

Soundscape

VOLUME I, NUMBER I, SPRING 2000



On International Noise Awareness Day 1999 two hundred students walked through the city and did nothing but listen.

The Journal of Acoustic Ecology

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Soundscape is a biannual English language publication of the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology (WFAE). It is conceived as a place of communication and discussion about interdisciplinary research and practice in the field of Acoustic Ecology, focussing on the inter-relationship between sound, nature and society. The publication seeks to balance its content between scholarly writings, research, and active engagement in current soundscape issues.

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Design, Layout, Prepress: Robert MacNevin

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Membership: Peter Grant (WFAE), John Campbell (AFAE), Tim Knight (CASE), Justin Winkler (FKL), John Drever (UKISC)

Mailing List and Distribution: Peter Grant

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WORLD FORUM FOR ACOUSTIC ECOLOGY (WFAE)

The World Forum for Acoustic Ecology, founded in 1993, is an international association of affiliated organisations and individuals, who share a common concern with the state of the world soundscape as an ecologically balanced entity. Our members represent an interdisciplinary spectrum of individuals engaged in the study of the scientific, social, and cultural aspects of natural and human made sound environments.

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CONTRIBUTIONS

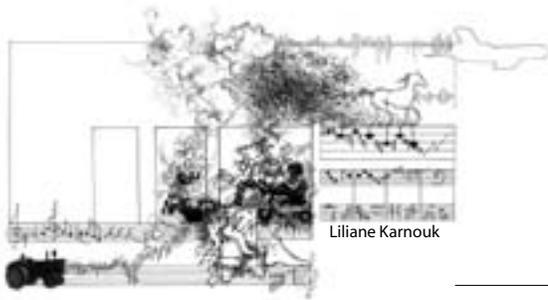
Ideas for journal themes, proposals for new sections, as well as visual materials, are welcomed. You may submit either a proposal or a complete manuscript of a potential article to *Soundscape*. The Editorial Committee would generally prefer to communicate with you regarding your idea for an article, or receive a proposal, or an abstract first (contact information below). More detailed information is available in our *Guide to Contributors: Instructions for the Preparation of Materials for Submission to Soundscape* is available in PDF format on the WFAE Website: <http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/WFAEHomePage>.

Upcoming themes: Silence and Noise; The World of Underwater Sound; Sacred Soundscapes.

Submissions. Please send articles, letters, and materials for the following sections in this journal:

- **Feature Articles.**
- **Research in Acoustic Ecology:** a section devoted to a summary of current research within the field.
- **Thinking Out Loud:** an opportunity for editorial comment by the membership.
- **Sound Bites:** a summary of acoustic ecology issues found in the press.
- **Sound Journals:** personal reflections on listening to the soundscape.
- **Soundwalks** from around the world.
- **Reviews:** a section devoted to the review of books, CDs, videos, web sites, and other media addressing the theme of Acoustic Ecology (please send your CDs, tapes, books, etc.)
- **Reports, articles, essays, letters** from Students and/or Children.
- **Announcements** of Acoustic Ecology related events and opportunities.
- **Quotes:** sound and listening related quotations from literature, articles, correspondence, etc.
- **Random Noise:** a section that explores creative solutions to noise problems.

Please send correspondence and submissions to: *Soundscape—The Journal of Acoustic Ecology* School of Communication, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C., V5A 1S6 Canada. Email: jwfae@sfu.ca. **Submission Deadline for Fall Issue: August 30, 2000.**



Soundscape

The Journal of Acoustic Ecology

VOLUME I, NUMBER I, SPRING 2000

EDITORIAL

We are excited to present to you the first issue of *Soundscape—The Journal of Acoustic Ecology*. After having had to work hard in the last few years to establish a better-functioning network through the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology (WFAE), we now want to devote more time to the theme of acoustic ecology. So far *The Soundscape Newsletter*, *The New Soundscape Newsletter*, and our website have been instrumental in keeping the acoustic ecology community connected and informed. But now we feel it is time that we pool our energies through this new publication and disseminate more and new vital information about the state of the acoustic environment and acoustic ecology. We see this journal as a place of dialogue and debate and invite your comments, questions and critical voices.

We have made *Listening* the theme of this first issue of *Soundscape*, because listening forms the basis for all work in acoustic ecology. Without knowing what enters our ears and without understanding the environ-

theme of listening connects (so we hope) the diverse articles in this issue of the journal, written by people from very different professions and areas of action.

Although sound reaches into all areas of our private and professional lives, the *study* of sound is splintered into many specialized fields. The environmental crisis of the soundscape has challenged us for some time now, to re-examine how we use existing knowledge about sound, noise, silence, hearing, and listening, to initiate change in the qualitative downward trend of the acoustic environment. Studies of noise problems may have improved isolated and individual aspects of the sound environment, but they have done little to change the quality of the soundscape as a whole. Just as any study in ecology refuses to study organisms, places, and behaviours in isolation and in lab settings, the study of *acoustic* ecology does not specialize in specific acoustic areas without always making the connection to the entire acoustic system of our world—which, in turn, is intricately connected to natural, so-

The problem of how to transmit our ecological reasoning to those whom we wish to influence in what seems to us to be an ecologically “good” direction is itself an ecological problem. We are not outside the ecology for which we plan—we are always and inevitably a part of it. (Gregory Bateson, Steps to an Ecology of Mind, NY, Ballantine Books, 1972, p. 504.)

mental, social, cultural and personal implications of this input, there can be no study of acoustic ecology. Daily *practice* of listening develops in each one of us a conscious physical, emotional, and mental relationship to the environment. And to understand this relationship is, in itself, an essential tool for the study of the soundscape and provides important motivation for engaging with today’s acoustic ecology issues—no matter whether the context is our personal or our professional life. In addition, listening creates the much-needed continuity in an otherwise fragmented field of study or area of environmental concern. In the same way, the

cial and cultural behaviours of all living beings within their surroundings.

In all definitions of ecology, the emphasis is on the word *relations* or *relationship*. The *Oxford Dictionary*, for example, defines ecology as a branch of biology “dealing with living organisms’ habits, modes of life, and relations to their surroundings.” Norwegian deep ecologist Arne Naess says that “ecology deals with relations of living beings to each other and to their habitats of life supporting environments.”¹ And Canadian scientist David Suzuki expresses it in this way: “Today we can see the beginning of a new way of thinking about the world—as sets of



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relationships rather than separated objects—which we call ecology... We belong to, are made of, that world that surrounds us, and we respond to it in ways beyond knowing.”²

Acoustic Ecology is a relatively new field of study and is in the process of defining itself. But one thing is certain: that its concern about the *relationship* between soundscape and listener and how the nature of this relationship makes out the character of any given soundscape, puts it squarely into the centre of ecological thinking. The term acoustic ecology first appeared in the mid-seventies, to our knowledge, when the World Soundscape Project (WSP) at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada published the *Handbook for Acoustic Ecology*.³ This book attempted to bring together “most of the major terms dealing with sound from the areas of phonetics, acoustics, psycho-acoustics, psychology, electro-acoustics, communications and noise control, together with those from music which seemed appropriate for an environmental handbook, and several soundscape terms which we have ourselves invented and adapted.”⁴

Along with the other research activities of the WSP, the Handbook was a first attempt to study the acoustic environment from an all-inclusive position. It seemed essential even then, that an area of study was created that brought together the vast knowledge from all areas of sound with the explicit focus on improving the quality of the sound environment and preventing its further deterioration. The focus was not on “fighting noise” but on gaining knowledge and understanding of the soundscape as a whole, its meanings, its behaviour, and all living beings’ behaviour within it.

Listening to the soundscape, in the context of this work, was and still is perceived as being at least as important for deepening our understanding of the soundscape as is research and study. In fact, it is perceived as the crucial and meaningful link between all fields of study in sound and the need for action towards soundscape improvements. In other words, listening is believed to be the very focus that makes all study in sound environmentally and ecologically meaningful and effective. Thus, a combination of rigorous aural awareness of our environment and in-depth studies of all aspects of sound and the soundscape is a way in which the acoustic ecologist can tackle the sound problems in today’s world.

Soundscape—The Journal of Acoustic Ecology not only wants to expose readers to existing knowledge but hopes to inspire and solicit further study, action and thought in the field. We intend to listen to *all* ways of speaking about sound, including writings sent to us by children, students, through to senior citizens, by the blind or the hard of hearing. We want to publish articles from different places and cultures. In the almost nomadic world of today where so many people are on the move, either as travellers, emigrants or refugees, we must know about each other’s ways of speaking about and listening to the soundscape. And we intend to publish articles about sound and soundscape written from the perspective of specialized disciplines, if they can shed light on issues of acoustic ecology and expand our knowledge about the acoustic environment. We see the journal as a place of intelligent and rigorous conversation that grapples with *all* knowledge about sound and the environment.

Perhaps there is a reason why not much has changed in the situation of the soundscape twenty two years after the publication of the *Handbook for Acoustic Ecology* and despite many studies in noise pollution and thoughts in acoustic ecology. Perhaps it is time to acknowledge that the question of what it may mean to have an ecologically balanced soundscape is much more complex than we have liked to admit. Perhaps more rigorous listening, studies and actions are required, and previously unexplored avenues need to be found

to bring about *real* change in the soundscape. This journal hopes to inspire more such action, deeper listening, study, and thought.

To engage seriously in the field of acoustic ecology requires, as it does for all ecologists, to know what Pauline Oliveros calls the two “... attention archetypes. These two modes are ... focal attention and ... global, or diffuse attention. These attention archetypes are complementary processes. Both modes are necessary for survival and for the success of our activities.”⁵ Applied to acoustic ecology it means to apply our focussed attention to specific acoustic concerns while staying connected to all knowledge about the acoustic environment. It is like listening itself: lending an attentive, focal ear to detail while at the same time hearing, being aware of, the soundscape as a whole.

Hildegard Westerkamp
for the Editorial Committee

Notes

1. Arne Naess, “The Sound Crisis—a Genuine Part of the Ecological Crisis.” In: *From Awareness to Action*, Proceedings from “Stockholm, Hey Listen!” Conference on Acoustic Ecology, Stockholm, June 9-13, 1998. p. 33.
2. David Suzuki, *The Sacred Balance*. Vancouver: Greystone Books, 1997. pp. 198-99.
3. Barry Truax, ed., *Handbook for Acoustic Ecology*. Burnaby, B.C. Canada: Aesthetic Research Centre, 1978.
4. Ibid. from Preface to the Handbook, written by R. Murray Schafer, p. iv.
5. Pauline Oliveros, *Software for People*. Baltimore: Smith Publications, 1984. p. 185.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

As communities around the world look with interest and expectation to the future it is an appropriate time for the WFAE to move on from what has recently been a somewhat reflective mode of operation. The closing months of 1999 provided us with events from which growth and confidence can flow.

Primary of these events was the formation of the UKISC and its affiliation with the WFAE. Close on the heels of the UKI group is the new Finnish group which is also planning formal affiliation with the WFAE. These developments provide new voices on the board, strength to the decision-making and more people to help the three original Affiliate Groups to run the WFAE.

The WFAE network is now set to grow its base membership with a major membership drive this year. The organisation’s primary role as a communication conduit for the acoustic ecology community will be enhanced by the first release of the publication containing this report, *Soundscape—The Journal of Acoustic Ecology*. Together with the WFAE and Affiliate web sites and the various list-serves, the Journal enables us to talk with each other as well as promote and provide information about acoustic awareness to fresh ears. Please utilise these facilities to their fullest for your discussion, dialogue and dissemination of ideas and activities.

Notwithstanding the importance to us of these media, nothing quite matches the power of face to face meetings. And so, in Amsterdam in November last year, a small group of us were able to spend some valuable and enjoyable time together during the *Soundscape voor 2000* event (see page 28 for a detailed report on this event). Our thanks is extended to Piet Hein van de Poel and Michael Fahres, Dr. Hans Martin Kemme from the Goethe Institut, Amsterdam, and the other organisers who made us feel very welcome.

This event was focussed on aspects of the arts and new media including soundscape and electroacoustic composition. Hence the morning sessions run by the WFAE provided us with the opportunity to present our perspective to quite a few new faces. We also were able to reacquaint ourselves with some old, perhaps I should say, better known friends as well.

Representatives from the WFAE's affiliate organizations, the AFAE, CASE, and FKL were in attendance along with the new affiliates from the UK & Ireland, and Finland (see their reports below). It was also pleasing to meet up again with Pierre Mariétan and Ray Gallon from the very active French organisation, Collectif Environnement Sonore (CES).

The next opportunity for an international gathering will be *Sound Escape: An International Conference on Acoustic Ecology* from June 28 to July 2 at Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada. (see below for more information on that event). In early 2001 an event is planned in the UK followed later that year by the International Conference in Australia, hosted by the AFAE.

The board hopes that you share the excitement that we feel for our prospects in the coming few years. We would welcome your assistance in spreading the word about the WFAE amongst your colleagues and friends during our membership drive throughout this year. This will enable us to become more financially stable and in particular, assist in the production and distribution of this Journal.

Nigel Frayne

Chair of the Board, the WFAE.

Sound Escape An International Conference on Acoustic Ecology

Peterborough, Ontario, Canada
June 28 - July 2, 2000

Sponsored by the Frost Centre for Canadian Heritage and Development Studies at Trent University, and the Canadian Association for Sound Ecology (CASE).

Building on resolutions developed at the 1998 *Hör upp!* conference in Stockholm, the main goal of *Sound Escape* is to promote and develop broad-based, interdisciplinary approaches to research in the field of acoustic ecology.

The conference and its corollary events have attracted an exciting array of participants from 10 countries. Key representatives from the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology (WFAE), the Canadian Association for Sound Ecology (CASE), the Forum für Klanglandschaft (FKL), CRESSON, the UKI Sound Community, and the WHO will be present. The academic part of the conference will consist of four days of papers from the following disciplines: acoustic design, anthropology, architecture, biology, Canadian studies, composition, cultural studies, ethnomusicology, geography, health, musicology, noise pollution activism, radio/new media, and sound engineering. There will be two plenary speakers, and Sunday morning will consist of a final plenary session to plan future activities and to identify new goals for acoustic ecology.

Originally inspired by conversations with R. Murray Schafer—a resident of the Peterborough area—we are very pleased that he will be participating actively in the conference. Dr. Schafer is the distinguished founder of Soundscape Studies, through the World Soundscape Project and his seminal book *The Tuning of the World*.

Plenary Speakers

Dr. Helmi Järviluoma, Academy of Finland and University of Turku, Finland. Head of the international research project that is replicating and expanding on early research by the World Soundscape Project. Topic: Place, Memory, and Acoustic Environments: Five European Villages Revisited.

Dr. Richard Leppert, Morse Distinguished Teaching Professor, University of Minnesota, Dept. of Cultural Theory and Comparative Literature, and author of many critical articles and books concerned with the intersections between modernism, sound, and visual media. Topic: Desire, Power and the Sonoric Landscape (Early Modernism and the Politics of Musical Privacy).

Other Conference Events will include: *Sound Tracks*, a group show of works by Canadian visual artists who are engaged with sound; *RaDio Burst!* Trent Radio Art Festival with three days of continuous audio/radio art and three nights of “Radio Noir”—all night presentations by top Canadian audio artists; a Public Forum on Noise and Health; an Evening of Inter-media Performance presented by Peterborough new Dance; and finally a Banquet followed by Millennial Canada Day Celebrations in Del Cray Park.

The *Sound Escape* website is on line at www.trentu.ca/soundscape and has updated information including the e-mail addresses for registering.

Registration Fees:

Regular \$85.00

Student \$50.00

One registers through Conference Services at Trent U. E-mail: conferences@trentu.ca. You can use Visa, Mastercard or a Certified Cheque or Money Order.

Contact:

Sound Escape

c/o Dr. Ellen Waterman

Peter Robinson College, Trent University,
Peterborough, Ontario, K9H 7P5, Canada

E-mail: ewaterman@trentu.ca

Thank You!

The Editorial Committee would like to thank all our new and renewed members for their support. And *special thanks* to the School of Communication, and the Dean of Applied Sciences at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada, Gary Ferrington, and Agnes Westerkamp, for their generous donations. Without all of these financial contributions *Soundscape – The Journal of Acoustic Ecology* could not exist.

Regional Activity Reports

Australian Forum for Acoustic Ecology (AFAE)

by Lawrence Harvey

Since establishing in 1998, the main activities of the AFAE have been to develop public programs for 2000 and 2001. In conjunction with these programs, the group is progressing with interdisciplinary links and the establishment of other support mechanisms. Several of these are outlined below.

Resonance 2000 is a series of five public forums being held in Melbourne between May and September, entitled Sound in the Constructed Environment; Audiology; The Natural Soundscape; the Indigenous Soundscape of Australia; and Technology and Sound. Guest presenters will include researchers and professionals from the fields of acoustic engineering, wildlife and ecology research, audiology, new media, architecture and design, urban design and planning and composition. In approaching prospective participants, it was encouraging to learn that although many of them were unaware of an acoustic ecology movement, they quickly acknowledged their interest and support for an inter-disciplinary movement dedicated to the soundscape. Funding for *Resonance 2000* is currently under consideration from the Australia Council for the Arts.

Conference 2001: The second principle activity of the AFAE has been the development of an acoustic ecology conference, to be held in Melbourne in 2001. The Faculty of the Constructed Environment at RMIT University will also be a major partner in this event along with other cultural organisations in Melbourne. At this time, the planned format of the conference revolves around morning acoustic design workshops and afternoon paper sessions. The design workshops are intended for participants to join on an elective basis, and will require each group to present a design resolution to a predetermined scenario at the end of the conference.

The scenarios and supporting research resources will be announced along with the conference later in 2000. The conference planning is also considering several performance and installation events and visits to local urban and natural soundscapes.

An AFAE website is currently under construction. It will be utilised to further develop the inter-disciplinary networks of the AFAE, and to inform the local and international community of forthcoming events and useful links. The URL for the finished website will be posted to the WFAE discussion list.

Individual members have been active in various sound based composition and acoustic design projects in Melbourne, Sydney and overseas. Further information will be available on these projects from the AFAE website later in the year.

Contact:

Nigel Frayne: nfrayne@netspace.net.au
or Lawrence Harvey: Lawrence.Harvey@rmit.edu.au

Canadian Association for Sound Ecology (CASE) Association Canadienne pour l'Écologie Sonore (ACÉS)

by Darren Copeland

Spring 2000 has been a watershed for CASE and has taken the organization into a new phase in its short history. The future of the Affiliated Organizations of the WFAE, in my opinion, rests in grassroots local activities that engage the general public. To this end, the members of CASE have shaped two initiatives which link the expertise of the soundscape community to local communities in southern Ontario.

With the *Toronto Sound Mosaic*, civic history is used as a means to engage the local public in a contemplation of the urban soundscape. The work will take the form of a soundscape documentary made by a production team directed by Richard Windeyer and myself with research and administrative assistance from Clarissa DeYoung. It charts the metamorphosis of the Toronto soundscape from the lakeside trading post once known as York to the multicultural metropolis now called Toronto. Drawing from existing historical documents, the *Toronto Sound Mosaic* is a new kind of heritage record that brings to life through sound the growth and transformation of Toronto.

The *Toronto Sound Mosaic* will be presented outdoors on June 17 and 18 at the Gibraltar Point Centre for the Arts on Hanlan's Point as part of a weekend of multi-channel electroacoustic concerts called *Sound Travels*. Performances on both days will commence with an informative historical soundwalk led by a member of CASE. The *Sound Travels* programming will also include a number of other soundscape works by Canadian and European composers. Among them will be a concert devoted to the work of Hildegard Westerkamp that will feature a world premiere.

CASE also is one of the sponsors of the acoustic ecology conference *Sound Escape* between June 28 and July 2, 2000. Further details can be found on [page 5](#).

Once these projects are completed there will once again be the question of what the future holds for CASE. Although CASE's office and current projects are in the Southern Ontario region, there is no reason why this should become the status quo for our production activities. In my opinion it is more healthy if our activities shift their focus to other regions of the country. However, in order to do so we require imaginative input and production initiative from our members out West, in Quebec, the North, and in the Maritimes. To all of you we appeal for your direct personal involvement. We welcome not only your support but your ideas and participation!

