, the pioneering members of the Electronic Music Studios radically changed the sound-scape of the 20th Century. What the Future Sounded Like tells this fascinating story of British electronic music.

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

Post-war Britain rebuilt itself on a wave of scientific and industrial breakthroughs that culminated in the cultural revolution of the 1960's. It was a period of sweeping change and experimentation where art and culture participated in and reflected the wider social changes. In this atmosphere was born the Electronic Music Studios (EMS), a radical group of avant-garde electronic musicians who utilized technology and experimentation to compose a futuristic electronic sound-scape for the New Britain. Comprising of pioneering electronic musicians Tristram Cary (famed for his work on the Dr Who series) and Peter Zinovieff, EMS's studio was one of the most advanced computer-music facilities in the world. EMS's great legacy is the VCS3, Britain's first synthesizer and rival of the American Moog. The VCS3 was a uniquely British invention, which changed the sounds of some of the most popular artists of this period including Brian Eno, Hawkwind and Pink Floyd. Almost thirty years on the VCS3 is still used by modern electronic artists like Aphex Twin and Chicken Lips. What The Future Sounded Like colours in a lost chapter in music history, uncovering a group of composers and innovators who harnessed technology and new ideas to re-imagine the boundaries of music and sound.



Tristram Cary



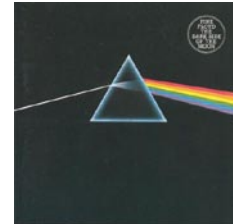
Peter Zinovieff

## SYNOPSIS

Post-war Britain rebuilt itself on a wave of scientific and industrial breakthroughs that culminated in the cultural revolution of the 1960's. It was a period of sweeping change and experimentation where art and culture participated in and reflected the wider social changes. In this atmosphere a radical new group of electronic musicians utilized technology and experimentation to compose a futuristic soundtrack for the New Britain.

In the early 60's pioneering electronic musicians Tristram Cary and Peter Zinovieff established EMS (Electronic Music Studios) with wunderkind music-engineer David Cockerell.

EMS's legacy is the VCS3, Britain's first synthesizer and rival of the American Moog. The VCS3 was a uniquely British invention used by some of the most popular artists of this period including The Who, David Bowie, Brian Eno and Pink Floyd, whose iconic album *Dark Side of The Moon* utilized the unique sounds of the VCS3 to startling effect. The album is still one of the top selling records of all time.



The individual backgrounds of the EMS characters show them as pioneering vanguards in their own right. As early as 1945 Cary hand-built the world's largest private electronic music studio from war-surplus junk and went to lead London's electronic avant-garde. He also moonlighted as a composer for pop cult films like *The LadyKillers* and the seminal television series *Dr Who*. Peter Zinovieff, an exiled Russian aristocrat and fringe dwelling avant-garde composer, borrowed money from his rich British wife to buy two military grade computers specifically for his personal experiments in electronic music. With David Cockerell's ability to make anything that Cary and Zinovieff dreamed up, EMS's musical inventiveness opened up a world of new musical possibilities.

Prime Minister Harold Wilson famously declared in 1964, 'Britain will forge itself with the white-hot heat of a scientific revolution. As leaders of a group of machine-based musicians, EMS were the ideal sonic-architects for a society where technology was God. They created incredible sounds for films about nuclear power reactors, adverts for early Olivetti computers and for the British Pavilion at the '67 World Expo. Played back today this early electronic music still arouses wonder at its creation and power.

The cross-pollination of swinging London's psychedelic rock scene elite with the cardigan wearing 'straights' of EMS, changed the course of British rock and roll. Today in the avant-hard world of British electronica, the analogue reverberations of EMS equipment and inspiration has come full circle and is being harnessed by bands like Add-N-To-X, RadioHead and Aphex Twin. In an electronically dominated music world where one synthesiser can be pre-programmed to make any sound, these analogue revivalists see the pioneering legacy of EMS as electro-genesis.

What The Future Sounded Like mixes experimental visual and sonic techniques with animation and never-seen-since archival footage. A sonic and visual collage, this documentary colours in a lost chapter in music history, uncovering a group of alchemical composers and music engineers who harnessed technology and new ideas to re-imagine the boundaries of music and sound.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT - MATTHEW BATE

What The Future Sounded Like is in many ways the culmination of my on-going love of electronic music. This affair began subconsciously in early childhood in the U.K, listening on the radio to things like War Of The Worlds, Kraftwerk's Tour De France and watching Dr Who on television (the sound was always much scarier than the papier mache monsters!). Later on I spent years inside dingy clubs listening to Detroit Techno, Chicago House and British Electronica.



