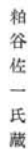


## VOLUME 6 NUMBER 2 | FALL / WINTER 2005

攝州平野大繪圖



*The Journal of Acoustic Ecology*

# Soundscape

*The Journal of Acoustic Ecology*

VOLUME 6 NUMBER 2 | FALL / WINTER 2005

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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 an active engagement in current soundscape issues.

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Harold Clark, Gary Ferrington, Nigel Frayne, Hildegard Westerkamp

## Contributors and

### Contributing Correspondents

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**Layout Design and Prepress:** Andrea Schmidt  
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The World Forum for Acoustic Ecology, founded in 1993, is an international association of affiliated organizations and individuals, who share a common concern for the state of the world's soundscapes. Our members represent a multi-disciplinary spectrum of individuals engaged in the study of the social, cultural, and ecological aspects of the sonic environment.

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**Submissions.** Texts can be submitted for the following sections in the journal: *Feature Articles*; *Current Research*: a section devoted to a summary of current research within the field; *Dialogue*: an opportunity for editorial comment from readers; *Perspectives*: reports of events, conferences, installations etc.; *Sound Journals*: personal reflections on listening to the soundscape; *Soundwalks* from around the world; *Reviews*: of books, CDs, videos, websites, and other media; *Students' and/or Children's Writings*; *Quotes*: sound and listening-related quotations from literature, articles, correspondence, etc.; *Announcements*: of events organized/sponsored by the WFAE Affiliates.

**Please send correspondence and submissions to:** *Soundscape—The Journal of Acoustic Ecology*, School of Communications, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C., V5A 1S6 Canada.

**Email contacts** (please send your email submissions to the relevant address):

[soundscape-editor@wfae.net](mailto:soundscape-editor@wfae.net), [soundscape-news@wfae.net](mailto:soundscape-news@wfae.net), [soundscape-reviews@wfae.net](mailto:soundscape-reviews@wfae.net), [soundscape-technology@wfae.net](mailto:soundscape-technology@wfae.net).

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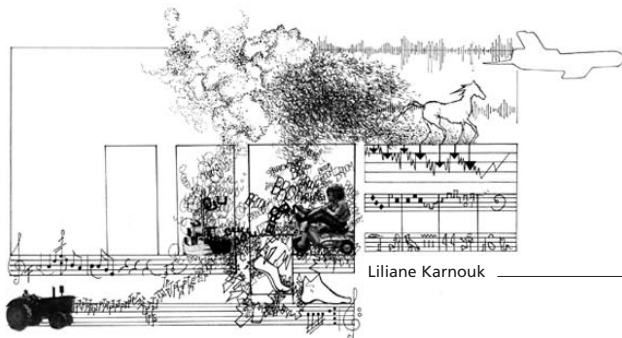
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# Soundscape

## The Journal of Acoustic Ecology

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## Editorial

In the context of the upcoming WFAE 2006 International Conference on Acoustic Ecology in Hirosaki, Japan, November 2—6, 2006, it is with great pleasure that we are presenting you with an issue of *Soundscape* whose focus is on Japan.

Soundscape research and education in Japan began in the second half of the 1980s through the single-handed initiative of Keiko Torigoe, who had come to Canada completing her Master's degree at York University in Toronto researching and writing about the work of the World Soundscape Project at Simon Fraser University. Since her return to Japan she involved herself deeply and continuously in the study of the Japanese soundscape, in educational and soundscape design projects, raising more and more awareness of soundscape studies and acoustic ecology in her own country.

Aside from translating R. Murray Schafer's *The Tuning of the World* (in 1986) and his *Sound Education* (in 1992) into Japanese, as well as introducing some of the WSP's documents to Japan, she laid the ground in her country for the establishment of the Soundscape Association of Japan (SAJ/1993—), which now has 200 members.

We were particularly pleased when the Japanese Association of Sound Ecology (JASE), one of the operating divisions of the SAJ, decided to become an affiliate organisation of the WFAE a few years ago.

We present you with three important articles from Japan, which in our opinion are representative of numerous other examples of soundscape activities, thought and philosophy in this country. In her article *Insights Taken from Three Visited Soundscapes in Japan* Keiko Torigoe reports on her follow-up field research of the original 100 Soundscapes of Japan project, completed in 1997, for which she visited specific localities that had been recommended as significant soundscapes by the local people. Three soundscapes from very different geographical and climatic zones of the country are discussed.

Atsushi Nishimura takes us into the comparatively small area of the historical neighbourhood of Hirano in Osaka, where

he developed the *Hirano Soundscape Museum* between 1998 and 2004 as part of a grass-roots activity for community development. It is not only a fascinating account of the author's own deepening involvement with and understanding of the community as the project progresses, but also a description of how the development of the Hirano Soundscape Museum can, as he says, "potentially provide a conceptual base and some methods and tools for soundscape design."

In the third article of this issue *Acoustic Ecology Considered as a Connotation: Semiotic, Post-Colonial and Educational Views of Soundscape*, Tadahiko Imada intensely examines the usefulness of soundscape studies—"to simply listen to sounds critically and socio-culturally"—as a way to reconnect to Japanese roots in the face of years of much exposure to and imposition of Western thought.

In the *Perspectives* section you will find an interesting variety of reports, which take us to another 100 Soundscapes project, recently conducted in Finland, and modeled on the original Japanese project; to an environmental art project also in Finland; to the Ground Zero memorial in New York and its potentially inappropriate acoustic environment; to the 12<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Sound and Vibration in Lisbon, Portugal, July 2005; and finally into the addictive sonic powers of video games. Check out *Dialogue* and *Reviews* for thought provoking and critical ideas. A soundwalk on the west coast of British Columbia and the sounding words of Japanese haikus are meant to invite you into another atmosphere of listening.

And finally, we want to thank Katharine Norman for her contributions and support in our editorial process during the last few years. She recently decided to leave the editorial committee of *Soundscape* in order to move on to other things. We have very much appreciated her clarity, efficiency, her intelligent and pragmatic, indeed professional approach to the task of editing and we already miss her dearly!

—Hildegard Westerkamp,  
For the Editorial Committee

### NOTE: Announcements,

Resources and Sound Bites can now  
be found in our Online WFAE  
Newsletter:

[www.wfae.net/newsletter](http://www.wfae.net/newsletter)

**Submissions should be sent to:**  
**secretary@wfae.net**



# Report from the Chair

The WFAE is heading into an important period with a number of issues to contemplate, the most important being the future of this journal. As mentioned previously we look forward to welcoming some new affiliate groups in the near future. So it will be an interesting period in the build up to our much anticipated face to face meetings during the conference in Japan in November (see page 20).

After many years of dedicated work producing our journal, the editorial committee members are finally buckling under the effort and have decided to suspend publication while the WFAE board determines a viable future. A number of options are being considered including a rotation of guest editors via the affiliate organisations and reviewing the frequency, printing and distribution methods. We are confident that the journal will continue in some form. However, it may be that there will be no publication for the year 2006. This current volume (Vol. 6) is the second from 2005. The online Newsletter produced by Gary Ferrington and available on the WFAE website will continue to bring you updates and information. (see [www.wfae.net/newsletter](http://www.wfae.net/newsletter))

On May 15 Murray Schafer and I presented the WFAE to an enthusiastic audience at the 12th International Radio Conference in Mexico City. During the presentation, Dr. Lidia Camacho, our kind host and the *Directora General de Radio Educación*, officially launched the *Mexican Forum for Acoustic Ecology*. I look forward to shortly being able to welcome this new organisation to the WFAE as a full affiliate. And I would like to thank Dr. Camacho for her generous hospitality and providing us with a platform to present the WFAE at such an important international event.

So as we move closer towards the conference in Japan there is a mix of excitement and challenge for us to contemplate. The energy for acoustic ecology is clearly growing around the world. New organisations and proposals for symposia and conferences are being discussed. The role played by the WFAE in these activities will be a point of focus for our meetings in Japan and indicates a new level of maturity for the organisation.

**Nigel Frayne**

Chair, WFAE Board  
[chair@wfae.net](mailto:chair@wfae.net)

## WFAE—Electronic Contact Information

[www.wfae.net](http://www.wfae.net)

Home to an extensive collection of Acoustic Ecology related materials—sembled and maintained by Gary Ferrington. (While you are at the WFAE Website—Join our Discussion List!)

WFAE Board: [chair@wfae.net](mailto:chair@wfae.net)  
Secretary: [secretary@wfae.net](mailto:secretary@wfae.net)  
Membership: [membership-secretary@wfae.net](mailto:membership-secretary@wfae.net)  
Website: [webmaster@wfae.net](mailto:webmaster@wfae.net)  
Journal: [soundscape-editor@wfae.net](mailto:soundscape-editor@wfae.net)

# Regional Activity Reports

## United Kingdom and Ireland Soundscape Community (UKISC)

By John Levack Drever

Marking a seismic shift in context from the idyllic, pastoral setting of Dartington, Devon in 2001 to the South East London locale of Goldsmiths College, this past season has seen our second major conference, *Sound Practice 2006*. Generously hosted by Goldsmiths Music Department, a department with a distinguished history of engaging sonic art practice with the environment, the conference tuned into activities, policies and practices that are shaping the current scene in the UK. Giving us a Scandinavian perspective, our keynote speaker Catharina Dyrssen offered us a series of innovative projects that bridge architecture with sound design. This ideally set the scene for a highly interdisciplinary yet bridge building colloquium covering anthropology, education, government sound strategies, documentary film, acoustics, music psychology, phonography and arts practice. As well as papers we experienced a number of high quality concerts and installations including the 16 channel *Sonic Space Ship* of Paul Gillieron, Martyn Ware and Julian Henriques. Like the Dartington conference, it was important to listen beyond the concert hall and step into the real-world. This took the form of a slightly damp early Sunday morning sound walk of Deptford, that was eagerly embraced by a receptive team of listeners. The conference was very well attended with at times around 100 delegates. Thanks go to all the presenters.

*Earshot 5* (UKISC's journal) has been postponed as we put all our energies into the conference. However, we anticipate its completion in the following season. We welcome Ian Stonehouse to the UKISC's management committee.

Contact: [ukisc@wfae.net](mailto:ukisc@wfae.net).

No website yet, but UKISC owns [www.ukisc.org](http://www.ukisc.org). So watch this space.

## Australian Forum for Acoustic Ecology (AFAE)

By Helen Dilkes

AFAE Members joined a number of other enthusiastic soundwalkers on an exploration of west Melbourne's soundscape. This was the second in the AFAE sound event series for the year. The walk took us from the edges of the inner city's Maribyrnong River, over a freeway and railway tracks to a newly created and highly formalised suburb. We passed through the detritus and interstices of old factory sites and returned to the grassed and treed area near the river where we began. Anthony Magen planned and led the soundwalk. Vigorous reflective discussion between participants in a sheoak grassland concluded the morning. The two and a half hour soundwalk provoked much discussion about the detail of the listening experience, the variety of places visited and our capacity to focus on listening during such a long soundwalk.

A small group of members continues to meet regularly and is organising and designing the soon to be launched AFAE website. We look forward to this becoming a voice for acoustic ecology in this part of the world and attracting new members. More soundwalks will be run during the year as well as our continuing meetings for sharing experiences and ideas. Several members will be attending the WFAE conference in Hirosaki in November.

Contact: [afae@wfae.net](mailto:afae@wfae.net), [www.afae.org.au](http://www.afae.org.au)

## Finnish Society for Acoustic Ecology (FSAE)

By Simo Alitalo

The *One Hundred Finnish Soundscapes* effort has finally come to a conclusion. During the past few years this project has been FSAE's main concern. It's aim was to raise public interest in our everyday soundscapes, collect information about them in the form of personal recollections and if necessary, help to protect soundscapes and soundmarks that communities deem to be important.

The winners of the essay competition were announced on February 20, 2006. Participants sent almost 800 essays and memoirs about Finnish soundscapes and proposals for important soundmarks. Some of the participants were very active in sharing their sound recollections and thoughts. The winner of the competition Mr. Jouko Mikkonen, sent 186 short essays that form a varied and rhapsodic sound biography of his life. Many of the writings travelled back in time to urban and rural soundscapes of childhood.

*One Hundred Finnish Soundscapes* was very well covered in the Finnish media across the country. FSAE members Meri Kytö and Ari Koivumäki produced a radio documentary on the subject that was aired nationally by the Finnish Broadcasting Co. (YLE) on October 10, 2005. Ilona Ikonen produced a television documentary about *One Hundred Finnish Soundscapes* that was also aired nationwide in October 2005.

## Japanese Association for Sound Ecology (JASE)

by Keiko Torigoe

As usual, JASE's regional activity report brings you the activities of the Soundscape Association of Japan (SAJ).

On October 15, 2005, the SAJ held its Annual Academic Meeting at Hirosaki University's 50th Anniversary Auditorium, where 7 papers were presented. The themes of the papers varied greatly, such as "On Interference Beats of Balinese Gamelan Gong Kebyar in Indonesia" by Hiroyoshi Shiokawa (College of Industrial Technology, Nihon University), "On Listening: An Ontological View of Soundscape" by Mai Takamatsu (Hirosaki University), "On Residents' Evaluation of a Time Bell as an Invented Sound Symbol" by Miho Kanomata and Koji Nagahata (Fukushima University) to "Waiting for the Tide, Tuning in the World of Ama no Isobue—the Soundscape of Japanese Abalone Divers" by Kumi Kato (The University of Queensland).

On the following day, the SAJ together with the Hirosaki University International Music Centre held a symposium entitled *Northern Soundscape: Acoustic Space and Affordance*, and a concert, *Northern Music*. They were held in the same hall as a pre-event to the WFAE conference November of this year. FKL president Gabriele Proy, who was in Japan to celebrate the Japan-EU year, participated in both the symposium and the concert where she presented her soundscape compositions. On October 25, the SAJ also hosted a lecture and concert of Proy in Miyashiro Hall at the University of the Sacred Heart, Tokyo.

Out of the numerous soundscape proposals the project's advisory panel has chosen one hundred to be recorded and documented. Many of the recordings, 214 to be exact, can be heard at the project's website: [www.100aanimaismamaa.fi/index.php](http://www.100aanimaismamaa.fi/index.php).

During the summer the Finnish Literature Society and Tampere Polytechnic University will publish a collection of writings and sound memories that were submitted. The publication will also include scholarly essays and a supplementary CD with a selection of *One Hundred Finnish Soundscapes*.

The material collected is available for study and many scholars from the Universities of Turku and Tampere and Abo Akademi University have already shown interest in it.

*One Hundred Finnish Soundscapes* has been a very important project for the FSAE. It has helped us spread knowledge and information about the importance of soundscapes in our everyday life. It has also helped the FSAE to create new working relations and broaden existing ones with media, academic and educational institutions as well as the general public (for more see p. 28—31).

