Crawling With Tarts have been making music in the experimental vein since 1983. The principal members are Suzanne Dyens-Gendreau and Michael Gendreau and often they work with guest musicians.

They have an extensive discography. Most of their earlier material was released on numerous tapes, some of which were home made.

Since 1993 CWT have released four CD’s and one full-length record. Their current recording projects include a 7” for gyttja records. Their music is based on a wide palette of sounds, many of which are newly created with homemade instruments, and some contain subtle sounds, often overlooked, like the sound of rocks rubbing together. Entire pieces have been composed with electrical motors or old records. Their compositions are created and edited by a process which has the structure “organized in some way...some illogical way more like. There’s always one way to do it and a hundred ways not to do it.”
The following interview was recorded on an afternoon in the park, while searching for a park or picnic location. The 12-month-old baby was along for the ride.

What's the purpose or goal for this?
Mlc: I don't know. I just know that I'm here.

What's your feeling about this?
Mlc: I don't know. I just know that I'm here.

What's the relationship of the girl's song to the other songs that you hear?
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Sus: No, I really think...
Mic: See where we are?
Sus: This is the way the bus comes down...shh...It is down there.
Mic: Sure.
Sus: It's kind of our neighborhood.
Some of your pieces seem really intimate as far as they don't seem as if they could be common things taken for granted and you explore the sounds that they make. You know they are not uncommon things.
Like you used...I've seen you use window weights, um is it?
Sus: The thing is about the music that you see is always what someone says, 'can you do this show,' then we go downtown and say, my landlord took out the window weights that day, so they're sitting there and we wonder what they sound like. We've said this before; it is always current to whom, what we create. Since we didn't create that for specific show, it depends what we have at hand at the moment, you know what I mean...or what actually inspires it to be sitting there.
It's in the present.
Sus: It's in the present.
Mic: The core of our music is more of an idea or a concept of elementation and form...and the instruments that we use to make it are less important I think. The philosophical center is the most important part of it.
Is some of it appreciating some of these sounds that are taken for granted?
Sus: Yes, I think so. Although not in a nostalgic or a preservationist sense. But in a sense of discovery...an exploratory dry sense...appreciating something that you've found.
Sus: That's like something that happened the time we were...obscured...and all of a sudden Fereone, our cat, got this little instrument or it slipped or something and started pushing it all over the living room and it was all quiet and it started reasoning through the room and I thought, "Wow! what a great sound!" so the next time you go, "OK, I'm gonna try to do that."
Did you ever use it on your show?
Sus: We used it on Ideodors.
Mic: The first one on the Sarajevo Center Metal Doors CD uses that sound.

On Sarajevo Center Metal Doors you have those charts which everyone has to follow, which is a score, but the time is relative isn't it?
Sus: That's right.
The musicians can interpret time on those scores which can vary widely. Mic: That's right. It's just an index...there are relative times but they are index numbers and they don't refer to...to...what do you call it...additional time or whatever it is. The amount of time that it takes for the planet to go around in circles.
Sus: Not sidereal time...what is it? Terrestrial time...it only refers to terrestrial time indirectly.

Pacific Standard Time?
Sus: Yes right but uh...they're exactly as you said: they are relative and that piece can be played very fast on...it means is something like ten minutes long or it could be two hours long depending on the multiplier...how you convert from the relative time to the terrestrial time in other words. The structure is like...the structure moves to a sort of linear...it's a linear structure and you can stretch it out to whatever length you want. And I think that we have time by sort of playing it naturally that forty minutes is just about right for that piece...it's...hard to play...if you played it any shorter it starts to lose its coherence and become more chaotic and if you play it any longer it just starts to become...uh...too obvious.
The structure becomes too simple. So that's...so it does have a real time.

Is that played with the same musicians?
Sus: Well it was. We haven't played it since. I've been thinking I'd like to have somebody else, like four other musicians play it.

Mic: But yes it has only been played by the same musicians so far. And it was written with those musicians in mind because they were people that I knew could handle that sort of score, creatively. My original thought was that it is not something you could give to anybody. Well actually...now I think I'd like to have other people play it, people who I don't select.
Sus: This is the little park I've always wanted to take Buggy to but it's always been so uphill.

Mic: Eh...I don't even know where we are.
Sus: We're at this weird little park.
I think this is the one that I've seen.
Sus: Can we go and sit down and rest for a little bit? Or do you gonna want to keep walking? I'd like to sit down. It's be nice.
Sus: It looks like a nice little park.

Sus: This is the park that I've seen once and I've never found it.
It has an alpine feel to it.
Sus: The sounds are always first.
Mic: Because we want to know the elements we're working with. It's like the problem with it is...someone said to me last night after the show...that the form of that piece sounded like a 'Beethoven sonata'.

Sus: Really?
Mic: Yes, and the thing...the advantage that Beethoven had was that he knew all of the sounds. He had all the sounds of the orchestral instruments memorized. Right. So all he...you know it was easy for him to compose a sonata because he knew what all those sounds were going to sound like ahead of time. Well that's what we don't have that's why...that's what I meant about us not using usual languages so we have to develop a language and that means developing the sounds. So we develop the sounds, create a new language, and then we can compose the piece.
Oh okay.
Sus: Oh! Look at those slides?
Oh wow, they're different sises.
Sus: I bet this ones great.
Look at those cliffs you could climb.
Sus: This is sort of a neat place.
Mic: As long as the big kids don't throw rocks off the cliffs. I know.
Sus: Oh yes the big kids get rowdy. Look where someone spray-painted the wall. Oh there's a pelican...and...pelican thing that's buggy's favorite. Oh I'm sorry.

Mic: There was one other point to make too but I can't remember. But I think that was the important part.
Sus: You...got structure? Form?
Mic: We put the sounds before the structure...usually...which is our usual way...and...we...made Sarajevo I was using certain mathematical constructions to develop this form, and when I was finished it was a form that I liked so that we wanted to keep music out of it. That's unusual for us. It's more academic than we are.

Where are we Madeleine?
Madeleine: waaawwhehwehwehweh
Sus: Playground, playgroundground!
ASAP - Crawling With Tarts: Post Office Box 24908 Oakland CA 94621 USA