Contact:

The Canadian Association for Sound Ecology
179 Richmond Street West, Toronto, ON, M5V 1V3, Canada
E-mail: cansound@interlog.com
Tel: +1 (416) 977-3546

Forum für Klanglandschaft (FKL)

by Thomas Gerwin

The FKL was founded in Switzerland in 1995 and has since become an Affiliate Organization of the WFAE. It currently has 83 legal members, both individual and institutional. These members come from Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, The Netherlands, Sweden and, of course, Switzerland.

The FKL's most important official project in the year 1999 was to establish its own web page. I would like to take this occasion to thank Lorenz Schwarz, FKL's webmaster, for all his work. This page provides dates, links and information about the FKL itself, as well as current projects worldwide; an extensive bibliography on topics of soundscape and acoustic ecology, with articles and books in German, French, Italian and English, and a discography of related documentation and (sound)art works.

A brand new service provides sound examples on the page, playable in QuickTime or MP3 format. Additionally, one can download the new brochure *Klanglandschaft wörtlich—Akustische Umwelt in transdisziplinärer Perspektive* (Soundscape Literally—Acoustic Environment from an Interdisciplinary Perspective) as compressed text or PDF file. One can subscribe to the FKL mailing list and get monthly updates and news via e-mail. Please visit the site at <http://www.rol3.com/vereine/klanglandschaft>.

The other major task, which FKL took on for the WFAE between 1996 and 1999 was the publication of *The New Soundscape Newsletter*. For this we very much have to thank Dr. Justin Winkler, who put much of his time and energy into this endeavour. He did a marvellous job as chief editor and coordinator of *The New Soundscape Newsletter*!

A smaller FKL project in 1999 was to help organize WFAE participation in *Soundscape voor 2000*, November 19-26 in Amsterdam, which was held by Netherlands' State Radio 'nps' in cooperation with several partners and with Michael Fahres and Piet Hein van de Poel as the main organizers. Beside several lectures and presentations of WFAE members, this year's WFAE meetings took place at, and were hosted by, the Amsterdam Goethe Institut as daily morning sessions, and were open to the public attending *Soundscape voor 2000* (see pp. 28-29)

FKL members have also been very active with their own projects, loosely but not officially connected with the organization, such as the publication of new books, CDs, exhibitions, radio productions, educational courses and scientific research. Most of the members have known each other for years and come together in the name of FKL once a year for a General Assembly. For their projects they normally contact their partners and collaborators directly and do not ask for FKL support. Thus there are, among other issues, two main ones that, in my opinion, will have to be discussed as tasks for the future in the FKL: a strategy to attract and handle sponsoring, and a procedure for providing and granting effective support for activities in the field of Acoustic Ecology.

Contact:

Forum für Klanglandschaft (FKL)
Hammerstrasse 14, CH-4058 Basel, Switzerland
<http://www.rol3.com/vereine/klanglandschaft>

The United Kingdom and Ireland Soundscape Community (UKISC)

by Gregg Wagstaff

Like any voluntary group whose members are widespread and also working full time in other capacities, the UKISC inevitably took a lot of time and patience to materialise. It was in November, 1999 at the *drift* event (see below) in Glasgow, Scotland, that the UKISC was, finally, formally constituted. And in Amsterdam with WFAE board members Nigel Frayne, Darren Copeland and Hildegard Westerkamp the UKISC (represented by myself and John Drever) was accepted as an Affiliated Organization to the WFAE. The current UKISC management committee will guide the activities of the group until its Annual General Meeting in December 2000, where members will be able to stand for and (re)elect the management committee for the following year. By the time you read this, we will be accepting subscriptions to the UKISC. We are confident that our membership will at least number the fifty or so individuals subscribing to the "soundscapeuk" e-discussion list.

The UKISC had its initial presence in *dialogues*, a music and sound art event directed by Pedro Rebello in August 1999 as part of the Edinburgh Festival (see www.music.ed.ac.uk/dialogues/uksc.html). Amongst other performances and events, several soundscape recordings were contributed by various earminded members. These were collated by Pedro and presented in a gallery space via a CD ROM based interface and a diffusion system. This allowed the listener to audition, make selections and read more about the various recordings. Pedro intends to make additions to this format, drawing upon a growing amount of soundscape contributors.

It was at *drift*—a weekend of Sound Art & Acoustic Ecology—that the UKISC made its public debut: group members presented several works—including compositions, installations, texts and a public talk (see: www.mediascot.org/drift/). John Drever and myself also led a listening walk around Glasgow Botanic Gardens, attended by about a dozen people (a good turn-out considering the England vs Scotland football match was occurring at the same time!). This walk ended in the relative quiet of one of the garden's palm houses, where many of the listeners contributed positively to the ensuing discussion. A binaural recording of the walk was made by Dallas Simpson. On the final afternoon, five of the six UKISC board members gave a public talk addressing the general issues concerning the sonic environment and talking about the objectives of the group. We have Robert King to thank for an incredible amount of organisation to make the *drift* event possible. It was a great success and the first of its kind within the UK. Robert is already planning the next one.

Currently members of the UKISC are working closely with those of the Finnish group (FSAE) during their visit to the village Dollar, Scotland, as part of the *Acoustic Environments in Change* project (see more on AEC in *Current Research* on p. 25).

John Drever is organising a UKISC conference for February 16-21, 2001 at Dartington College of Arts, in Devon, England. This is primarily intended as a UK, Ireland, and European event with some international keynote figures. However, if you wish to journey from further afield and your schedule and finances permit—then welcome!—we expect it to be an accessible and interesting week. You can expect the UKISC event to be participatory in nature, with an "ears-on approach"—with workshops and listening walks.

Contact: Gregg Wagstaff: earminded@ecosse.net

Finnish Society for Acoustic Ecology (FSAE)

by Helmi Järviluoma

The FSAE was established on December 11, 1999 and is soon to become an Affiliate Organization of the WFAE. Sound artist Simo Alitalo, journalist Tuike Alitalo and myself invited people to the meeting whom we knew to have an interest in sonic environments and who came from both artistic and scholarly backgrounds. Fifteen came: journalists, sound artists, sound teachers, music researchers, an architect, a librarian and a poet. At the moment we have more than 20 members in the FSAE.

The FSAE aims to promote both consciousness of the sound environment and critical awareness of its quality. It also encourages the protection and maintenance of existing acoustically balanced soundscapes.

To achieve those aims the FSAE promotes: a) education, with an emphasis on listening to soundscapes and on sharpening aural awareness; b) study of the diverse aspects of soundscape; c) publishing and distribution of information and research in acoustic ecology; d) protection and preservation of existing quiet places and times in both natural and cultural soundscapes; e) sound design of environments and objects.

Our statutes are very close to those of the WFAE. We are taking our first steps as an organisation, and only the future will tell *how* we are going to realise our aims.

Contact

Helmi Järviluoma: helmi.jarviluoma@utu.fi

(Editors' note: For information about Acoustic Environments in Change, an exciting soundscape research project, initiated by Helmi and executed by a European research team, please see [page 25](#).)

Soundscape Association of Japan (SAJ)

by Kozo Hiramatsu

The SAJ started its activities in 1993 with about 300 members (396 as of May, 1999). Membership includes researchers, as well as individuals of practical affairs from various fields in music, noise control engineering, architecture, civil engineering, landscape architecture, aesthetics, philosophy, sociology, anthropology and others.

During the symposium held in commemoration of the foundation, the keynote lecture, entitled "Expanding the Scenery," was given by Prof. Sawada, a philosopher, who was appointed the first president. Other titles of lectures presented in the symposium reflected the diversity of the members' interests and backgrounds. These included: "On the Concept of Environment Concerning Soundscape," "Soundscape—A Thought of Design," "Toward the Sociology of Soundscape," "A New Look at the Administration of Urban Environment," "Art and Soundscape," and "Nagasaki Soundscape—Sound, Ear and Mind."

Since then the SAJ has conducted a variety of activities which may be classified into five categories:

1. Publications: so far the SAJ has published 15 volumes of the *Japan Soundscape Newsletter*, 6 of *Japan Soundscape Mail* and one of *Soundscape—Journal of the Soundscape Association of Japan*.
2. Organization of events: the SAJ organised six to seven events a year until 1997 and thereafter one or two each year. They included lectures, symposia, concerts, field trips, soundwalks, a blind walk, workshops, an expedition, and conferences.
3. Support for digital communication: the SAJ has a mailing list and a homepage for member use.
4. Support of and/or collaboration with local activities: in response to demand from local members, the SAJ provides partial financial support, provides suggestions, and encourages members to volunteer to organize events in places other than Tokyo or Osaka district.
5. Co-operation with other bodies: the SAJ has co-operated with other groups like the Sharing Earth Association, Goethe Institut Tokyo, Earth Vision, Acoustical Society of Japan, Fukuoka Municipal Office, and an NGO in Thailand.

Apart from these formal activities, some members have organised many small and casual meetings and events.

In 1997 Professor Tanimura, a musicologist, was appointed as second president. Under his direction the SAJ published the journal *Soundscape—Journal of the Soundscape Association of Japan*, in 1999 with seven academic papers and field notes.

The SAJ is not an academic organization and most members are non-professionals in sound. Thus the emphasis in its activities does not lie in research. Nevertheless, it has a significant mission to promote research activities in acoustic ecology and offers its members opportunities to present their papers and to discuss topics on soundscape and related matters. This cannot be realised in other societies and institutions.

After five years of lively activities the SAJ confronted its financial problems and reconsidered its future direction. It was realized that, through its rather specialized events, only a limited part of the organization's members had been reached. As a result, the SAJ decided to shift its emphasis to the publication of a journal and newsletter and promote digital communication among members as well as non-members. It will also dispatch messages and information in English to seek closer communication and better cooperation with overseas institutes regarding soundscape.

Contact:

Kozo Hiramatsu, Secretary-General, SAJ: NBG01036@nifty.ne.jp

Editors' note: Thanks to many years of tireless efforts by Keiko Torigoe prior to its formation, the SAJ became the first organization in the world to be active in the area of soundscape. It has attracted the largest number of members to date and has been very effective in generating community interest in soundscape issues in Japan. Although the SAJ is not officially affiliated with the WFAE, strong links have always existed between members of the two organizations, and we are happy to present this report as part of this journal.

Sound Journals



Sliding Door Sounds

by Keiko Torigoe

“Gala gala gala, opening the entrance door,” used to be a cliché in Japanese writing until recently. But actually, we rarely hear these door sounds in the urban environments of Japan now, at the end of the 20th century.

The sound of sliding doors is a unique and essential sonic characteristic of Japanese houses. I first became aware of this fact almost 20 years ago, when I made an experimental radio programme on the theme of door sounds during a soundscape workshop with R. Murray Schafer at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada.

A Quebecois radio programmer and I took our microphones to downtown Montreal recording as many types of door sounds as possible. We collected a big variety, including a revolving door and a caterpillar door.* However, there were no sliding doors among them.

Recently I became conscious of the sound of sliding doors again when I was planning my own house. On the site of the new house, which was completed last summer, used to be my grandparents house. I was born there and grew up in it, and as a result many of my precious memories had been accumulated in that location. So, I wanted to conserve the original house in some way.

After some contemplation, I decided to remove my favourite sliding doors from the old house, and use them in the new house so that they could continue to play the same sound in the new space. This way, although the shape of the house would be changed, the sound and atmosphere would be conserved—so I thought.

However, the problem, as I perceived it then, was to find a builder who could handle the troublesome task of fitting the module of the old doors into the current modernized module. After some searching, I discovered a family of master carpenters who is fond of using old lumber and knows how to work with it. In the end it turned out that we could not use the current modernized module at all. We had to build the whole house using the traditional module so that the old doors could fit and their sounds would be preserved. Fortunately, additional old doors, gathered by the father of the master, were available and could be installed in the remaining parts of my house. All this delayed the project a lot.

Now, these sliding doors are playing a variety of sounds: an old storehouse door sighs with its deep and heavy voice. Two glazed sliding doors sing with their cheerful percussive voices, and lattice sliding doors with shoji paper speak to each other with their soft voices in my new old house.

This text was translated by Keiko Torigoe from her essay, “Soundscape of House: Sliding Door Sounds,” and revised by Hildegard Westerkamp. Originally written in Japanese, it first appeared in *Tashikaname* 1999. 9. p.71, published by the Japan Consumer Information Center. It is one of a series of essays entitled *Soundscape of Japan*.

* Editors’ note: when we asked the author what she meant by the term she explained that it refers to a metal or wooden garage door, also found in Japan, that folds up somewhat like a caterpillar and is rolled up into the garage ceiling.

Door

by Philip Dadson

In Tokyo, Keiko took me to a Western-style coffee bar below street level. When the door closed, a draught blew through a gap at the bottom of the door and a haunting chord of sound came through into the room. Later I dreamt of a large door that was slightly ajar, and when the wind blew through it, a divinely haunting chord of sound came through it into the room. Much later I was in Wellington’s City Gallery theatre watching silent films. But the films were not silent, they were accompanied by a continuous and divinely haunting chord of sound, which my ears gradually traced to the theatre door. The door was large and slightly ajar, balanced by the pressure of a draught outside and the air-conditioning within. And as the wind blew, a haunting chord of sound came through into the room.

Reprinted with permission from “Sound Stories” by Philip Dadson, published by Artspace Gallery, on the occasion of SoundCulture ’99, Auckland, New Zealand, 1999.

(More Sound Journals on [page 27](#))

An Introduction to Acoustic Ecology

by Kendall Wrightson

I try to listen to
the still, small voice within
but I can't hear it
above the din

from *Little Audrey's Story* by Eliza Ward

As a reader of this journal it is possible that you attach a certain significance to sound. Maybe you are a musician, an audio engineer, an architect, a foley artist, a marine biologist, or a composer of sonic art. Maybe you have studied sound in built environments, used sound in performance, in film or video, or researched sound under water and among animals. You may have noticed how important sound can be in communicating mood, meaning and context. Perhaps when listening to a “soundscape”—sound heard in a real or “virtual” environment—you have been transported to another time, another place. Conversely, maybe you have experienced the-here-and-now even more acutely as a result of listening intently. Your awareness of sound—specifically your *level* of awareness of the acoustic environment at any given time—is an issue central to the interdisciplinary of Acoustic Ecology (also known as ecoacoustics).

The philosophy underpinning Acoustic Ecology is simple yet profound: its author—R. Murray Schafer, a musician, composer and former Professor of Communication Studies at Simon Fraser University (SFU) in Burnaby, BC, Canada—suggests that we try to hear the acoustic environment as a musical composition and further, that we own responsibility for its composition (Schafer 1977a, 205). Like many issues emerging from the explosion of ideologies in the late 1960s, the profundity of Schafer's message is now hidden behind a single, soundbite-friendly issue: noise pollution. This is unfortunate since Schafer has far more to offer. However, some 22 years after his ideas were first fully articulated in print, they remain unknown to the general public and mostly unknown to environmental acousticians. Where Schafer is well known—within the contemporary music community—it is mostly for his large-scale, often site-specific, musical/theatrical work rather than his acoustic ecology. Composer John Cage was aware of both; when asked if he knew of any great music teachers, he replied “Murray Schafer of Canada” (Truax 1978, sleeve note).

So what did Schafer say and what is its relevance at the beginning of a century?

Eye Culture

Schafer's starting point was to note the incredible dominance of the visual modality in society—“eye culture,” as it has been termed elsewhere¹—and to reveal that children's ability to listen was, in his experience, deteriorating. So concerned was Schafer about this problem that he argued passionately for listening skills to become an integral part of the national curriculum. Schafer both demonstrated

and addressed the issue—which he termed “sonological competence”—through the practical exercises he developed in working with music students, such as: list any five environmental sounds (not music) that you remember hearing today; and list five sounds (not music) you like and five you do not.

As a lecturer in Music Technology, I often begin a lecture series with these exercises and I can confirm Schafer's experience: many students do not recall “consciously” having heard any sounds during the day, and many do not complete the sound list even after fifteen minutes. Schafer's response to the problem was to develop a range of “ear cleaning” exercises including “soundwalks,” a walking meditation where the object is to maintain a high level of sonic awareness (see Schafer 1967 and 1969).

By the early 1970s, Schafer had enrolled his colleagues at SFU into his work and the World Soundscape Project (WSP) was created, its first major project being a field study of the Vancouver Soundscape. The study involved level measurements (producing isobel maps), soundscape recordings and the description of a range of sonic features. The study resulted in both a book² and a collection of recordings.³ Further WSP field studies in Europe led to the publication of *Five Village Soundscapes* (Schafer, 1978b) and *European Sound Diary* (Schafer, 1977b). Schafer's *The Tuning of the World* (1977a)⁴ remains the best known and the most comprehensive text on Acoustic Ecology.

Soundscape Features

A fascinating book that changed my understanding of—and relationship with—sound, *The Tuning of the World* formalised the soundscape terminology Schafer had devised during his field studies with the WSP: background sounds he defined as “keynotes” (in analogy to music where a keynote identifies the fundamental tonality of a composition around which the music modulates); foreground sounds (intended to attract attention) are termed “sound signals.” Sounds that are particularly regarded by a community and its visitors are called “soundmarks”—in analogy to landmarks. Natural examples of the latter include geysers, waterfalls and wind traps while cultural examples include distinctive bells and the sounds of traditional activities. (Schafer 1977a: 9, 55-56, 173-175, 272-275; Truax 1978: 68, 119, 127; 1984: 22, 58-60).

Schafer's terminology helps to express the idea that the sound of a particular locality (its keynotes, sound signals and soundmarks) can—like local architecture, customs and dress—express a community's identity to the extent that settlements can be recognised and characterised by their soundscapes. Unfortunately, since the industrial revolution, an ever increasing number of unique soundscapes have disappeared completely or submerged into the cloud of homogenised, anonymous noise that is the contemporary city soundscape, with its ubiquitous keynote—traffic.

The contrast between pre-industrial and post-industrial acoustic environments is well expressed in Schafer's use of the terms “hi-

fi” (high fidelity) to characterise the former and “lo-fi” (low fidelity) to describe the latter (1977a, 272). He defines a hi-fi soundscape as an environment where “sounds overlap less frequently; there is more perspective—foreground and background” (1977a, 43). In transcribing recordings of hi-fi environments, Schafer’s team noted that the level of natural environmental sounds—such as weather and animals—varied in repeating cycles. The team created a rudimentary level versus time diagram charting the more prominent sonic features of the soundscape over a twelve month period (reproduced below as Figure 1).

Schafer concluded that the vocal “give and take” between species (evident in Figure 1) is probably a characteristic feature of natural soundscapes. In addition to the rhythmic balance in sound level Schafer identified in natural habitats, Krause (1993) suggested an equilibrium is also apparent across the audio spectrum. The possibility of a natural spectral balance occurred to Krause during long sojourns in the wilderness as he attempted to record the vocalisations of specific creatures. Listening intently to the soundscape to capture specific sounds (often waiting for up to thirty hours in one sitting), Krause noticed that “When a bird sang or a mammal or amphibian vocalised, the voices appeared to fit in relation to all the natural sounds in terms of frequency and prosody (rhythm)” (1993, 159).

Acoustical spectrographic maps transcribed from 2,500 hours of recordings confirmed his suspicions: animal and insect vocalisations tended to occupy small bands of frequencies leaving “spectral niches” (bands of little or no energy) into which the vocalisations (fundamental and formants) of other animals, birds or insects can fit. As urban areas spread Krause suggested, the accompanying noise might “block” or “mask” spectral niches and, if mating calls go unheard, a species might die out (1993, 158). While there has been little corroborative research into Krause’s “Niche Hypothesis,” (or into Schafer’s suggestion that give and take occurs in terms of sound level), a recent Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) study suggested that birds living near roads “... cannot hear one another which leads to difficulty in learning songs and communicating with potential mates” (Barot 1999).

In acoustics, the word “mask” has a very specific meaning.⁵ The relevance of this effect for the soundscape is that since quieter sounds do not generally mask each other (unless their frequencies are close together), a hi-fi soundscape can be characterised by its lack of masking from noise and other sounds, with the result that all sounds—of all frequencies—“can be heard distinctly” (Schafer, 43). As SFU colleague Hildegard Westerkamp puts it, there is “no anonymous sound.” The lack of masking facilitates the propagation of

“acoustic colouration” caused by echoes and reverberations that occur as sound is absorbed and reflected from surfaces within the environment, and due to the effects of weather related factors such as temperature, wind and humidity. The resulting colouration offers significant information for the listener, providing cues relating to the physical nature of the environment and expressing its size in relation to the listener. This fosters a sense of place for individuals as they move around the community. SFU colleague Barry Truax conveys this concept well when he states “... the sound arriving at the ear is the analogue of the current state of the physical environment, because as the wave travels, it is charged by each interaction with the environment” (Truax 1984, 15).

