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Brian Eno

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Brian Peter George St. John le Baptiste de la Salle Eno,^[2] RD^[3] (born 15 May 1948 and originally christened Brian Peter George Eno), professionally known as **Brian Eno** or simply as **Eno**,^[4] is an English musician, composer, record producer, singer, and visual artist, known as one of the principal innovators of *ambient music*.^[5]

Eno was a student of *Roy Ascott* on his *Groundcourse* at Ipswich Civic College. Then he studied at *Colchester Institute art school* in Essex, England, taking inspiration from *minimalist* painting. During his time on the art course at the Institute, he also gained experience in playing and making music through teaching sessions held in the adjacent music school. He joined the band *Roxy Music* as synthesiser player in the early 1970s. Roxy Music's success in the *glam rock* scene came quickly, but Eno soon tired of touring and of conflicts with lead singer *Bryan Ferry*.

Eno's solo music has explored more *experimental musical* styles and ambient music. It has also been immensely influential, pioneering ambient and *generative music*, innovating production techniques, and emphasising "theory over practice".^[6] He also introduced the concept of *chance music* to popular audiences, partially through collaborations with other musicians.^[7] Eno has also worked as an influential music and album producer. By the end of the 1970s, Eno had worked with *David Bowie* on the seminal "*Berlin Trilogy*" and helped popularise the American band *Devo* and the punk-influenced "*No Wave*" genre. He produced and performed on three albums by *Talking Heads*, including *Remain in Light* (1980), and produced seven albums for *U2*, including *The Joshua Tree* (1987). Eno has also worked on records by *James*, *Laurie Anderson*, *Coldplay*, *Depeche Mode*, *Paul Simon*, *Grace Jones*, *James Blake* and *Slowdive*, among others.

Eno pursues multimedia ventures in parallel to his music career, including *art installations*, a regular column on society and innovation in *Prospect* magazine, and "*Oblique Strategies*" (written with *Peter Schmidt*), a deck of cards in which cryptic remarks or random insights are intended to resolve dilemmas. Eno continues to collaborate with other musicians, produce records, release his own music, and write.

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Education and early musical career [edit]

Brian Eno was born in 1948 at Phyllis Memorial Hospital, *Woodbridge, Suffolk*, and was educated at *St Joseph's College, Ipswich*, which was founded by the *St John le Baptiste de la Salle* order of Catholic brothers (from whom he took part of his name when a student there),^[8] at Ipswich Art School in *Roy Ascott's* Groundcourse and the *Winchester School of Art*, graduating in 1969. At the Winchester School of Art, Eno attended a lecture by *Pete Townshend* of *The Who* about the use of tape machines by non-musicians, citing the lecture as the moment he realised he could make music even though he was not a musician at that point.^[9] In school, he used a *tape recorder* as a musical instrument and experimented with his first, sometimes *improvisational*, bands. St. Joseph's College teacher and painter *Tom Phillips* encouraged him, recalling "Piano Tennis" with Eno, in which, after collecting pianos, they stripped

Brian Eno



Eno, at the Museo MADRE of Naples, in June 2008

Background information

Birth name	Brian Peter George Eno
Born	15 May 1948 (age 65) Woodbridge, Suffolk, England, UK
Genres	Experimental rock, ambient, minimalism, electronic, art rock, glam rock, art pop ^[1]
Occupations	Producer, musician, songwriter, artist
Instruments	Synthesizer, piano, keyboards, vocals, organ, saxophone, guitar, bass
Years active	1970–present
Labels	Island, Polydor, EG, Obscure, Opal, Virgin, Astralwerks, All Saints Records, Rykodisc
Associated acts	Roxy Music, David Bowie, Coldplay, Talking Heads, Robert Fripp, Cluster, Devo, U2, David Byrne, Robert Wyatt, 801
Website	brian-eno.net

Music sample

Dune Prophecy Theme
Sorry, your browser either has JavaScript disabled or does not have any supported player. You can [download the clip](#) or [download a player](#) to play the clip in your browser.

and aligned them in a hall, striking them with tennis balls. From that collaboration, he became involved in [Cornelius Cardew's Scratch Orchestra](#). The first released recording in which Eno played is the [Deutsche Grammophon](#) edition of Cardew's *The Great Learning* (rec. Feb. 1971), as one of the voices in the recital of *The Great Learning* Paragraph 7. Another early recording was the *Berlin Horse* soundtrack, by Malcom Le Grice, a nine-minute, 2 × 16 mm-double-projection, released in 1970 and presented in 1971.^[10]

Roxy Music [edit]

Main article: [Roxy Music](#)

Brian Eno's professional music career began in London, as a member (1971–1973) of the [glam/art rock](#) band [Roxy Music](#), initially not appearing on stage with them at live shows, but operating the [mixing desk](#), processing the band's sound with a [VCS3](#) synthesiser and tape recorders, and singing backing vocals. He then progressed to appearing on stage as a performing member of the group, usually flamboyantly costumed. He quit the band on completing the promotion tour for the band's second album, *For Your Pleasure* because of disagreements with lead singer [Bryan Ferry](#) and boredom with the rock star life.^[11]

In 1992, he described his Roxy Music tenure as important to his career: "As a result of going into a subway station and meeting [saxophonist [Andy Mackay](#)], I joined Roxy Music, and, as a result of that, I have a career in music. If I'd walked ten yards further on the platform, or missed that train, or been in the next carriage, I probably would have been an art teacher now".^[12] During his period with Roxy Music, and for his first three solo albums, he was credited on these records only as 'Eno'.