When I met Claire Harris and she told me that she knew Tristram Cary and that he lived in Adelaide we thought that he would make a great documentary subject. This was a chance to delve into the back history of a subject I thought I knew about. Whenever people talk of the beginnings of this music it usually starts with bands like Kraftwerk. But people like Tristram Cary were pioneering electronic music techniques from the late 40's using machines hand built from war-junk. Tristram's scores are monolithic soundscapes, grating and beautiful and unlike anything I'd ever heard before. He also scored for Dr Who and films like the Ladykillers and Hammer Horror films. Thus our project began as a bio-pic about Tristram before morphing into a story about the Electronic Music Studios (EMS).

The story of EMS is truly amazing. In the mid 60's Peter Zinovieff, an exiled Russian aristocrat, bought a computer which, at the time only the military and large factories had access to. But Peter didn't want to launch rockets or control food processing; he wanted to change the boundaries of how to make music. From the late 50's Peter and Tristram led a vanguard of avant-garde electronic music makers who sought to re-define what music could be. One of the most intriguing ideas for the film is that these artists were making music and sounds which had never been heard before, using equipment which was either hand built or appropriated from cutting edge scientific hardware. What a beautiful idea that such an alchemical process should be used to make music.

Together with Tristram and genius-engineer David Cockerell, Peter Zinovieff established EMS one of the first computer music facilities in the world. They pioneered techniques now taken for granted such as digital sequencing, sampling and analysing. Prime Minister Harold Wilson declared in 1964 that England would be 'forged in the white-hot heat of a scientific revolution'. This idea forms another key to our story; that EMS was breaking new artistic ground with the science and technology of music, and in a way provided a futuristic sound-track for the New Britain.

When they needed more money to fund their ideas EMS invented England's first synthesizer, the VCS3, which coincidentally changed the sound palette available to mainstream rock bands in the late 60's. Suddenly iconic bands like Pink Floyd and Roxy Music were turned on to electronic music through a cross-pollination with the avant-garde EMS. Today bands like Radiohead and Aphex Twin are still using this EMS gear. This was another seductive idea in telling this story, that these fringe-dwelling avant-garde musicians had influenced the sounds of iconic albums like Dark Side of The Moon and the glam rock of Roxy Music!

We approached the film by treating it as a musical and visual collage. Using incredible archival footage, hand-drawn animation, hand-painted & bleached super-8 film and access to a massive back-catalogue of music, we have set out to create a film that mirrors the hand-made aesthetic and musical techniques of its subjects. The film also captures the zeitgeist of each era we pass through from post war London, to Howard Wilson's technocratic mid 60's Britain to L.S.D-soaked 'Swinging' London. We have made links between wider cultural goings on in politics, culture, science and technology with the achievements and influence of EMS.

The rise and fall of EMS is a story of triumph and tragedy played out against a backdrop of room-sized computers, using a soundtrack unlike you've ever heard and starring a number of radical and eccentric musicians. Strangely, the story of EMS is not written about in music history books, it has become a kind of lost chapter in electronic music evolution. What The Future Sounded Like became for us, a mission to tell their story.

### **PRODUCER'S STATEMENT - CLAIRE HARRIS**

Making this film was a unique opportunity to explore the fascinating story of British electronic music – we were lucky to have Tristram Cary, now 82 years old and a meticulous archivist, living on our doorstep in Adelaide. We found an enormously rich archive, which gave us the opportunity to create a visually exciting story. Our aim was always to let the film reflect the handmade quality of the early electronic experimentation and this shaped our archive searches and the inclusion of animation and motion graphics. We were also fortunate to meet British experimental filmmaker and musician, Ian Helliwell, who hand treated super 8 film and braved English winters to find obscure bits of old film in car boot sales. Matt and I both wanted to make a documentary that was visually creative and entertaining for audiences and this vision was embraced by motion graphics editor Raynor Pettge, animator Greg Holfeld and our editor Karryn De Cinque.

While we started out wanting to tell the story of Tristram Cary's contribution to music our focus centred on his early experimentation in electronic music and the fascinating untold story of EMS and his colleagues Peter Zinovieff and David Cockerell. Many British audiences know of the BBC Radiophonic Workshop and see it as the prime mover in the British electronic scene. We hope this film will fill in some historical gaps and reveal the pioneering work of Peter, David and Tristram and the fantastic work they were doing at EMS.

I have known Tristram Cary since I was a child and have strong memories of being taken to concerts of his music – music which seemed then confronting and difficult and mostly, unlike anything I'd ever heard. As a child my interest really grew when I learnt of his Dr Who music – our all time favourite TV program – yet Tristram groans every time Dr Who is mentioned "I'll only be remembered as the bloke that did Dr Who music" What was interesting about finally finishing the film and watching it with Tristram was he had no idea of the influence of EMS or their synthesisers. Even he had a laugh as Hawkwind's Dave Brock tells his story about making music with a VCS3 aided by LSD.