Another characteristic of the pre-industrial revolution, hi-fi soundscape, is that the “acoustic horizon” may extend for many miles. Thus sounds emanating from a listener’s own community may be

heard at a considerable distance, reinforcing a sense of space and position and maintaining a relationship with home. This sense is further strengthened when it is possible to hear sounds emanating from adjacent settlements, establishing and maintaining relationships between local communities.

In the lo-fi soundscape, meaningful sounds (and any associated acoustic colouration), can be masked to such an extent that an individual’s “aural space” is reduced.

Where the effect is so pronounced that an individual can no longer hear the reflected sounds of his/her own movement or speech, aural space has effectively shrunk to enclose the individual, isolating the listener from the environment. If the masking of reflected and direct sounds is so severe that an individual cannot hear his/her own footsteps—which is common on the streets of many cities—“... one’s aural space is reduced to less than that of human proportions” (Truax 1984, 20). Under such extreme conditions, sound is either smothered (in the sense that particular sounds are not heard) or, sounds merge and sonic information mutates into anti-information: “noise.”

While the hi-fi soundscape is—Acoustic Ecologists suggest—balanced in terms of level, spectra and rhythm, the lo-fi soundscape features an almost constant level. This creates a “Sound Wall” (Schafer 1977a, 93), isolating the listener from the environment. Spectrally, the contemporary lo-fi soundscape is biased towards the low frequency range (thanks to the internal combustion engine and sounds related to electric power). Due to the twenty-four hour society, the rhythms of daily routine are, in some localities, significantly eroded.

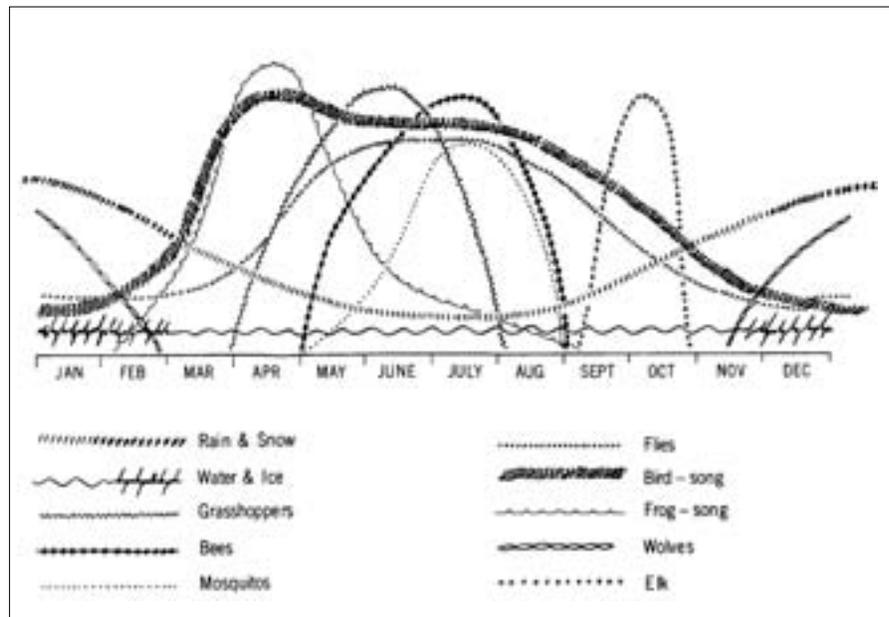


Figure 1: The cycles of the natural soundscape of the west coast of British Columbia showing the relative level of sounds (from Truax 1984: 142).

The Soundscape and Society

In describing the soundscape's capacity to convey information, Truax (1984) describes sound as a mediator between listener and the environment. This relationship is illustrated in Figure 2.

As the soundscape deteriorates, so awareness of the subtleties of environmental sound has withered in proportion. As a result, the meanings sound holds

for the listener in contemporary soundscapes tend to be polarised into extremes—"loud" and "quiet"; noticed or unnoticed; good (I like) or bad (I don't like). Compare this level of sonic awareness (and the results of the listening tests mentioned earlier) with the Kaluli men of Papua New Guinea who, according to Feld (1994) can "... imitate the sound of at least 100 birds, but few can provide visual descriptive information on nearly that many." In other words, environmental sounds for the Kaluli tribe comprise a continuum offering a limitless range of subtleties.

In the developed world, sound has less significance and the opportunity to experience "natural" sounds decreases with each generation due to the destruction of natural habitats. Sound becomes something that the individual tries to block, rather than to hear; the lo-fi, low information soundscape has nothing to offer. As a result, many individuals try to shut it out through the use of double glazing or with acoustic perfume—music. Music—the virtual soundscape—is, in this context, used as a means to control the sonic environment rather than as a natural expression of it. Broadcast speech and music provide the same opportunity for control, turning the sonic environment into a commodity. Networks, transmitters and satellites extend the acoustic community across the entire planet, a fact that has been utilised for fair deeds and foul. Schafer refers to the latter use of sound as "sound imperialism" (1977a, 77).

A 1993 survey of public attitudes to noise in the United Kingdom lists "neighbours"—and specifically sources of broadcast or recorded sound (which Schafer calls "schizophonic" sound)—as the premier source of irritation, toppling traffic from the number one spot it had occupied for many years (Grimwood, 1993). As Slapper (1996) reports: "Nationally, councils now receive 300 complaints a day about unacceptable noise from neighbours" and more disturbingly "Over the past four years, 18 people have been killed" [due to disputes over noisy neighbours].

The psychological significance of sound used as a controlling force—as an (offensive) weapon or as a (defensive) barrier against the soundscape—is that the environment and the community become the enemy. As with any war, the environment becomes a battle-

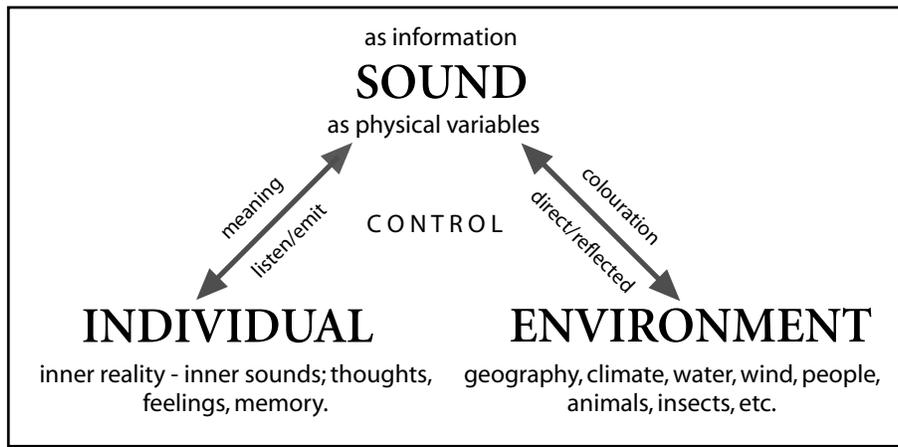


Figure 2: The mediating relationship of an individual to the environment through sound (modified from Truax 1984, 11).

is the enemy without, the noise of unwanted thoughts and feelings represents the enemy within. The use of sound as an "audioanalgesic" (Schafer 1977a, 96)—a soundwall to block the unceasing (and often critical) inner dialogue and the uncomfortable emotions the dialogue evinces—provides the illusion of mastery over emotion. A basic tenet of psychotherapy is the notion that unexpressed thoughts and feelings can result in inappropriate actions ranging from a burst of anger over an insignificant event, to the kind of horrific incidents that seem increasingly, to make the front pages of newspapers the world over. Despite an increased awareness of psychotherapeutic principles, the belief that emotion is somehow controlled through distraction prevails.

The physical and psychological cost of unexpressed emotion is an epidemic of stress related illnesses that reflects a struggle to adapt to a new way of living—the speed, busy-ness and sustained arousal of city life. Such is the contrast between the character of life in towns and cities compared to that in rural and tranquil areas, that Newman & Lonsdale (1995) refer to city dwellers as *homo urbanus*. Appreciative descriptions of the "buzz" of the city frequently refer to its noise, as well as its speed and activity (Newman & Lonsdale 1995, 34). As

the city represents excitement, so the countryside, the plains and wilderness areas have come, for many, to represent boredom and incredibly, a disconnection from life, since "life" has become associated with continuous noise and activity. The corollary to this is that "quiet" and highly differentiated environments—characteristics of hi-fi soundscapes—are equated with boredom, conformity, lassitude, lack of choice "... and most importantly, the fear of being out of touch." (Newman & Lonsdale 1995, 10). The latter expression is a masterly example of sophistry since while being "in touch" with the noise of opinion and technol-

ogy (objectivity), the quiet reality of how "I" feel now (subjectivity)—is devalued or ignored.

In my view, the hi-fi environment represents a deep psychological fear for anyone whose purpose (consciously or unconsciously) is to avoid their feelings. In a wide variety of psychotherapeutic experiences, I have witnessed many times—in myself and others—how being quiet tends to bring emotions to the surface. As psychologist

ground and suffers as much as its inhabitants. Schafer estimated that the battle between sonic expression and control was helping to increase environmental sound levels by around 0.5 to 1 decibel per year—a "noise generator" as illustrated in Figure 3.

Inner Noise

If community and environmental noise

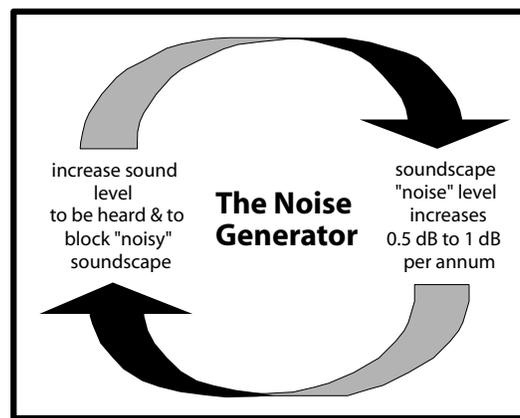


Figure 3: The Noise Generator (source: the author)

James Swan quoted in Gallagher (1993, 203) offers: “Just sitting quietly in that atmosphere [a quiet place] allows most people to process a lot of emotions and issues they haven’t been dealing with.”

It is no coincidence that in much art and literature, nature is used to symbolise emotion: both are wild and uncontrollable and the history of humanity could be described in terms of a need to dominate both. This domination has taken the form of ephemeral realities built upon life-as-it-is. In the case of nature, the construction refers to electrically powered communities whose ephemerality is a function of their power source. Contemporary society cannot operate without electricity—if the plug is pulled by nature, terrorists or the depletion of natural resources, society will collapse. As for emotion, the ephemeral constructions are the “schizophonic” sounds, television pictures and eventually, the “data suits” and other “cybersense” technologies that are creating a “virtual” reality. Built on top of the electric society, cyber-reality is twice as ephemeral, doubly fragile.

Acoustic Ecology Today

Schafer suggests that there are two ways to improve the soundscape. The first is to increase sonological competence through an education programme that attempts to imbue new generations with an appreciation of environmental sound. This he believes, will foster a new approach to design—the second way—that will incorporate an appreciation of sound and thus reduce the wasted energy that noise represents.

Schafer’s ideas are laudable and I endorse them. However it is vital that Acoustic Ecologists do not underestimate what Schafer is asking; in order to listen we need to stop or at least slow down—physically and psychologically, becoming a human being instead of a “human doing.” “Be here now” is one of the main messages to emerge during the 1960s, and a major tenet of the multitude of Eastern philosophies that have been imported into the west ever since. For *homo urbanus*, stopping and listening is a tough call, though many try and keep trying. For others, being here now, listening to the soundscape, valuing the soundscape, is anathema. Porteous (1990) confirms this in his critique of the original WSP surveys noting that “experts” always bring with them their own agenda. In this case, he says, the agenda is that people *should* value the soundscape, specifically a balanced one; surveys of public opinion, he notes, indicate that the people—the “inerts”—do not.

Today, interest in Acoustic Ecology is growing thanks to the activities of the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology (WFAE), which was founded during The First International Conference on Acoustic Ecology in Banff, Alberta, Canada, in August of 1993. Through newsletters, this new journal, regular conferences (since 1993) and more recently a listserver and web site available to anyone with access to the Internet, knowledge of acoustic ecology and the activities of the WFAE is beginning to spread to a wider audience; Westerkamp (1995) reports that the WFAE has enrolled steering committee representatives in Europe, Asia-Pacific, South/Central America and the USA and has had a well-functioning international board since 1998.

In summary then, it is my view that the values espoused by Acoustic Ecology—the value of listening, the quality of the soundscape—are values worth evangelising. However, it is vital that we do not underestimate the enormity of what we are asking at the end of the busiest, loudest century in recorded history.

Kendall Wrightson is a lecturer in music technology at London Guildhall University, England, and a freelance writer. The relationship between the

individual, technology, sound and music is a current passion. Kendall is a founder member of SoundscapeUK, the Internet discussion list of the UKI Soundscape Community.

E-mail: wrightso@lgu.ac.uk

<http://www.kwrightson.freemove.co.uk/>

<http://www.mailbase.ac.uk/lists/soundscapeuk/welcome.html>

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Discography

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Notes

1. The dominance of eye culture at the expense of the aural modality is explored in Berendt, J. E. [trans. Nevil, T.] *The Third Ear*, Henry Holt, New York, 1988.
2. Schafer, R. M. [Ed.] *The Vancouver Soundscapes*, ARC Publications, 1978a.
3. Now available as a double CD set including a 1996 comparative study: *The Vancouver Soundscape 1973/Soundscape Vancouver 1996*, Cambridge, 1996. Records CSR-2CD 9701.
4. Schafer, R. M. *The Tuning of the World*, Knopf, New York, 1977. [republished in 1994 as *The Soundscape—Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*, Destiny Books, Rochester, Vermont].
5. Over a relatively narrow frequency range, quiet sounds will be inaudible (i.e. “masked”) in the presence of loud sounds of a lower frequency. If the frequencies of two sounds are within a few hertz, a beating effect is heard which makes it easier to detect the masked tone (Backus, 1977, pp. 101-103).

Acoustic Atmospheres

A Contribution to the Study of Ecological Aesthetics

by Gernot Böhme

Translated from the German by Norbert Ruebsaat

Editors' Introduction

In every issue of *Soundscape* we are aiming to publish at least one article that is written by a scholar and/or professional who is willing to grapple with issues of soundscape and acoustic ecology from the inside of his or her discipline or specialisation. Acoustic Ecology as an inherently interdisciplinary field of study is in the process of formation. Its boundaries, in our opinion, can only be defined with clarity (and without giving up flexibility), when an exchange of knowledge and ideas occurs between those disciplines that are involved with aspects of sound and the acoustic environment and those that are already actively engaged with issues of soundscape, listening and ecology. In that spirit of exchange, these articles are meant to encourage dialogue and debate, and it is hoped that they initiate new and deeper ways of listening to each other.

The German philosopher Gernot Böhme first presented the ideas for his article at the Symposium "Acoustic Ecology and Ecological Aesthetics," on June 6, 1999 as part of the larger festival *Stadtstimmen* (City Voices), conceptualized by Sabine Breitsameter and organised by the city of Wiesbaden, Germany, (March-Oct., 1999). Critical of the natural sciences for excluding aesthetics, i.e. people's perception and state of being, from their study of ecology, he takes the reader on a tour-de-force of philosophical thought, examining ecology, and ultimately acoustic ecology, through his "aesthetics of atmospheres." At the symposium he spoke of ecology as the relationship between the *quality* of an environment and people's state-of-being inside that environment. This relationship creates what he calls the atmosphere of a place or situation. *Acoustic* atmospheres become the centre of discussion in this article, examining both music and the soundscape as well as people's forms of listening in the context of ecology.

1. Introduction: The Origins of the Aesthetics of Atmospheres in Ecological Nature Aesthetics

The fact that the environmental crisis represents a challenge to Aesthetics was not recognized at first. Scientific reaction to the crisis sought recourse in a 19th century idea, which originated with Ernst Haeckel, namely, the idea of Ecology. This idea took up the even older idea of a natural economy or household, and broadened this idea into a science which investigated the systemic interconnections of nature's parts, the integration of organisms with their surroundings, the social relationships of organisms, and the self-regulating systems in which organisms lived. This science seemed the proper method by which to identify humanity's destructive effects on the environment, to set guidelines for environmentally friendly behaviours and, finally, to examine appropriateness and inappropriateness of environments for organisms, including human ones. In this way the environmental crisis which, of course, only became an issue because humanity was at the point of injuring itself as a result of what it was doing to nature, became a merely physiological and toxicological crisis: the question of what constituted human environments was answered by Ecology purely in terms of the natural sciences, i.e., by assertions regarding metabolic processes and energy exchanges. In this process, the fact that environmental consciousness was not entirely or even primarily brought into being by toxicological crises like Minamata disease,

but rather by such books as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*,¹ in other words, by aesthetically mediated impressions, was forgotten. The image of a springtime without birdsong—that was what really got people moving.

Ecological Nature Aesthetics was originally proposed to counter Ecology's inadequacy as the leading environmental science, in other words, as a proposal to develop Ecology into a full-fledged science of human environments.² For, whether an environment is experienced as human or not, does not depend on physiological or toxicological factors alone, but on qualities in the environment which are experienced aesthetically. The paradigmatic example is that of a city quarter which suffered from chemical factory emissions. "The factory stinks," people said. When scientific research showed that the emissions were not toxic, the case from the factory management's point of view was closed. But it was not closed, because the sensibilities of the people who lived around the factory were being disturbed. Sensibilities meaning: how one feels in an environment. This idea became the content of Ecological Nature Aesthetics: to examine the relationship between environmental qualities and human sensibility. Atmospheres became the primary focus of this Aesthetics because atmospheres constitute the "In-between" between environmental qualities and human sensibilities.

It has since become clear that this represented a new initiative originating from outside classical Aesthetics, an initiative whose tendencies would reform Aesthetics as a whole. Aesthetics was origi-

nally conceived, in the middle of the eighteenth century by Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, as a theory of sensual perception. All too quickly, however, it developed into a theory of taste and limited its investigations to artworks. While for Kant, Aesthetics seemed by and large to still be Nature Aesthetics,³ for Hegel they became simply a prologue to the actual field of Aesthetics, which was art theory. Aesthetics henceforth served primarily to inform aesthetic judgments and thereby art criticism, and it completely abandoned the field of sensual experience and affective understanding.

2. The State of the Aesthetics of Atmospheres

The profound advantage offered by an Aesthetics of Atmospheres is that it can draw on a large reservoir of daily life experiences. One talks of a pleasant valley,

of the depressive mood before a storm, of the tense atmosphere in a meeting, and it is easy to agree on what these phrases mean. If atmospheres are moods, which one feels in the air, then we are describing a phenomenon which is familiar to everyone; moreover, the potential source material for discussing and characterizing atmospheres is nearly inexhaustible. One speaks of a sombre atmosphere, a foreboding atmosphere, an exalted atmosphere, but one speaks also of an atmosphere of violence or holiness, and one even speaks of the boudoir atmosphere, or a petit-bourgeois atmosphere, of the atmosphere of the twenties.

Arising from these everyday experiences and expressions, the concept of atmospheres has since become a scientific concept.⁴ What is unique and also theoretically complex is that the term describes a typical in-between phenomenon. Atmospheres stand between subjects and objects: one can describe them as object-like emotions, which are randomly cast into a space. But one must at the same time describe them as subjective, insofar as they are nothing without a discerning Subject. But their great value lies exactly in this in-betweenness. Atmospheres combine what was traditionally divided up into Production Aesthetics and Reception Aesthetics. It is possible to generate atmospheres, of course, and there are developed art disciplines dedicated specifically to the creation of atmospheres. These involve the deployment of what are clearly objects plus all kinds of technical aids, whose presence, however, does not serve its own end, but serves to create atmospheres. Stage design is the paradigmatic example of this approach to atmospheres. On the other hand, however, atmospheres are experienced affectively, and one can only describe their characteristics insofar as one exposes oneself to their presence and experiences them as bodily sensations. This is the classical side of Reception Aesthetics.