Solo work [edit]

1970s [edit]

Eno embarked on a solo career almost immediately. Between 1973 and 1977 he created four albums of largely electronically inflected pop songs – *Here Come the Warm Jets*, *Taking Tiger Mountain (By Strategy)*, *Another Green World* and *Before and After Science*, though the latter two also contained a number of minimal instrumental pieces in the so-called ambient style. *Tiger Mountain* contains the galloping "Third Uncle", one of Eno's best-known songs, owing in part to its later being covered by [Bauhaus](#). Critic Dave Thompson writes that the song is "a near [punk](#) attack of riffing guitars and clattering percussion, 'Third Uncle' could, in other hands, be a [heavy metal](#) anthem, albeit one whose lyrical content would tongue-tie the most slavish [air guitarist](#)".^[13]

These four albums were remastered and reissued in 2004 by [Virgin's Astralwerks](#) label. Due to Eno's decision not to add any extra tracks of the original material, a handful of tracks originally issued as singles have not been reissued ("Seven Deadly Finns" and "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" were included on the deleted Eno Vocal Box set and the single mix of "King's Lead Hat" [which is an [anagram](#) of "[Talking Heads](#)"] has never been reissued).

During this period, Eno also played three dates with [Phil Manzanera](#) in the band [801](#), a "[supergroup](#)" that performed more or less mutated selections from albums by Eno, Manzanera, and [Quiet Sun](#), as well as covers of songs by [The Beatles](#) and [The Kinks](#).

In 1972, Eno and [Robert Fripp](#) (from [King Crimson](#)) utilised a tape-delay system, described as '[Frippertronics](#)', and the pair released an album in 1973 called (*No Pussyfooting*). The technique involved two Revox tape recorders set up side by side, with the tape unspooling from the first deck being carried over to the second deck to be spooled. This enabled sound recorded on the first deck to be played back by the second deck at a time delay that varied with the distance between the two decks and the speed of the tape (typically a few seconds). The technique was borrowed from minimalist composer [Terry Riley](#), whose similar tape-delay feedback system with a pair of Revox tape recorders (a setup Riley used to call the "Time Lag Accumulator") was first used on Riley's album *Music for The Gift* in 1963.^[14] In 1975, Fripp and Eno released a second album, *Evening Star*, and played several live shows in Europe.

Eno's new methods of making sound into music called for new ways of notating his compositions. Like some 20th-century composers of "classical" music, he used [graphic notation](#) to represent what could not possibly be conveyed by conventional notes on a staff.^[citation needed]

Eno was a prominent member of the performance art-classical orchestra the [Portsmouth Sinfonia](#) – having started playing with them in 1972. In 1973 he produced the orchestra's first album *The Portsmouth Sinfonia Plays the Popular Classics* (released in March 1974) and in 1974 he produced the live album *Hallelujah! The Portsmouth Sinfonia Live at the Royal Albert Hall* of their infamous May 1974 concert (released in October 1974.) In addition to producing both albums, Eno performed in the orchestra on both recordings – playing the clarinet. Eno also deployed the orchestra's famously dissonant string section on his second solo album *Taking Tiger Mountain (By Strategy)*. The orchestra at this time included other musicians whose solo work he would subsequently release on his [Obscure](#) label including [Gavin Bryars](#) and [Michael Nyman](#). That year he also composed music for the album *Lady June's Linguistic Leprosy*, with [Kevin Ayers](#), to accompany the poet [June Campbell Cramer](#).

Eno continued his career by producing a larger number of highly eclectic and increasingly [ambient electronic](#) and acoustic albums. He is widely credited with coining the term "ambient music",^[15] low-volume music designed to modify one's perception of a surrounding environment.

His first such work, 1975's *Discreet Music* (again created via an elaborate tape-delay methodology, which Eno diagrammed on the back cover of the LP), is considered the landmark album of the genre. This was followed by his *Ambient* series (*Music for Airports (Ambient 1)*, *The Plateaux of Mirror (Ambient 2)*, *Day of Radiance (Ambient 3)* and *On Land (Ambient 4)*). Eno was the primary musician on these releases with the exception of *Ambient 2* which featured [Harold Budd](#) on keyboard, and *Ambient 3* where the American composer [Laraaji](#) was the sole musician playing the [zither](#) and [hammered dulcimer](#) with Eno producing.

