

work in progress

# MAKING MUSIC

MARINA ROSENFELD AND HER SHEER FROST ORCHESTRA POLISH THEIR PERFORMANCE

This is a rehearsal of the Sheer Frost Orchestra, a performance piece I created for seventeen women on electric guitars which will be held in April at the Whitney Museum, in conjunction with BitStreams—a survey of digitally inspired arts. Only one of the women pictured is a guitar player in any normal sense. The rest are playing for the first, and possibly only, time. They're using a technique I developed that allows any woman to become a Sheer Frost guitarist. The guitar is laid out on the floor and nail polish bottles are used to produce sounds such as "the drop," "the drone," and "the scratch." She learns the gestures, how to read my score, and then I set her loose. I don't even play in the orchestra anymore. The women, who are new and different for every performance, come to the work with no expectations, ready to rock, or be contemplative, or whatever suits their personality. It's about improvisation and transformation. They always amaze me. They're instant virtuosos of Sheer Frost guitar. A person turns into a musician and a group of strangers turns into an orchestra.

The Sheer Frost Orchestra promotes idiosyncratic behavior over standardization. Music making can be an immediate, truthful, improvised act of communication, an expression of the unknown. It's ephemeral—sound disappearing into thin air—but not impossible. There are a couple of laptop computers there, used for live sampling and signal processing during the performance. I also make compositions using turntables, other kinds of electronics, video, photos. I guess you could say I am exploring the connections between music and everything else—material, circumstantial, everyday life. **MARINA ROSENFELD**

BitStreams, The Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC March 22-June 10, 2001. For info: [www.whitney.org](http://www.whitney.org)

PHOTOGRAPHY JASON SCHMIDT