Contrastive and ingressive experience were suggested as approaches to the study of atmospheres: one experiences the specifics of atmospheres most clearly when their characteristics are set apart,

rather than when they appear as something that surrounds us to the point of unnoticeability. Atmospheres are therefore experienced as contrasts, as, for example, when one is in atmospheres that contradict one's own mood; or they are experienced via the change which

occurs when one enters them from inside another atmosphere. Atmospheres are in these cases experienced as suggestive instances,⁵ that is, as a tendency or urge toward a particular mood.

On the Production Aesthetics side, atmospheres are, as we said, examined by reference to what produces them, i.e. objects, their qualities, arrangements, light, sound, etc. The decisive factor, however, especially as regards the ontology of objects, is that the concern is not with the properties of the object,

properties which encapsulate it and distinguish it from other objects, but rather with the qualities via which the object projects itself into a space. It is a matter of reading characteristics as ecstasies,⁶ that is, ways in which a thing goes out of itself and modifies the sphere of its surroundings, that is of specific concern here. The study of ecstasies is especially important for the arts of Design and Stage Design, because in these the emphasis is not on the objective characteristics and functions of things, but on their scenic potential.

The Aesthetic of Atmospheres, whose beginnings can thus be found in Ecological Aesthetics, rehabilitates Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's initial point of departure, i.e. Aesthetics as Aisthetics, as a general theory of perception. It has in the meantime proven its revelatory power by way of a series of case studies - the atmosphere of a city, light as atmosphere, the atmosphere of dusk, the atmosphere of church spaces, on music as atmosphere, and finally in the study of the atmospheres involved in interpersonal communication.⁷

3. The Aesthetic Conquest of Acoustic Space

Music as art has consisted, since Greek times, of knowing "the tones," and what tones are was determined through harmonic relationships to a fundamental tone, i.e. through intervals. This conception of music appears inconceivably narrow to us today. The twentieth century has brought in a profound expansion of musical material, reaching into many dimensions. It is possible to speak, in fact, of a conquest of acoustic space. From tonality through chromatics, the road leads through a step-by-step expansion of musically acceptable acoustic materials, all the way to the inclusion of sound and noise. What began as an interest in microtones within intervals of the chromatic scale, and the inner life of the tone itself, the attack, the embouchure, grew to include an interest in the individuality of the instruments, their voices, and led to an appreciation of the importance of "sound" as such. By transmogrifying instruments via strik-



Hildegard Westerkamp

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ing and scratching of resonating bodies and via new percussion instruments, a whole host of sounds, not only tonal ones, were admitted into music's sphere. Every day sounds, street scenes, nature sounds and the acoustic world of the factory entered finally via tape recordings. Today, the technique of sampling makes any kind of acoustic material available for composition.

The claim can be made that in addition to this expansion of musical material, a basic transformation, or, shall we say, an expansion of the essence of what music is has occurred. The dogma that music is a time art held sway well into this century. Music, in this conception, found its essential being as a product of time, in the unity of the musical gesture, which transcends the moment. From the basic push to the cadence and return to the tonic through melody and theme, the weave of musical movements, all the way to the unity of the symphony: the unity of the time-bound sequence was what constituted music. Even in something like Schönberg's twelve tone music, the adaptation of fugal techniques still placed what was essentially musical inside the unity of the time-regimented sequences. This notion of music was not overhauled but was relativized when it was discovered that music was a space art, and when it was specifically developed as such in New Music. The fact that music fills spaces and that, by way of resonance and echo, space represents a vital component of its effectiveness was always known. What was newly discovered is that the individual tone, the tone ensemble, but also the tonal sequence, or, more specifically, the sound sequence, have spatial dimensions and form figures and ensembles in space. This fact was previously not understood as musical subject matter. It is likely that modern electronic techniques for reproduction and production of music were what first brought this region within reach and thereby directed attention to it. The ability to make a sound skitter across the room like an insect or to let it rise above a muffled soundmass and spew sonic fireworks—such things were only made possible by technology, which, in realizing them, directed attention to something which, to a certain extent, has always been part of music's province. The Greek terms for high and low, *ὄξύς* and *βαρύς*, which translate as sharp and heavy, broad, point to these possibilities. New Music began, partly via the use of classical instruments, and partly via electronic installations, to consciously work with the spacial aspect of music and thereby promoted recognition of space as an essential dimension of musical composition. This dimension can, under certain circumstances, become the primary dimension of a musical work of art, in which something like a beginning and an end and an over-arching time principle can consequently no longer be expected. It is precisely music's tendency to become a space art that has brought it into the realm of an Aesthetics of Atmospheres. Musical space is, strictly speaking, expanded corporeal space, i.e. a physical reaching out into the domain which the music concurrently moulds and articulates.

The discovery that music is the fundamental atmospheric art has solved an old, always annoying and yet inescapable problem of musical theory, i.e. the question: of what does music's so-called emotional effect actually consist? In opposition to the helpless association theories and the theories that called upon fantasy to mediate, the Aesthetics of Atmospheres gives a simple answer to the question: music as such is a modification of space as it is experienced by the body. Music forms and informs the listener's sense of self, (*das Sichbefinden*) in a space; it reaches directly into his or her corporeal economy. Practitioners have long since made use of this theoretical insight: already in silent movies, music gave spatial and emotional depth to the picture. Later, film music continued this practice. In

radio dramas and features, one speaks of an atmosphere or mood, i.e. of music or sound material, which one lays down under the action to provide atmosphere for the spoken word. Similarly, a certain *soundscape* provides atmosphere in bars, and one renders visits to airports, subway stations and to the dentist pleasant through the use of Muzak and similarly sweetens and enlivens shopping malls, hotel foyers, etc.

If music in our century has expanded the acoustic field by expanding the arsenal of musical source materials to include technical sounds and samples of the every day, including noise, and if music has moved from being a time art to being an art which consciously and affectively shapes spaces, it has, in this process of conquering space, encountered a totally different development. I am referring to the World Soundscape Project founded by R. Murray Schafer in the seventies.⁸ In this Project, the world of natural sounds, the acoustic life of a city, the acoustic characteristics of technology and work were explored, documented, and the material thus made available was ultimately used to compose. Acousticians and sound engineers worked with musicians, or were themselves composers. Thus, what from the perspective of music was an expansion of musical materials, was, seen from this perspective, a discovery of the musicality of the world itself. Of course it was always recognized that birds and whales had their own music. But the soundscape perspective involved more, namely, the discovery of the acoustic character, or, better still, the characteristic appearance or shape of life realms, be they natural ones, like the sea, the forest and other landscapes, or be they the life worlds of cities and villages. It became apparent that even the documentation of such acoustic worlds required densification and composition in order to make the regions addressed accessible to one who was not at home in them. What could be closer at hand than making this densification and composition into an explicit design and to thereby partially encounter, partially ally oneself with music? In the latter instance, the piece *Roaratorio* by John Cage is exemplary.

In the meantime it has been discovered that the feeling of "home" is strongly mediated by the *soundscape* of a region, and that the characteristic experience of a lifestyle, of a city's or a countryside's atmosphere, is fundamentally determined in each instance by the acoustic space. This means that one's conception of what a landscape is can today no longer be restricted to what one sees and that city planning can no longer be content with noise control and abatement, but must pay attention to the character of the acoustic atmospheres of squares, pedestrian zones, of whole cities.

We must not consider the two developments, i.e. that of music in the twentieth century and that of the World Soundscape Project, without looking also at the development of technology. If the blossoming of music as a space art is unthinkable without electronic reproduction and production techniques, the exploration of acoustic landscapes without electronic recording and reproduction technologies is similarly so. The development of acoustic technology in the twentieth century has had an additional effect, however, which is independent of either of the above developments, and that is the all-pervading presence of music. Music, which in past millennia of European tradition was connected to celebration and special occasions, has become a cheap general consumer product. Music is constantly available via radio and television, and the acoustic decoration of public spaces has made our acoustic environment something that, as a rule, is occupied or has at least been colonized by music.

What are the consequences of this development? Considering the last point, one can speak of acoustic pollution of our environ-

ment.⁹ On the other hand, however, one must admit that the acoustic consciousness of the average individual has experienced a noticeable development. This is not only to suggest that musical desires and the musical demands contained in them have been heightened substantially—it also means that listening as such has developed into an important dimension of life and into a broad zone of satisfaction for the general public. Of course one must state that the noise of the modern world and the occupation of public space by music has led to the habit of not-listening (*Weghören*). At the same time, listening has grown from an instrumental experience—I hear something—to a mode through which one participates in the world. The above-mentioned developments have blurred music's boundaries. If, at the beginning of European music history, music was defined by such boundaries, the regular expansion of the musical field has willy-nilly rendered every boundary uncertain. If Thierry de Duve¹⁰ said, speaking of the visual arts, that after Duchamp the fundamental question of Aesthetics—what is beauty?—turned into the question, What is art? this statement can also be applied to music.

4. Acoustic Atmospheres

Perhaps the reference to acoustic atmospheres provides a temporary answer to this question. Temporary, here, meaning that it describes that which characterizes musical experience in our time. One must consider that in future, perhaps quite soon, other answers will be required. What is certain is that the great epoch of music that began with Plato is at an end. Plato criticized people who wanted to discover with their ears what harmonic intervals were.¹¹ And Theodor Adorno could still write that the appropriate way to listen to a symphony was to read the score. What a distance we have travelled from such viewpoints! What we wonder about today is whether modern music can still be notated with any accuracy. The sensuality of music appears to have been rehabilitated, and we must counter the whole Platonic project by saying that what music is can only be determined by listening. Perhaps one must even say that the actual subject of music is listening itself. It is said of modern art in general that it is self reflexive, that it makes art, art's social position, art's anthropological significance, art's very existence, into art's subject matter. In the visual arts this reflective tendency had a clearly definable purpose. In many visual artworks the concern was no longer to represent something but to present the experience of looking. This may have begun already with Turner and the Impressionists, but becomes clearly evident in the work of artists such as Joseph Albers, Barnett Newman, Marc Rothko. In music, this development may have been less evident, because in a way it is music's natural *métier*. For it has always been clear that, unlike the image, music has no object; it does not represent anything. Of course there was Programme Music. But it could not be

denied that these were basically detours, and that music in these instances was putting itself in the service of something else. Kant already said that music was the language of the emotions. Of course one could interpret this statement in accordance with standard semi-otic notions and say that music signifies emotions, that is, it represents them. But that is not what Kant meant, for he specifically differentiated the tone in which something is said from the sign which

transmits its content; and by tone he meant that which allows one to take part directly in the feelings of the speaker.¹² Music was for him the self-actualization of this method of communicating emotions. We have reason, today, to generalize this line of reasoning. Music's determining feature would thereby become the thematicization of acoustic atmospheres as such. And this would generate a different set of boundaries for music than the one, which comes to us from the Platonic tradition. Music was in the latter tradition defined by the restriction of allowed sound materials, or rather, by the limits of the acoustic realm, which defined musical sounds. Today we can say that music occurs when the subject of an acoustic event is the acoustic atmosphere as such, that is, when listening as such, not listening to something is the issue. This requires further elaboration. But one can say off the top that music in this case need not be something made by humans.

What does "when listening as such, not listening to something" mean? In asking this question one notices the great extent to which listening is a

rule object-oriented. I hear a car driving by, I hear the clock strike twelve, I hear somebody talking, I hear a mosquito, I hear a ship's horn. This kind of listening is useful and convincing; it serves to identify objects and locate them in space. But to a certain extent, in listening this way, one stops listening to listening itself. Of course, in place of I hear a dog bark one can say, I hear the barking of a dog. But this is in fact a different kind of listening. Yes, the barking belongs to the dog. It is one aspect of his presence in space. But the characteristic feature of voices, tones, sounds, is that they can be separated from their sources, or rather, they detach themselves, fill the space and wander through it much in the manner of objects. Perceiving acoustic phenomena in this way, that is, as themselves, rather than as expressions of something, demands a change of attitude. We, the citizens of the twentieth century, have, perhaps as a direct result of using acoustic mechanisms, especially through headphone listening, begun to practice this attitude. It is embarrassing for many of us to discover only in this way that acoustic spaces are something unto themselves, that they are independent of things and not identical with them. Of course acoustic space is also experienced in real space. We are talking, however, about bodily space, the space of my own presence, which is pitched out around me by my physical sensations. In a listening which does not leap over tones, voices, sounds to the sources where they might stem



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from, listeners will sense tones, voices, sounds as modifications of their own space of being. Human beings who listen in this way are dangerously open; they release themselves into the world and can therefore be struck by acoustic events. Lovely tunes can lead them astray, thunderclaps can shatter them, scratching noises can threaten them, a cutting tone can damage them. Listening is a being-beside-yourself (*Außer-sich-sein*); it can for this reason be the joyful experience of discovering oneself to be alive.

These things must be experienced; they cannot be transmitted verbally. But there is a good analogy, that might clarify what is meant. Descartes, a fundamentally mechanistic philosopher, already asked the question: where does someone who feels out a stone with a stick experience this stone to be? His answer was, like Gestalt psychology's answer in the twentieth century, that one experiences the stone to be where it is. This has also been described as the embodiment of the stick, and this is not at all a faulty label. However, strictly speaking, the issue here is the expansion of corporeal space. It is even more appropriate to say that when we are listening and not simply tapping around with a stick, we are outside ourselves. And this being which is outside itself does not encounter voices, tones, sounds, out there, but is itself formed, moved, moulded, crenated, cut, lifted, pushed, expanded and constricted by voices, tones, sounds.

The best existing model for describing listening proposes that one inwardly re-enacts that which is heard. This is the resonance model for listening, and it was rendered convincing by the common experience that when one hears a melody one, to a certain extent, sings along with it inwardly. But this model suffers from the false topology of an Inside and an Outside, and quickly reaches its apogee when one thinks of the complexity and quintessential foreignness of that which is heard. No one sings along with the whirring, trilling, whistling, whining, buzzing, droning of an engine room. One doesn't hear these sounds inside oneself at all, but rather exactly outside. What resonates and delivers the "inside" wherein the voices, tones, sounds and noises take place is the corporeal space itself. This experience rarely occurs in pure form because to a certain extent it forms the very ground from which we listen: the "I" does not normally lose itself in the listening act, but protects itself by distancing the voices, tones and sounds, relegating them back to their sources, and thus leaping over the experience of the In-between.

5. Conclusion

We should end by returning to the beginning, which, after all, consisted of an ecological question. The development of music in the twentieth century has led to a state of affairs where music itself became a component of the environment. Music's functionalization as an aspect of interior design—one speaks of acoustic furniture—has reduced it, to a certain degree, to the status of atmosphere. On the other hand, avant-garde music coming from one side, and the World Soundscape Project arriving from the other, have elevated acoustic atmospheres to the status of musical essences. In this way, the voices of things and the concert of the world have experienced growing attention, and listening has gained strong currency as a valued life component. When one takes all of this into account, Ecological Aesthetics in the acoustic realm is not an embellishment of natural science-based Ecology, but acquires its own *métier*, namely, the recognition, the maintenance and the structuring of acoustic space. The question of what constitutes a humane environment becomes a question inquiring after the character of acoustic atmospheres. And here too it is a matter of overcoming the narrow natural

science based approach which remains at best capable of grasping noise as a function of decibels, and to ask instead what type of acoustic character the spaces in which we live should have.

Born in 1937, Gernot Böhme studied mathematics, physics and philosophy. He got his Ph.D. from the University of Hamburg, his habilitation in philosophy at the University of Munich, 1972. Since 1977 he has been Professor of Philosophy at the Technical University of Darmstadt and Speaker of the Graduate College "Technisierung und Gesellschaft." His main fields of research are: Plato, Kant, Ethics, Aesthetics, Philosophical Anthropology, Science Studies.

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Notes

- 1 Rachel Carson, *Der stumme Frühling* (Silent Spring). München: Biederstein 1962.
- 2 Gernot Böhme, *Für eine ökologische Naturästhetik*. Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp 1989, 3. Aufl. 1999.
- 3 It becomes evident that examples taken specifically from the field of design form the centre of this field. G. Böhme, *Kants Kritik der Urteilskraft in neuer Sicht*. Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp 1999.
- 4 Gernot Böhme, *Atmosphäre. Essays zur neuen Ästhetik*. Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp 1995, 2. Aufl. 1997. Michael Hauskeller, *Atmosphären erleben. Philosophische Untersuchungen zur Sinneswahrnehmung*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag 1995.
- 5 Gernot Böhme, *Anmutungen. Über das Atmosphärische*. Ostfildern: edition tertium 1998.
- 6 For more on this term, see G. Böhme, *Atmosphäre*, Teil III, see footnote 4.
- 7 G. Böhme, "Kommunikative Atmosphären". In: T. Arncken, D. Rapp & H.-C. Zehnter (Hrg.), *Eine Rose für Jochen Bockemühl, Sondernummer der Elemente der Naturwissenschaft*, Dürna: Kooperative 1999. For the other themes see *Anmutungen*, see footnote 5.
- 8 A newer example of R. Murray Schafer's extensive writings is, *Voices of Tyranny—Temples of Silence*, Indian River, Ontario: Arcana Edition 1993.
- 9 A key work on this question is: Hildegard Westerkamp, "Listening and Soundmaking: A Study of Music-as-Environment". In: Dan Lander, Micah Lescier (eds.), *Sound by Artists*, Toronto: Art Metropole 1990, 227-234.
- 10 Thierry de Duve, *Kant after Duchamp*, Cambridge/Mass.: MIT 1996.
- 11 Platon, *Politeia*, VII, 531a.
- 12 I. Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, 3. Originalausgabe 1799, 219.

The following articles by Gernot Böhme can be found in English translation:

- "Atmosphere as the Fundamental Concept of a New Aesthetics." In: *Theses Eleven* No 36, 1993, 113-126 (key article of *Atmosphäre*, see footnote 4).
- "An Aesthetic Theory of Nature." In: *Theses Eleven*, No 32, 1992, 90-102 (article from *Natürlich Natur*, Frankfurt/M. 1992).
- "The Atmosphere of a City." In: *Issues in Contemporary Culture and Aesthetics* (Maastricht), no. 7, 1998, 5-13 (article from *Anmutungen*, see footnote 5).
- "Aesthetic Knowledge of Nature." In: *Issues in Contemporary Culture and Aesthetics* (Maastricht), no 5, 27-37 (article from *Atmosphäre*, see footnote 4).

From the Isles of Lewis and Harris

by Gregg Wagstaff

Documenting the social, cultural and natural make-up of the islands through their soundscape.

As part of the Touring Exhibition of Sound Environments (TESE)
<http://www.imaging.dundee.ac.uk/tese>

I am writing this from the Isle of Harris in Scotland's remote Western Isles on August 3, 1999. To get here I had to drive five hours from my home in Fife on the east coast, across the Isle of Skye to Uig, where a further one and three-quarter hour ferry journey lands you in Tarbert. The Isles of Harris and Lewis (to the North) are in fact one land mass; Lewis is the largest, containing greater concentrations of population and is relatively flat compared to Harris's mountainous borders. With each visit to these islands, I have grown to further appreciate this landscape and its soundscape.

Large areas of relative quiet dominate this geography: sparsely populated places of heather, peat, rock and many small lochs creating a drowned or puddled landscape. Human life exists, seemingly haphazardly, on or around these margins. People's dependence upon the fragile, changing economies that provide them with a 'living', seems all the more fragile here; the fish farms are worried about disease spreading to these waters; sheep farming is becoming less profitable, especially for the small scale crofters, not aided, it seems, by EU directives; during the summer months Tourism would appear to be doing a flourishing trade in the Calanais Standing Stones, B&Bs, and Harris Tweed. However, the islands' weather, their remoteness, and the expense of getting to and from here, will, I hope, guard it from the environmental and cultural ravaging that occurs in other climates. A result of all this socio/ecological/economic unfolding, is the soundscape. The soundscape is in fact interwoven, a direct result (an indicator even) of such socio-ecological change. (To a lesser degree it is even responsible for such changes: some species of birds are sensitive to sonic alterations of their habitat).