In 1975 Eno performed as the Wolf in a rock version of [Sergei Prokofiev's](#) classic *Peter and the Wolf*. Produced by [Robin Lumley](#) and [Jack Lancaster](#), the album featured [Gary Moore](#), [Manfred Mann](#), [Phil Collins](#), [Stephane Grapelli](#), [Chris Spedding](#), [Cozy Powell](#), [Jon Hiseman](#), [Bill Bruford](#) and [Alvin Lee](#). Also in 1975, Eno provided synthesisers and treatments on [Quiet Sun's](#) *Mainstream* album alongside [Phil Manzanera](#), [Charles Hayward](#), [Dave Jarrett](#), and [Bill MacCormick](#), and he performed on and contributed songs and



Eno performing on Dutch television in 1974

vocals to Phil Manzanera's *Diamond Head* album.

In September 1976 Eno recorded with the highly influential *Krautrock/Kosmische Musik* group *Harmonia* at their studio in Forst, Germany. This material was not released until 1997 as *Tracks and Traces* by Harmonia '76. It was again reissued in 2009 with additional tracks and credited to Harmonia & Eno '76.

1980s [edit]

In 1980 Eno provided a film score for Herbert Vesely's *Egon Schiele – Exzess und Bestrafung*, also known as *Egon Schiele – Excess and Punishment*. The ambient-style score was an unusual choice for a historical piece, but it worked effectively with the film's themes of sexual obsession and death.

In 1981, having returned from Ghana and before *On Land*, he discovered Miles Davis' 1974 track "He Loved Him Madly", a melancholy tribute to Duke Ellington influenced by both African music and *Karlheinz Stockhausen*: as Eno stated in the liner notes for *On Land*, "Teo Macero's revolutionary production on that piece seemed to me to have the "spacious" quality I was after, and like Federico Fellini's 1973 film *Amarcord*, it too became a touchstone to which I returned frequently."^[16]

In 1980–1981, Eno collaborated with *David Byrne* of *Talking Heads* (which he had already anagrammatised as 'King's Lead Hat') on *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*, which was built around radio broadcasts Eno collected while living in the United States, along with *sampling* recordings from around the world transposed over music predominantly inspired by African and Middle Eastern rhythms.

In 1983 Eno collaborated with his brother, *Roger Eno*, and *Daniel Lanois* on the album "APOLLO: Atmospheres and Soundtracks". Many of the sounds created on this album can be heard again on later albums produced by both Eno and Lanois.

1990s [edit]

In 1992, Eno released an album featuring heavily syncopated rhythms entitled *Nerve Net*, with contributions from several former collaborators including *Robert Fripp*, *Benmont Tench*, *Robert Quine* and *John Paul Jones*. This album was a last-minute substitution for *My Squelchy Life*, which featured more pop oriented material, with Eno on vocals. (Several tracks from *My Squelchy Life* later appeared on 1993's retrospective box set *Eno Box II: Vocals*.) Eno also released in 1992 a work entitled *The Shutov Assembly*, recorded between 1985 and 1990. This album embraces atonality and abandons most conventional concepts of modes, scales and pitch. Much of the music shifts gradually and without discernible focus, and is one of Eno's most varied ambient collections. Conventional instrumentation is eschewed, save for treated keyboards.

During the 1990s, Eno became increasingly interested in self-generating musical systems, the results of which he called *generative music*. The basic premise of generative music is the blending of several independent musical tracks, of varying sounds, length, and in some cases, silence. When each individual track concludes, it starts again mixing with the other tracks allowing the listener to hear an almost infinite combination. In one instance of generative music, Eno calculated that it would take almost 10,000 years to hear the entire possibilities of one individual piece. Eno has presented this music in his own, and other artists', art and sound installations, most notably "I Dormienti (The Sleepers)", *Lightness: Music for the Marble Palace*, *Music for Civic Recovery Centre*, *The Quiet Room* and "Music for Prague".

One of Eno's better-known collaborations was with the members of U2, Luciano Pavarotti and several other artists in a group called *Passengers*. They produced the 1995 album "Original Soundtracks 1". This album reached No. 76 on the US Billboard charts and No. 12 in the UK charts. It featured a single, "Miss Sarajevo", which was a top 10 hit in the UK (#6). While the members of U2 are on the album, Eno's influence dominates, as the album is very atmospheric and ambient. This album showcased a lot of experimentation from U2, but flowed into Eno's general style. The album was designed to be songs for movie soundtracks – movies that had yet to be made. The album caused some discontent within U2, as some members felt it a bit self-indulgent.^[citation needed] U2 purposefully called the group *Passengers* – as opposed to U2 – as they felt they were all "passengers" on Eno's creation.^[citation needed] This collaboration is chronicled in Eno's book "A Year with Swollen Appendices" a diary published in 1996.