What the Future Sounded Like was a long time in the making and we have been very fortunate to have the ongoing support of the Adelaide Film Festival

Investment Fund, the South Australian Film Corporation, the Australian Film Commission and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Researching and sourcing archive from a great many private and public libraries in Australia, the UK and Germany and from personal collections has been a fascinating voyage of discovery. We hope this film will rekindle an interest in the grandfathers of electronic music.

## **CREW BIOGRAPHIES**

### **MATTHEW BATE - DIRECTOR**

Matt was born in the north of England and immigrated to Australia in the early 80's. At University he majored in Film and Classics and went on to make a number of award winning short films. Matt is currently involved in creating Risking It All, a four part cross-platform documentary series with SBS, and the on-line project I Love A Sunburnt Country with SBS and Dennis O'Rourke. What The Future Sounded Like is a culmination of Matt's lifetime obsession with electronic music.

### **CLAIRE HARRIS – PRODUCER**

Claire Harris grew up in the arts community of St Ives, Cornwall, UK, moving to Adelaide in 1973. She has a background in the visual arts and studied Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Adelaide. Claire worked for several years in London and has extensive experience in film publicity and marketing. She began producing documentaries in 2004 with Hearing James, directed by Cath Moore (SBSTV) and is currently working as producer with Alan Carter on Risking it All (4 x 26 minute cross platform series for SBS/SAFC) with other documentaries in development.

### **EXECUTIVE PRODUCER – IAN COLLIE**

Ian Collie is a producer with Essential Viewing, an Australian production company formed by key producers from Hilton Cordell Productions and drama production company RB Films. His recent credits include Political Football, Dust to Dust (ABC, TV NZ and RDF) and for the ABC's Reality Bites programs: A Case for the Coroner, Art House and Street Practice. He is currently producing The Colony (6 X half-hour SBSTV) He is the producer of The Shadow of Mary Poppins a biopic on the Australian writer of the Mary Poppins books, P.L Travers. (ABC, RTE (Ireland), AVRO (Holland), Artsworld (UK) and CBC (Canada)) and The Original Mermaid a documentary on Australian swimming, vaudeville and silent screen star Annette Kellerman (SBS, AVRO, Women's Television Network (Canada).

### **EDITOR - KARRYN DE CINQUE**

Karryn De Cinque is a graduate of the Australian Film, Television and Radio School. She completed a Masters Degree in Editing in 1999. Her graduating film "Half Mongrel" won the Frameworks Editing Award and the Tomorrow's Cinema Award (Brussels). Karryn has over 12 years experience as an editor and has worked on more than 20 short films, which have been screened and distributed internationally. Her documentaries credits including Two of Us (SBSTV 2006), The Man Who Saved a Million Brains (ABCTV 2005), When Children Kill (NZ TV3 2004)

### **TONY WILSON DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY (NSW)**

Award winning Tony Wilson is one of Australia's most experienced documentary

cinematographers whose work has screened at film festivals around the world and won national and international awards. Recent credits include Plumpton High Babies (ABC) and Secrets of the Jury Room (SBS). Facing the Demons (ABC) won the Gold Logie Best Documentary and the United Nations Media Peace Prize and First Contact (directed by Bob Connolly) received an Oscar Academy nomination in 1984

## **WHAT THE FUTURE SOUNDED LIKE – CHARACTERS**

### **PETER ZINOVIEFF**

Peter Zinovieff came from a moneyed Russian aristocratic family who fled the revolution and settled in London. In the early 1960's Peter began to pursue his dream of advancing the field of electronic music and purchased two military grade computers, which he installed in his Putney house. He was the main instigator of the Electronic Music Studio (EMS), which he established with David Cockerell and Tristram Cary. Together they designed and built the VCS3 Synthesiser, which changed the sounds of contemporary British music. Peter now lives in Cambridge and is still composing.

### **TRISTRAM CARY**

Tristram Cary, son of British novelist Joyce Cary, holds a unique place in contemporary music. He is well known for his early electronic scores for Dr Who (BBC, 1965) and the score for the Ealing Studio classic The Ladykillers (1955). For over 60 years Tristram has been a prolific composer of electronic and orchestral music writing for film, radio and television. Credits include Time Without Pity, Harlequin (1956); The Little Island, with animator Richard Williams (1958) and the cult classic Quatermass and The Pit, Hammer Films (1967) Tristram was founder in 1976 of the electronic music studio at the Royal College of Music, London and founder Director of EMS and co-designer of the VCS3 (Putney) Synthesiser. In 1992 Faber and Faber published his Illustrated compendium of Musical Technology.

### **DAVID COCKERELL**

Since David Cockerell was a small child he has been obsessed with electronics, music and inventing music-making devices. He is acknowledged as one of the world's most gifted electronic engineers and inventors. At EMS David was the engineering brain behind the synthesisers. Today he works for AKAI and continues to design synthesisers.