I find that my listening on Harris and Lewis becomes more acute. Silences come to delineate the sounds, rather than the sounds delineating the silence. When the wind dies and the seas are calm, I have never heard a quieter environment: I can sit for several minutes with nothing but the sounds of my own making. It is especially quiet on Sundays—few people venture out, what little traffic there is restricted to church goers: sitting here in Meavag, there is a short peak of cars ten minutes before and after the morning and evening services (around 11 am and 7 pm), one service usually in English, the other in Gaelic. I was told that, to the Gaelic ear, there are possibly around twenty distinguishable variations of the Gaelic dialect, dependant on what part of the island you come from. But it is the wind, sea and rain which are the *keynote* sounds of this environment. Water seeps, trickles and falls through peat and over rock, small windblown waves lap rapidly against the edges of small inland lochans, whilst larger waves crash on the shell sand beaches.

Several locals have commented on the different sounds of the waves upon the coastline miles away, especially in the crisp winter months when sound carries further through the cooler air. Away

from this edge, the relative silence heightens your awareness of those sounds which do occur. A German woman who has been resident on Harris for some years, told me that she could hear the sound of beetles walking on the walls of her room! Another lady with whom we were staying commented that she would know which of her neighbours was passing her door by the sound of their footsteps.

It is here on Harris and Lewis that I am working alongside Kendall Wrightson and Helen Sloan on a Touring Exhibition of Sound Environments (TESE). This project aims to describe and document the social, cultural and natural make up of the islands through their soundscape. Rather than getting too involved with a project description here, those interested please visit www.imaging.dundee.ac.uk/tese. I would rather use TESE as a way of highlighting some of the issues related to soundscape studies and acoustic ecology.

One approach TESE has had to recording the life of Harris and Lewis is to involve the public in this process. One way has been to ask people to nominate sounds which they like/dislike, sounds which they would wish to conserve for future generations, sounds which are associated with valuable cultural or economic events, sounds particular to their environment. In short, to build up a list of publicly recognised *soundmarks* across the island. We are also conducting interviews, devising listening walks and sound recording workshops. A CD soundscape library will be given to the main Stornoway Library and a sound exhibition will take place in the Museum November 2000.

One of the main reasons for doing this as far as I am concerned is, as I have said earlier, that the soundscape is an indicator of social and environmental change. I see TESE as not just documenting this change but also examining the causal processes behind the change. Asking people to listen, to make qualitative judgements about the sounds around them, in an indirect manner asks them to engage with social, economic and political concerns. In some way I think I am using sound now as a way for people to re-enter these arenas. This is my personal interpretation and application of an Acoustic Ecology. I am not sure that there is such a thing as an "ecological sound" or soundscape—only that there are potentially ecological social structures and processes which, naturally give rise to various soundscapes.

This text originally appeared as part of an online debate facilitated by www.sensesonic.com. See also: www.futuresonic.com/sensesonic.html#Anchor-49575

Gregg Wagstaff is an Artist working primarily in sound and installation. He has also produced works for video and radio, for audiences in the UK, Europe, and Canada. More recently, his interests have moved towards regionally and community specific projects such as the Touring Exhibition of Sound Environments (TESE). Currently Gregg is undertaking a part-time Musicological Ph.D. into Sound, Art & the Environment, and has presented and published papers on this subject. He recently co-founded the UK and Ireland Soundscape Community (UKISC) and is the UKISC representative on the board of the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology. He is currently self employed as a freelance artist/researcher. [please see p. 25 for more Current Research]



Learning is Living

Acoustic Ecology as Pedagogical Ground A Report on Experience

by Lena Dietze

Translated from the German by Norbert Ruebsaat

Presented at the Symposium: "Acoustic Ecology and Ecological Aesthetics," June 6, 1999 as part of the larger festival Stadtstimmen (City Voices), conceptualized by Sabine Breitsameter and organized by the city of Wiesbaden, Germany, March to October 1999.

“Every place has its own sound. Do you hear it?” We wrote this on the handouts we distributed when we mounted our mass soundwalk in Wiesbaden on April 21, 1999. We were participating in an Action to accompany the opening of the project, *City Voices*. Two hundred students walked through Wiesbaden and did not talk, but only listened. And it is astonishing to hear a grade 9 boy, Joe, who at the beginning was sceptical of the action, say: “I heard sounds I had never heard before, car noises, for example, or bird songs. I paid special attention to certain things. I thought it was awesome. I never experienced anything like this before.”

Of course we are surrounded by traffic noise every day. We also take birdsong for granted. But we are not aware of these. And on the day of the Action, Joe and many others became conscious. They suddenly heard things in a different way.

My intent is to show, using a few examples from my teaching practice, what I do with students from my base in the area of acoustic ecology, what I consider important, why I consider it important, and what goals I have in mind. I will not speak about schools in general, but will limit myself to a few concrete projects connected with *City Voices: Soundscape Wiesbaden*.

Murray Schafer gave us the pedagogical groundwork for acoustic ecology more than thirty years ago. He is the soundscape pioneer and our work builds on his. Back then he wrote of the soundscape: “It is a word I invented. It describes all the sound events of which a landscape, a place, a space is composed - the entire acoustic environment of our daily lives, wherever we may be, at home, at work, indoors, outdoors.”

He developed *Ear Cleaning* and, in *A Sound Education* he published one hundred listening and soundmaking exercises which form a basis for our current sound ecology work with students.

Landscape as Soundscape

Acoustic ecology is concerned with listening. Only the person who listens hears. And if I sensitize myself to listening and open my ears to the sounds of the environment, I pay attention also to the unique characteristics of soundscapes. Over time, I hear more and more and develop the ability to discriminate. I notice what I find pleasant or unpleasant, what creates stress and what makes me happy. In school my primary concern is not to turn students immediately into environmentalists, but to open their ears and simply listen.

Soundscapes are everywhere, in our immediate surroundings, in our homes, on the street, in cities, in the countryside, by the sea, in the water, in the forest, in San Francisco, in Vancouver, on an island in the North Sea, or in Wiesbaden.

It is useful now and again to experience soundscapes as if they were concerts. We naturally go to a concert, sit down, and listen. If we go into nature or into any environment as if to a concert, new worlds of listening open up. When one actually listens consciously, pauses, and listens to the voice of a robin or to the rustling of wind in a poplar tree this becomes a special experience. It becomes an inner listening experience like a concert. A student writes: “These conscious listening experiences are the keys to one’s own *inner* soundscapes” (Fedor, grade 10).

Soundwalking

On a soundwalk one doesn’t walk and talk, one walks and listens. The instruction about not talking is important for two reasons. The first is clear: when you talk you are not listening. Secondly, when you talk you are already talking-over, talking-about. You are evaluating and interpreting. And this is precisely what should not happen. One should just listen and experience.

Soundwalks can be taken in groups or alone. There is also the classical form, where one goes in pairs, with one partner blindfolded while the other leads. Not seeing always intensifies the listening experience. So even on a soundwalk without a blindfold, it makes sense to close ones eyes occasionally and just listen.

When we had the chance to take part, as a school, in the project *City Voices*, the idea was to use *International Noise Awareness Day*, April 21, 1999, to draw special attention to the activity of listening. We discussed a number of possibilities beforehand: for example that the students might walk, in star formation, from different points into the centre of the city where they would perform sound events. We also had the idea of using a performance to draw attention to the terrible leaf blowers which have replaced the quiet raking of leaves in our cities. Another idea was to have students perform an event in which, carrying ghetto blasters on their shoulders, they would sweep past in a kind of technocloud—which is also a part of our soundscape and of our youth culture, just as are the cars which drive past like a soundcloud filled with technomusic.

It seemed to make little sense, however, to add more noise to the already noisy city. We didn’t want to make noise in order to make passersby listen. Instead, we wondered how we might use an action to make people aware of the voices, sounds and noises in our environment. And for me that meant walking-and-listening, using get-up and self-presentation to bring the message to others’ awareness. The then cultural officer, Reinhard Strömer, liked the idea. So the artist and musician Dirk Marwedel of the Wiesbadener Group

ARTist, and I as sound pedagogue, were able to act under the auspices of the Cultural Office. Not noise, but awareness was the point of the action: sensitivity training for the ear.

We were able to involve four schools in the project: the Helene-Lange-School (integrated High School) at which I teach, and the Elly-Heuß, Dilthey and Gutenberg Schools (Gymnasias). In the latter it was music teachers with their grade eight, nine and ten students who participated. The collaboration between the different schools was enjoyed by all, and motivated and inspired us.

The preparatory phase was the most important part. It produced the actual pedagogical effect. We took initial soundwalks with the participating groups of students and later discussed our experiences.

These conversations about what we had heard intensified our awareness of the sound environment. Many students said later that the small group soundwalks were more intense. They listened more and heard more—whereas during the larger Action everyone was busy with the organization, the process, the timetable, and attention to proper staging. And of course one can't be as quiet in a group of 200 students as one can in the smaller group. The message nevertheless got across.

Of course at the beginning the students felt odd to be walking around doing nothing but listening. "What's this about," they asked. "We listen all the time. What's so special about it?" A few teachers and students found it so useless and silly that they refused from the start to participate. As we were planning our first soundwalk one student said: "When we started walking last Tuesday I felt pretty stupid. I wondered if it could still be called normal to walk around the city just listening to sounds. People will think you're crazy, I thought. But then when we got to the city it wasn't so bad" (Cristina, Grade 9).

On *International Noise Awareness Day* we were in the downtown area with 200 students. The Action was called *Wiesbaden Er-hören* (Listening to Wiesbaden)—a staged soundwalk. The students were experiencing things and tried also, by way of this Action, to get passersby and motorists to become aware of listening.

Dress and presentation on the students' part were important aspects of the performance. Everyone wore black T-shirts. On the back of each was a big white ear. And on the front each person had a letter. When students came together in groups, words thus materialized, all of which had to do with listening: "listen," in different languages: "Hören," "Écouter," "Dinlemek," and "Audio," "Sound," "Klang," "Noise," "Lärm." A large group spelled out the day's theme: "International Noise Awareness Day."

Our soundwalk began in the Kurpark am Warmen Damm (City

Park). The park as soundscape: birdsong, water fountains and car noise in the background. Wilhelm Street, Wiesbaden's showpiece shopping street, which is also very noisy, was the scene of the first Action: 200 students stood in a long line close to the car traffic silently in word-groups and did nothing but listen for five minutes. At the half-way point they all turned like sandwichboard people and the two hundred ears could be seen from the other side.

Later on the market square they were able to listen to the typical market sounds, and shortly before noon they heard one of Wiesbaden's soundmarks, the carillon of the market church, played, on that day, live. The students stood in word-groups, saying nothing, only listening.



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At the corner of Burg Street and An den Quellen the traffic was again very loud. And at the end everyone gathered at the Spa Hotel and stood in the shape of a large ear around the spa fountain and listened for five minutes. Many found this the best part of the Action. They liked the peacefulness and the fact they could look at each other.

Almost all passersby reacted positively and with interest. Many were initially

annoyed, asked questions, and upon having the proceedings explained to them, thought what the students were doing was a good thing.

Students' experiences and responses to the Action:

"I didn't think we 200 students would be able to walk more or less quietly through the city and become aware of the sounds.

It was the first time I found traffic noise annoying.

It was the first time I really listened to the sounds of the market-place.

I thought all the black T-shirts were a great sight" (Katharina, Grade 8).

"Today I became aware of city sounds for the first time. I never noticed them before. I discovered by listening that the noise in Wiesbaden is caused mainly by automobiles. My experience was that one should walk through the city with open ears more often.... The highlight of the Action for me was when at the end on the bowling green all the students from the different schools applauded.... All in all I thought the Day of Action was lots of fun, and I found it interesting to walk through Wiesbaden with a different orientation, that is, listening" (Julia, Grade 8).

"I could take in the sounds of Wiesbaden better and more intensively on this walk because I had an occasion to listen.... When I walk through Wiesbaden normally, I don't think very much about the traffic noise. On this walk, though, I became conscious that the



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traffic noise was extreme in comparison to the quiet in the Park, where you hear almost only birds.... I especially liked the one moment during the Action when it was totally quiet. This was when we were on the grass by the Spa hotel. Only two people were talking into what was actually silence” (Sophia, Grade 8).

What was meaningful for the participants and constituted the wider effect was that listening was moved into the foreground of consciousness.

School as Acoustic Space

This is another *City Voices* project. Through a variety of workshops elementary school pupils explore the sounds of their environment and play with the sounds to create a new soundworld. I am planning a soundwalk through the school grounds with the Grade Three class at Nordenstadt Elementary School. We collect sounds, listen and try things out. Then we will take a classical soundwalk with blindfolds: ten children will take visitors to ten different “sound stations” in the school yard. The sounds and noises will be produced by the rest of the class. There will be sounds of drainpipes, of the Ocean Drum, a gong, water sounds and noises made with plastic, paper, glass and metal. Each child brought one sound to a recent meeting. Wearing blindfolds, they took turns listening to the individual sounds. What was impressive was the variety of sounds and also the quiet and concentration experienced by the class.

It is important, during listening exercises, to be actively involved and to make sounds. The movement of the Ocean Drum, of water, or that of the drain pipe needs to be experimented with and experienced. This produces a feeling of coordination between movement and sound. It’s also fun for the children. They can produce special sounds with simple implements. And everything makes sound!

To lead a soundwalk has its pleasures, too. The child who is leading pays particular attention to that which is to be listened to, and leads the blindfolded partner carefully forward. The sound stands at the centre. The leader is curious and inwardly present and awake. Murray Schafer made this point in 1967: “As a practising musician I have come to realize that one learns about sound only by making sound, about music only by making music.”

The *City Voices* project of the Wiesbaden Cultural Planning Office has been profoundly motivating. The Cultural Office is to be congratulated for its support. Listening, which has been largely marginalized by overall media developments, achieves official recognition and support. Many students have trouble with listening. They are restless and easily distracted. Involving them in environ-

mental sounds and in soundscapes allows them completely unaccustomed access to the activity of listening, access that moves not through language or assignments, but through personal discovery. Listening as life enrichment.



Lena Dietze is a teacher and media/soundpedagogue in Wiesbaden, Germany and focusses on radio work in schools. Since 1975 she has been the co-ordinator of “Radio and Schools,” a collaborative project between the Hessian Broadcasting Corporation, Frankfurt/Main and schools. She has conducted a number of radio projects with students as well as in teacher training contexts. She focusses on action and production-oriented engagement with the medium to promote both listening and soundmaking.

English translation © January 2000, Norbert Ruebsaat.

Graphic of Ear: Dirk Marwedel

Notes

- 1 R. Murray Schafer as quoted in *GEO* 7/98, p. 82.
- 2 Ibid., *Ear Cleaning*. Toronto: Berandol Music Limited, 1967.
- 3 Ibid., *A Sound Education—100 Exercises in Listening and Sound-Making*. Indian River: Arcana Editions, 1992.
- 4 Ibid., *Ear Cleaning*. Toronto: Berandol Music Limited, 1967, p. 1.



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Associative Listening

by Darren Copeland

Written for *The International Congress on Acoustic Ecology in Paris, France, Summer 1997*. Revised for *Soundscape, February 2000*.

People can shape ideas about the world and themselves just by listening to the associations triggered by sounds. Here is one example:

Is it true that the blind live in their bodies rather than in the world? I am aware of my body just as I am aware of the rain. My body is similarly made up of many patterns, many different regularities and irregularities, extended in space from down there to up here. These dimensions and details reveal themselves more and more as I concentrate my attention upon them. Nothing corresponds visually to this realization. Instead of having an image of my body, as being in what we call the “human form,” I apprehend it now as these arrangements of sensitivities, a conscious space comparable to the patterns of falling rain....¹

This passage comes from John Hull’s autobiography *Touching the Rock*, which is a work that has often been cited in soundscape research since its initial publication about ten years ago. The entire book is derived from diary entries recorded into a Dictaphone: a process that helped Hull understand the finality of total blindness after over twenty years of gradual vision loss caused by cataracts. Not surprisingly, his anecdotes in *Touching the Rock* revolve around comparisons of what life is for sighted people to what it is for blind people.

Across The Acoustic Horizon

I had the opportunity of interviewing John Hull in Birmingham, England in July of 1997. Four excerpts from the interview provide the basis for investigating listening without sight. Like in *Touching the Rock*, Hull often compares the experience of life from different sensory modalities. The concept of horizon, for example, varies according to the particular senses available to an individual.

Now I would suppose that if a person was both blind and profoundly deaf, the perimeter of experience is the skin. You are aware of what your body is touching, and you’re aware of fragrances, breezes, but no further. If it doesn’t impinge upon your body in some way, then it doesn’t exist for you.

What sound does, is to create an environment. That’s why I say in one of my books thunder is like scratching. Why is thunder like scratching? Because it sets a perimeter. Your sensations are bounded by skin, and your world is bounded by thunder. Now if you go up, there is nothing up at all. You’re just in a boundless infinity of space. As I suppose a sighted person could readily imagine. If you imagine yourself plunged into total total darkness: no stars, no clouds, no street lamps. What is around you? Where are you? You’ve got no environment. But sound gives you that sort of horizon of place within which you can situate yourself.²

Sound tells the blind person about place. The process of identifying people begins the moment they make a sound; no matter how incidental the sound. The blind listener, on the basis of a half-utterance or a few strides along a path, may need to resolve several questions: Is that a woman or a man? Do I know that person? Is he or she coming towards me? Could I be standing in his or her way? And so on.

The acoustic environment, therefore, presents the world as it exists outside of the blind person’s body. The blind listener can determine, for instance, whether he or she is on a main or residential street, simply by paying attention to the patterns in the traffic sounds. A different example of how sounds “photograph” a surrounding space, is a large clock tower at the University of Birmingham. The tolling of that clock sounds different wherever one happens to be on campus. This is due to the physical distance between listener and bell, as well as the varying ratios of direct and reflected sound. It is also due to the types of echoes and reverberations heard in different outdoor spaces, as well as the effects of masking in particular areas. Every time the clock strikes a different person gets a unique acoustic impression of structures normally considered to be immobile and silent. Flash, the bell strikes, and one has an exemplification of how sound expresses both time and space in the same snapshot of existence. Interestingly, the buildings play as much of a role in the composition of this snapshot as the tolling bell.

Blind people compose their image of a particular place on the basis of connecting a series of isolated acoustic (and other non-visual) experiences. Something happens—it seizes attention—and a new feature is added to the overall impression. All of the evidence about a place seems to fall out of the blue as it were. It is as if sounds place photographs in the hands of the blind listener, but often these photos are provided without warning. In the following, John Hull illustrates the immediacy with which experiences often unfold.

I think that for a blind person there is no intermediate space. Things are either there or they’re not there. You know, you are walking along the road and suddenly a tree hits you smack in the face. It wasn’t there a minute ago—now it’s there. Of course that would be unimaginable for a sighted person, who would just never walk straight into a tree.

For sighted people: another person approaches, you see the person a long way away, or coming around the corner. And they get bigger as they approach you, don’t they? And finally, they are within shouting distance. Et cetera, et cetera. At last, you shake hands. None of that intermediate space exists for a blind person. All of a sudden you are grabbed, you are greeted. Somebody calls your name from a few feet away. Now I think that changes the sense of distance and nearness for a blind person.³

The immediacy of the moment, or the lack of intermediate transitions, distinguishes the blind person’s impression of space from that of a sighted person. The dominant feeling is that the world is

full of perpetual motion and change. Sounds are dynamic and transient. They are soft at one moment, and then unexpectedly loud at another. They can lurk in the distance for a while, and then suddenly, brush against you. One can never predict their arrival or departure. Acoustic experience is, therefore, a whirlwind of unannounced change.

Well, pictures of things are static, aren't they? You know, the picture you have of a building; it's just standing there, doesn't move around. Now you never have a sound like that. The sound is always mobile. So in a blind person's world nothing will stand still. Those footprints now, they walk away from us. Now they've stopped, and the person has disappeared. In a sighted person's world things are both mobile and still—a mixture, aren't they? But in a blind person's world everything moves—everything is dynamic. If it stops moving then it is silent. In other words it disappears. To move is to exist.⁴

The dynamic sonic environment can appear, in one moment, like a calm blanket muting every possible murmur. Then without warning, it can shower the blind person with a flood of new distractions that beg for undivided attention. When something moves, or sounds, the blind person must take notice. The object moves and produces a sound. The sound approaches, decays, and drifts away. He or she must keep track of the sound until it dissolves completely into the peaceful silence from which it suddenly arose. Perhaps he or she will take a mental note for future reference. Sounding objects come and go, but invariably some will return again.