Contact: [fsae@wfae.net](mailto:fsae@wfae.net)

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

[www.100aanimaismamaa.fi](http://www.100aanimaismamaa.fi)

Sadly, the SAJ recently lost two significant people who played important roles in its history. During its beginnings in 1993 in order to receive various stimuli and lessons, we had invited a prominent and senior scholar to be our president, who understood the significance of the soundscape concept and its field of study, but was not necessarily directly involved in soundscape work. Shigenobu Sawada, a philosopher born in 1916, after presiding over the Philosophical Association of Japan and the Philosophy of Science Society Japan, accepted the role of our first president in 1993-1994. He passed away on April 14, 2006. Ko Tanimura, a scholar of aesthetics and musicology born in 1927, after presiding over the Musicological Society of Japan, became our second president from 1995-2005. He passed away on October 7, 2005. We are very grateful to these two outstanding scholars who always had open minds and great insights. Since our recent general meeting on May 28, 2006 our third president is Masayuki Nishie, an anthropologist and linguist born in 1937.

The SAJ is now planning to focus its activities for several years on the theme of "Soundscape and 21st Century Society". Together with JASE it is also preparing the WFAE conference in Hirosaki to be held in November of this year. (for details please see p. 20).

Contact: [jase@wfae.net](mailto:jase@wfae.net)

Conference website: [www.saj.gr.jp/en/hirosaki2006.html](http://www.saj.gr.jp/en/hirosaki2006.html)

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

By Charlotte Scott and Nadene Thériault-Copeland

CASE had its AGM on February 26, 2006 in Toronto, Ontario and across Canada via conference call. A larger board was elected and we welcomed Jacky Sawatzky, Katie Hlynsky, Charlotte Scott, Audrey Churgin, and Don Sinclair as new board members and said good bye to Tim Wilson and Hildegard Westerkamp. Membership with CASE has been building steadily, increasing the need for networking opportunities for new members, notably through the website. Many thanks to Don Sinclair for maintaining the site, and to Andra McCartney for providing a French-language mirror on the site, [www.acousticecology.ca](http://www.acousticecology.ca). Hildegard Westerkamp gave an update on the *Soundscape* Journal where changes are afoot, as the volunteer workload has been considerable. The possibility of rotating publication through affiliates was discussed and it was decided that CASE can produce one journal every three years.

A number of conferences and festivals involving CASE members are in production for the summer months. The emerging artistic and academic fascination with architecture and sound has become apparent; the *SoundaXis* festival, (June 8—10) in Toronto, Ontario featured a conference about Architecture, Music and Acoustics, [www.ryerson.ca/amaconf](http://www.ryerson.ca/amaconf), organized by Colin Ripley. CASE had a presence at the conference; many thanks to Nadene Thériault-Copeland who organized soundwalks during the festival, and to Ellen Waterman who chaired a sound ecology session. The current interdisciplinary trend of sound-architecture will also be a focal point for a fall CASE retreat (November 24—26, 2006 at the *Haliburton Forest and Wildlife Reserve* in Haliburton Ontario Canada); no doubt the displacement of landscape/architectural sound theory into the pastoral setting of the Haliburton Forest will create a distinctive and inspiring intellectual environment. Check the CASE website for information about this retreat ([www.acousticecology.ca](http://www.acousticecology.ca))

The annual *Deep Wireless* festival, [www.naisa.ca/deepwireless](http://www.naisa.ca/deepwireless), kicked off in May 2006. Installations at the festival experiment in sound translocation. “Journées Sonores: Canal de Lachine” (by Andra McCartney) incorporates the experiences of over 20 ear witnesses and researchers in and around Montreal, Quebec. “SoundRoam (Halifax to Toronto)” creates spatial sound relationships between two cities, while the citywide [murmur] project uses mobile technology to engage the listener in a physically situated experience of sound stories. New Adventures in Sound Art also hosted *Sound Travels* in June, which featured a new sound spatialization system developed by artistic director Darren Copeland, [www.naisa.ca](http://www.naisa.ca)

The sound ecology community in Canada is enjoying a resurgence of art and research thanks to the efforts of Canadian pioneers in the field. However, much remains to be developed in terms of branching out and making the best of the interdisciplinary trend in academia. The coming-together of sound and architecture is an excellent breeding area for new ideas and the CASE board of directors is involved in a busy and productive summer as the aforementioned conferences create new connections and directions.

Contact: [case@wfae.net](mailto:case@wfae.net), [www.acousticecology.ca](http://www.acousticecology.ca)

## American Society for Acoustic Ecology (ASAE)

By Jim Cummings

Since the last issue of *Soundscape*, the folks involved in the ASAE have been mostly pursuing projects in their local regions. The ASAE Board, our core of most active members, has remained constant, and we continue to ponder several nationwide projects that could help to bring us together as well as seed some acoustic ecology themes into the society at large. The national-level idea with the most interest is the creation of a “hundred soundscapes” project, modeled on the similar work in Japan and Finland; so far, though, we have yet to hit critical mass in catalyzing forward momentum. Discussion has begun concerning the feasibility of hosting an international symposium in 2009. Between now and the Japan gathering in the Fall, we’ll be working to clarify our thoughts on this, and hope that some of our members will be in Japan to discuss the possibility with the international community.

At the regional level, there has been a lot of activity in New York and New Mexico. The New York Society for Acoustic Ecology has become very active locally, with a wide range of public activities. They’ve hosted a series of soundwalks and discussions, as well as a monthly radio show, *Giant Ear*))), which morphed into a place-based sound art weekend, with pieces broadcast to visitors wearing wireless headphones as they wandered a rural landscape. These works were released on a CD-R to benefit the NY chapter. The New York members are working with Joel Chadabe of the Electronic Music Foundation toward the *Ear to the Earth Festival*, scheduled for October 2006. A series of shorter symposia have already taken place; information on the festival can be found at [www.eartotheearth.org](http://www.eartotheearth.org). The NY chapter website is quickly growing, reflecting the organization’s energy; check them at [www.nyacousticecology.org](http://www.nyacousticecology.org). In New Mexico, the 2005/6 Acoustic Ecology Lecture Series was welcomed into the new home of the College of Santa Fe’s contemporary music program, thanks to Steven Miller. This year’s talks ranged from Steve Feld’s anthropology of bells, to a couple of sessions on sound art, to a bioacoustics presentation on the use of sound by bats.

A promising new initiative from the University of California at Riverside, while not a project of the ASAE, certainly injected acoustic ecology into a fruitful larger whole. The UCR music program and Center for Ideas and Society sponsored the first Sound, Environment, and Connective Technologies symposium ([www.music.ucr.edu/music\\_symposium](http://www.music.ucr.edu/music_symposium)), which included presentations by Barry Truax and Jim Cummings, as well as a surprise visit from Nigel Frayne. Among the most encouraging presentations was one by Larry Rosenblum, a perceptual psychologist who is pushing his field to consider sound with as much dedication as it does sight; he and Barry certainly had a lot to talk about!

Contact: [asae@wfae.net](mailto:asae@wfae.net), [www.AcousticEcology.org/asae](http://www.AcousticEcology.org/asae)

## Interdisciplinarity without Disciplinarity?

By Albert Mayr

The following thoughts were stimulated by a lengthy and learned debate (via mailing list) that took place among various members of another association of which I am a member, the *International Society for the Study of Time*. Actually, its constitution emphasizes that it is devoted to the *interdisciplinary* study of time. The debate centered around issues such as: what interdisciplinarity really is or ought to be, how interdisciplinary discourse is possible, what kind of opportunity the society does, or should, offer for such discourse, and so on.

Now, I think that this issue is important also for the WFAE and its Affiliates. While it is true that R. Murray Schafer has already stated some 30 years ago that soundscape studies had to be an interdisciplinary affair, it appears that we have not progressed very much in developing an interdisciplinary discourse. Actually, I would say that, given several exceptions (such as the soundscape composers, music teachers, ethnomusicologists) even the *intradisciplinary* discourse is not very alive. In my opinion this has to do, among other things, with the structure of our organization. Creating national/regional associations was, of course, the natural thing to do. Many things can be achieved by people who live, geographically, not too distant from each other and share some common focus, albeit from different perspectives. Personal acquaintance, or even friendship, helps in overcoming differences and hard to manage diversities.

But other things, such as pushing ahead a specific line of research, theoretical reflection or aesthetic exploration, requires that the persons involved are deeply interested in just these specific issues. Geographical distance is irrelevant in this case. That’s why I suggest that next to the national/regional associations we should set up networks along disciplinary lines. By discipline here I do not mean the, sometimes rather arbitrarily circumscribed, official academic areas, but rather fields of inquiry that have a recognizable disciplinary area of reference, but—precisely because of the still perduring novelty of soundscape studies—can benefit from heterogeneous inputs. An example that I have in mind, or rather, such a disciplinary/transdisciplinary field I would like to see developing, would be socio-acoustics, i.e. the study of when, where, how certain groups use sound as a means for building identity, cohesion, and so on.

I believe that an increased and more lively exchange and co-operation on specific issues is a pre-requisite for starting to develop interdisciplinarity.

## Forum Klanglandschaft (FKL)

By Albert Mayr

This is my last report about FKL’s activities since at our recent board meeting in March I passed the role of FKL representative on to our new board member Clemens von Reusner. On the whole it has been an enjoyable task, particularly thanks to Nigel Frayne. But as years (of age) increase one tends to scale down one’s ‘official’ duties.

At the board meeting we were faced with the preoccupying phenomenon of a not dramatic, but steady decrease in membership, mainly in the German-speaking sections. In general, it appears that many, if not most affiliates have difficulties in recruiting new members. The issue is discussed intermittently but, it seems, not sufficiently enough to develop effective strategies for increasing membership. Or are we happy to be a sophisticated, albeit minute, elite? Sometimes it seems to me that the great diversity of our members (composers, sound artists, music pedagogues, geographers, architects, etc.), rather than being an asset that is meant to increase interdisciplinary interaction, is more of a hindrance in the recruitment of new members. Interdisciplinarity, alas, is not very prominent on the agenda today. More and more people—understandably in these difficult times—tend to focus on their specific disciplinary area. Thus I wonder, if next to the Affiliate organizations we should not also have some world-wide, loose groupings (or mailing-lists) along specific disciplines (see more details of this discussion in the *Dialogue* section in the next column of this page).

### From the membership:

*Gabriele Proy*, our president, after a very successful tour with concerts and lectures in Japan, is now involved in various committees preparing the conference in Hirosaki, Japan, in November. (for more details see, p. 20)

*Giacomo Ruspa*, has launched a small competition (FKLers only) for a sound installation in a shopping center in Suno (Piemont), Italy. Perhaps this may stimulate some new people to join.

*Valeria Merlini* has been able to establish a co-operation with the Italian National Institute for Urban Planning which will result in a conference *The Sounding City* in Bozen, Italy, end of November (details to be announced).

*Antonio Arpini* has given several lectures on soundscape-related topics at universities and cultural centers.

Our “sub-affiliate”, the Sicilian Soundscape Research Group, is preparing a CD-ROM with materials from the conference *Ascolta Palermo / Palermo Ascolta* (April 2005); hopefully it will be available soon. Please check [www.ssrg.it](http://www.ssrg.it).

Contact: [fkf@wfae.net](mailto:fkf@wfae.net), [www.klanglandschaft.org](http://www.klanglandschaft.org)

ALBERT MAYR (Bolzano 1943) has studied composition at the Conservatories in Bolzano and Florence. He has held teaching positions at McGill University in Montréal and at the Conservatory in Florence (Electronic and experimental music). He works mainly in the fields of experimental music, the soundscape and the aesthetics of time. Since 1975 he has been involved, on the theoretical, artistic and didactic level, in developing an aesthetic approach to the times of daily life (time design).



On Phonography: A Response to Michael Rüsenberg

By Christopher DeLaurenti

In his review of my *N30: Live at the WTO Protest*, November 30, 1999, [Soundscape Fall/Winter 2004, vol. 5 no. 2, page 48], Michael Rüsenberg asserts that I made *N30* “...without the intervening instance of any production of art, even to the extent of selection and framing. And as Frank Zappa says, ‘The most important thing in art is the frame.’”

Zappa notwithstanding, Rüsenberg missed that I framed sections of *N30* with the following silences: 7 seconds at 06” and 3’26”; 4 seconds at 9’20”; 2 seconds at 9’36” and 9’45”; 7 seconds at 49’31”; 13 seconds at 50’33”; 3 seconds at 52’02”; and 4 seconds at 59’25” (the piece concludes at 61’28”). Now, if Rüsenberg felt that the work’s continuous 40 minute segment from 9’47” to 49’31” was too long or bloated, he should have stated so, explaining why there wasn’t any “production of art.”

Regarding his accompanying complaint of “selection,” Rüsenberg flunks CD Reviewing 101 by failing to describe *N30* except for the glib “...walkie-talkie type messages by security forces observing the WTO Protest in Seattle...” Rüsenberg omits the protester chants, crushing mobs, the close-up crunch of batons and rubber bullets hitting bodies (including my own), hissing tear gas, the fearlessly funky machine-gun drumming of the *Infernal Noise Brigade*, and much more.

On the following page, Rüsenberg’s subsequent review admits a similar confusion regarding the nature and intent of another CD, the marvelous *Buildings (New York)* by Francisco López. Yet López, who collaborated with Rüsenberg on the excellent 1998 album *Roma: A Soundscape Remix*, enjoyed the chance to answer the reviewer’s questions. Despite my publicly available email address, I did not. I will do so now.

Rüsenberg bemoans that “[a]s little noticeable effort has been put into what, among my soundscape colleagues is known as ‘recording quality,’ DeLaurenti inadvertently questions my beliefs on soundscape work, documentation and composition alike.”

*N30* directly, not “inadvertently,” challenges prevailing practices of soundscape composition. A closer listen to *N30* reveals that the graduated improvement of audio fidelity during the course of the composition—from clumsy lo-fi struggling at the beginning to high-fidelity captures—is a substantial structural element of the work. Although Rüsenberg does not admit me into his confraternity of “soundscape colleagues,” I would like to invite him and anyone else with open ears to consider phonography.

Field recording is over a century old, however phonography does not conform to established, commercially-driven ideas of “quality,” technique, “fidelity,” and subject matter.

As a phonographer, I seek to liberate the forbidden elements of field recording—mic handling noise, hiss, narrow frequency response, distorted proximity effect, haphazard directionality, drop-outs, device self-noise, glitchy edits—and not only erode the erroneous idea that recordings objectively represent one “reality” but admit those overt flaws as music. Today’s glitch is tomorrow’s melody. Such *verboten* elements can serve as a framing device, enabling transitions from transparent sequences to obviously recorded ones or may amplify, subvert or dispel the sense of place so fundamental to soundscape composition.

As a phonographer, I take a risky and experimental approach to field recording. Doubt damns my every step. For both *N30*

pieces and *Live in New York at the Republican National Convention Protest September 2—August 28*, 2004, I aggressively plunged into a violent soundscape, risking my gear and personal safety. I live in an unjust world and therefore must act, rebelling when and where I can. Nonetheless, results, not willful sacrifice or “noble” intentions, make a work succeed.

Phonographers do not always uphold the long-standing ideal of recording invisibly, standing still or moving very slowly to document nature, scientific phenomena, or folk music with high-fidelity equipment. My body moves. Sometimes I run multiple microphone set-ups concurrently, corporeally improvising in the moment with body-mounted mics to shape the stereo image, azimuth, and the depth of field while swooping an additional microphone boom for a contrasting aural perspective.