Related Links:

[www.myspace.com/whatthefuturesoundedlike](http://www.myspace.com/whatthefuturesoundedlike)

[www.whatthefuturesoundedlike.com](http://www.whatthefuturesoundedlike.com)

[www.ems-synthi.demon.co.uk](http://www.ems-synthi.demon.co.uk)

[www.analogdays.com](http://www.analogdays.com)



David Cockerell

**CREDITS**

Director  
Matthew Bate

Producer  
Claire Harris

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Executive Producer       | Ian Collie   |
| Editor                   | Karryn de Cinque   |
| Assistant Editor         |  |
| Motion Graphics          | Raynor Pettge  |
| Director of Photography  | Tony Wilson ACS  |
| Additional Photography   | Bryan Mason<br>Nick Matthews   |
| Sound Recordist          | Richard Pilcher  |
| Additional Sound         | Will Sheridan  |
| Production Manager       | Daryl Watson   |
| Production Accountant    | Mark Kraus   |
| Animation Sequences      | Greg Holfeld   |
| Super 8 Sequences        | Ian Helliwell  |
| Colour Grade             | John Armstrong   |
| Sound Facility           | Boom Sound @ Best FX   |
| Sound Design             | Pete Best  |
| Sound Edit               | Liam Price   |
| Mixer                    | Peter Smith  |
| Editing Facilities       | Plexus Films   |
| Post-Production Facility | The Lab  |
| Insurance                | Webster Hyde Heath   |
| Post-Production Script   | Meredith Hosking   |
| Music Licensing          | Kim Green  |
| Archive Research         | Claire Harris<br>Daryl Watson  |
| Archive                  | Crown Copyright/ Film Images / Film Australia<br>ITN Source / Reuters / British Pathe<br>BBC Motion Gallery<br>Getty Images<br>Terry Nation Estate<br>EMS Archive<br>Tristram Cary Archive<br>Peter Zinovieff Archive<br>Film World<br>Canberra Times<br>Yancey<br>Hawkwind Archives |

## MUSIC CREDITS

### "Virginia Plain"

Composed by Brian Ferry and licensed by  
BMG Music Publishing Australia Pty Ltd  
"Virginia Plain" live performance, 'Beat Club',  
Radio Bremen, Studio Hamburg

### "Silver Machine"

Composed by David Brock/ Robert Calvert  
Licensed courtesy of EMI Music Australia Pty Limited  
1972 EMI- UNITED PARTNERSHIP LTD. All rights licensed  
By EMI Catalogue Partnership Australia Pty Ltd  
(P) 1972 EMI Records Ltd.

### "On The Run"

Performed by Pink Floyd  
Composed by Roger Waters and Dave Gilmour  
© Roger Waters Music Overseas Ltd (Ns)  
All Rights On Behalf Of Roger Waters Music Overseas Ltd.  
By kind permission of Warner/Chappell Music Australia Pty Ltd  
© 1973 Pink Floyd Music Publishers Ltd. All Rights admin and licensed by EMI Songs  
Australia Pty Ltd.  
Licensed courtesy of EMI Music Australia Pty Ltd

### "Seka Wants Your VCS3"

performed by The Emperor Machine  
Written and produced by Andy Meecham,  
Published by Schnozza Music, C&P 2006 DC Recordings  
Licensed courtesy of DC Records

### "Leviathan '99", "Continuum"

"Birth Is Life Is Power Is Death is God Is.." "345"  
Composed by Tristram Cary  
Published By Tall Poppies Foundation Limited

### "Chronometer", "Zasp",

"Now's The Time To Say Goodbye", "Lollipop"  
Composed by Peter Zinovieff

DMZ – Taken from DMZ Live  
Copyright Juice Records Australia 1991-2007

### SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Tristram Cary, Peter Zinovieff, David Cockerell, Robin Wood, Mark Ayres, David Brock  
and Hawkwind, Andy Meecham, Gordon Reid, David Vorhaus, Mark Jenkins, Katrina  
Sedgwick, Amanda Duthie, Melissa Juhanson, Mike Cowap, Karin Altmann, Julia  
Overton, Reece Schubert, Martin Potter, Belinda Humphris, Viron Papadopoulos, Holly  
Owen, Jane Cary, Heather Croall, Roderick Ho'vell, Jack Dangers, Adelaide University.

And

Trevor Pinch, co-author of "Analog Days", Harvard University Press 2002  
[www.analogdays.com](http://www.analogdays.com)

ABC Executive Producer Amanda Duthie

Developed and Produced in Association with the Australian Film Commission



South Australian Film Corporation



Produced in Association with the 2007 Adelaide Film Festival



Produced in Association with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation



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