Intrusions of noise, therefore, have different repercussions for the blind person. What might merely disturb the peace of those who see and hear can outright stop a blind person in his or her tracks. It's not the annoyance that is at issue here, but the utter seizure of one's individuality and control upon the environment. Perhaps this situation demonstrates a new dimension to the meaning of noise. Noise is more than just unwanted sound. Noise is also the total occupation of one's consciousness from an unexpected, and certainly uninvited, external sound source. The difficulty in this situation, as the next excerpt will illustrate, is that the blind person has no other alternative but to give him or herself up to this overwhelming intrusion. He or she will have to forfeit individual control until the intrusion has unquestionably gone away.

Of course another difference arises out of the fact that you can close your eyes if you don't like that building, but you can't close your ears if you don't like that sound. So, the blind person's environment is irresistible. It bursts in upon one, in a way, which is not true of the sighted person's world. He can control it by shutting his eyes. He can bring it back into focus at will. But the blind person can't do that with the sounds.

... When, for example, I am standing by the bleeped crossing in the Bristol Road, and one of these huge vehicles (or some fire carts) roars past, I can feel that post shaking and the ground is vibrating under my feet. And then it's all gone. But I have to pause there for a moment. If the bleep then sounds I can't instantly cross. I have to somehow gather myself for a moment, and make sure that my senses ... it's just slightly dazing, slightly shocking. It's like a dazzle. It's as if I've been acoustically dazzled. That's what it's like.

And also, the sighted person knows the split second the thing has past, because there is your visual image of it going past. You know it's not going to stop and come back towards

you. But for the blind person, the sound roars to a crescendo, and then it starts to die away—you are pretty sure it's gone, but you wait. For one thing, maybe there is another one coming along behind that was masked. So you have to wait until it is quiet again. Now that's peculiar to a blind person. So it's not just the dazzle. It's the acoustic corruption of the environment, which has to settle, before you feel safe to step out.⁵

Associative Listening

All of these interview excerpts show in different ways the extent to which blind people immerse themselves in their surroundings. The primary channel for this immersion is the ear. Before concluding, I would like to underscore the importance for creatively engaging in the experiences that pass through us acoustically. Hull's sensitivity to environmental sounds show how they can occupy and frame our deeper emotional experiences—no matter how banal, annoying, or beautiful they might seem. For example, a sighted person's memory of friends or family is not always complete with the memory of their looks alone. In fact, the visual memories reside within the actions of those people. These actions usually include sounds. Therefore, the sounds of people and the sounds of environments are containers of experience. Every breath outward swims with the sounds of the environment while every intake of breath drinks in the sounds of the environment. Whether one chooses to admit it or not, sound resides within one's existence and sustains it. Sighted people experience this envelopment all the time. They are just less aware of it than blind people are.

However, despite the pervasive presence of environmental sound in any hearing person's life, there remains a peculiar predicament: people generally lack the means to express themselves creatively through sounds, where sounds become, like visual images, carriers of social meaning. Sounds from the environment remain tucked away in the undervalued realm of functional utility. Only when there is more understanding of the connection between sounds and other levels of experience, for instance emotions, can sounds be attributed with the potential to carry associative properties.

It would be good to forecast the day when the sonic arts could access a symbolic vocabulary composed of sounds from the everyday world. A language that would be sophisticated enough in its specific cultural associations to put it on par with the vocabulary available to the visual arts. However, vocabularies only develop from a culturally motivated intellectual desire. At this time, environmental sounds function as mere indicators of place, and little more. This is especially evident in the treatment of environmental sounds in conventional Hollywood sound design. There they serve as simple statements of fact or as extensions and cushions to visual effects. Rarely do they resonate metaphorically or serve as a thematic thread for the film.

The usage of environmental sound in acousmatic art suffers from a similar single-mindedness, to cite another example. In this case, environmental sounds are exploited only for their latent musical properties. The social baggage these sounds contain, and the metaphors that lurk within them, often remain unchecked in the acousmatic discourse. There are exceptional occasions, where the bags are opened up and the clothes inside are worn. They are occurring more frequently, as the practice of acousmatic art fuses with that of soundscape composition and draws influence from the ground breaking soundscape research of the seventies. However, even in these developments there is still a great deal of ambivalence about what is being said or not said. The composer may have one inter-

pretation, but the listeners may have varying interpretations that agree and disagree with the composer. The medium seems plagued with ambiguity, due perhaps to the absence of a vocabulary to articulate an informed interpretation.

Without conscientious efforts to approach environmental sounds with some imagination and a sensitive social awareness, the language for coping with the everyday sound world will remain crude and ineffectual. If sound shapes people's experience in the world, then a vocabulary for documenting this interrelationship needs to develop. John Hull provides one example. He hears a sound around him. It affects him in a certain way. The impact on his mind leads to a chain of related thoughts and musings. He then records these thoughts into a Dictaphone and later shapes them into a piece of writing. The whole process, in my opinion, is informed by associative listening. On the basis of such listening, can one ever approach the enormous task of reading the acoustic environment as a record of social experience?

Darren Copeland is a soundscape composer living in Toronto. He is active with the Canadian Association for Sound Ecology and New Adventures in Sound, among others.

- 1 John M. Hull: *Touching The Rock*. SPCK, Great Britain, 1990. A new expanded reprint is available under a new title: *On Sight and Insight: a Journey into the World of Blindness*. Oxford: One World Books, 1997. ISBN: 1851 681418.
- 2 Personal interview with John Hull. Recorded on July 7, 1997 at the University of Birmingham in the UK. Special thanks to Joe Anderson for recording production.
- 3-5 Ibid.

Current Research (continued from page 19)

Acoustic Environments in Change: Five Village Soundscapes Revisited

A Research Report by Helmi Järviluoma

One of the sound projects that keeps several Finnish researchers busy during this spring of 2000 is *Acoustic Environments in Change (AEC): Improvement of sustainable qualities and strategies for local action*. AEC is a Europe-wide initiative, coordinated by myself, and involving various researchers studying the relationships between the soundscape, the environment, and its various inhabitants.

The project is based on two earlier important, empirical soundscape studies: *The Vancouver Soundscape* (Schafer et al. 1974) and *Five Village Soundscapes* (Schafer et al. 1977). In 1975, five European villages were visited by a group of Canadian soundscape researchers and members of the "World Soundscape Project" (WSP). The villages were in Brittany (France), Sweden, Scotland, Germany, and Italy. The group looked at—or rather listened to—the interplay between the soundscape of each community and its social, cultural and natural make-up.

The AEC project is re-visiting the villages in 2000 to undertake comparative studies, and at the same time is adding new community based initiatives and approaches to the soundscape. In addition, we will study the acoustic ecology of one Finnish village. The goals of the research are the following:

- 1) to study the changes in the soundscapes of six European villages;
- 2) to develop a rigorous methodology and theory for the analysis of acoustic environments;
- 3) to create concrete means that will help each of the localities in re-designing and re-constructing its soundscapes.

Although it is important that the relevant literature on the topic be analysed, it is more pertinent, that the methods and theories are developed via concrete, on-location soundscape analyses. The participants of the research group come from six European countries, and work in close collaboration with some of the Canadian original members of the World Soundscape Project, who are pioneers in the field. One of our aims is, by using today's knowledge, to develop further the methods, concepts and theories of acoustic ecology that are to be found in the 1977 research report.

The duration of this phase of the research will be approximately three years. It will provide the necessary foundation from which to formulate the concrete means to move toward the objectives mentioned above, in goal three. This phase will involve further cooperation with local architects and community planners, among others, to develop more tools for planning the soundscapes of their communities with a deeper ecological consciousness.

The main field research is proceeding during the spring of 2000. Apart from other visits, each village will be visited at approximately the same time of year as during the earlier Five Village Study: between February 8 and June of 2000.

The Tampere School of Art and Communication is sending environmental and media arts students to each of the villages. Among other things, they are sending sound diaries, pictures and sounds *daily* to our Internet site.

Dr. Helmi Järviluoma, researcher
The Academy of Musicology
University of Turku
20014 Turku, Finland
tel.: +358-2-333 5218
fax: +358-2-333 66 77
E-mail: helmi.jarviluoma@utu.fi
www.6villages.tpu.fi

WFAE—Electronic Contact Information

Website: <http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/WFAEHomePage>
(While you are at the WFAE Website—*Join our Discussion List!*)
WFAE Board: garywf@oregon.uoregon.edu
WFAE additional information: wfae@sfu.ca
Membership Secretary: wfm@sfu.ca
Soundscape—*The Journal of Acoustic Ecology*: jwfae@sfu.ca

Learning to Listen

Children's Books that Guide the Way

By Gary Ferrington

Do you remember those special sounds of childhood? The sound of sleet against the window, birds singing in the tree above your favorite playground swing, or the echo of kids laughing in a vacant urban lot?

Memories from the soundscape of youth often come to us at the most unexpected times, stimulated by a gust of wind, the rustle of leaves, rain on the roof, a distant voice, or the sound of a car. The acoustic environment in which we grow up can leave a lifetime of impressions on us.

Childhood is a time for discovery and learning. It is a good time to sharpen the already eager ears of the young person and to develop a child's often remarkable listening skills in further depth. All sounds have meaning of which we can become conscious through listening. The beeping of a backing truck signals caution. The ringing of a church bell calls the faithful to worship. Someone may perceive whispering sounds in the wind blowing across dried grasses. Or there are sounds that annoy with their loudness, rhythm, or constant excess. All these sounds are part of the acoustic fabric of daily life that transmits meanings to us.

Listening is a skill. When it is learnt early, it can enrich a lifetime of experiences with the natural and urban soundscape environments. Unfortunately, when taught in school, it is usually included in a unit on listening comprehension. Little effort is made to go beyond speech communication into the world of sound when developing children's listening skills.

Enhancing listening skills is something educators and parents can facilitate in children and youth. The following library books encourage exploration and understanding of the soundscape. Check them out and explore listening with a child.

Books for Children

The Listening Walk, by Paul Showers, illustrated by Aliki Brandenberg (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1992). The key to a successful listening walk is to avoid talking to others and to open one's ears to the world of sound. In this book, a young girl takes a listening walk with her father and her dog Major. The setting is urban and the soundscape is rich in sounds. Some sounds are not pleasant at all, such as the sound of cars, construction, and other human noise activities. Others, such as the tapping of Major's toenails on the sidewalk, a sprinkler, and birds in the park are enriching. The book concludes by asking the reader to close the book, close their eyes and just listen. There are always sounds to hear.

Just Listen, by Winifred Morris (New York: Atheneum, 1990). Tara is an urban child surrounded by the constant sounds of the city. Only when she goes to visit her Grandmother does she experience the unique silence of the country. Her grandmother always takes her out for long walks to listen to the natural world. Grandma frequently whispers to Tara, "Now what do you hear?"

One day Tara's grandmother asks her to listen very carefully.

When she does, she hears a very special sound—the unique sound of self. Her grandmother encourages her to always remember that sound, as it is hers and no one else's.

The Magic School Bus, In The Haunted Museum: A Book About Sound, by Linda Beech (New York: Scholastic, 1995). Ms. Frizzle's music class sets out to perform a concert at a "Sound Museum." Along the way the Magic School Bus has a flat tire and the students find themselves in what looks like a haunted house. They explore the house hearing many sounds only to learn that they are in the Sound Museum itself. There are doors that lead to a jungle full of exotic sounds, another door leads to a mountain landscape where echoes can be made. The children learn much about new sounds and how sounds are made. The next day the class performs its concert with a better understanding of the basic principles of acoustics and sound making.

The Noisy Book, by Margaret Wise Brown (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993). Muffin, a very little dog, one day gets a cinder in his eye. The veterinarian puts a bandage around Muffin's eyes and he can no longer see. His ears now become his guide to the world around him. It is an acoustic world of often confusing sounds. When Muffin finally arrives home he hears a sound he cannot identify. It is both familiar and yet strange. He cannot determine what it is. Readers are asked to guess what Muffin might be hearing and the answer is finally revealed at the end of the story.

Noisy and Quiet, by Lorraine Calaora & Christopher Karcovskibagen (Grosset and Dunlap, Inc., 1977). In this book of opposites children learn about quiet and noise. It is a book designed for parents and children to use together. A mother and father can, for example, help a child understand the difference between the soundscape of a desolate beach and of one beaming with activity. The book encourages an awareness of sound in a variety of urban and rural environments. The inside title page is especially effective with a family of rabbits nibbling at the grass along an airport runway with a roaring jet lifting off in the background. There are activities at the end of the book for children to learn about the making of sound and quiet.

The Phantom Tollbooth, by Norton Juster (New York: Random House, 1961). Though not a book specifically about sound the chapter on Dischord and Dynne explores the acoustic soundscape. An excerpt: "Are you a doctor?" asked Milo, trying to feel as well as possible. "I am KAKOFONOUS A. DISCHORD, DOCTOR OF DISSONANCE," roared the man, and, as he spoke, several small explosions and a grinding crash were heard. "What does the 'A' stand for?" stammered the nervous bug, too frightened to move. "AS LOUD AS POSSIBLE," bellowed the doctor, and two screeches and a bump accompanied his response. "Now, step a little closer and stick out your tongues. Just as I suspected," he continued, opening a large dusty book and thumbing through the pages. "You're suffering from a severe lack of noise."

Owl Moon, by Jane Yolen, illustrated by John Schoenherr (New York: Philomel Books, 1987). When you go owling on a bright moonlit night with your father you have to be very quiet. And when you are quiet you listen very carefully to the sounds around you. Somewhere there is a distant train whistle blowing long and low "like a sad, sad

song.” A farm dog answers the train joined by others and then their voices fade. This is a wonderful story of a young girl and her father going out to find owls one night and it suggests that one must be very, very quiet in order to really listen.

The Animal That Drank Up Sound, by William Stafford, illustrated by Debra Frasier, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1992). This story, tells the tale of an animal that needed sound. It moves slowly and silently from high on the mountain to the valley below. One day the animal finally drinks up all the sounds of a wonderful green summer. It takes “ the croak of toads, and all the little, shiny noise grass blades make.” It is, of course, winter in the guise of the snowy white animal that brings a special quiet to the land.

*Gary Ferrington is a Senior Instructor Emeritus, College of Education, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, USA.
E-mail: garywf@oregon.uoregon.edu*

Sound Journals (see also [page 9](#))

The Train

by Rick Verwoerd

I remember once when I was about six years old. I was staying overnight with the rest of my family at my grandparents’ home. A railway line passed the back of the house within a good one hundred metres behind a strip of forest. As I lay in bed, I could hear the deep regular breathing of sleep from my older brother’s side of the room, and the soft murmuring of the adults’ voices downstairs.

It was very relaxing and I was starting to fall asleep when I heard a low, eerie whistle in the distance. The sound filled me with a deep longing to experience the wonderful, far-off places from where the plaintive sound seemed to come. There was another whistle, closer than the first, and I could make out a low, far-off rumble. It seemed as if the train was coming to meet me and carry me off to some magical land beyond the night.

The adults continued to talk downstairs, oblivious to the energy that the approaching train infused into everything in its wake. Louder and louder the rumbling grew, and then the train proclaimed its presence with a mighty four-part blast from its whistle: two chords of medium length followed by a short toot and ending with a long drawn out blast that seemed to envelop me and soak into my very pores.

This great magical beast had travelled through many towns, casting its spell on anyone receptive to it. Now it was my turn. Once the train had come closest, its sound became a steady, thundering rhythm that coalesced into a mystical portal. With the power of the spell, I stepped through the portal into the train and was carried off to the mysterious world of dreams.

This journal entry was written in the context of an assignment for Acoustic Dimensions of Communication, CMNS 259 (the second year Distance Education version of the course—more information on [page 34](#)), through Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C., Canada. Rick’s grandparents lived in Hammond, a town in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia, Canada.



Hildegard Westerkamp

The Baby’s Voice

by Richard Armstrong

Alice Misuka was born on January 1996 in New York. I met her for the first time on the 18th of April in the apartment of her parents in the East Village. While they busied themselves in the kitchen, Alice and I looked at one another, she reclining in a small chair placed upon the bed, me lying beside her, dazed from the twelve hour journey from Paris via Toronto. Then she began to converse with me with the wide range of sounds, to which I at first responded similarly, not the first time I have improvised baby sounds with a real baby. We had something of a conversation, but very soon it became clear that this little girl, who was seeing me, a close family friend, for the first time, wanted *me* to listen to *her*. A torrent of proverbial language ensued, to which I, and by then from the door to the kitchen, attracted by the authority in Alice’s voice, her mother listened. A wonderfully complex story of vowels and exclamations crescendoed to some kind of conclusion, at which point Alice settled back, as if to say: “There, I’ve told you all my news for now.”

Her mother and I marvelled for a moment at what had happened, delighted at being made to listen to a three-month old child by the child herself, and at hearing such meaning in the sounds; we were struck by how normal this felt to us, and not just because her parents and I had an intimate life connection to the voice. It felt normal because Alice’s voice was free, connected and authoritative in the best sense of the word.

Reprinted with permission from *Voice Chronicles, an anti-text-book on the human voice*, by Richard Armstrong. (Soon to be published)

As a pioneer of the extension of the human voice, Richard Armstrong’s unique abilities as a teacher, director and performer have taken him to over 20 countries, and inspired a whole generation of performers and their work. A founding member of the Roy Hart Theatre of France, he divides his time between France, Canada, and the U.S.

Acoustic Snapshots from Soundscapes voor 2000 Amsterdam, November 19-26, 1999

by Helmi Järviuoma



Helmi Järviuoma

Among big cities, Amsterdam is exceptional. At its street corners you hear cars whizzing past, tram noises, people speaking, and chainlocks rattling as employees unlock their company-owned bikes from lamp posts.

This was the very human venue for the *Soundscapes voor 2000* festival. The event brought together composers, researchers, sound designers and interested people from Amsterdam for concerts, seminars and exhibitions. The audiences were united by an interest in the act of listening and in the study of balance and imbalance in acoustic environments. The festival's sponsoring organisations include the Dutch radio station NSP, the Goethe Institut Amsterdam, the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology (WFAE) and the Centre for Electronic Music (CEM).

The two key organizers behind the festival were composer Michael Fahres and Piet Hein van de Poel from NSP, who, back in 1994, collaborated in a project with the Goethe Institut Brasilia, a number of Brazilian composers and composer Hildegard Westerkamp. The result was a CD of soundscape compositions about Brasilia. Ultimately it was this project that led to *Soundscapes voor 2000*.

The organizers wanted the festival to help keep discussions on the theme of soundscapes alive and healthy. The basic concept was to bring together a variety of ideas and themes, as well as different generations. There is no doubt that the festival was successful in attaining these goals. *Soundscapes voor 2000* was approached from a diversity of angles, such as artistic, scientific and design-related. The concert hall de Veevloer, a renovated factory, and

the Rozen theater proved to be excellent venues for the concert and soundscape performances. De Balie cultural centre hosted performances and lectures during the initial weekend of the festival while the Goethe Institut hosted most of the twenty lectures during the week as well as the five morning sessions of the WFAE. The loose structure of the WFAE meetings proved to be a good thing: for once, there was enough time for necessary exploratory discussions on the definition of acoustic ecology. The lectures covered a wide range of soundscape topics and thoughts. I will highlight some of them in the following paragraphs.

The Whiz of a Shuttle and a Laughter

Nigel Frayne from Australia, current Chair of the WFAE Board, introduced us into the realities of his work as a sound designer. He has designed numerous soundscapes for aquariums, zoos and museums all over the world. Many exhibitors and museums today like to incorporate sound in order to bring life to their mute exhibits but often do not realize that successful sound design requires a great deal of research, conceptual and technical preparation as well as knowledge of acoustics and psychology of hearing. But in many cases professional sound designers are called in when it is too late: only to fix acoustic disasters.

Recently Frayne has constructed two very different soundscapes. For the Immigration Museum in Melbourne he worked on a room which contained a loom brought to Australia by its owner from the Balkans. He wanted to create the weaver's presence here, using the subtlest means possible: the whiz of a shuttle, the sound of its falling, a laughter—no more. In contrast, his sound design of the engine room on the *ex-HMAS Vampire*, a decommissioned destroyer turned exhibit at the National Maritime Museum in Sydney, leaves no doubt as to why the engineers invariably lost their hearing.