2000s [edit]

In 2004, Fripp and Eno recorded another *ambient* collaboration album, *The Equatorial Stars*.

Eno returned in June 2005 with *Another Day on Earth*, his first major album since *Wrong Way Up* (with John Cale) to prominently feature vocals (a trend continued with *Everything That Happens Will Happen Today*). The album differs from his 1970s solo work as musical production has changed since then, evident in its semi-electronic production.

In early 2006, Eno collaborated with David Byrne, again, for the reissue of *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* in celebration of the influential album's 25th anniversary. Eight previously unreleased tracks, recorded during the initial sessions in 1980/81, were added to the album, while one track, "Qu'ran", was removed in accordance with requests from an Islamic organisation in London.^[17] An unusual interactive marketing strategy coincided with its re-release, the album's promotional website features the ability for anyone to officially and legally download the multi-tracks of two songs from the album, "A Secret Life" and "Help Me Somebody". Individuals can then remix and upload new mixes of these tracks to the website so others can listen to and rate them.



Eno at *The Long Now Foundation*, 26

In late 2006, Eno released *77 Million Paintings*, a program of generative video and music specifically for the *PC*. As its title suggests, there is a possible combination of 77 million paintings where the viewer will see different combinations of video slides prepared by Eno each time the program is launched. Likewise, the accompanying music is generated by the program so that it's almost certain the listener will never quite hear the same arrangement twice. The second edition of "77 Million Paintings" featuring improved morphing and a further two layers of sound was released on 14 January 2008. In June 2007, when commissioned in the Yerba Buena Center of the Arts in San Francisco, California, *Annabeth Robinson* (*AngryBeth Shortbread*) recreated *77 Million Paintings* in *Second Life*.^[18]

In 2007, Eno's music was featured in a *movie adaption* of *Irvine Welsh*'s best-selling collection *Ecstasy: Three Tales of Chemical Romance*. He also appeared playing keyboards in *Voilà*, *Belinda Carlisle*'s solo album sung entirely in French.

Also in 2007, Eno contributed a composition titled "Grafton Street" to *Dido*'s third album,

June 2006

Safe Trip Home, released in November 2008.^[19]

In 2008, he released *Everything That Happens Will Happen Today* with David Byrne, designed the sound for the video game *Spore* and wrote a chapter to *Sound Unbound: Sampling Digital Music and Culture*, edited by Paul D. Miller (a.k.a. DJ Spooky).

Eno revealed on radio in May 2009 that a skin graft he received as treatment for a severe burn on his arm was part human skin, part [carbon fibre](#). He explained that as human skin is based on [carbon](#), the experimental treatment was likely going to work out well for him, in spite of the fact that he feels a lightness in the affected arm.^[20]

In June 2009, Eno curated the Luminous Festival at Sydney Opera House, culminating in his first live appearance in many years. "Pure Scenius" consisted of three live improvised performances on the same day, featuring Eno, Australian improv trio [The Necks](#), Karl Hyde from [Underworld](#), electronic artist [Jon Hopkins](#) and guitarist [Leo Abrahams](#).

Eno scored the music for [Peter Jackson's](#) film adaptation of *The Lovely Bones*, released in December 2009.^[21]

2010s [edit]

In May 2010, the same Pure Scenius line-up as in 2009 performed 'This is Pure Scenius!', in the same format of three live improvised performances on the same day, at the [Brighton Festival](#) in England. Also at the 2010 Brighton Festival, after a performance of Woojun Lee's live arrangement of 'Apollo: Atmospheres and Soundtracks' by [Icebreaker](#) and [B. J. Cole](#), Eno and the band performed four of his songs.

Eno released another solo album on [Warp Records](#) in late 2010. *Small Craft on a Milk Sea*, made in association with long-time collaborator [Leo Abrahams](#) and [Jon Hopkins](#), was released on 2 November in the United States and 15 November in the UK.^[22] The album included five compositions^[23] as adaptations of those tracks that Eno wrote for *The Lovely Bones*.^[24]

Eno also sang backing vocals on [Anna Calvi's](#) debut album on two songs "Desire" and "Suzanne & I".^[25] He later released *Drums Between the Bells*,^[26] a collaboration with poet Rick Holland, on 4 July 2011, and the EP *Panic of Looking* from the same recordings.

In November 2012, Eno released *Lux*, a 76-minute composition in four sections, via [Warp Records](#).^[27]

It was announced on 25 February 2013 that Eno would produce the song "Digital Lion" on [James Blake's](#) second album, *Overgrown*.



Brian Eno, 2011.