As a phonographer, I know that the use of various and varying recording fidelities won’t demolish the ideal embodied by documentary nature recording, but instead expands the palette of procedures and techniques. Some artists recording in the field deploy a variety of microphones and recording equipment—including the tiny on-board mic in cassette players, MiniDisc recorders, DAT, etc.—orchestrally, just as a composer of symphonic music weighs balances among woodwinds, brass, percussion, and strings.

As a phonographer, I affirm the inevitable influence (and presence!) of the recordist and recording gear both in the field and back in the studio. Sometimes it is enough to press play, wait, listen, press stop, and then cull an unedited, unprocessed segment as a complete piece. Yet usually listeners hear me, my struggle, my “incompetence,” my fortuitous discoveries, and my frustrated objectives.

Some phonographers radically transform their material; I do not, instead relying on aggressive editing (abrupt stops, dead silence, frenetic intercutting, obviously artificial polyphony, antiphonal spatialization, the traditional transparent cross-fade) to explore the intersection of speech and music, to preserve oral history made in the moment, and to convey the truth spoken by voices in crisis.

To my ears, phonography has a different subject matter: waterworks and plumbing, close-up recordings that transcend human hearing, and other ordinary (and extra-ordinary) sounds of daily life (a popping toaster, creaking bus flaps, etc.) that often remain ignored, processed into protoplasm by the latest plug-in, or merely consigned to the margins within soundscape compositions.

The essence of phonography entails capturing and transforming field recordings into a listening experience athwart the boundary of music and everyday sounds. Music, after all, is not notes and tones, but the deceptively difficult act of listening. Ultimately, phonographers and soundscape composers—the distinction may soon disappear—want everyone to hear the music the world makes.

CHRISTOPHER DELAURENTI, born in 1967, is a Seattle-based composer, improviser, and phonographer. He is a member of the *Seattle Phonographers Union*, an ensemble that collectively improvises with unprocessed field recordings. Christopher’s music resides at [www.delaurenti.net](http://www.delaurenti.net) along with many music-related essays and articles.

Letter to the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)

WFAE member, Elliott Berger is a scientist in search of good listening experiences in art galleries and in the art world. Such experiences are few and far between, and as you will see from his perspective in this letter, even the most prominent institutions often fail to properly consider the aural domain. He wrote this letter on December 19, 2005 and has not received a response to date.

Dear MoMA, I was in NYC last weekend and enjoyed an afternoon at your fabulous museum of the visual arts; unfortunately my auditory experience was not nearly so exemplary. I was particularly eager to hear and see the exhibits in the Contemporary Galleries. I had hoped that in a museum of the stature of MoMA and in one that has just been expanded and updated, that not only would form, texture, and light, be thoughtfully and artistically rendered, but so too would sound. Unfortunately that was not the case.

The Contemporary Galleries showcase a number of ensonified works such as the dramatic *40-Part Motet* by Janet Cardiff and the subtle sounds of *The Way Things Go* by Peter Fischli and David Weiss. Because of the reverberant and uncontrolled acoustic environment in which the pieces are presented, the sounds escape, mingle, and intrude. This substantially mars the ability to appreciate the works. When you present visual art, you provide a space for each piece to inhabit and in which it can breathe. The works are not crowded tightly on a single wall. Sometimes a piece has a wall or a room to itself. Sound art should be regarded similarly—except that simply providing the work its own space is insufficient if the space is not properly designed and isolated.

Would you exhibit a visual work without proper lighting? Or would you let the light wash from one piece to another creating inappropriate shadows or highlights. I suspect not. So why do you exhibit sound art without equivalent planning and sensitivity? My guess is that you have many visually literate staff members and consultants and few if any, aurally literate experts. And also, control of sound in gallery spaces can be more difficult, but it can be accomplished.

For example, the Cardiff *40-Part Motet* is marvelous, but presented in too reverberant a space. Yes, reverberation is good for choral works, but some acoustical damping in that room would be helpful to control the sound of the visitors who choose to converse instead of simply listen. During many moments of the 11-min. work, the guests’ voices, amplified by the reverberance of the room, partially masked the sounds of the choral singing. And then of course, since you have no door on the room, or sound-locked entry corridor (a corridor with right-angle turns and absorption on its walls to reduce the transmission of sound), the Cardiff piece is heard throughout much of the galleries. Yes, sound absorption costs additional money and may require other types of maintenance, but when you require a special light or wall mounting for a visual piece, do you not find the resources to do what is needed?

Then there is Bruce Nauman’s installation *Learned Helplessness in Rats*. The dark and menacing sounds in that space should stay in that space. There was actually a point in the Contemporary Galleries where I could hear Cardiff’s, Nauman’s, and one other piece simultaneously—and at that point, the sounds of all three

were distracting and unwanted. So too, is it impossible to enjoy *The Way Things Go*, because of the sounds emanating from Nauman’s gallery.

I am an acoustician, an acoustic ecologist, and an audiophile—in short, much of my sensory experience is dominated by the aural landscape, or as some would say, soundscape. It is a shame that when your architects and exhibition designers plan installations, that acousticians are (apparently) not included. For many people, sound is a second-class sense next to vision; the imbalance can sometimes be rectified when the impact and importance of audition is brought to the forefront. In MoMA this is not encouraged since when one attends to the aural it is often disappointing. At a very basic level, another example is the Café on the 5th level. I was going to eat there at a busy time, but because of the complete lack of absorption in the space the levels were obtrusive to the extent that I had to raise my voice substantially to even be heard.

There are solutions to many, perhaps all of the issues I have raised. They do require planning and expense, and perhaps a new perspective. A wide array of absorptive materials are available, as well as good sound blocking designs and sophisticated highly directional loudspeakers to control the propagation of sound. Few if any galleries do this today, probably because of lack of space, resources, knowledge, awareness, you name it. I am generally disappointed with the sound installations I have heard. That is why MoMA is all the more discouraging—I had hoped you could lead the way with groundbreaking sound design to match your groundbreaking visual design.

I would welcome a letter or phone call to further discuss these matters. Although I am not personally involved in the specialty of acoustical design for architecture, I can suggest a number of fine acousticians and sensitive artists with whom you could work so that MoMA could lead the way in *both* the visual and the auditory arts.

Sincerely,  
Elliott H. Berger

ELLIOT H. BERGER is Senior Scientist, Auditory Research of E•A•R / Aeero Company, where for nearly 30 years he has studied noise and hearing conservation, with an emphasis on hearing protection.

**Online WFAE Newsletter**  
[www.wfae.net/newsletter.html](http://www.wfae.net/newsletter.html)

This is a bi-monthly supplement to *Soundscape—The Journal of Acoustic Ecology*. Our goal is to make available, in a timely manner, news, events, and announcements from WFAE Affiliates and other sources. Newsletter contributors are asked to send related news and information to the WFAE secretary ([secretary@wfae.net](mailto:secretary@wfae.net)). We welcome information about regional events, new publications, and general news of interest to the acoustic-ecology community.





Photo by Hildegard Westerkamp

# Insights Taken from Three Visited Soundscapes in Japan

By Keiko Torigoe

## Abstract

Since the project of *100 Soundscapes of Japan*, which was carried out by the Japanese Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), was completed in 1997, I have been conducting my own follow-up field research, visiting the specific localities which were recommended by the local people for their soundscapes. This paper reports some of my findings on three specific soundscapes. Based on the result of this field work, this paper discusses the significance and problems of the project.<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

To understand the properties of certain soundscapes reported by other people, it is important for us to visit the localities and to meet and talk with the people who have experienced the soundscapes in their daily lives. From 1994 to 1997, the Japanese EPA carried out a project entitled *100 Soundscapes of Japan: Preserving Our Heritage* in order to raise awareness of and preserve Japan's natural and cultural soundscape heritage. The project encouraged individuals or groups of people throughout the country to recommend soundscapes which could be appreciated in specific localities and which the dwellers would wish to preserve or to conserve for the next generation.

From these recommended soundscapes, 100 were selected as symbols of the richness and wide variety of Japanese nature and culture. Therefore, the project was not carried out as a "Top 10" kind of event. The whole mixture of 100 soundscapes was expected to be a kind of trigger for others to become aware of the many aspects of their own surrounding soundscapes. Applicants were asked to provide the answers in the following form:

- 1) name and address of the person or the group;
- 2) description of the specific sound components of the soundscape which could include visual illustrations;
- 3) season and time when the recommended soundscape is experienced;
- 4) location or site where the soundscape is experienced;
- 5) reason why the applicant wants to conserve the soundscape.

I participated in this project both as a planning adviser and a committee member. A total of 738 applications were received, of which 249 came from individuals. The themes of the soundscapes varied from the sounds of natural creatures and phenomena to those of festivals and industries, as well as the sounds of transportation such as steam locomotives. Through these applications, I became aware of the wide variety of soundscapes and specific sites which exist in Japan or are created by people throughout the country.

When the final 100 soundscapes were selected and publicly announced, the project itself was completed. However, since then,

I have been conducting my own private follow-up field research on these 100 soundscapes as well as on those not selected (through my experience as a committee member I was aware of the fact that some selections were politically motivated, although most of the 100 were selected for their ecological and cultural value). I have already visited some of the sites in the process of my study.

Through visiting the actual soundscapes and interviewing the local people including the applicants, I have come to understand the profound meaning that the individual soundscapes hold for the inhabitants. It also enabled me to observe the various events which were brought about by the very fact that the sites were selected.

This paper aims to report what I have experienced and to discuss the significance and problems of the project by focussing on three specific soundscapes:

- 1) the soundscape of drift ice in the Sea of Okhotsk, the most northern soundscape of Japan,
- 2) the rumblings of the Sea of Enshu, the soundscape located in the centre of the country,
- 3) the sound of the subtropical forest and the creatures along Shiiragawa River of Iriomote Island, the southern-most soundscape of Japan.

All of these were included in the 100 selected soundscapes.

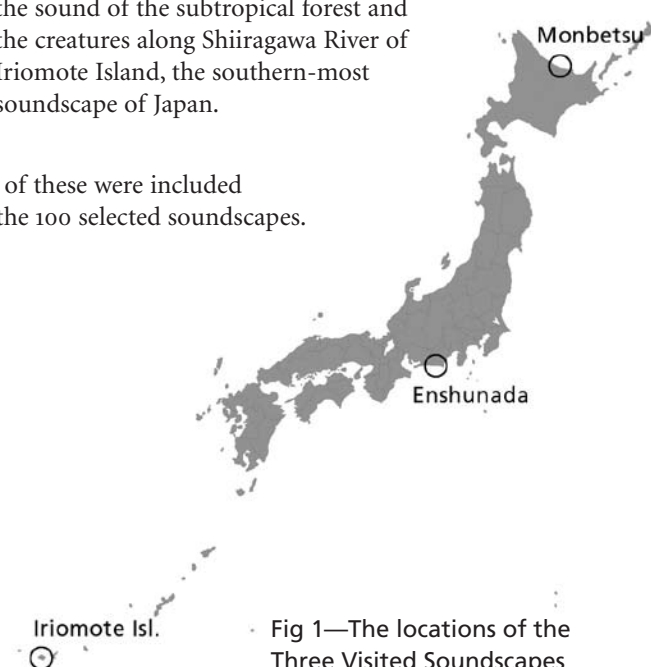


Fig 1—The locations of the Three Visited Soundscapes

## 1.The Soundscape of Drift Ice in the Sea of Okhotsk

*The advent of drift ice is sudden. One day we notice that a white line shines along the horizon, and the next morning, or some days later, the whole surface of the sea changes into a white world of ice. Then the sea is hidden under layers of*



*whiteness and quietness, and the sound of the waves cannot be heard. But if I listen carefully, I start hearing the whining and wailing sounds of the moving ice fields instead. This is how the ice weeps. The surging ice pushes forward and piles up in pieces one above another, and in that process it makes creaking, squeaking and groaning sounds and forms itself into extraordinary shapes. As these shapes lose their balance, pieces of ice break away and with a hissing sound skid along the surface of the ice field. Indeed, the drift ice sounds like a living creature.*

#### – One applicant’s comment

In Japan it is only along the coast of the Okhotsk Sea—the southern most end of the drift ice, which begins in the Arctic Circle—where we can hear the sound of drift ice.

This coast is located between the two capes of Sohya and Shiretoko and there are cities and towns such as Esashi, Monbetsu and Abashiri. The applicant quoted above and who described the interesting variety of drift ice sounds, comes from Esashi City.

In order to experience some of these sounds, I decided to visit the city of Monbetsu in February 1999, which is located just around the middle section of the coast. It was late afternoon when I arrived in the city. First I visited city hall, where I had an appointment to interview some city officials. I found out that every year, since 1986, the city of Monbetsu has been holding an International Conference on the Regions of the Arctic Circle. Not only the scholars and specialists but also the citizens get together at these conferences to compare, for example, the different ways of preparing the same food, to share their customs and exchange ideas.

In a pamphlet handed out by city council, there was a phrase stating that *drift ice now has a new life*. I asked them what they meant by *new life*. They explained that in former times the advent of drift ice stopped the fishermen of this area from going fishing. As a result they had no income during this time. Therefore the drift ice was sometimes called “the white devil” by the local people, and was the symbol of poverty. However, in 1961, scallops began to be cultivated and it turned out to be quite successful precisely because of the conditions created by the drift ice.

A vast amount of vegetable and animal plankton flows from the Amur River into the Okhotsk Sea and enriches the seawater environment, which in turn is protected by the drift ice. As a result the combination of this food chain and the drift ice the Okhotsk Sea becomes an excellent place for the cultivation of seafood. Furthermore, the local people started to understand that drift ice functions as a kind of lid on the ocean, which stops the sea salt from being blown onto the land and destroying the forests.

Based on these new findings, the inhabitants’ attitude towards drift ice has changed completely. Now drift ice is considered to be positively good in contrast to former times when it was considered to be positively bad. This change was reinforced by the development of an academic study on drift ice at the University of Hokkaido.

From this new awareness of the benefits of drift ice, the local people’s attitude to other aspects of their environment has also been changed. For example, they used to be in favour of the excavation and development of an underground oil field in Sakhalin, Russia. But now, they are greatly concerned that it may pollute the seawater in the event of an accident. If this were to happen, the drift ice would contain oil which in turn would contaminate the sea of Monbetsu.

When I asked about the sounds made by the drift ice Mr. Funayama, one of the city officials whom I was interviewing, told me the following interesting fact. While it is true that the typical sounds of drift ice are creaking and squeaking sounds, these are,

in fact, rarely noticed by the local people in their daily lives. Mr. Funayama’s former house is located about 300 meters away from the coast and the house is surrounded by the constant sound of ocean waves. However, as he says himself, one morning when he woke up, suddenly the wave sounds were silenced. This signified to him the arrival of drift ice. Indeed, in the local people’s daily lives it is this sudden silence of the waves which makes out the character of the drift ice soundscape

Listening to Mr.Funayama’s words and recalling the applicant’s description quoted at the beginning of this section, my understanding of this soundscape was deepened. The sea is silenced by drift ice. So its sound is quietness. Or as the applicant expresses it: *the sea is hidden in a world of whiteness and quietness, and the sound of the waves cannot be heard*. And the soft and delicate creaking and squeaking sounds that he mentions are audible precisely because of this quietness.<sup>2</sup>

As the next soundscape example shows, folktales often exist where we encounter a rich interaction between the local people and their natural sound environments. So, my last question to the people I interviewed was whether they had heard of any folktales or myths referring to the drift ice. However, none of them seemed to have heard of any such tales.