Heleen Engelen is a designer working for a Dutch home appliances giant. For years she has attempted to interest her employer in improving the *sound* of home appliances. She reports that the results from consumer studies are encouraging: it is not only possible to improve the sound, but sound quality can now be utilised as a marketing tool. Of course, a completely soundless dishwasher is not a good idea, for users would think a silent washer had completed its cycle and would be in danger of opening it by force. According to tests, women

would prefer their cellulite massager to make a musical sound based on the pure fifth, resembling a Tibetan meditative chant. So far, this is too expensive a concept, so women will have to tone their bodies with a gadget that sounds more like a lawn-mower.

Historian Karin Bijsterveld spoke from another angle about the soundscapes in Dutch homes. She has studied noise complaints and the debate about noise bylaws in Rotterdam during the 1930s. According to her, the inhabitants waged "a civilised war against barbaric noise." The city council considered the sound of the gramophone to be a problem of such magnitude that it had to be controlled through the noise bylaws. This was opposed by the councillors representing workers. Their argument was that gramophone music was an inexpensive form of entertainment and served to bring worker families together. These same councillors also questioned why no noise bylaw was proposed for the pianos and trombones of middle-class families! The answer was that trombone players take breaks, while a mechanical instrument never gets tired. In Bijsterveld's opinion this was an instance of class conflict and an attempt to use acoustic issues for gaining power.

Lia Verhaar and Emmy Muller described the Dutch organisation BAM (Bestrijding Akoestische Milieuvuiling), whose purpose is to protect the acoustic environment. The lecture performance by Susanne Bohner and musician Helmut Eisel introduced an interesting project implemented jointly by Germany and Switzerland, in an old industrial building in the Black Forest. The project also involved visual artist Jeroen van Westen and geographer Justin Winkler.

The team arranged a "composition workshop" for the local factory workers—ten men and two women. The participants had no background in music, and they were only linked by having noisy jobs. The purpose was to give people an experience of *beautiful* sounds, since the project leaders consider it useless to preach against noise unless people have positive sound experiences. The sound workshops were successful beyond expectations. A follow-up meeting was organised two weeks after the workshop, and its outcome convinced the project team that the everyday experiential world of the participants had become more varied. "These days, I tend to rattle and knock on things simply to find out what kind of sound they give," reported one of the participants.

Several Internet projects were introduced. Hans Timmermans and Niels Gorisse described the Utrecht School of Arts & Media project called *Distributed Sound Lab*, attempting to create a system whereby several composers can work simultaneously in real time on a piece—thus overcoming the limits of space to some extent. Various radiophonic experiments were also presented. Canadian composer Darren Copeland introduced his *Sound Travels* project and demonstrated the possibilities for expanded and deepened soundscape listening for both listeners and composers through his 8-channel diffusion system.

Sound Travels in Various Directions

German composer Michael Rösenberg spoke about the soundscape as an aesthetic category, starting from Hemingway's observation that we do not deserve to live in this world if we do not perceive it. Rösenberg's work includes an homage to the five bridges in Cologne. An evening concert consisted of Rösenberg's work *Roma*, as well as versions of his piece re-composed by a number of other composers.

There is no doubt, in my opinion, that Rösenberg's work comes under the category of "soundscape composition." The criteria for this category were examined by composer Hildegard Westerkamp, who was a member of the international jury which evaluated the final 24 (out of an initial 85) pieces sent to the soundscape composition contest in the Am-

sterdam festival. Other jurors included Heleen Engelen (Philips design, Groningen, the Netherlands), Klaus Schöning (WDR, Studio Akustische Kunst, Cologne, Germany), Otto Sidharta (Music Information and Education Centre, Jakarta, Indonesia), and Daniel Teruggi (GRM, Paris, France). The jury's task was to select the five best soundscape compositions to be presented during the festival, including the winner.

According to Westerkamp, not all of the works submitted could be described as sound-
scape compositions, although all of them were using environmental sounds as material. Why is this not a sufficient criterion? In Westerkamp's opinion, the sounds in a soundscape composition—even when they have been processed—"must in some way make audible their relationship to their original source, or to a place, time or situation." She states further that a soundscape composition is never an abstraction. It has its roots in the themes of the acoustic environment.

Given the many acoustic conditions that encourage non-listening, a soundscape composition can, according to Westerkamp, create "a strong oppositional place of conscious listening.... It can make use of the schizophonic medium to awaken our curiosity and to create a desire for deeper knowledge and information about our own as well as other places and cultures." Often a soundscape composition rides the edge between "authentic" and taped, original and processed sounds, everyday and composed soundscapes. Some of the jury members felt that these criteria were best met in the composition *Prayer for the Sun before Travelling* by Sybille Pomorin from Germany. This piece was heard during the festival and is included on the festival CD, together with the four other works selected for presentation, by Eric La Casa, Karel von Kleist, Francisco López and Robert Iolini/Phillip Ma.

For the evening concerts the organisers had commissioned soundscape compositions from

to taped and live music as well as Vedic recitation in several locations. This proved to be an impressive experience.

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the premiere of *Far-West News* by Luc Ferrari, but was told that it was one of the pearls among the evening concerts: a remarkable soundscape journey through the Western United States from the sensitive and alert aural perspective of a Parisian travelling in America. Ferrari is an old-timer, active since 1958 in the *Musique Concrète* group and a partner of Pierre Schaeffer. The tops of soundscape composition were also represented by the enchanting *From the India Sound Journal* by Hildegard Westerkamp, *Jardins suspendus* by Pierre Mariétan, and *Winter Diary* by R. Murray Schafer in collaboration with Claude Schryer, who produced an ear-opening exploration of northern space and cold in the Canadian province of Manitoba.

De Veemvloer housed the exhibition *Acoustic Architecture/Architectural Acoustics*, which consisted of small pieces by artists and architects exploring acoustic space. One of the most memorable pieces was the auditory amphitheatre "Hear or Imagine and Hear" by Jean van Wijk: the visitor sees the stage of an amphitheatre as a gigantic eardrum, and the eardrum as a miniature theatre with the world on its stage. The piece was extremely thought-provoking and its interesting visual form resembled a wooden jigsaw puzzle.

The Internet exhibitions introduced during the festival are still accessible. In collaboration with the Dutch Audiovisual Archives (NAA), an exhibition called *Vanished Sounds* was set up to feature 150 sounds which can no longer be heard in Holland. The exhibition can be found at <www.soundscape.nl>. Wolfgang Neuhaus introduced the Worldtune project, whose address is <www.worldtune.com>. Here, all visitors can have a go at influencing soundscapes around the world. A do-it-yourself loudspeaker is set up in five different countries with the help of local adult education centres, one of them in Saarijärvi, Finland. On the Internet, anyone can select any sound to be audible in Saarijärvi, or maybe in a school yard in Denmark at that very moment.

Dr. Helmi Järviuoma is a researcher at the Academy of Musicology. She currently leads the Europe-wide research project Acoustic Environments in Change: Five Village Soundscapes Revisited (please see page 25 for details).



Helmi Järviuoma

both rising young talents and recognised masters. Among the young were Diane Donck and Pascal Plantinga. The latter had recorded the sounds of Schiphol airport. In addition, the composer went mercilessly at his synthesiser and rounded off the concert by offering sushi. If the purpose of the performance was to arouse strong emotions, it certainly was successful! My personal experience was that of annoyance. During the *Klankhuis* concert by Hans van Zijp (CEM) the audience could move about the Werkgebouw Het Veem and listen

both rising young talents and recognised masters. Among the young were Diane Donck and Pascal Plantinga. The latter had recorded the sounds of Schiphol airport. In addition, the composer went mercilessly at his synthesiser and rounded off the concert by offering sushi. If the purpose of the performance was to arouse strong emotions, it certainly was successful! My personal experience was that of annoyance. During the *Klankhuis* concert by Hans van Zijp (CEM) the audience could move about the Werkgebouw Het Veem and listen

Sounds of the Moon

Killaloe, August 29 to
September 4, 1999.

by Victoria Fenner

In a noisy world, there are few opportunities for audio artists to listen and create without external distractions. There are even fewer opportunities to get together with other artists to listen and create together. *Full Moon Over Killaloe* was a rare opportunity to do both. It was held near Killaloe, Ontario, a Canadian village about two hours car drive west of Ottawa.

The purpose of *Full Moon* was to explore new directions in audio artwork and stimulate production. Through workshops, audio art concerts, group feedback and independent creative time, the participating artists developed and shared new ideas with each other and with our two artists-in-residence, Hildegard Westerkamp and Michael Waterman.

It was held at the Killaloe Fairgrounds, a rustic camping facility in the heart of the Madawaska Valley about two kilometres outside of the village. The experience of living without walls created an artistic edge that could not be replicated in an urban environment. The campgrounds are located in the bottom of a small valley, creating a sense of isolation from the outside world. The hills on all sides create an unusual and interesting acoustic space. Our production studio was a minimal wooden stage, built at the bottom of a hill. Our gear consisted of three computer editing stations, sound boards, lots of speakers and recording equipment. Each participant also brought their own microphones and portable recording gear, which made for an interesting show and tell. I counted at least twelve different kinds of microphones, including a shock mount for a Sennheiser shotgun microphone created from sticks picked up in the forest. A striking contrast between high tech and no tech.

The studio was in constant use. Sounds from the studio (which was also used as a stage) reverberated up the hill, creating interesting possibilities for listening, recording and performing. It was also far enough from the nearest neighbour that we were able to work late into the night without disturbing anyone (except the cows in the next field, who were very confused when we played a recording of cows from another farm bellowing to be milked. Even more confusing, these were morning recordings of cows).



Victoria Fenner

Shock mount for a Sennheiser shotgun microphone made by David Solursh (centre) from branches and rubber bands. Michael Waterman (left) and Hildegard Westerkamp (right).

Some of the participants suggested that living in minimal surroundings forced them to face their artistic experience head-on. We heard no sound other than the natural ones around us and those we created ourselves. No radio, no Internet, no media of any kind, no visitors, except for two scheduled public concerts. The challenge to create was present 24 hours a day for all seven days. We worked hard, rising with the sun and falling back to sleep long after the moon had risen.

Highlights of the week included a two hour soundmaking session in nearby Bonnechere Caves, where no less than four performances happened simultaneously (with interesting echoes and reverberation). Jam sessions were held each night, consisting of sounds made from found objects and recorded sounds from earlier in the day. We began each morning with a soundwalk where we listened, shouted to the hills and created sounds from trees, rocks, leaves and our own footsteps. Impromptu rehearsals of new pieces were held under trees, at the beach, over dinner, around the campfire, set to a constant soundtrack of late August crickets in Ontario.

The value of the experience is summed up by workshop participant Scott Stevens, an artist from Kingston, Ontario: "The experience was exceptional. It brought together people from every level of technical and artistic experience, and a full range of ideas and

concepts. Over the week I couldn't help but be influenced and inspired by the diverse range of work that was presented or being explored... I find it exciting to meet the people with whose work I am somewhat familiar and thus have the chance to bring to light the specific thoughts and techniques behind the artists' work. Hildegard Westerkamp certainly made much more clear to me what can go into the making of a soundscape/electroacoustic piece, with the dissection of one of her compositions (*Sensitive Chaos*). She introduced us to soundwalks as well, which encouraged me to develop more alertness towards all the sound around me. The other participants were also contributing to my awareness of sound and the making of audio art."

Full Moon over Killaloe II will be held this year from August 13-20. For registration details please see information in the announcement section, p. 33).



Hildegard Westerkamp

John Muir in the outdoor studio

Soundwalking Interactions

ISEA, Sao Paulo, August, 1999

by Andra McCartney

This article is based on a presentation on a panel called Sonic Interactions, organized and led by Andrea Polli, at the conference of INVENCAO/ISEA/CAiiA-STAR at the end of August 1999, held at the Itau Cultural in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The presentation included playing excerpts from "Soundwalk in Queen Elizabeth Park" part of Andra McCartney's CD-ROM "Sounding Places."

My artistic practice often begins with soundwalking, which is simply walking through an area, and listening to it. Like many simple experiences, soundwalking is often profound as well. The act of focussing on that moment, that place and time, leads me to hear that place differently, to understand it in new ways. And when I record the sounds of a walk, I am able to reflect on it later, generating new understandings again.

I would like to tell you about a soundwalk that I did in Queen Elizabeth Park, Vancouver, in August of 1997 with Hildegard Westerkamp. She has taught me a lot about how to listen, and often walks with me—on soundwalks, in friendly conversation, sometimes in my dreams. I want to talk about sonic interactions in soundwalks, interactions between recordist and environment during the recording, interactions between sound, text, and image in my compositions that result from those recordings, interactions between artists and audiences all based on listening to the environment.

When I record a soundwalk, I usually wear either a portable digital or analog tape recorder, or a minidisk recorder, depending on what I have available at the time. I sometimes carry a stereo microphone, or attach binaural microphones to my headphones, glasses or clothing. I have an amplified perspective on my surroundings—at once closer to the environment as everything is amplified, but also separated from it as my experience is mediated by the microphone's perspective. My own bodily sounds are more present—I must remain very still to hear what is far away. Where I wear the microphone is important—if I have the binaurals on my headphones, the listening perspective is similar to my own ears, with my breathing sounds particularly present. If I place

the microphone near my belt, it is as if my navel has grown ears, and my footsteps are closer. It is interesting to imagine having ears in other places, and to try to hear from that perspective. My choice of microphone also affects what kind of interaction I have with other people in the place. When I wear the binaurals on my headphones, I resemble some kind of demented cyborg insect: people tend to look away politely, no doubt thinking "poor thing, she must have lost her mind!" When I wear mics elsewhere on my clothing, they are less conspicuous, and people might think that I am listening to music. When I carry a larger stereo microphone in my hand, people often approach me and ask what I am doing, sometimes asking if I am video-taping. It is odd for many people to see a lone audio recorder with a microphone.

In the Queen Elizabeth Park soundwalk, Westerkamp and I were connected by our ears, our headphones both listening to the same recorder. She operated the microphone while I used a camera to record occasional images of the park. I was impressed with how Westerkamp responded to sounds during this walk. The experience of walking with her focused my own responses. When we heard an interesting juxtaposition of sounds, we moved ourselves, and the microphone, to intensify sonic relationships. While saxophone and bongo drums are playing instruments, a microphone is primarily a listening instrument (although it can be used to produce sound using feedback). Whereas a jazz improviser works with melodic and rhythmic lines and harmonic progressions, a soundwalk recordist improvises with perspective, motion, and proximity. In both cases, the partner in improvisation is partly known and partly surprising. In a jazz solo, I hear how intimately the soloist knows the other members of the band, how well she can anticipate their progressions, the energy that is born of new surprises. When I am recording, it is partly how well I know a place that determines the success of a recording. Do I anticipate the weather? Do I know this sound environment well enough to plan my walk at a time of day/week/month/year when particularly interesting sonic juxtapositions may occur? And then there are the surprises: an unusual sonic juxtaposition occurs, out of the blue. Am I listening carefully enough to respond to it? Can I let go of my presuppositions about this place and go with this new situation?

Then there is the point where I have several hours of tape, a few still images, and a plan to make a website or CD ROM. How do I put these together? My response is to return to listening, drawing from the sounds that I hear, dwelling on and with them, often listening to the soundwalk recording for months at a time. If I want to focus on a moment, I can draw the sound out and extend it with time-stretching, then work with the image in a similar way by zooming in on different parts of it. If I want to highlight the changing textures of a sound, I can filter different sonic frequencies, then work with the image in similar ways by focussing on different colours, different visual frequencies.

By focussing on listening, I am going against the grain of most multimedia texts that I have encountered, which explain visual processes in great detail, then speak of "adding sound" at the end.

I worked with the Queen Elizabeth Park soundwalk recording to create both a website, <<http://www.finearts.yorku.ca/andra/soundwalk/qep.html>>, and a gallery installation. I worked with a visual artist on this installation, P. S. Moore, who created drawings, painting, and sculptures in response to listening to the soundwalk—artworks that are engendered by a listening experience. Throughout our creation of a multimedia installation, we listen repeatedly to the sounds of a place, deriving both abstracted sound compositions and abstracted images from interacting with the sonic traces of that place in a particular time. This gives gallery visitors an immersive experience which is based on sound, and brought into the visual and tactile realms. Visitors choose their own route through the place of the soundwalk, all routes leading back to the ear.

Andra McCartney is a multimedia soundscape composer, working with location recordings to create websites, CD-ROMs, tape works and performances. She recently joined the faculty at the Dept. of Communication Studies at Concordia University, in Montreal, Canada, teaching Sound in Media. Her Ph.D. dissertation (York University, 1999) is a CD-ROM about the soundscape works of Vancouver composer Hildegard Westerkamp. Her own sound works are available on CDs produced by the Canadian Electroacoustic Community, Terra Nova, Musicworks and Entartete Kunst, as well as online at: www.finearts.yorku.ca/andra/soundwalk/

Restoring Natural Soundscapes in the USA

Florida: On May 12, 1999 the Department of the Interior, USA, National Park Service announced its intention to plan and develop a Soundscape Management Plan for Biscayne National Park, Florida. The Florida Park is 181,500 acres in size and was created to protect a rare combination of subtropical terrestrial, marine, and amphibious life. The restoration of the natural sound environments within Biscayne National Park has become one of the foremost challenges in the protection of park resources. The current natural ambient soundscape is threatened by the noises of civilization and technological conveniences that increasingly reach the most remote corners of the park. Action on the plan is still pending. Source: Federal Register: May 24, 1999 (Volume 64, Number 99).

Noise from Above

President Clinton has announced new measures to restore "natural quiet" to the Grand Canyon by better managing sight-seeing flights over the National Park. The new rules continue to allow visitors to view the Canyon by air, but limit noise by significantly expanding "flight-free" zones over the Park and by restricting future growth in commercial air tour operations.

Restoring Natural Quiet. In 1996, concerned that noise from overflights was interfering with visitors' enjoyment of Grand Canyon National Park, the President directed the National Park Service and the Federal Aviation Administration to develop a joint strategy for restoring the Park's natural quiet. The new FAA rules reflect close consultation with local businesses, Native American tribes, and the conservation community.

A Peaceful Park Experience. The new rules, which will take effect later this year, establish new and modified air tour routes over and around the Grand Canyon, and require aircraft to increase their maximum flight elevation (altitude) from 14,499 feet to 17,999 feet. The rules also establish an innovative allocation system for limiting air tour flights over the park.

Antiquated Machines

On April 27th, 2000, the National Park Service banned recreational use of snowmobiles at nearly all US national parks, recreational areas and monuments. These vehicles have had "significant adverse environmental effect" on the park system, the agency said.

The ban applies to 10 national parks from Acadia in Maine to Sequoia and Kings Canyon in California. Snowmobiling also no longer will be allowed in 15 national seashores, monuments, parkways, historic sites, recreational areas and scenic trails. Decisions on applying the ban to Yellowstone National Park in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming and to Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming were delayed until November because of continuing snowmobile studies at the two parks.

"The time has come for the National Park Service to pull in its welcome mat for recreational snowmobiling," Assistant Interior Secretary

Donald J. Barry said. He called snowmobiles "noisy, antiquated machines that are no longer welcome in our national parks."

"The snowmobile industry has had many years to clean up their act and they haven't," said Barry.

Listening to the World

World Tune is a web site that allows one to listen to current sounds from all over the world with over 100 trigger events every day. Listeners can contribute environmental sounds from their region by uploading wave/MP3/ or au files. Users can also download environmental sound from an online sound library. *World Tune* is located at: <http://www.worldtune.com>

NPR's Lost and Found Sounds

Beginning January 1, 1999 National Public Radio (USA) has been broadcasting a series of audio documents on its weekly program *Lost and Found Sounds*. This series is comprised of audio recordings made by ordinary individuals throughout the century and include a wide range of topics. One example is, *Obsessed With TV Sound* by Phil Gries who has recorded the sounds of television since 1958 and has captured many historic and now lost moments in the process. Another is *The Man Who Loves Sound*. This program features 85-year old Don Hunter of Eugene, Oregon, who plays us a few of his acoustic "trophies" from a lifetime of recording. Listeners hear a "planer," foghorn and the felling of a Douglas Fir. Almost all of these programs are available on the web and can be found at: <http://www.npr.org/programs/Infsound/>

An Echo at Canada's CBC

Imagine a collection of richly layered stories—evocative and haunting—radio stories that chronicle, reflect and celebrate the changing century—that mark the turn in sound. "Lost and Found Sound" is designed to create a special series of stories that explore Canadian life through sound—endangered sounds, sounds on the verge of extinction, shifting accents, vanishing voices, the merging of languages, the stories of people obsessed by sound, music and the people who make it. (You can link to the relevant [CBC page](#) from the WFAE website.)