Record producer and other projects [edit]

Record production [edit]

From the beginning of his solo career in 1973, Eno was in demand as a producer – though his management now describe him as a "sonic landscaper" rather than a producer. The first album with Eno credited as producer was *Lucky Leif and the Longships* by [Robert Calvert](#). Eno's lengthy string of producer credits includes albums for [Talking Heads](#), [U2](#), [Devo](#), [Ultravox](#) and [James](#). He also produced part of the 1993 album *When I Was a Boy* by [Jane Siberry](#). He won the best producer award at the 1994 and 1996 [BRIT Awards](#).

Eno describes himself as a "non-musician" and coined the term "treatments" to describe his modification of the sound of musical instruments, and to separate his role from that of the traditional instrumentalist. His skill at using "The Studio as a Compositional Tool"^[28] (the title of an essay by Eno) led in part to his career as a producer. His methods were recognised at the time (mid-1970s) as unique, so much so that on [Genesis's](#) *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*, he is credited with 'Enossification'; on [Robert Wyatt's](#) *Ruth Is Stranger Than Richard* with a *Direct inject anti-jazz raygun* and on [John Cale's](#) *Island* albums as simply being "Eno".

Despite being a self-professed "non-musician", Eno has contributed to recordings by artists as varied as [Nico](#), [Robert Calvert](#), [Genesis](#), [David Bowie](#), and [Zuki Mu](#), in various capacities such as use of his studio/synthesiser/electronic treatments, vocals, guitar, bass guitar, and as just being 'Eno'. In 1984, he (along with several other authors) composed and performed the "Prophecy Theme" for the [David Lynch](#) film *Dune*; the rest of the [soundtrack](#) was composed and performed by the group [Toto](#). Eno produced performance artist [Laurie Anderson's](#) *Bright Red* album, and also composed for it. The work is avant-garde spoken word with haunting and magnifying sounds. Eno played on David Byrne's musical score for *The Catherine Wheel*, a project commissioned by [Twyla Tharp](#) to accompany her Broadway dance project of the same name.

He worked with [David Bowie](#) as a writer and musician on Bowie's influential 1977–79 'Berlin Trilogy' of albums, *Low*, *"Heroes"* and *Lodger*, on Bowie's later album *Outside*, and on the song "I'm Afraid of Americans". In 1980 Eno developed an interest in altered guitar tunings, which led to [Guitararchitecture](#) discussions with [Chuck Hammer](#), former [Lou Reed](#) guitarist. Following on from his No-Wave involvement which brought him in contact with the "renegade" artist Greg Belcastro, who introduced him to the guitar techniques of a fledgling [Sonic Youth](#), Eno has also collaborated with John Cale, former member of [Velvet Underground](#), on his trilogy *Fear*, *Slow Dazzle* and *Helen of Troy*, [Robert Wyatt](#) on his *Shleep* CD, with [Jon Hassell](#), with the German duo [Cluster](#), with composers [Harold Budd](#), [Philip Glass](#) and [Roberto Carnevale](#).^[citation needed] A new collaboration between David Byrne and Brian Eno titled *Everything That Happens Will Happen Today* was released digitally on 18 August 2008, with the enhanced CD released in October.

Eno co-produced *The Unforgettable Fire* (1984), *The Joshua Tree* (1987), *Achtung Baby* (1991), and *All That You Can't Leave Behind* (2000) for U2 with his frequent collaborator [Daniel Lanois](#), and produced 1993's *Zooropa* with [Mark "Flood" Ellis](#). In 1995, U2 and Eno joined forces to create the album *Original Soundtracks 1* under the group name Passengers; songs from *OST1* included "Your Blue Room" and "Miss Sarajevo". When the album was released, the US charts were dominated by movie soundtrack albums and singles. Even though films are listed for each song, all but three are bogus. Once Eno pointed out that it was not a real ploy for radio airplay, but a spoof of one, U2 agreed to the concept. Eno also produced *Laid* (1993), *Wah Wah* (1994) and *Pleased to Meet You* (2001) for [James](#), performing as an extra musician on all three. He is credited for "frequent interference and occasional co-production" on their 1997 album *Whiplash*.

Eno played on the 1986 album *Measure for Measure* by Australian band [Icehouse](#). He remixed two tracks for [Depeche Mode](#), "I Feel You" and "In Your Room", both single releases from the album *Songs of Faith and Devotion* in 1993. In 1995, Eno provided one of

several remixes of "Protection" by [Massive Attack](#) (originally from their *Protection* album) for release as a single. The single also included more remixes by DJs [J-Swift](#), Tom D, and Underdog.

In 2007, he produced the fourth studio album by [Coldplay](#) entitled *Viva la Vida or Death and All His Friends*, which was released in 2008. Also in 2008, he worked with [Grace Jones](#) on her album *Hurricane*, credited for "production consultation" and as a member of the band, playing keyboards, treatments and background vocals. He worked on the twelfth studio album by [U2](#), again with Lanois, titled *No Line on the Horizon*. It was recorded in Morocco, South France and [Dublin](#) and released in Europe on 27 February 2009.