## 2. The Rumbling of the Sea of Enshu

*The waves of the Enshu Sea rumble without any rest, like high and low drums. The sound is like a symphony played by the sea and the winds.*

*In the spring, the ebbing and flowing of the small waves beat small drums softly together with the sound of the gravel. The voices of children on an excursion are captured on the five lines of the musical notation formed on the sandhill by the winds.*

*In the summer, the big surges of the waves beat big drums, washing the feet of the children on the shore. Their shouts resound like the sound of brass instruments among the waves.*

*The fall is the season of typhoons. The drum sounds made by the waves reach us from the East announcing a break in the weather. The wave sounds are audible within a distance of 30 or 40 km, which reveals the meaning of the proverb: thunder travels 2 Ri, Waves travel 7 Ri. (1 Ri equals 3.9 km in the traditional Japanese way of measuring distance.)*

*The winter is the season of strong winds. The sand on the beach travels from one sandhill to another as it dances to the accompaniment of the waves.*

#### – One applicant’s comment

There were several applicants for this sound, *the rumbling of the Sea of Enshu*, including the one who wrote the above sentences, a local dweller who was born and is still living near the Sea of Enshu. All of them referred to an old folktale of *Wave Boy*. which is one of seven well known mysteries in the Enshu district. The story goes as follows:

Once upon a time, there was a small monster called *Wave Boy* living in the Sea of Enshu. *Wave Boy* was very mischievous and did many naughty things such as breaking the fishing net. One day, a fisherman found *Wave Boy* caught in his net. He said, “At last, I caught you. You should get ready to be killed.” *Wave Boy* implored saying “Please save my life. If you save me, I will give you something in return. I will let you know the change of the weather by beating the drum. The fisherman released him, and since then *Wave Boy* has been announcing weather changes by beating his wave drum.

In March of 1998, I visited Nagaoka sandhill located on the coast of the Enshu Sea. Observing the site and talking with local people, I found out that the beach itself is endangered through erosion. The amount of sand on the beach is decreasing steadily, caused by several factors including the construction of dams upstream of the Tenryu River—a big river which flows into the Sea of Enshu—and the unhealthy pine woods which were planted as windbreakers.

Some of the local dwellers, including the applicants, are very concerned about this situation. During that same visit, I noticed a new stone statue on the beach together with a sandholding fence. According to the local people, this is a statue of *Wave Boy*, which was built by the local government immediately after the site was selected as one of the 100 Soundscapes of Japan.



Fig 2—Nagaoka Sandhill with Traditional Windproof Fences

On the front side of the stone base, the title of the statue, *Namikozo*, which means *Wave Boy* in Japanese, is curved in three Chinese characters, and under the title, the brief story of the *Wave Boy* legend is also curved. I felt that something is wrong with this statue. It is a good idea to let visitors know the legend by engraving the story into a stone monument. However, a mythical figure such as *Wave Boy* has been imagined in many ways, therefore it seems problematical to me to visually represent and freeze his image into one sculptured form.

## 3. The Sounds of Subtropical Forests and Creatures along the Shiira River

Iriomote Island, which is located within the southern most subtropical area of Japan, is the habitat of a variety of rare species, such as crown eagles and round back turtles, both of which are Protected Species. Because of its rich nature, the island is called the Galapagos of the Oriental world. It is the biggest island in the Yaeyama Islands, which have their own unique culture, distinct from the Okinawa culture.

Four applicants recommended this particular soundscape to the project and it was selected to be among the final 100 under the title of *TheVoices of Birds and Animals Living in the Mangrove Forest / The Soundscape of the Shiira River Created by the Local Living Creatures*. This is the most Southern of all the recommended sites.

It was March of 2001 when I landed on Iriomote Island and I was concerned that it would be too early to hear the subtropical sounds recommended in the applications. However, I was able to hear some of them as summer comes very early on this island.

The most impressive sounds I heard during my stay were the voices of some local creatures, that sounded like *kon-kon kon-kon*. They entered my room in the inn from the surrounding environ-

ment when I was resting on my futon. Another voice was a continual *kata kata kata kata* which filled the paddy field by a path. As I had never heard these sounds in my life before, it was impossible for me to connect them to any specific creatures. They remained pure sound to me, as I could not put them into any semantic context. This made them particularly mysterious to me. Listening to these unfamiliar sounds, I felt that I was not in Japan.

On my second day on the island, I visited Mr. Sakaguchi, one of the four applicants who works at the *Iriomote Wildlife Conservation Centre*, and I interviewed him about the sounds of the forest on the island as well as about the life of the islanders themselves.

Although there are many rivers on the island, the Shiira River, according to Mr. Sakaguchi, is the optimum place to observe nature, because its size is ideal for canoeing. I asked him what the *kon-kon* sounds were, heard the night before. But he said it was difficult to tell without hearing the real sound. He speculated that it may have been the voices of either the spotted belly yaeyama frogs or of the branded crakes.

He also explained that traditionally the islanders who were involved with agriculture and forestry, relied on the sounds from the forest to regulate their daily activities. For example, the call of the Ruddy Kingfisher announces the beginning of the farming season and the chirping of the Dusky Thrush tells the arrival of seeding time. Sometimes the islanders considered these sounds to be the voices of the gods. At the same time, so he told me, the whole island is also developing the idea of *eco-tourism*.

The following day, I canoed along the Shiira River with Mr. Yamamoto, a local canoeing instructor. I followed him in my own canoe, as we paddled upstream.

The further we went, the less we heard the mechanical sounds of the port. Finally we were surrounded just by the sounds from the forest and river (as shown in fig. 3). I heard clearly the rustling



Fig 3—A View from My Canoe

sounds in the trees and the voices of various birds and other living creatures—sounds that I had not heard during a motor boat tour on my first day here along a bigger river. When I heard a sharp and strong chirp, Mr. Yamamoto told me that it was the courtship cry of a Crested Serpent Eagle.

After about two hours of paddling, we were able to float back down stream, so we could concentrate on listening & observing our surroundings. Occasionally, we dipped our oars in the water in order to steer our canoes in the right direction. The sound of the water dripping from our oars onto the surface of the river, resounded with crystal clarity. In the midst of this rich acoustic environment, I felt a profound quietness.

In the course of the tour, Mr. Yamamoto explained many things to me. The most impressive one was that, the number of visitors coming to listen to the sounds of the river surroundings had increased since this particular soundscape was selected. Due to this fact, the motor boat travel company of the island had withdrawn its motor boats from the Shiira River.



# Conclusion

These three cases gave me a variety of insights into the nature of our soundscape activities and showed me the significance (and disadvantages) of the *100 Soundscapes* project.

For example, the last case highlighted the need for noise abatement, not only for our health and aural well being, but also to reveal to our ears what all too often is covered by noise: the indigenous soundscapes of our local environments.

One of these cases also showed that folktales record the traditional interaction or relationship between the local people and the sounds of their environment.

In another case, when the local people became aware of the extra aural dimensions of their environment, it empowered them to pursue further ecological activities. At the same time, it is also important that the project—on a purely personal level—enabled these applicants and the local people they represented, to extend their understanding and deepen their appreciation of their local environments. Their comments and illustrations in their application forms demonstrated this clearly.

At the Stockholm *Hey Listen!* conference (June ‘98), I first presented the *100 Soundscapes* project from Japan as an example of how an awareness of soundscape and acoustic ecology issues can be converted into action. At that time I tried to highlight one of the most important aspects of this project: the fact that the project *itself* was an action brought about by the awareness of soundscape and acoustic ecology concepts. However, at the same time, I could predict from previous work in this area, that future actions needed to take more of a grass roots approach, *designing from the bottom up or from inside*, which is very different from the conventional way of *designing from the top down or from outside*. (Torigoe 1998: 104). After the Stockholm conference, Gregg Wagstaff succinctly honed in on this aspect of the project as follows:

The *100 Soundscapes* project successfully raised public awareness of, and responsibility towards, the environment by means of its soundscape. This was achieved not by promoting a ‘Self-realisation’ but rather the identification of sounds as having a greater value or worth within a community by that community. (Wagstaff 1999: 7)

The fact that the motor boat travel company stopped running their motor boats on the Shiira River so that the visitors could enjoy the sounds of the subtropical forest and the living creatures in that area, demonstrates what Wagstaff and myself said above. The local people, including the owner and workers of the company, became aware not only of the value of the river’s sound environment but also of their responsibility towards these sounds. As a result their priorities and understanding of their daily activities within their environment changed.

The *Wave Boy* statue is another, but in a way more ambiguous, example of action taken as a result of the *100 Soundscapes* project. As mentioned earlier I had an uneasy feeling when I saw the statue on the beach of Enshu. I felt that it fixed an image of *Wave Boy* in people’s minds. Whereas the marvelous aural tradition of the legend allows people to use their inner imagination and conjure up images in their own mind’s eye of this *Wave Boy*, a visual aid like this statue highlights only one person’s notion of what he might have looked like.

These examples indicate that there can be a wide variety of actions as a result of soundscape projects, some of which may be more beneficial in the context of acoustic ecology, and some may even contradict its ideals. However, this does not mean that we should be discouraged from carrying out actions as a result of the project, as long as we consider them carefully and continue to exchange our opinions in an open atmosphere. (In this context we

should not forget the fact that the eco-tourism in Iriomote Island is based on economic and commercial considerations.)

As we have seen from *Wave Boy*, legends of folk tales referring to environmental sounds are an important part of the local soundscapes. That was the reason I asked people in Monbetsu if they knew of any legends or folk tales based on the drift ice. When they replied that they had not heard of any, I suggested to them that they might consider inventing a new story which would include the sound of drift ice. If I were from the area, I would love to create such a story myself. This could also be a future action of the *100 Soundscapes* project.

At the same time, we should not assume that there are no legends about drift ice in Japan. It could very well be that there are some among the Ainu people who used to be the main people living in the drift ice area. But unfortunately, the dominant Japanese indigenous people, who started to take control of Hokkaido about 1800, did not culturally interact with the Ainu people.

It is highly likely that other peoples living around the Arctic Circle have stories and legends about drift ice. Indeed, it would be another action to initiate exchange of such stories among the people who share the common experience and environment of drift ice.

On the last day of my visit to Monbetsu, I traveled through the frozen sea on an ice-breaker. From the deck of the ship, I noticed the footprints of the Northern Fox. Watching these footprints as they faded away into the white surface of the sea, I thought of the so-called “Okhotsk People”, who, the local people say, used to travel just as freely on the frozen sea.

For the Okhotsk people as well as for the Northern Fox, it is not a national anthem that is important, but the environmental sounds which form the soundscape of their daily lives. It is a matter of survival for them to listen to the subtle differences in the drift ice sounds.

If people were bound more by the local soundscapes rather than by national anthems, there would be wider and deeper understanding among the people of this new millennium.

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# Endnotes

1 This paper was presented at the WFAE conference in Melbourne in 2003. Several sentences and figures were added for this version.

2 Recently, in March 2006, I visited the Shiretoko Peninsula and I heard a type of murmuring sound in the drift ice in Okhotsuk, which indicated that the power of the drift ice in the Okhotsk Sea has decreased since the year 1999. The murmuring sound was caused by the air captured inside the ice. As the ice melted, the air was released out into the sea water and made the murmuring sounds. When the power of drift ice is strong, however, the drift ice squeaks and grinds.

# Acoustic Ecology Considered as a Connotation: Semiotic, Post-Colonial and Educational Views of Soundscape

By Dr. Tadahiko Imada

**Keywords:** *Semiotics, Post-colonial, and Soundscape*

## I. Phono-Centrism and Metaphysics

Jacque Derrida criticized the Cartesian metaphysical view of philosophy as being logo-centric. Derrida thinks that logos is merely a monologue criticized as phono-centrism. Phono-centrism suggests that when one speaks something, one’s speech should express exactly the same contents which one intends to say, in other words, there is no difference between speech and writing. Derrida writes (1978, pp.279-278):

The history of metaphysics, like the history of the West, is the history of these metaphors and metonymies. Its matrix—if you will pardon me for demonstrating so little and for being so elliptical in order to come more quickly to my principal theme—is the determination of being as presence in all senses of this word. It could be shown that all names related to fundamentals, to principles, or to the center have always designated the constant of a presence—*eidos*, *arche*, *telos*, *energeia*, *ousia*, (essence, existence, substance, subject) *altetheia*, transcendentality, consciousness, God, man, and so forth.

European philosophy always listens to its own voice. This monologue pursues a desire for unification, explained by the terms “A=A.” This is a concept which seeks identity among differentiation. For example, the concept of “a human = a human” may express that a human being is always a human being even if one looks like a hoodlum, and this concept of “A=A” comes from a particular value named “cogito.” Therefore, the concept of “A=A” secretly introduces the concept of humanity. Derrida (1980) also argues that all language, because of a surplus over any exact reference, leaves the reader and listener free to interpret due to a certain vagueness of the relationship between signifier and signified. European metaphysics strives for a solid foundation of language, that is to say, an original meaning which is spoken and can be precisely written. Therefore this writing (*écriture*) actually says exactly the same thing as the original meaning of the speech. In Saussurian linguistics, attention is paid to speech events (*parole*). Derrida criticizes this as phono-centrism and removes the center of Saussurian linguistics from speech events to writing (*écriture*). Derrida explains (1976, p.78):

The privilege of the phone does not depend upon a choice that might have been avoided. It corresponds to the moment of the system (let us say, of the “life” of “history or of “being-as-self-relationship”). The system of “hearing / understanding-oneself-speak” through the phonic substance—which presents itself as a non-exterior, non-empirical or non-contingent signifier—has necessarily dominated the history of the world

during an entire epoch, and has even produced the idea of the world, the idea of world-origin, arising from the difference between the worldly and the non-worldly, the outside and the inside, ideality and non-ideality, universal and non-universal, transcendental and empirical, etc.

Naess (1998), for example, proposed the concept of deep ecology, which has no objective/subjective distinctions, and all human beings can instinctively and spontaneously experience it. His concept is quite similar to Noam Chomsky’s linguistic theory. Chomsky (1966) proposed the concept of deep structure, in which all human beings innately and universally have as one, the same internal organs. However, both “deep ecology” and “deep structure” have never yet been found. If anything, we might merely listen to Naess’ monologue and should not expect to find any fundamental ecological truth. Needless to say, any cultural symbol or heritage is not genetically inherited, (e.g., Levi-Strauss, 1968). Thus, we cannot share the same acoustic environment where everybody universally feels comfortable. We may be able to find some commonalities in terms of acoustic environments and people’s perceptions. However, we should also examine their socio-cultural settings very carefully. We need to learn what deconstruction, cultural history, narratology, and feminist theory have to offer even for acoustic ecology as well as soundscape studies (Said, 1991, xvi).

Umberto Eco says (1972, p.383):

If the ultimate structure exists, it cannot be defined; no metalanguage can ever capture it—because if it can be discovered, it is no longer ultimate.