National Geographic: Pulse of the Planet

Each weekday, *Pulse of the Planet* provides its listeners with a two-minute sound portrait of Earth, tracking the rhythms of nature and culture worldwide and blending interviews and extraordinary natural sound.

Pulse of the Planet is broadcast over 300 public and commercial stations around the world and on Voice of America and the US Armed Forces Radio Network, and is heard by over a million listeners every day.

Jim Metzner is the executive producer of *Pulse of the Planet*. Programs can be downloaded from the web at: <http://magma.nationalgeographic.com/pulseplanet/>

Cilento Bells Concert

August 2000

The first bells concert in 1999 was preceded by research about the soundscape and iconology of Ancient Cilento, an area situated around a conical mountain. The mountain is characterized by the compact system of small medieval towns arranged like a crown half way up the slopes, and by its unique, geography, history and tradition.

The area was used by the Longobards, who built a fortified citadel on the summit. The Santuario della Madonna della Stella is now on this same site. Old pictures and oral tradition bear witness to the Madonna's popular image as a genuine personification of the mountain named after her. (For example, in a popular song there is an image of the Madonna protecting all the little mountain villages under her mantle.) On Good Friday, confraternities from each of these villages tour the other villages in a circular system and visit their churches. The various costumed processions sing as they wend their way around the mountain. This ancient and intensely fascinating collective ritual has no parallel in the rich religious traditions of the Mediterranean and the rest of Europe.

In day to day life, this profound identification of a single community with a variety of centres, is manifested in the sound of the church bells. They constitute the unifying element for the faithful. As the church bells toll together in belfries all over Mount Stella, they echo each other and become one chorus of many voices. This harmonious clangor, akin to that heard in a city with many churches, envelops the mountain and, like the Madonna's protective mantle, gathers its villages under one blanket of sound.

The first bell concert happened on Good Friday of 1999, with 30 bell towers in the National Park of Cilento, Italy. In this area there is a bigger concentration of bells than in any other rural region: 60 bells in a radius of 6km. After the experience of last year, we are planning for a performance in August 2000 with nearly 50 performers and we are setting up several listening-areas, some with amplification others without. We have analyzed the bell sounds and composed and recorded a space&music piece.

Contact:

Giuseppe Anzani
via Crispi 14
84043 Agropoli
Italy
Phone: +39 974 821066
Fax: +39 974 827227
E-mail: pinoan@oneonline.it

Announcements

**Collectif Environnement Sonore (CES)
Third Annual Meeting: Architecture Music Ecology "Chronicle of that which is heard"
Sion, Valais, Switzerland
(July 19-23, 2000)**

Continuing its line of reflection and experimentation about the relationship of human beings to the sonic environment, the third *Recontres Architecture Musique Écologie* will bring together Murray Schafer and Pierre Mariétan, both of whom are composers and have initiated this research in the mid-sixties. Each will create his own musical event in the context of place and circumstance of the meetings.

Xavier Jaupitre, Mario Zoratto, and Michel Clivaz, architects and educators, will debate the relationship between architecture, urban space, landscape, the environment and health within the sonic dimension.

Jean-Marie Rapin, acoustic engineer, will describe research carried out to master acoustic space and its representation, both in quantifiable and sensorial terms.

This creative approach will be applied concretely through the apprehension and analysis of different sonic situations in the local area (Vallon de Réchy—a rural site, and the urban *sédunoise* region), as well as by the work of students from the course, *Sonic architectural composition*, at the École d'Architecture de Paris La Villette.

Ray Gallon, artist and communicator, and Françoise Kaltemback, philosopher and educator, will generate, at the same time, the provocation, order, and resonance necessary for the dynamics common to the *Recontres*.

Languages employed: French and English

For more information on the complete programme contact:

Institut Universitaire Kurt-Bösch
case postale 4176
CH 1950 Sion 4, Switzerland
tel/fax: +33 (0)1 42 05 09 48
E-mail: culturecom@worldnet.fr

**Full Moon Over Killaloe
A Radio Art Retreat, Killaloe, near Ottawa,
Ontario, Canada (August 13-20, 2000).**

For the second time radio artists and composers will gather in this beautiful spot to explore radio as a creative medium. (See also the report of last year's retreat on [page 30](#)). *Full Moon Over Killaloe* is sponsored by the Canadian Society for Independent Radio Production (CSIRP) with funding generously provided by the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council.

Registration information: contact Victoria Fenner, coordinator
Phone: +1 613 274-4441.
E-mail: fenner@synapse.net

Information about *Full Moon 2000* has been posted in March at www.web.net/csirp. See the *Wavelength* Newsletter, Issue #4 in PDF.

**Collectif Environnement Sonore (CES)
A Shared Listening Journey to South East Asia:
Early 2001**

After the first listening journey, *The Sounds of Displacement*, across France in the summer of 1997, a new project is taking shape: a study journey to Southeast Asia to listen to the sound cultures and practices found there.

The mode of permanent listening, together, in the same place along the same itinerary will be combined with observation of sonic spaces of everyday life in five cities of the region: Bangkok, Vientianne, Hanoi, Saigon and Phnom Penh. This will take place during a 28-30 day journey, using different means of transportation.

The point of departure and the terminus will be Bangkok, at fixed dates. The intermediate stages will allow a bit of spontaneity in planning the length of stay in each place. The group will have freedom of movement so as to better be able to realise the project.

During the preparatory period (about 4 months before the departure), proposals will be made to articulate modes of listening and of recording data during the course of the journey, as a function of the interests expressed by the participants. After returning, each participant will be invited to present a first "expression" resulting from the work done on site, during the fourth annual meeting, *Architecture Music Ecology*, to be held in Switzerland during the summer of 2001.

Provisional dates: first quarter of 2001 (before the monsoon begins)

Number of participants: between 9 and 18
Estimated costs: Around 12 000 French francs, from Bangkok to Bangkok, including transportation, hotel, meals, organisation.
Information and pre-registration: tel/fax: +33 (0)1 42 05 09 48
E-mail: culturecom@worldnet.fr

Definitive registration, in order received, up to the end of September 2000.

**The UK & Ireland Soundscape Community (UKISC) Presents: A multi-disciplinary conference on Acoustic Ecology and Soundscape Studies at Dartington Hall & Dartington College of Arts, Devon, England.
February 16-21, 2001**

There will be an open call for paper presentations, workshops, soundwalks, installations and performances shortly.

For more details contact:
John Levack Drever
Research
Dartington College of Arts
Totnes, Devon
TQ9 6EJ
England

E-mail: j.drever@dartington.ac.uk
<http://www.dartington.ac.uk/>

**Deep Listening Retreat
With Pauline Oliveros and Ione
Sunday July 16 to Saturday July 22, 2000**

At the Haliburton Forest and Wildlife Reserve, a three-hour drive northeast of Toronto, Canada.

The Pauline Oliveros Foundation is pleased to announce the Deep Listening Retreat with Pauline Oliveros (composer and performer) and Ione (author and dream facilitator) in Canada's Haliburton Highlands.

What is Deep Listening?

Deep Listening is a practice created by Pauline Oliveros to enhance her creative work and to engage with others. Deep Listening comes from her childhood fascination with sounds and from her works in concert music with composition, improvisation and electroacoustics. Deep Listening is connecting with the universe of sound and processing what one hears.

The Training

Deep Listening Retreat participants are not required to be musicians. The week-long training is designed to awaken creativity and a sense of well-being through the meditative exploration of listening and sounding, and to learn flexibility in as many forms of listening as possible. Listening and sounding are complemented by gentle creative movement and exercises as well as listening through dreaming.

Registration

The individual cost for the week of workshops, accommodation and vegetarian meals is \$650 Canadian. For more information, please contact the Pauline Oliveros Foundation, Inc. at PO Box 1956, Kingston NY 12402, USA. Tel: (914) 338-5984, Fax: (914) 338-5986, or E-mail: pof@deeplisting.org. Web site: www.deeplisting.org/ or contact: Gayle Young, ridge@vaxxine.com (Tel: 416-977-3546).

Canadian Association for Sound Ecology (CASE) Association Canadienne pour l'Écologie Sonore (ACÉS) c/o Musicworks; 179 Richmond Street West; Toronto, ON; M5V 1V3; (416) 977-3546

Annual General Meeting

Sunday July 2, 2000 at 2 PM
conference room TBA
Sound Escape Conference
Trent University
Peterborough, ON

Please contact Dr. Ellen Waterman by e-mail at ewaterman@trentu.ca or (705) 748-1771 for location information.

Members of the Canadian Association for Sound Ecology (CASE) as well as other interested parties are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting. Only paid members can vote at the meeting.

Resources

Now on CD-ROM! *Handbook for Acoustic Ecology*

by Barry Truax

Cambridge Street Publishing is pleased to announce the publication of a revised and updated CD-ROM version of the original *Handbook for Acoustic Ecology*, edited by Barry Truax, Professor in the Schools of Communication and Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C., Canada.

As with the original 1978 edition, this new version brings together over 500 terms from the fields of acoustics, psychoacoustics, environmental acoustics and noise measurement, electroacoustics, music, linguistics, audiology, and soundscape studies, with extensive cross-references (and now with efficient active links!) and straightforward explanations suitable for the undergraduate or lay person interested in acoustic communication.

Numerous diagrams, charts and tables provide additional reference information. Included for the first time in this edition are 150 sound examples, many of which are drawn from the rich collection of environmental sounds of the World Soundscape Project.

Also new to this edition is a thematic search engine that supplements the conventional alphabetical one. Related terms across various disciplines are brought together under the themes of Vibration and Magnitude, Sound-Medium Interface, Sound-Environment Interaction, Sound-Sound Interaction, as well as the specific themes of Audiology and Hearing Loss, Noise Measurement Systems, Electroacoustic and Tape Studio, Linguistics and Speech Acoustics, and Communications Theory.

The CD-ROM runs on either the Mac under Netscape 3.04 or later, or on the PC under Windows 95 and Netscape 3.2 or later. Installers for these Netscape browsers are included on the CD-ROM. The complete text may also be viewed on-line at the Sonic Research Studio website: www.sfu.ca/sonic-studio/srs.

To order (postpaid Cdn. \$24/US \$18), consult the Truax website: www.sfu.ca/~truax, and click under "Our New CD-ROM."

Acoustic Dimensions of Communication 1 CMNS 259 "OnLine"

Now available through Simon Fraser University Distance Education, during the spring and summer semesters, CMNS 259 "OnLine" is an introduction to the practice of listening and the study of sound. With a primary aim of achieving aural competence, the course looks at the effects of sound in environmental, social, cultural, and behavioural contexts. It also considers the role that acoustic design might play in bringing about improvements to the soundscape.

Course topics include: The Soundscape as a System; The Acoustic Community; Issues of Noise and Sound Pollution; The Voice and Soundmaking; Meanings of Silence; Sound and the Sacred; Acoustic Design; and more.

The Distance Education version of CMNS 259 was written by Susan Frykberg, is supervised by Barry Truax, and is currently being taught and revised by Robert MacNevin.

Contact: For more information, please visit the WFAE website, or contact Robert MacNevin via e-mail at: rdm@sfu.ca

New Books

Environmental Sound Education: A Scientific Approach

Author: Michele Biasutti Ph.D.
La Nuova Italia, 1999. L32,000

The author explores four questions: What importance do sound events have for humans? How articulated is the perception of sound events? What relationships exist between environmental sound events and music? What relevance do sound events have for music education? Specific topics include: biological importance of acoustic perception, perception of sound events in prenatal state, acoustic ecology, effects of sound and music on humans, sound and noise in environmental ecology, research on the perception of sound events, ecological approach to music education, the computer as a didactic medium. This book is currently available only in Italian.

Village Bells: Sound and Meaning in the 19th-Century French Countryside

Author: Alain Corbin
New York: Columbia University Press, 416 pages. 1998. \$35.00 US.

Alain Corbin, French historian of the balance of the senses in 19th century France, moves to the ears as he comprehensively recreates and extends the tradition of campanarian literature, or writing on bells. His book illustrates how the village bells of France can tell an auditory history of the country. It looks at the history of perception and how people in other periods responded to the soundscape of their immediate community.

Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts

Author: Douglas Kahn
Cambridge: MIT Press, 464 pages. 1999. \$28.00 US.

An interdisciplinary history and theory of sound in the avant-garde and experimental arts in Europe and the United States from the late 19th century to the 1960s, with discussions devoted

to Italian Futurist noise, Russian Revolutionary film sound, John Cage, Fluxus, William Burroughs, Antonin Artaud and Michael McClure.

I See a Voice—Deafness: Language, and the Senses

Author: Jonathan Ree
Henry Holt & Company, NY, 1999. \$27.50 US

A philosophical argument on the relationship of voice and writing based on the historical backdrops of graphical and visual speech and deaf culture in the 19th century.

"In this tour de force of historical narrative, Jonathan Ree tells the astonishing story of the plight of the deaf from the sixteenth century to the present. He explores the great debates about deafness and its 'cure,' from the 'oralists' who believed that the deaf should be forced to speak, to the 'gesturalists' who advocated sign-language and even a separate homeland for the deaf. But these debates, as Ree shows in illuminating detail, were distorted by systematic misunderstandings of the nature of language and the five senses. Ree traces the botched attempts to make language visible, and he charts the tortuous progress and final recognition of sign systems as natural languages in their own right."—Source: Book Jacket.

Wired for Sound, A Journey Into Hearing

Author: Beverly Biderman
Trifolium Books Inc., 1998 \$24.95 Cdn.

The experience of sound as an unfolding revelation: Biderman originally wrote *Wired for Sound* to explain the life-changing, exhilarating adventure of learning to hear with a cochlear implant after having been deaf for most of her life.

"Those of us who are hearing tend to take the world of sound for granted. We cannot imagine or recollect hearing sound for the first time, for this early experience is lost in infancy. But it is exactly this—the experience of sound as revelation, that Beverly Biderman evokes."—Oliver Sacks (from the book jacket).

The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor

Author: Bruce R. Smith
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999. \$21.00 US.

"We know how a Shakespeare play sounds when performed today, but what would listeners have heard within the wooden 'O' of the Globe Theater in 1599? What sounds would have filled the air in early modern England, and what would these sounds have meant to people in that largely oral culture?"

"In this ear-opening journey into the sound-worlds of Shakespeare's contemporaries, Bruce

R. Smith explores both the physical aspects of human speech (ears, lungs, tongue) and the surrounding environment (buildings, landscape, climate), as well as social and political structures. Drawing on a staggeringly wide range of evidence, he crafts a historical phenomenology of sound, from reconstructions of the "soundscapes" of city, country, and court to detailed accounts of the acoustic properties of the Globe and Blackfriars theaters and how scripts designed for the two spaces exploited sound very differently." Quoted from University of Chicago Press.

Editors' Note: The following titles were mentioned to us without further information. If you do know these books, we would welcome a short informational paragraph to publish to our readers in the next issue of Soundscape.

Sounds of Our Times: Two Hundred Years of Acoustics, Robert Beyer (Springer-Verlag, 1999).

Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination, Susan Douglas (Times Books, 1999).

Music, Science and Natural Magic in Seventeenth-Century England, Penelope Goul (Yale University Press, 1999).

Listening in Paris: A Cultural History, James Johnson, (University of California Press, 1995).

And Coming Soon

Hearing Things: The Mystic's Ear and the Voices of Reason, (tentative title) Leigh Schmidt, (Harvard University Press, 2000).

A Cultural History of Ventriloquism, Steven Connor (Oxford University Press, 2000).

Earth Ear

Earth Ear is one of today's few international sources for soundscape and acoustic-ecology recordings and related materials. It has recently released three new CDs: a compilation featuring a wide range of leading soundscape producers, an extended work composed by Douglas Quinn that was originally commissioned by Klaus Schöning at the West Deutscher Rundfunk, Cologne, Germany, and a book with CD by David Dunn on listening in nature. Soon to be released is Jason Reinier's *Day of Sound* (the 1996 version) and a new project from David Rothenberg and Douglas Quinn exploring Evan Eisenberg's "earth jazz."

Through Earth Ear's new catalogue, you can order CDs with varying styles of Environmental Sound Compositions—ranging in their approach from documentaries, reconstructions, transformations, through to musical compositions. The catalogue also lists a small number of books about "Soundscape, listening, and lives spent in the pursuit of the sonic muse."

The Earth Ear website provides a number of resources for acoustic ecologists including an Educator's Resource Center linking to online resources related to the global soundscape community.

EarthEar
45 Cougar Canyon
Santa Fe, New Mexico USA 8705
Phone: +1 505 466-1879
Fax: +1 505 466-4930
E-Mail: info@earthhear.com
<http://www.EarthEar.com>

Northern Soundscapes

The Yearbook of Soundscape Studies, *Northern Soundscapes* (Eds. R. Murray Schafer and Helmi Järviluoma) is available for 130 FIM (Finnish Marks). VISA card is perhaps the easiest and cheapest way to pay. You may order from:

University of Tampere
Sales Office
PO Box 617
33101 Tampere
Finland.
E-mail: taju@uta.fi

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Price: SEK 140 (incl. mailing costs) within Europe, SEK 160 (incl. mailing costs) all other countries.

Address: Kungl. Musikaliska Akademien
Blasieholmstorg 8
SE - 111 48 Stockholm, Sweden
Fax +46 8 611 8718
E-Mail: henrik@musakad.se

Francophones - Vue d'en face a book & CD by Yvan LeSoudier

Francophones—Vue d'en face (French-Speaking People—Opposite View) is the latest book & CD published by French writer-photographer-sound recordist Yvan Le Soudier. He takes you on a journey to eight French-speaking countries (Laos, Vietnam, Lebanon, Moldavia, Belgium, Canada [Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec] Congo, and Mauritania), offering wonderful colour and sound images. His colour pictures have a rare quality: just look at them, quietly, deeply, and you will soon hear their soundscapes. His recordings are strangely powerful: just listen to them, quietly, deeply, and you will soon envision landscapes, faces, architectures and skies. If you read French, the two or three line statements written on each page will make you smile very often. Believe-me: this book & CD is pure magic!

Source: Bernard Delage, acoustician & architect, France.

Available from: Yvan Le Soudier, 7 rue Lecarnier 76700 Harfleur, France
phone: +33 2 35 51 63 58 fax: +33 2 35 49 18 34 e-mail: yls@wanadoo.fr

QUOTES

We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak.

Epictetus (AD 55-135)

To be listened to is, generally speaking, a nearly unique experience for most people. It is enormously stimulating. It is small wonder that people who have been demanding all their lives to be heard so often fall speechless when confronted with one who gravely agrees to lend an ear.

Robert C. Murphy

The best way to persuade people is with your ears — by listening to them.

Dean Rusk

Blessed is the man who, having nothing to say, abstains from giving us wordy evidence of the fact.

George Eliot

Careful the things you say, children will listen. Careful the things you do, children will see. And learn. Children may not obey, but children will listen. Children will look to you for which way to turn, to learn what to be. Careful before you say, "Listen to me." Children will listen.

Witch in "Into the Woods" (1990 - TV)

Rabbit hurried on by the edge of the Hundred Acre Wood, feeling more important every minute, and soon he came to the tree where Christopher Robin lived. He knocked at the door, and he called out once or twice, and then he walked back a little way and put his paw up to keep the sun out, and called to the top of the tree, and then he turned all around and shouted "Hallo!" and "I say!" "It's Rabbit!" — but nothing happened. Then he stopped and listened, and everything stopped and listened with him, and the Forest was very lone and still and peaceful in the sunshine, until suddenly a hundred miles above him a lark began to sing.

A. A. Milne

From "Rabbit's Busy Day" in *The House at Pooh Corner*

Above all, I feel that the sounds of this world are so beautiful in themselves that if only we could learn to listen to them properly, cinema would have no need of music at all.

Andrey Tarkovsky

It is the disease of not listening, the malady of not marking, that I am troubled withal.

Shakespeare

Listening is an attitude of the heart, a genuine desire to be with another which both attracts and heals.

J. Isham

Listening is a magnetic and strange thing, a creative force. The friends who listen to us are the ones we move toward. When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand.

Karl Menninger