In 2011, Eno and Coldplay reunited and produced Coldplay's fifth studio album *Mylo Xyloto*, released on 24 October of that year.

The Microsoft Sound [edit]

In 1994, [Microsoft](#) corporation designers [Mark Malamud](#) and [Erik Gaviluk](#) approached Brian Eno to compose music for the [Windows 95](#) project.^[29] The result was the six-second start-up music-sound of the Windows 95 operating system, *The Microsoft Sound*. In an interview with [Joel Selvin](#) in the *San Francisco Chronicle* he said:

The idea came up at the time when I was completely bereft of ideas. I'd been working on my own music for a while and was quite lost, actually. And I really appreciated someone coming along and saying, "Here's a specific problem — solve it."

The thing from the agency said, "We want a piece of music that is inspiring, universal, blah-blah, da-da-da, optimistic, futuristic, sentimental, emotional," this whole list of adjectives, and then at the bottom it said "and it must be 3¹/₄ seconds long."^[† 1]

I thought this was so funny and an amazing thought to actually try to make a little piece of music. It's like making a tiny little jewel.

In fact, I made 84 pieces. I got completely into this world of tiny, tiny little pieces of music. I was so sensitive to microseconds at the end of this that it really broke a logjam in my own work. Then when I'd finished that and I went back to working with pieces that were like three minutes long, it seemed like oceans of time.^[30]

Eno shed further light on the composition of the sound on the [BBC Radio 4](#) show *The Museum of Curiosity*, explaining that he created it using a [Macintosh](#) computer, and stating "I wrote it on a Mac. I've never used a PC in my life; I don't like them".^[31]

Video work [edit]

Eno had spoken of an early and ongoing interest in playing with light in a similar way to the ambient manner in which he manipulated sound, but only started experimenting with the medium of video in 1978. Eno describes the first video camera he received, which would become his main tool for creating ambient video and light installations:

"One afternoon while I was working in the studio with [Talking Heads](#), the roadie from [Foreigner](#), working in an adjacent studio, came in and asked whether anyone wanted to buy some video equipment. I'd never really thought much about video, and found most 'video art' completely unmemorable, but the prospect of actually owning a video camera was at that time quite exotic."^[32]

The [Panasonic](#) industrial camera Eno received had significant design flaws preventing the camera from sitting upright without the assistance of a tripod. This led to his works' being filmed in vertical format, forcing the viewer to flip his television set on its side to view it in the proper orientation.^[33] The pieces Eno produced with this method, such as *Mistaken Memories of Mediaeval Manhattan* (1980) and *Thursday Afternoon* (1984) (accompanied by the album of the same title), were labelled as 'Video Paintings.' He explained the genre title in the music magazine *NME*:

"I was delighted to find this other way of using video because at last here's video which draws from another source, which is painting... I call them 'video paintings' because if you say to people 'I make videos', they think of Sting's new rock video or some really boring, grimy 'Video Art'. It's just a way of saying, 'I make videos that don't move very fast'"^[34]

These works presented Eno with the opportunity to expand his ambient aesthetic into a visual form, manipulating the medium of video to produce something not present in the normal television experience. His video works were shown around the world in exhibitions in New York and Tokyo, as well as released on the compilation *14 Video Paintings* in 2005.^[35]

Eno continued his video experimentation through the 80s, 90s and 2000s, leading to further experimentation with the television as a malleable light source and onto his generative works such as *77 Million Paintings* in 2006.^[36]

Generative music [edit]

In 1996, he collaborated in developing the SSEYO [Koan generative music](#) system (by Pete Cole and Tim Cole of [intormorphic](#) ↗) that he used in composing the hybrid music in the album *Generative Music 1*:

Some very basic forms of generative music have existed for a long time, but as marginal curiosities. Wind chimes are an example, but the only compositional control you have over the music they produce is in the original choice of notes that the chimes will sound. Recently, however, out of the union of synthesisers and computers, some much finer tools have evolved. Koan Software is probably the best of these systems, allowing a composer to control not one, but one-hundred and fifty musical and sonic parameters, within which the computer then improvises (as wind improvises the wind chimes).

The works I have made with this system symbolise, to me, the beginning of a new era of music. Until a hundred years ago, every musical event was unique: music was ephemeral and unrepeatable, and even classical scoring couldn't guarantee precise duplication. Then came the gramophone record, which captured particular performances, and made it possible to hear them identically, over and over again.

But now, there are three alternatives: live music, recorded music, and generative music. Generative music enjoys some of the benefits of both its ancestors. Like live music, it is always different. Like recorded music, it is free of time-and-place limitations — you can hear it when and where you want.

I really think it is possible that our grandchildren will look at us in wonder and say: "You mean you used to listen to exactly the same thing over and over again?"