How can we understand or even compare soundscapes which have totally different histories and contexts? In non-Western cultures, there is presumably no concept of Western acoustic ecology or soundscape at all. Can we simply abstract a “sound structure” of which Western people may make sense from non-Western sound cultures? And can we accept such a structure as a universal one for acoustic ecology or soundscape, ignoring all the evidence of differences? We can possibly have some universal sense of acoustic ecology or soundscape from a European or North American perspective. However, if it does not apply to non-Western sophistication (if people in the non-Western culture do not need to seek the universal nature of acoustic ecology or soundscape at all), a universal structure of acoustic ecology itself would be a European and North American cultural product in a specific period.

People in Japan, for example, used the word “music” as soon as Western musical influence came to Japan in the early twentieth century (Tanaka, et al, 1986). In ancient times, “music” meant the foreign instrumental sounds which were mostly from Korea and China. Simultaneously, people in ancient Japan called their own

music “singing and dancing,” “playing” and “sound of a thing.” That is to say, the ancient Japanese people thought about various sounds not only as acoustic phenomena but also as cultural and religious events, existing in a more inclusive socio-cultural context. The traditional way of listening in Japan involves a sort of amalgam of environmental sound, instrumental sound and any other environmental facts. In short, cultures do not share the same methods of listening, that is to say, there are as many ways of listening as there are cultures and ears.

## II. Roland Barthes’ Semiotics

Saussurian linguistics (1966) focuses on abstracting a “universal system” (e.g., the concept of signifier and signified) which can apply to all languages around the world. Semiotics, however, extends Saussurian linguistic theory to decode socio-cultural systems as a system of meaning, that is to say, semiotics is an apparatus to analyze socio-cultural phenomena as the structure of meaning. Semiotics assumes that language is not merely a tool for communication but also for creating any other communicative apparatus such as music, advertisements, foods, objects, clothes and so on. Roland Barthes (1968) started off as a structuralist and coded everything into semiotic systems of signs and signifiers from fashion, to poetry, striptease, hamburgers and advertising in the manner of Jakobson and Lévi-Strauss. But for Barthes, the sign draws attention to its own arbitrariness which does not want to be natural and in the act of conveying meaning, communicates its own relative and artificial status as well as signifier. His reasoning is political. Signs which are “natural” are also authoritarian and ideological because ideologies seek to make social reality “natural” (e.g. saluting the flag, western democracy represents the true meaning of the word *freedom*). Barthes sees such things as contemporary mythologies. He thinks that all signs are ambiguous, capable of many different interpretations, but this does not mean they are all limitless. It does mean they are not fixed in meaning. Barthes (1973) also illustrated his view that all theory, all ideology, all determinate meaning, all social commitment have become terroristic and writing is the answer to all such “terrorism.” He thinks about writing as enabling meaning to be dislocated and released from the straightjacket of a single identity. To understand why Barthes held this view, the context of modern France must be examined. Particularly important is the fact that he wrote *The Pleasure of the Text* five years after the 1968 students riots in Paris where France itself nearly collapsed into anarchy (Reader, 1987). Barthes (1982, p. 4) has written about Japan, as follows:

Today there are doubtless a thousand things to learn about the Orient: an enormous labor of knowledge is and will be necessary (its delay can only be the result of an ideological occultation); but it is also necessary that, leaving aside vast regions of darkness (capitalist Japan, American acculturation, technological development), a slender thread of light searches out not other symbols but the very fissure of the symbolic.

Barthes visited Japan as a member of a French cultural mission in 1966. His *Empire of Signs*, written in 1970 is a sort of impressionistic criticism of Japan. What Barthes hoped to reveal are things which have been concealed by metaphysics—“another wisdom (the latter might appear thoroughly desirable)” —but he keeps his perspective as an outsider and tries to forget his own background as a French person. Barthes somehow had a need to escape from the metaphysics and logo-centrism in the West, but the Japanese do not need to escape. Japanese behave according to a cultural manner that Barthes likes. But unlike with him, it is always done involuntarily. Only when a certain external perspective is brought

into an internal culture, can the culture be accepted as an exotic presence. However, since this exteriority is always produced somewhere out there, we can hardly expect a neutral standpoint at all.

Barthes believes that Japan, as an empire of signs, is opposed to the West as an empire of meanings. This opposition between signs and meanings is equivalent to the opposition between full and empty. According to Barthes, people in the West always have a desire to fill signs with meanings, that is to say, the Western world is fulfilled by the metaphysics of Christianity. However, Japanese people reject filling signs with meaning involuntarily. Signs in Japan always exist with a kind of “lack of meaning,” as if they are empty signs. It means that many signs are not explained by both spoken and written words in Japan. People do not have any desire to fill signs with meanings. In this quote he clarifies the most important difference between the West and Japan, namely: there is no antinomy in the Japanese *Bunraku* (the Japanese puppet performance that was originally begun in the sixth century), in contrast to the fact that a basic antinomy plays a very important role in Western drama. In the West, this antinomy is called “dualism.” Especially modern Western thinkers, such as Descartes (1988), tried to understand the world as divided into the spirit, body, mind and matter. Although we can find many common points between the Western and Japanese puppet performance in that they have a puppet, story, music, actor, audience and so on, the concept is completely different: *Bunraku* is not based on Western dualism. Barthes creates a contrast between Western theater and Japanese *Bunraku*, whereas the Japanese have never regarded the Bunraku like Barthes does, that is to say, they have never tried to “analyze” the *Bunraku*.

*Ecriture* (writing) is one of Barthes’ best-known terms. It has an original meaning of “written language,” “a literary expression,” or “literary style.” But he thinks *ecriture* is a tendency which is seen in a certain period of literature and is independent of each single work. In *Empire of Signs*, *ecriture* becomes a general term for a visual and spatial sign system. He says (1982, p. 4):

Writing (*ecriture*) is after all, in its way, a *satori*: *satori* (the Zen occurrence) is a more or less powerful (though in no way formal) seism which causes knowledge, or the subject, to vacillate: it creates an emptiness of language. And it is also an emptiness of language which constitutes writing; it is from this emptiness that derive the features with Zen, in the exemption from all meaning, writes gardens, gestures, houses, flower arrangements, faces, violence.

For Barthes, writing is “not in order to read it (to read its symbolism) but to follow the trajectory of the hand which has written it: a true writing.” (Barthes, 1982, p. 45) He has also written about the Japanese *Kabuki* (one of the great three theatrical arts in Japan, which originally began in Kyoto at the end of the sixteenth Century) actor, “The Oriental transvestite does not copy Woman but signifies her.” (1982, p. 53) He thinks *ecriture* is formed by a gesture of ideology, and that is why the Oriental transvestite is a gesture of the ideology of woman and is not plagiarism. “The whole of Zen wages war against the prevarication of meaning. We know that Buddhism baffles the fatal course of any assertion (or of any negation) by recommending that one must never be caught up in the four following propositions: this is A—this is not A—this is both A and not A—this is neither A nor not-A . . . The Buddhist way is precisely that of the obstructed meaning: “the very arcanum of signification, that is, the paradigm, is rendered impossible.” (Barthes, 1982, p. 73)

This “exemption from meaning” is exactly what the Japanese culture values based on “ruminating” and “*satori*.” Barthes explains “*satori*,” as follows:

Westerners can translate only by certain vaguely Christian words (illumination, revelation, intuition), is no more than a panic suspension of language, the blank which erases in us the reign of the Codes, the breach of that internal recitation which constitutes our person. (Barthes, 1982, p.75)

There is a particular space for *Bunraku* and *Kabuki* and those Western concepts such as metaphor, implication and dualism are not involved at all. Karatani (1989, pp.268-269) has written, as follows:

For example, the “Japan” of the Empire of Signs is a place of absence. Barthes’s project was to reexamine Western thought in terms of an exteriority free of the sovereignty of the thinking subject which would be called “Japan.” It is in this sense that Barthes’s “spirit” exists: as a critique of the Western nineteenth century, seen as an autarchy devoid of exteriority. But the “Japan” discovered by Barthes—that is, the Japanese nineteenth century—is also a despotic system.

What Karatani implies here, that two different cultures can co-exist, creating a sort of cultural mixture is however not quite possible. Although some commonalities can be found between two different cultures, many differences exist simultaneously. Karatani concludes (1989, pp.271-272):

No matter what form the West’s evaluation of Japan may take, Japan will remain for the West a place of exteriority rather than being what in fact it is: a discursive space filled with complacency and almost totally lacking in exteriority. Can there be a way out of this situation? The only word that comes to mind is “spirit,” not, to be sure, interior or community spirit, but rather spirit as exteriority.

Karatani does not think that semiotics by Barthes can be considered as a tool to make a connection between two cultures (e.g., Japan and France). As Karatani says, the methodology to observe each cultural sophistication has to be “spirit”, since exteriority goes beyond simple stylistic borrowings or adaptations from Western concepts as the West sees it. The predictable question arises here: can semiotic research make a link between the West and Japan in terms of social constructs of a space and location through time?

## III. Sounds and Connotation

Barthes (1953) proposed the concept of denotation and connotations (first and second degree languages). The denotation refers to the actual things to which language applies. The connotation, however, brings in many more things and is the meaning-proper of an expression. An American motion picture *Finding Forrester*, directed by Gus Van Sant in 2000, interestingly illustrates the concept of connotation: Jamal Wallace (Robert Brown) is a 16 year old high school student who lives in the Bronx, New York. He has an aptness for basketball and is a genius in writing. He coincidentally meets Pulitzer-prize winning author and recluse William Forrester (Sean Connery). Jamal is helped along and shaped by Forrester. Some lines from the movie:

Forrester: “Whatever happens, I’m off. What’s the word that you and your friends would use for that?”  
Jamal: “Leaving?”  
Forrester: “Oh God . . .”  
Jamal: “Where are you off to?”  
Forrester: “Well, I have a homeland I haven’t seen for too long.”  
Jamal: “You mean, Ireland.”

Forrester: “Scotland, for God’s sake!”  
Jamal: “I’m missing with you, man.”

“I am off” and “I am leaving” are denotatively the same meaning. However, Forrester does not like the term “leaving” at all. Ireland and Scotland denotatively express the two different countries but have totally different connotations. Barthes thinks that the concept of denotation/connotation is a mythical system, which can apply to not only language but also any other social events. Barthes’ concept should be applicable to the acoustic environment as well as to soundscape. We do not listen to sound itself as an acoustic entity. The sound merely creates metaphor and image, which we receive from time-to-time. If anything, we might not have any denotation after all.

Barry Truax writes (1984, pp. 47—48, p.147):

Jacobson (1978) has described the linguistics relation of sound to meaning on the phonemic level in terms of Saussure’s concept of the sign through which the signifier and the signified are linked (Saussure, 1966). . . . Although originating in the theory of signs, these terms and the model within which they function are useful for describing how sound communicates. . . . In situations where sound is the conveyer of information, it functions in a quasilinguistic sense as a “signifier” of that information. One identifies a particular sound as indicating the presence of an object or person, or as reflecting a specific state of the environment.

Truax thinks that the concept of soundscape describes the various systems of acoustic communication in relationship to each other. Saussure (1966, p.67) referred to the arbitrary nature of a sign and that the same concept of this arbitrariness may be applied, to some extent, in acoustic communications. Another example concerning denotation/connotation (in terms of acoustic communication) is the sound of bells at Nicoli Temple, a Russian Orthodox Church Temple, which has been heard by people in the town of Kanda in Tokyo. A variety of expressed values about Nicoli Temple were collected:

*Question:*

“Explain in words your impressions of the sound of the bells.”

*Answers:*

“I wish you every happiness.”  
“It was a signal of evening in my childhood.”  
“I don’t like it, because it reminds me of when I was poor.”  
“I wish to marry as soon as possible.”  
“It is not noisy. I have very fond memories of it.”  
(Imada, 1991, pp.214—215)

These informants listened to exactly the same bell sounds. However, each of them gave us totally different answers. The definition of the concept of soundscape by the World Soundscape Project is (Truax, 1978, p.126):

An environment of sound (sonic environment) with emphasis on the way it is perceived and understood by the individual, or by society. It thus depends on the relationship between the individual and any such environment. The term may refer to actual environments, or to abstract constructions such as musical compositions and tape montages, particularly when considered as an artificial environment.



Even in our present time, the definition of “music” is still pretty much coming from a nineteenth century Western aesthetic as articulated by Hanslick (1957), in which critics had developed a position where music could exist as an autonomous world. Many music teachers, not only in Japan but also in North America, assume that all music serves the same function for all human beings, and that music is a kind of “universal language” for all human races. Soundscape, however, is the idea of perceiving various sounds such as the sounds of nature, artificial sounds in cities and music, as total sonic scenery. We could, therefore, begin to see parallels between structuralist/poststructuralist theories proposed by both Barthes and Derrida as a concept of soundscape. There is evidence concerning the music/noise contradiction. A Japanese theatrical company premiered their performance outside Japan in Chicago, USA, in 1867 (Mihara, 1998). Their acrobatic performance was based on *kabuki* (one of the “great theatrical arts” with *noh* and *Bunraku*, which was originally begun in Kyoto at the end of sixteenth century). Aya Mihara (1998, pp.135—136) quotes from a review about their Chicago tour, as follows:

Take, for instance, the peculiar tone which a dog emits when subjected to the irritation of a tin kettle tied to his tail, and under a rapid state of locomotion down a side street; join to this the heartbroken tone which a pig makes, under gate, when he cannot go forward, when it is forever too late to retrace his steps, and when it is misery to remain where he is; unite with this, the plaintive notes of a guinea hen in a state of mental agitation, and you have the peculiar music which my Japanese friend produces. To be sure, the dog, pig, guinea hen and Hollander together make more of a tune than he, which is not surprising, as one Japanese cannot be expected to rival the joint efforts of all these animals. (the *Chicago Tribune*, June 2, 1867)

Today, we can easily see that there is a lack of information of and understanding for Japanese culture and music at that time, as well as racial prejudice against Asian people. We know that today’s music journalists in Chicago are quite unlike their cohorts one hundred years ago. Is this because they have more information about Japan and education regarding racism, where we can actually find the purely universal standpoint of music or sound in which all human beings can share equally and denotatively? Robert Walker writes (1990, pp. 187—188):

It is commonly reported in many ethnological studies of the Australian aboriginal culture, for example, that the Australian aboriginal considers the role of the Dreamtime absolutely crucial to their survival. The Dreamtime is regarded as the truly creative time of their existence. It is the time when they make contact with the supernatural forces that shaped their universe. It is also regarded as the source and repository of songs and, indeed, all artistic activities...In such a belief system, creativity, as Western thought has defined it, cannot exist. There is no place for the individual as “creator” of his or her own music. This represents a significant and qualitative difference between an aboriginal musician and a Western composer such as Liszt.

We have to make sure that the “affective power” of music, for example, belongs to Western culture. There are no terms for Western affective power in the Australian Aboriginal aural culture. As Walker mentions, there is no place for the individual as “creator” of his or her own music outside Western musical culture. The following hypothesis presumably comes into being:

1) We cannot universally understand acoustic ecology because acoustic ecology is arbitrarily created based on a specific epoch

and culture. In other words, to understand the concept of acoustic ecology (method) or soundscape (practice) one must understand the cultural forms that produced it.

2) We can conceivably learn the concept of acoustic ecology or soundscape in terms of contextual relationships.