As C.S.J. Bofop, in 1996, he said:

Each of the twelve pieces on *Generative Music 1* has a distinctive character. There are, of course, the ambient works ranging from the dark, almost mournful "Densities III" (complete with distant bells), to [the] translucent "Lysis (Tungsten)". These are contrasted with pieces in dramatically different styles, such as "Komarek", with its hard-edged, angular melodies, reminiscent of [Schoenberg's](#) early serial experiments, and "Klee 42" whose simple polyphony is similar to that of the early Renaissance, but, of course, the great beauty of Generative Music is that those pieces will never sound quite that way again.

Obscure records [\[edit\]](#)

Main article: [Obscure Records](#)

Eno started the Obscure Records label in Britain in 1975 to release works by lesser-known composers. The first group of three releases included his own composition, *Discreet Music*, and the now-famous *The Sinking of the Titanic* (1969) and *Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet* (1971) by [Gavin Bryars](#). The second side of *Discreet Music* consisted of several versions of [Pachelbel's Canon](#), the composition which Eno had previously chosen to precede Roxy Music's appearances on stage, to which various algorithmic transformations have been applied, rendering it almost unrecognisable. Side 1 consisted of a [tape loop](#) system for generating music from relatively sparse input. These tapes had previously been used as backgrounds in some of his collaborations with Fripp, most notably on *Evening Star*. Only 10 albums were released on Obscure, including works by [John Adams](#), [Michael Nyman](#), and [John Cage](#). At this time he was also affiliating with artists in the [Fluxus movement](#).

Other work [\[edit\]](#)

Eno has also been active in other artistic fields, producing videos for gallery display and collaborating with visual artists in other endeavours. One is the set of "[Oblique Strategies](#)" cards that he and artist [Peter Schmidt](#), produced in the mid-1970s, described as "100 Worthwhile Dilemmas" and intended as guides to shaking up the mind in the process of producing works of art. Another was his collaboration with artist [Russell Mills](#) on the book *More Dark Than Shark*. He was also the provider of music for [Robert Sheckley's](#) *In the Land of Clear Colours*, a narrated story with music originally published by a small art gallery in Spain. Eno appeared as Father Brian Eno at the "It's Great Being a Priest!" convention, in "[Going to America](#)", the final episode of the television sitcom *Father Ted*, which originally aired on 1 May 1998 on Channel 4.

In March 2008 Eno collaborated with the Italian artist Mimmo Paladino on a show of the latter's works with Eno's soundscapes at Ara Pacis in Rome. In 2008, Eno designed the procedurally-generated music for the video game *Spore*.^[37] In October 2008, Eno collaborated with [Peter Chilvers](#) to create an application titled *Bloom*, Trope, and Air for the iOS platform.^[38] Eno was the guest curator of the 2009 Sydney Festival and the 2010 Brighton Festival. In 2013, Brian Eno made a number of limited edition prints featuring the artwork from his 2012 album *Lux* available only from his website.^[39]

In 2011 Eno and Chilvers released 'Scape', an Ambient Music app.

Influence [\[edit\]](#)

Eno is frequently referred to as one of popular music's most influential artists.^[40] Critic Jason Ankeny at [Allmusic](#) argues that Eno "forever altered the ways in which music is approached, composed, performed, and perceived, and everything from punk to techno to new age bears his unmistakable influence."^[6] He has spread his techniques and theories primarily through his production; his distinctive style affected a number of projects he's been involved in, including Bowie's *Berlin Trilogy* (helping to popularise [minimalism](#)) and the albums he produced for [Talking Heads](#) (incorporating [African music](#) and polyrhythms on Eno's advice), [Devo](#), and other groups.^[41] Eno's first collaboration with [David Byrne](#), 1981's *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*, pioneered [sampling](#) techniques that would prove to be influential in hip-hop, and broke ground by incorporating [world music](#).^[42] Eno and [Peter Schmidt's](#) *Oblique Strategies* have been utilised by many bands, and Eno's production style has proven influential in several general respects: "his recording techniques have helped change the way that modern musicians – particularly electronic musicians – view the studio. No longer is it just a passive medium through which they communicate their ideas but itself a new instrument with seemingly endless possibilities."^[43]

While not the only inventor of [ambient music](#), Eno is seen as a major contributor to the genre. The Ambient Music Guide argues that he has brought from "relative obscurity into the popular consciousness" fundamental ideas about ambient music, including "the idea of modern music as subtle atmosphere, as chill-out, as impressionistic, as something that creates space for quiet reflection or relaxation."^[43] His groundbreaking work in [electronic music](#) has been said to have brought widespread attention to and innovations in the role of electronic technology in recording.^[44]

In 2001 [Half Man Half Biscuit](#) released an EP entitled "Eno Collaboration", which contains a track of the same name. [MGMT](#) wrote a song about Eno, called "Brian Eno", for their 2010 album *Congratulations*. The band [LCD Soundsystem](#) has frequently cited Eno as a key influence on their own sound and music. In 2011 Belgian academics from the [Royal Museum for Central Africa](#) named a species of [Afrotropical spider](#) *Pseudocorinna brianeno* in his honour.^[45]