### IV. Final Thoughts

Japanese music education has believed in the European aesthetic values since the end of the nineteenth century to the present time. That is to say, the imposition of European musical epistemology on Japan has persisted for over one hundred years. The concept of soundscape presumably tries to eradicate Western music’s autonomy, in other words, people’s own personal standards can possibly re-examine all the traditions which Western music has preserved.

Derrida sees a fundamental alienation between speech events (*parole*) and writing (*écriture*). If one says “the sky is blue”, this *parole* may be expressing a specifically impressive blue, felt by a particular person. Writing (*écriture*), however, produces “the death of a subject,” because this writing does not represent (=presence) any specific feeling of any particular person at all and merely becomes a general linguistic sign. If one can possibly own the terms “the sky is blue” to express a specific feeling, nobody can use the terms any longer. If language is the system of differences as Saussure says, language cannot be present for anyone any more. Hence, language no longer represents any specific feeling for any particular person at all. The term “play” is therefore introduced by Derrida to indicate this absence of any transcendental meanings in *écriture* or text. Derrida thinks that as soon as one uses some words, language automatically gets involved in the system of differences and is separated from any original meanings. The combination between “original meaning,” “speech events (*parole*)” and “writing (*écriture*),” which phono-centrism takes for granted, and the presence of the truth ensured by phono-centrism, cannot be established any longer. Thus, several possible arguments against Derrida exist. There are no absolute grounds for use of words such as truth, certainty, reality and so on. However, are we able to say that these words lack any meaning? At the same time, if there are no certainties or truth, how do we know that there is no truth simply because words cannot tell us the truth? We should carefully examine what Derrida actually suggests. What are those terms—such as deconstruction, *différance* (difference), and play—proposed by Derrida, actually for? The European people have always grasped reality through words. However, no matter how we try to explain this world through words, it keeps changing continuously into new realities. Don’t we call this sort of unpredictable nature which exists in the world “reality.”? Derrida therefore states that European metaphysics cannot tell us any truth because of the huge gap between reality and human recognition, and this “world” is only “play” after all.

Much Western thought has already been introduced into Japan. This metamorphic process induces a black hole, which could presumably be explained by the term “play,” to use Derrida’s word—that is to say, bringing Western ideas or products into Japan without having European metaphysical ties. In stark words, many Japanese people have started to feel very strongly about their Japanese roots and how they made us think differently even though we were brought up with Western artifacts in Japan. There can be no such thing as a neutral standpoint to a Japanese. Perhaps our postmodern world has sown post-colonial contacts after all. Post-colonial theory (e.g., Loomba, 2001) has revealed how notions of the universal are ethnocentric, since their formulations are created by the image (notation) of the dominant culture (i.e., Euro-American culture).

The imposition of European epistemology on non-Western nations has continued for over one hundred years. Soundscape is useful as a concept, for example, in Japanese education, in that it can illuminate for us how to simply listen to sounds critically and socio-culturally. Simultaneously, we should re-examine this idea utilizing a post-colonial theory in order to go beyond the simple adaptation of Suzerains’ (colonizers’) concept, as the West views sound and culture.

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TADAHIKO IMADA is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education and Vice-Director of the International Music Centre at Hirosaki University in Japan. He holds an MA from Simon Fraser University where he studied as a recipient of a Government of Canada Award; and his Ph.D. is from the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. His publications appeared in many academic journals in the U.S., Canada, Australia, Sweden, Korea, Hong Kong, India and Japan. He is the co-author of *A Little Sound Education* (together with R. Murray Schafer, 1996). Prior to joining the faculty at Hirosaki University, he was a research fellow at Roehampton Institute London. He was Visiting Professor at the University of Tennessee at Martin in 2002.

Quote:

“If an ancient master plays the kin,  
his music has the power to move  
the earth and a fierce god,  
and all kinds of instruments  
have a variety of effects  
according to kin sounds.  
However, when poor players  
play the kin, its sounds sometimes  
move the moon and the stars,  
make snow and frost out of season,  
and disturb the clouds and thunder.  
Thus, the kin is the greatest instrument.  
So why should we choose  
any other instrument except the kin  
as a standard for tuning all sounds “

— “The Tale of Genji” by Lady Murasaki



Photo by Hildegard Westerkamp

# Haiku

## 1) Three Haikus

A mosquito buzzes  
every time flowers  
of honeysuckle fall  
*By Buson (1716—1783)*

Now the swinging bridge  
is quieted with creepers  
like our tendrilled life  
*By Basho (1644—1694)*

*Source (for the two above):*  
<http://raysweb.net/haiku/pages/haikubythemasters.html>

The butterfly  
rests upon the temple bell  
asleep.  
*By Buson, 18<sup>th</sup> century Haiku Master*

## 2) Interpretations of Basho by R.H.Blyth, Lucien Stryck, and Peter Beilenson

*Source: [www.haikupoetshut.com/basho1.html](http://www.haikupoetshut.com/basho1.html)*

*R.H. Blyth*

**1a**  
Moonlight slants through  
The vast bamboo grove:  
A cuckoo cries

**8a**  
The old pond  
A frog jumps in  
The sound of water.

*Stryck*

**1b**  
From moon wreathed  
bamboo grove,  
cuckoo song.

**8b**  
Old pond  
leap—splash  
a frog.

*Beilenson*

**1c**  
Moonlight slanting  
through all this long bamboo grove  
and nightingale song.

**8c**  
Old dark sleepy pool  
quick unexpected frog  
goes plop! Watersplash.

## 3) This haiku seemingly has 2 interpretations by Stryck:

Fading bells  
now musky blossoms  
peal in dusk

Dusk—though last  
bells faded  
airs cherry rich

*and this one by Blyth:*  
The temple bell dies away  
The scent of flowers in the evening  
Is still tolling the bell.



# World Forum for Acoustic Ecology 2006

## International Conference on Acoustic Ecology

in Hirosaki, Aomori, Japan  
November 2—6, 2006

The WFAE Board encourages member participation in this year's International Conference of the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology.

### Presented by

The Japanese Association for Sound Ecology (JASE)  
The Hirosaki University International Music Centre (HIMC)

### Supported by

The World Forum for Acoustic Ecology (WFAE)  
The Soundscape Association of Japan (SAJ)

**Venue:** The Hirosaki University's International Music Center (HIMC) established in 2005. Many of the events will take place in the Center's beautiful 50th Anniversary Auditorium "Michinoku Hall"

**Nov. 2:** Opening Ceremony, Keynote Speakers, Symposium  
The West Meets the East: Physical, Spiritual and Postcolonial Perspectives of Acoustic Ecology.

**Nov. 3 and 4:** Papers and Workshops, Evening Concerts

**Nov. 5 and 6:** Two-day listening tour through the surrounding areas of Hirosaki.

### Welcome to WFAE 2006 in Hirosaki, Japan

On behalf of the organizing committee, I am very pleased to invite you to the *International Conference on Acoustic Ecology: WFAE 2006* in Hirosaki, Japan.

The old castle town of Hirosaki is the cultural centre of the Tsugaru District located on the northern tip of the main island of Japan. The city of Hirosaki is well known for the traditional townscapes, for Tsugaru shamisen, the three-stringed Japanese musical instrument, and for the surrounding natural environs such as Oirase ravine with its hot spring, one of the *100 Soundscapes of Japan*. We believe that Hirosaki will provide you with an enriching spirit and environment in order to present and exchange ideas in the field of acoustic ecology....

We very much look forward to your participation.

Keiko Torigoe (JASE)

### Welcome to Hirosaki

Greetings to everyone participating in the WFAE Conference in Hirosaki, Aomori, Japan! This is the first time that the world comes to Asia via the concept of soundscape. Hirosaki University is pleased to bring this important moment to Japan after the Banff event in 1993. Traditional Western aesthetics based on Platonic and Aristotelian mimesis, for example, has exerted a great influence on Japan. In the Japanese aural tradition, however, people regarded sound as a psychological image rather than a pragmatic acoustic event. The concept of "man", for example, creating "meaning" through rational thought was absent in Japan (e.g., Karatani, 1989). Some confusion, at the same time, still surrounds

the relatively new field of postcolonial studies. This is mostly because, similarly to the concept of soundscape, the term postcolonial has become so heterogeneous and interdisciplinary. However, it is the only theory, which has been developed by non-Anglo-Saxon thinkers such as Said, Bhabha and Spivak in the late 20th century. I, therefore, believe that the term postcolonial is indispensable to the City of Hirosaki in order to explain the situation of fusion, hybridity and deculturation in Japan. Through the symposium on the first day, we are looking forward to proposing an approach to acoustic ecology that incorporates the notion of sound as a physical, spiritual as well as postcolonial phenomenon.

Chair of Organizing Committee  
Tadahiko Imada (Hirosaki University)

Source (and for more information): [www.saj.gr.jp/en/hirosaki2006.html](http://www.saj.gr.jp/en/hirosaki2006.html)



Photo by Hildegard Westerkamp

# A Tiny Field for Soundscape Design: A Case Study of the Soundscape Museum in Osaka, Japan

By Atsushi Nishimura

## Abstract

*The author worked out his idea of the 'soundscape museum' as an experiment in order to put into practice ideas on soundscape design that can be executed by any individual citizen. He ran the Hirano Soundscape Museum (HSM) from 1998 to 2004 as part of a grass-roots activity for community development in Hirano, Osaka, Japan. In this paper, the author reports on the activities of the HSM and discusses his concepts and methods of soundscape design he has gathered as part of this case study.*



Fig. 1—An old map of Hirano-go published in 1763.

## Introduction

The purpose of this study is to illustrate how the soundscape exists in our real life. Although the soundscape has been an object of study for a long time, it seems that there is little agreement as to what the soundscape actually is. In this paper, the author will report on his experimental activities in community soundscape design and will discuss his underlying concept as a way of demonstrating a method for approaching the study of soundscape. He will use the term "soundscape" as defined by the World Soundscape Project:

SOUNDSCAPE: An environment of sound (sonic environment) with emphasis on the way it is perceived and understood by the individual, or by a society. It thus depends on the relationship between the individual and any such environment. The term may refer to actual environments, or to abstract constructions such as musical compositions and tape montages, particularly when considered as an artificial environment. (Truax, 1978, p.126)

As will become clear later in the article, the author felt it necessary to make the applicable area of the above definition narrower.

The core question was how to make a clear distinction between soundscape and sound. If not addressed, it would not be possible to properly treat the soundscape as an object of study or design. Therefore, the author regards the term "soundscape design" as a design of soundscape. Special emphasis will be placed on the processes by which individuals form a philosophy of relating to sounds. (Nishimura 2002)

## A Brief Review Of The Case

The author was involved in the case study from 1996 to 2004, in which he attempted to develop a museum for soundscape study as one of the community development activities in Hirano, Osaka. This section provides background information and an overview of the case study.

### Study Area: A Lost District

Hirano is an old district of Hirano-go which prospered as a self-governing town until the early twentieth century. At present, the area is located in Hirano ward, Osaka City, Japan. Hirano-go covers an area of approximately one square kilometer. New buildings such as factories, shopping centers and residences are rapidly growing while historical buildings are disappearing. Preserving the historical landscape here has become an important problem in need of resolution.

In the period of *Sengoku* (the age of civil wars in Japan, approximately 1467—1568), the people of *Hirano-go* had constructed a moat for their self-defense from enemies and plagues. Figure 1, an old map of the district, shows the moat around the town.

In 1925, the name of *Hirano-go* was lost in the process of the area's incorporation into Osaka City. Most of the moats have been filled through land reclamation for further urbanization. And in 1949, most of the administrative districts were modified following the establishment of Hirano ward. Once *Hirano-go* disappeared from the maps the name remained alive mainly in the memories of some residents.

### A Grassroots Activity for Community Development

Since 1980 a community development movement has been addressing local issues. The citizen's group Hirano People's Network for Community Development (HPN) started its activities with a campaign for the preservation of a train station in the district, when the line was abolished in 1980. Although the preservation campaign was not successful, the solidarity among the participants resulted in the continuation of their community development for over twenty years. A lost district has survived because of such community efforts.

HPN has a unique motto: "no representative, no rule and no membership fee." Such volunteerism has been valued highly in the activities of the *Hirano People's Network for Community Development*.





Figure 2—One of the 15 museums' Hirano Film Archives. The top picture shows an exterior of the museum. The bottom shows the museum's director.

HPN started the *Hirano Ecomuseum Project* in 1993. The project consists of a lot of tiny museums utilizing the ordinary facilities such as temples, shrines, stores, public spaces and private houses. Each director develops a plan for each museum's exhibition. The plan is based on the director's own understanding of the community and what is important to include. The aim of the museum project is to transmit to visitors—while strolling around the district visiting the many small museums available—a kind of holistic sense of the area, an image or atmosphere of the town.

### History of the Soundscape Project

The first HPN project for the soundscape started in 1994. The group gathered various kinds of sounds found in their every day life, such as traffic noises, music in traditional festivals, sound streams in supermarkets, voices of cash dispensers in city banks, etc. Any sounds were potential objects for field recordings. The HPN, however, could not find a way in which to utilize the recordings at that time. Although some tapes were archived, the project was discontinued.

In 1996, the author began participating in the HPN. At the time, he was a graduate student who studied the soundscape and was especially interested in researching the sound archives. He thought that the collected field recordings, which appeal directly to our aural sense, are indispensable for soundscape study. At the same time, however, both the members of the HPN and the author recognized that the recordings alone were not sufficient and that something more than sounds alone needed to be studied.

At the beginning of his participation, the author thought that the old town and the HPN activities would be the sole focus of his soundscape study and that the concept of soundscape could be useful for the HPN activities. The reality, however, was entirely different. Because the members of the HPN had always considered the community as a bundle of experiences it was initially difficult for the author to conceptually understand the area. The answer to the question “what does the area mean for someone” depended upon what individual inhabitants had seen, heard, felt, imagined, considered and done there. Therefore, the first task for the author while studying the soundscape was to feel and encounter the area for himself and become totally involved in the sights, sounds, smells and tactile features of the community.

As a result, the *Hirano Soundscape Museum* (HSM) started as part of the *Hirano Ecomuseum Project*. The author thought he could find a focus for his soundscape study by positioning himself on the same footing as the members of the HPN community.

### Overview of HSM

The Hirano Soundscape Museum has six facilities for exhibiting its original soundmonograph. One of them in the Senkoji temple, became the core facility in which all HSM information is integrated. At other facilities, the soundmonograph for each site is displayed and various types of CD players are used—visitors can listen to CDs using an FM radio receiver (see figure 3).

HSM exhibits the soundscapes of the area using a variety of media. The sound map indicates the geographical locations of the facilities, describes the purpose of the HSM, transmits the testimonies of “earwitnesses” [Schafer 1974], shows a sound walk route around the area and listening points where characteristic sounds can be heard. The website has given participants a lot of opportunities to communicate with others. The World Wide Web is especially useful for international exchanges and in the future, it will constitute an interface between users and the digital archive section of the HSM.



Figure 3—CD listening system in the core facility at Senkoji-temple. A multi disc player is combined with an antique phone.

## Concepts And Methods of the Case Study

Through his HSM activities, the author discovered several concepts as well as methods to put these concepts into practice. They took shape in the form of the *soundmonograph* and the *soundscape museum* (Nishimura and Hiramatsu 1999a, b), both of which will be discussed in this section.

### Soundmonograph

The author calls the documentation of a soundscape a soundmonograph and defines it as a monograph in the recording medium. (Nishimura and Hiramatsu 1999a)

Sounds often excite our imagination and bring back vivid memories. When a sound is heard as background to a visual image, the sound often hides away from our consciousness. But when we listen to a sound consciously, it takes us into a world of images and meanings that exist behind the sound.

The directness of a sound recording can reveal things to us that are impossible to discover through other media. The soundmonograph is not only for acquiring knowledge, but also for sharing the great feelings that can never be described visually, such as the animated sounds of a bustling street, the charm of children's voices, the sounds of nature that often relax us, and so on.

In soundscape studies the relationship between an environment and its subject can be understood from a holistic point of view in which image, mood and memory are included. Therefore, the descriptions of a soundscape have to include elements by which listeners' experiences and imagination can be evoked.



Figure 4—A recording session for creating a soundmonograph. A lot of important information was acquired from such free discussions.

To make a soundmonograph, it is necessary to gather both the sounds and listeners' comments. Figure 4 shows a recording scene where information is gathered about a specific sound. The following story is a typical example that illustrates the quality of such information. In a recording, the author tried to capture the sounds of a well. He operated the well's pump himself and created various sounds in the process. On another day, the author made recordings around the same well, but this time with an informant who used to use the well. When he asked her to operate the pump he realized that the sounds she made while pumping and those on his first recording were completely different.

The soundmonograph has been defined as the documentation of a soundscape on tape, disc, or other recording media. (see Figure 5) It consists of several elements. The first is the actual sound which includes a wide variety of material, from live sound recordings, to ear witness accounts, explanations and finally even synthesized sound effects. The second element is composition.

It includes scripting, montage of sound materials and arrangement of interviews. The third element is subjectivity, referring mostly to the recorder's, editor's and informant's subjectivity. The “soundscape” concept places special emphasis on the perspective of the listener and, more importantly, this subjectivity stands in a mutual relationship to the subjectivity of others. It means that any soundscape descriptions or documentations consist of two or more subjectivities and that any soundmonographs can be accomplished through the collaboration of two or more persons. (Nishimura and Hiramatsu 2003)

### SOUNDMONOGRAPH:

#### A Description of Soundscape *on recordings*

Live Recordings,  
Witnesses . . .

Elements

Recorders, Editors,  
Informants . . .

Interviews,  
Scripting,  
Montage . . .

1. Sounds
2. Compositions
3. Subjectivities

Figure 5—The definition of soundmonograph in the case study.

### Soundscape Museum

As mentioned above, the HSM was not only a sound archive but also a soundscape museum. The author realized from the beginning that any sound could potentially be perceived as a mere sound without context, not inspiring imagination, not sparking memories. So, whatever relationships existed in the actual activities themselves, came to be realised by the author.

Sounds are most certainly the result of some event. To know the sounds of a specific context is to know the other things in the same context. All the sounds we hear each day, that we *have* heard, and everything we wish to hear in the future are the key to discovering our history, to recognizing our present situation, and to thinking about our future. It became clear that the purpose of HSM should be based in a more comprehensive context, in which a series of soundscape tasks, such as gathering sounds, were initiated as part of a community development project.

The author's concept of a soundscape museum is partially derived from the new museum movement, which produces places such as ecomuseums, community museums, integral museums, and so on. The HSM seems to resemble mostly the neighbourhood museum where people not only study but actually create their own culture. (Riviere 1974)

To produce a soundmonograph for blind people became an important issue for our project. The recording medium seems to be suitable for blind people. However, it should be noted that blind people have a different set of contextual sensory relationships with sound than do those who are sighted. Consequently, this difference needs to be understood and integrated into the production of a soundmonograph for the blind.

## Conclusion

The *Hirano Soundscape Museum* was a tiny progressive step in the experiment of community soundscape design. Therefore it was impossible to fully estimate its effectiveness and validity for



soundscape design. However, the significance of HSM can be summarized in the following two points: (1) the problems of the sonic environment have been treated in an actual project for community development, and (2) HSM was interested not just in sound itself but also in the meanings of sound. (Nishimura 2001)

The author considers the most important aspect of the case study to be his direct experience with the voluntary nature of the community development activities in the HPN. He believes that voluntarism is one of the most important concepts of soundscape design, because in that context any individual can participate in a soundscape project.

There are a lot of things that we cannot see without hearing. There are, however, a lot of sounds that cannot be heard without knowledge. The goal of HSM is to provide a conceptual base and some methods and tools for soundscape design. In the author's opinion an audio production, or soundscape, may be designed in a way that listeners can create their own unique set of associations during the listening experience. Those associations will be based upon their daily interactions with particular sounds, or—in the case of listeners unfamiliar with the context of the recording—associations will be triggered in their imagination based upon their life experiences in general.

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ATSUSHI NISHIMURA, born in 1968, studied musical engineering at Osaka University of Arts. With a background in arts, psychology and environmental science he received his PhD of science in home economics at Mukogawa Women's University in 2001. His dissertation was entitled *Soundscape Design for Lifestyle and Community*. Since 2005 he has been an Associate Professor of Media at the Okinawa National College of Technology. His research now focuses on the environmental influences of the construction of a new U.S. Marine Corps Air Base in Okinawa, Japan.

# Perspectives

## Acousticians walked through the Soundscape

By Carlos Alberto Augusto

The 12th *International Congress on Sound and Vibration* took place in Lisbon, Portugal in July 2005. This annual Congress is dedicated to the engineering sciences and this year featured a significant number of innovations in its program. One of the important contributions to this innovative character was the inclusion of the fields of acoustic ecology and soundscape studies.

The Congress takes place in a different location each year and is organized by the *International Institute of Acoustics and Vibration* (IIAV), [www.iiav.org](http://www.iiav.org) and a local institution. In Lisbon the Congress was co-organized by the *Instituto Superior Técnico* (IST), the largest and most prestigious school of engineering in Portugal. The World Forum for Acoustic Ecology (WFAE) was one of the co-sponsors of the event. The local organizers have total freedom in establishing the program of the Congress. The Portuguese organizing committee in accordance to its “Atlantic vocation” defined as one of its main goals the need to introduce new approaches and new views to the traditional engineering disciplines which this Congress usually addresses. The opportunity to present the concepts of acoustic ecology and soundscape studies to such an audience seemed challenging and exciting. This was the first time that the WFAE was formally involved in a prestigious scientific event of this kind.

Acoustic ecology and soundscape studies, together with related areas such as sound architecture and sonic tools for architecture design, were part of a program which also included the more traditional fields of noise, acoustic signal processing or underwater acoustics. These different disciplines were present throughout the technical sessions, keynote speeches and special events organized within the realm of the Congress program.

Apart from the Technical Sessions where papers were presented and discussed, the acoustic ecology community's presence comprised a panel discussion organized and directed by WFAE chair Nigel Frayne which addressed the theme “How can people's experience of soundscape be included in the urban planning and design process”. R. Murray Schafer delivered a keynote address titled “I have never seen a sound” to a packed and attentive audience in which he analysed sound and its role, delivered in his usual and often provocative fashion. Finally acousticians and acoustic engineers were given a chance to walk through and listen to the soundscape of uptown Lisbon. The soundwalk was lead by myself, R. M. Schafer and Nigel Frayne.

By giving the WFAE visibility within this context a dynamic was created that allowed these themes to be incorporated into the discourse and practice of the professionals involved in these areas. The visibility may in itself be important but is not sufficient as Prof. Bento Coelho, the Chair of this Congress and a member of the IIAV, pointed out. The presence of the WFAE, its members, themes and special events were an important aspect of this Congress and thoroughly confirmed the organization's expectations. But to ensure that the promise created by this presence be fulfilled, Bento Coelho further remarked, that the WFAE must strengthen itself and maintain this dynamic.

This year the 13th *International Congress on Acoustics and Vibration* will take place in Vienna. A perfect setting for the strengthening of the WFAE's visibility initiated in Lisbon.

More information on the 12th *International Congress on Acoustics and Vibration* at [www.icsv12.ist.utl.pt](http://www.icsv12.ist.utl.pt).

CARLOS AUGUSTO: Portuguese composer, sound designer, video director, multimedia/graphic designer, musician, radio producer. Studied communication at Simon Fraser University (Vancouver, Canada). His musical work centers around music-theatre. Augusto worked in the area of noise control and curated the Music and Sound Arts Program of “Coimbra, Capital Nacional da Cultura 2003”, which included *Coimbra Vibral*.

More info at [www.euphonium.pt/augusto](http://www.euphonium.pt/augusto).

## Ziggurat Vertigo

### *Soundscaping the Digital World*

By Eliot Britton

The artificial sound palate that has spilled over the ears of my generation is remarkable. The shuttle bus to my university is crammed with students, each packing giga bites of pirated, compressed audio. Dozens of tiny devices pumping thousands of mp3s into their ears at dangerously high levels. These sounds drown out the bus, the possibility of conversation and any real-world sounds. When we go home, we can turn on our stereo systems (most likely 5.1) and enjoy rich, carefully balanced media. If we turn on our computers, we are welcomed by any number of immersive audio-visual experiences. Should we go to the movies, the bar, the mall or a coffee shop, a mixed and mastered sound experience awaits us.

Thanks to new technologies involving carefully controlled lights and sounds, we are able to chose and determine a large portion of our daily perceptual experience. And as new technological breakthroughs allow for more convincing immersive experiences, we are faced with an interesting question: How will increasing exposure to virtual environments affect our perceptions of sound?

I have an interesting first hand account that answered this question for me. After being inspired by artists like Robert Ashley and Nan Jun Paik who commented on the role of media in their societies, I composed a piece for Saxophone and Tape called *Ziggurat Vertigo*1. It was inspired by the strange repercussions I suffered from descending too deeply into a virtual world.

The story of this piece begins with my 14-year old digital self running through the twisted halls of a virtual reality bloodbath called *Quake*.

Before you dismiss me as some sort of technology crazed nerd, you must realize that I was a very active, well adjusted and balanced kid. I did well in school, had great friends, read a lot, played soccer, studied music and was in training to be a lifeguard. However, in addition to my daytime existence I would stay up at night honing my skills as an online warrior, challenging other players around the world via 56k modem. These war simulations would go on for hours, pushing the limits of my focus, reaction time and strategy. At first, *Quake* was more than I could handle. But being a stubborn and competitive kid, I didn't give up. I had to learn the rules so I could win in this exciting virtual world.

*Quake* was the first truly 3D virtual reality game to hit the mass market. Dark, lightning fast, violent and addictive, it took the world of video games by storm. It incorporated bleeding edge technologies developed by some of the best game designers and artists working in the field. I didn't know it at the time, but the people at *id software* were working hard to bring my worst nightmares to life. They accomplished this through a 3D environment filled with digital avatars controlled by human players from all over the globe. The game's twisted maze-like structures were modeled after gothic structures and industrial complexes, all maliciously designed to keep you fighting and running for your digital life.

And of course, there were the sounds. The sound designers at *id* developed new software that placed all sound sources in real-time 3D space. They then incorporated filtering and effects to create a sense of atmosphere and movement through time. No detail was overlooked—from the otherworldly sound of a demon sneaking up behind you to the hum of a broken fluorescent light as you run down an empty corridor. These sounds came together to create a stunningly vivid stereo image. As someone with very sensitive ears, I paid very close attention to these sounds. The real-time virtual soundscape was how I learned to win. I could tell from the sound where my enemies were moving, what they were doing, which types of weapons they were carrying. In a game where victory is based on the number of players you can hunt down and kill, creating sonic profiles of your enemies is very useful.

Before I knew it, I was playing too much for my own good. Eventually, as it is with any fast paced, demanding task, intuition, muscle memory and instinct begin to play a big part. Abilities that until then only manifested

themselves in my music performance began to come out in the game. Like with piano, my fingers would move without conscious thought. Eventually the thought patterns I developed while playing *Quake* worked their way into my real life. My descent into the world of *Quake* came to an abrupt end on a rainy day in 1999.

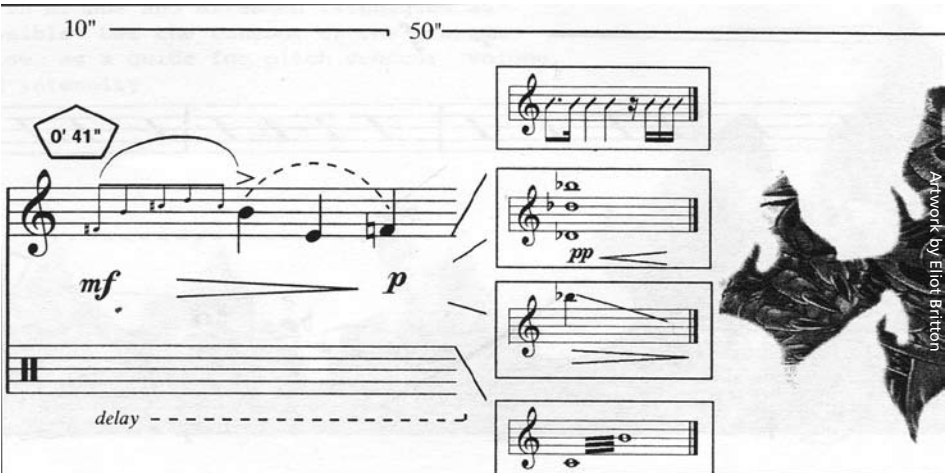
I had been up all night connected to a private server in Ontario and my mind was still reeling when I walked into my high school. I could hear the voices of students getting ready to start the day, the sound of countless different shoes hitting the polished tile floors, the bells, talking and laughing. Looking down one of the long hallways into the cafeteria I remember thinking “a well placed grenade could take out the entire cafeteria and I'd have three possible escape paths”. I paled and stood there motionless for a few minutes. I rubbed my eyes and looked around. I knew that there was something wrong. The Columbine School massacre in Denver, Colorado had occurred a few weeks earlier. Only for an instant, a passing thought, far from turning my school into the next Columbine, but I think I may have had a glimpse into the minds of some of those troubled kids.

I stopped playing *that* day and watched with disgust as games increased their realism and disturbing violent content. Years later, the images and sounds of *Quake's* nightmarish halls were still burning in the back of my mind. During a particularly high stress period of my undergraduate degree my mind drifted back to *Quake*. By this point, I had had enough. I decided to compose a piece in order to exorcize myself of these nightmares. I dug out the *Quake* CD, deep from where it had been buried, set my soundcard to record the master output and started the program. I then logged onto a public server in Minneapolis. “Welcome to *Quake*” flashed on my screen for the first time in many years.

It was a unique experience, comparable only to going back to a hospital or some other setting of a traumatic childhood experience. A sense of nostalgia mixed with



fear and dread came over me. Despite all these familiar feelings, something was very different. The elaborate and interactive soundscape was still there: the hum of the lights, the whirr of a ventilation system in the distance, a dark, almost inaudible ambient soundtrack. But, I couldn't hear any opponents, no explosions, gun shots or screams. With the violent purpose of this arena lost, it seemed peaceful. This massive virtual world whose sole purpose was to funnel people into rooms where they could blast each other with heavy weaponry was still running. Only this time it was devoid



Score excerpt of *Ziggurat Vertigo* by Eliot Britton

of the people that brought the nightmare to life. The game was cycling through dozens of environments without any human players to experience them. My old nightmare, once so intense, had been abandoned and forgotten, reduced to some insignificant software program operating on a massive server in Minneapolis.