Personal life and beliefs [\[edit\]](#)

Brian Eno refers to himself as an "[Evangelical Atheist](#)".^[46]

Eno has been active politically throughout his life, frequently writing letters to government ministers, appearing on political debates, and writing newspaper columns to express his political views. He was sharply critical of the [Thatcher](#) government's decision to reduce funding to the [BBC World Service](#), arguing that the £5 million cut to its £25 million budget was damaging, and was the equivalent cost of "just one wing of one [F-16](#) fighter jet" – a reference to a large order of military hardware the government had just made.^[citation needed]

In 1996, Eno and others started the [Long Now Foundation](#) to educate the public about the very long-term future of society.^[47] He is also a columnist for the British newspaper *The Observer*.

In 2003, he appeared on a UK [Channel 4](#) discussion about the [Iraq war](#) with a top military spokesman; Eno was highly critical of the war. In 2005, he spoke at an [anti-war demonstration](#) in [Hyde Park, London](#). In March 2006, he spoke at an anti-war demonstration at [Trafalgar Square](#); he noted that 2 billion people on this planet do not have [clean drinking water](#), and that water could have been supplied to them for about one-fifth of the cost of the Iraq war.^[citation needed]

The **Nokia 8800 Sirocco Edition** mobile phone features exclusive music composed by Eno.^[48] Between 8 January 2007 and 12 February 2007, ten units of Nokia 8800 Sirocco Brian Eno Signature Edition mobile phones, individually numbered and engraved with Eno's signature were auctioned off. All proceeds went to two charities chosen by Eno: the Keiskamma Aids Treatment program and The World Land Trust.^[49]

In 2006, Eno was one of more than 100 artists and writers who signed an open letter calling for an international **boycott of Israeli** political and cultural institutions.^[50]

In December 2007, the newly elected **Leader of Liberal Democrats**, **Nick Clegg**, appointed Eno as his youth affairs adviser.^[51]

In January 2009, Eno spoke out against **Israel's military action on the Gaza Strip** by writing an opinion for *CounterPunch* and participating in a large-scale protest in London.^{[52][53]}

In 2013, Eno became a patron of **Videre Est Credere** (Latin for "to see is to believe") a UK Human Rights Charity.^[54] Videre describes itself as "give[ing] local activists the equipment, training and support needed to safely capture compelling video evidence of human rights violations. This captured footage is verified, analysed and then distributed to those who can create change."^[55] He participates alongside movie producers **Uri Fruchtmann** and **Terry Gilliam** – along with Executive Director of Greenpeace UK **John Sauven**.

Discography [edit]

Main article: Brian Eno discography

Solo studio albums

- *Here Come the Warm Jets* (1974), **Island**
- *Taking Tiger Mountain* (1974), **Island**
- *Another Green World* (1975), **Island**
- *Discreet Music* (1975), **Obscure**
- *Before and After Science* (1977), **Polydor**
- *Ambient 1: Music for Airports* (1978), **Polydor**
- *Music for Films* (1978), **Polydor**
- *Ambient 4: On Land* (1982), **E.G.**
- *Apollo: Atmospheres and Soundtracks* (1983), **E.G.**
- *More Music for Films* (1983), **E.G.**
- *Thursday Afternoon* (1985), **E.G.**
- *Nerve Net* (1992), **Opal**
- *The Shutov Assembly* (1992), **Warner Bros.**
- *Neroli* (1993), **All Saints**
- *The Drop* (1997), **Thirsty Ear**
- *Another Day on Earth* (2005), **Hannibal**

Ambient installation albums

- *Extracts from Music for White Cube, London 1997* (1997), **Opal**
- *Lightness: Music for the Marble Palace* (1997), **Opal**
- *I Dormienti* (1998), **Opal**
- *Kite Stories* (1999), **Opal**
- *Music for Civic Recovery Centre* (2000), **Opal**
- *Compact Forest Proposal* (2001), **Opal**
- *January 07003: Bell Studies for the Clock of the Long Now* (2003), **Opal**
- *Making Space* (2010), **Opal**
- *Small Craft On a Milk Sea* (2010), **Warp**
- *Lux* (2012), **Warp**

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Footnotes [edit]

- ↑ The eventual length of The Microsoft Sound as supplied and used was roughly 6 seconds, not 31⁄4.

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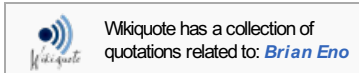
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External links [[edit](#)]

- Brian Eno discography at Discogs
- Brian Eno at the Internet Movie Database
- Paul Morley interviews Eno in *The Guardian*, 17 Jan 2010
- Interview with Brian Eno from *The Guardian*, 19 May 2006
- Brian Eno: *The Philosophy of Surrender* interview November 2008



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