All the players had left. I realized that although *Quake* had remained fresh in my mind, technology had moved on. With it, all the people who use virtual worlds as a means to escape the confines of reality. I look back now and laugh at what I used to consider cutting edge. Despite its place in the history of virtual reality and sound design, *Quake* seems very tame compared to the games people are playing today, seven years later.

So, as I ride on the express bus to the university and think about the effects of virtual environments on sound experience, I see a lot of people trying to escape the sonic reality of this bus ride. My mind wanders back to my experiences in the virtual world and I am painfully aware of the effects on my perception of sound. It has influenced my aesthetics, my

approach, but most importantly it has cultivated in me an awareness of this issue. Does the iPod generation care at all about the long term effects of living mostly behind headphones? And what about the guy sitting next to them who is choosing to hear the bus engine and the squeaky breaks—does he care? Or are these headphone sounds a stylish type of “lens” through which these listeners perceive the world? But like anybody who has worn a pair of coloured lenses can tell you, until you take them off, it's easy to forget how bright the world is.

A recent graduate from the University of Manitoba's composition program, ELIOT BRITTON (b. 1983) is currently studying mastering and 5.1 surround techniques at the Precursor Productions School of Electronic Music in Winnipeg, Canada. While studying composition, he worked in a variety of roles including that of a radio show host, sound designer, performer, producer and audio technician. Britton's works have been featured at the *Winnipeg New Music Festival*, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's *On the Edge* series and at the *Canadian Contemporary Music Workshop* in Toronto. He is the recipient of numerous awards and scholarships. He has recently been accepted into the Masters of Composition program at McGill University in Montreal where he intends to continue his studies.

Endnotes

1 Ziggurats were a form of temple common to the Sumerians, Babylonians and Assyrians of ancient Mesopotamia. (Source: wikipedia.org) Their terraced structures and unique architecture have made them a common feature in many

videogames. The computer game *Quake* has a secret level called “Ziggurat Vertigo” featuring a central ziggurat-like structure.

Reflecting On the Lack of Acoustical Considerations at Ground Zero

By Arline L. Bronzaft, Ph.D.

New Yorkers, like many residents around the world, are being inundated by noise from automobiles, aircraft, trains, cooling devices and power tools, not to mention the most recent invasion of boom cars and cell phones. The result—the number one complaint to the City's Quality of Life hotline is NOISE.

In response to the growing noise problem, Mayor Bloomberg launched an initiative in October 2002 called *Operation Silent Night* to combat excessive noise in 24 high-noise neighborhoods. The police were armed with sound meters and given the authority to seize audio equipment and issue fines and summonses to violators. The latest data indicate the effectiveness of this program in that it has led to over two hundred thousand summonses being issued, two hundred cars being seized and over 15,000 arrests. Often when a noise complaint is being investigated by police, it leads to an arrest for other crimes, e.g. drugs seized from a noisy household or boom car.

Mayor Bloomberg also directed the Department of Environmental Protection to revise the City's Noise Code, which when it was introduced over thirty years ago was a model for other cities. Now thirty years later, it cannot meet the demands of citizens who want a lower din, while still preserving the city's vibrant and exciting sounds, e.g. cheers at ballparks, hoorays by children as the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade characters pass by, and shouts greeting the falling of the ball on Times Square on New Year's Eve.

When the City Council held its hearing on the proposed Revised Noise Code, the city's construction industry strongly objected to the Construction Management section which includes rules pertaining to noise mitigation at construction sites, e.g. a plan to be prepared for each construction site that would be in accordance with the provisions of the section that advises on mitigation strategies, methods, procedures and technology. Objections from the city's

devel-  
opers were not  
surprising in light of the findings of

Michael Gerrard, a New York City environmental attorney. He examined a large number of Environmental Impact Statements that accompanied proposed projects in the city and found that these new developments would increase noise levels from one to three dBA. Yet, he discovered that no environmental impact statement he looked at was rejected by the city on the grounds that the project would *create unacceptable noise levels*. (Personal Communication, 1990). Thus, if each new building is allowed to add one or two dBA to the overall ambient level of a community, then ten new buildings in the community would more than double its ambient sound level. The city has not yet developed nor expressed interest in developing a technique that would recognize the impact of small increments on the overall ambient level in communities. Is it any wonder that New York City's soundscape grows noisier with each passing year!

That developers are fighting a requirement setting down detailed construction rules to mitigate noises during the building phase is underscored by the ill-prepared environmental impact statement, with no discussion of abating construction noise, that was recently approved for a tall building to be erected just a short distance from an elementary school in lower Manhattan. When the Councilman representing the school and I looked at the environmental impact statement for this project, we insisted that an acoustical engineer be hired to deal with the concerns of the parents of the schoolchildren who would be adversely affected by months of construction noise. Apparently, things haven't changed from the time Mr. Gerrard conducted his study.

New York City's residents welcome *Operation Silent Night* and are now looking forward to the Revised Noise Code that the Mayor signed in December 2005, which should take effect in about a year. With New York City now facing major development in lower Manhattan because of 9/11 and the revitalization of other neighborhoods as the city bounces back from that horrible day five years ago, more than ever New York needs to be cognizant of its acoustical environment. Under the Revised Code the commissioner will be adopting rules that identify noise mitigation strategies for certain devices and activities, including steel plates, and these rules call for mitigation measures for sensitive receptors. An advisory committee—comprised of representatives from the utility and construction industries, a City Council representative and an acoustical expert—is to assist the Department of Environmental Protection in carrying out the rules under this section.

In January 2004, I wrote to the Chair of the selection committee for the Ground Zero Memorial to inquire about the role of the soundscape in the design of this Memorial. Before receiving a reply and after the selection of the design, a *Newsweek* reporter called to ask my opinion about the Ground Zero memorial called *Reflecting Absence*. After speaking with me and other interested parties including the

archi-  
tects Michael Arad  
and Peter Walker, an article was

written entitled: “Reflecting Absence . . . of Silence” ([www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4266767](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4266767)) which clearly indicated how little thought the architects had given to acoustics. The Memorial will consist of two chasms where the Twin Towers once stood and water will fall 30 feet from ground level into a pool where it will drain off another fifteen foot ledge. I raised two points: 1) Was the impact of the surrounding soundscape, a thriving, active noisy area, considered in the design of the Memorial? 2) Will the waterfall, which may be the largest ever artificially constructed, generate a crashing cacophony of sounds? I was concerned that intrusive noises from the surrounding environment and a very loud waterfall would negate the quiet, somber atmosphere associated with memorials and shrines.

Much to my dismay Mr. Walker responded that “street-level sound does not keep him up at night.” This response is so dismissive of the noise issue. As to whether the bedrock level itself will become a massive echo chamber, Mr. Walker responded that he didn't know. Maybe he should have responded: “I didn't think of it,” possibly because he hadn't given it any thought.

When the chair of the selection committee responded to my letter, its role in the selection process had ended and I was referred to the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation's representatives whom I had difficulty in contacting. Not simply satisfied with my quotes in the *Newsweek* article, I continued to voice my opinion that the Ground Zero Memorial team had ignored acoustical issues. Then on May 12, 2005, I learned that Daniel Euser, a water architecture consultant, had erected a mock-up of the waterfall in his backyard in Richmond Hill, Ontario to deal with the noise issues. Mr. Euser was asked to *create a veil that will not splash . . . or roar deafeningly*. (David Dunlap, *New York Times*, May 12, 2005). Still as the *Times* article noted, *water cannot be scaled—that is, its performance in real life cannot be extrapolated from a small scale model*.

Subsequently, I learned in a personal communication from Mr. Euser that sound was not an issue until he was hired, about a year after I raised questions about the potential noise problems emanating from the waterfall. He also worried that lessening the sound level may compromise the aesthetics of the project. Mr. Euser's testing continues and additional architects and acoustical engineers have been brought on board to deal with the acoustical problems involved with the memorial.

Much has been written about the safety issues of Daniel Libeskind's design of the Freedom Tower but nothing, to my knowledge, has been written about the acoustical implications. For example, absent from any writings was a concern for the wind turbines that were to be placed at the top of the Freedom Tower as a means of obtaining clean electricity from atmospheric winds. The low frequency noise generated by these turbines may have brought an intrusive hum to lower Manhattan. After several months



of contacting people to complain about the potential hum, including the media and city agencies, I finally spoke with a representative of Silverstein Properties, the landlord for the proposed tower. After voicing my concern about the hum from the tower's turbines, the representative said a press conference would be held shortly and: *You will be pleased by what you will learn at the press conference.* Indeed, the wind turbines were removed and replaced by another energy source. The alteration very likely did not come about because of the fear of the potential hum but more likely because of the changes made to the upper portion of the tower.

After reflecting on the lack of interest in acoustics exhibited by the plans for Ground Zero, the author urges the Department of Environmental Protection to carefully monitor developers' noise mitigation plans to see that they are in compliance with the Code. This Department should also evaluate the effectiveness of the construction sections in the Code as to whether they are indeed lessening the impact of construction noise on individuals living, working and studying near construction sites. If not, the construction sections should be corrected without waiting thirty plus years for a major Noise Code revision. Beyond the Noise Code, New York City should pay closer attention to Environmental Impact Statements for new buildings to determine whether they are underestimating impacts on overall ambient levels in communities. To be less than vigilant about new construction mitigation strategies and overall impacts on the environment after the buildings are in place is to expose New Yorkers to even greater noise in the future and a soundscape that will be even more unpleasant.

ARLINE L. BRONZAFT is a Professor Emerita of Lehman College, City University of New York and serves as a member of the Council on the Environment of New York (non-paid volunteer, appointed by Mayor Bloomberg as well as the three previous Mayors). Dr. Bronzaft does research, writes, lectures, and advises anti-noise groups, in the U.S. and abroad, on the hazards of noise to health and well being. Email: albtor@aol.com.

## Listen! They are still threshing.

### One Hundred Finnish Soundscapes selected

By Helmi Järviluoma

February 20, 2006 was an important "soundmark" for the largest project so far of the Finnish Society for Acoustic Ecology (FSAE). After five years of organising, the project *One Hundred Finnish Soundscapes* was reaching its final stages: the society awarded the prizes and gave flowers to the three winners of the competition at the theatre of the School of Art and Media at Tampere Polytechnic University.

Almost 800 suggestions had been sent to the competition. It was definitely not easy to choose any one particular description as better than the others. Finally, the jury had to vote. The winner was a retired 69 years old warehouse worker, Jouko Mikkonen, whose achievement was named as 'amazing' by the jury. He had sent in a total of 186 suggestions to the competition, which form a kind of rhapsodic, sonic life story. His way of writing was personal and "thick", a kind of poetic prose. His descriptions ranged from the sounds of the fishing journeys by the rapids and lakes to the fascinating sounds of the motorcycles; and the paper factory dominated soundscapes at Voikkaa, the village of his childhood,

hundred kilometres north-east of Helsinki.

The second prize was given to the fifty year old teacher Olavi Mäenpää from Kuopio, in mid-eastern Finland. His *Song of the Harvester* was described by the jury as a touching description of alienation and yet ultimately of understanding the meaning of one's own roots. The sound-of-the-harvester theme was personal, but familiar to many Finns. The writing managed to portray the emotions connected to a sound, in an evocative way.



Remembering the old childhood road with Jouko Mikkonen

The third prize was shared by two women: a young student, Silja Hurskainen, whose "Squeak of the wooden stairs" is a sensitive description of the sound of stairs in an old log house in mid-Finland—a sound, which connects several generations living in the same house; and 72 years-old Ritva Muhonen recounted a memory from childhood, in which she as a child, lying on a straw bed, listens to her grandfather early



Heikki Uimonen and Ari Koivumäki recording Hepoköngäs falls



Niilo Rytönen explaining how his "viskumasiina" (seed cleaning machine) works

in the morning as he calmly prepares a fire in the kitchen for breakfast. All the winners received a reward of 250 Euros.

Amongst the participants who received a special mention (and books and CDs) were Elsi Komu (67) who describes a child's way of listening to a special Finnish tree with flickering leaves, and Solveig Erikson, who wrote a beautiful story about a child's soundscape in an urban backyard 50 years ago. The rest of these special mentions include a factory whistle, an elevator in Turku, bird life in a countryside yard, natural "ice jingle bells", a farmhouse childhood, and especially the iron wheels of carriages, and clapping hands with woollen gloves during Independence Day, which is on December 6 each winter.

In addition the jury—consisting partially of FSAE board members (Ari Koivumäki, Meri Kytö, Helmi Järviluoma and Heikki Uimonen) and partially of "non-professionals" (Sinikka Annala and Birgitta Grönroos)—chose 100 descriptions which will be published in a book by the Finnish Literature Society and the School of Art and Media. We will also publish an audio-CD in connection with the book, including sounds and excerpts from the interviews. For about a year FSAE board members mainly, but also some students, travelled throughout Finland to meet the people, who submitted their suggestions to the project. Interviews were made, and soundscapes were recorded where-ever possible. The book will also include several articles and preliminary

analyses of the data. It is scheduled to come out as soon as September 2006.

In addition, twelve five-minute radio documentaries are being prepared for Channel 1 of the Finnish Broadcasting Company. Not only the radio has shown interest in the project, but also television has received it very positively (including a 20-minute documentary already shown on Finnish TV), as well as countless journals.

## How and why?

As a result it can well be said that the project has helped the FSAE to reach its most important goal. Ever since the society was established, we have been giving serious attention to the ways in which we might promote the association's goals: how to increase the awareness of the Finnish people that soundscapes are meaningful.

After hearing Keiko Torigoe talk in one of the early conferences of the WFAE about the Japanese competition, where one hundred Japanese soundscapes were selected for conservation, we decided that this was a great idea. A similar kind of competition—so we hoped—would motivate Finns and give them an incentive to become more attentive to their own soundscape and its meanings.

The Finnish Literature Society is dedicated to the preservation and collection of Finnish tradition and literature. It has a long history of organising competitions, collecting different kinds of folk wisdom. This is why we first contacted the FLS, and they were interested in helping us. We made connections with several other institutions, of which the most important ones were the School of Art and Media at Tampere Polytechnic University, University of Turku, University of Tampere, Abo Akademi University, the Sibelius Museum and the Finnish Broadcasting Company. Finally, we received enough funding, thanks to the Finnish Cultural Foundation and Tampere Polytechnic, that we were able to hire the competent project secretary Meri Kytö and to pay other costs involved in such an undertaking.

The 762 descriptions give a good sonic map of the richness of Finnish soundscapes from 80 years ago to the present. Writings were sent from all over Finland, both from the countryside and from cities. They were written by young and old people, and sounds of nature, people and technology were all included and described. Needless to say, we feel that the project has been a success! For future research the material



will be deposited in several archives ,including with the FLS, Tampere University, the Sibelius Museum and Tampere Polytechnic. Several studies are already under way at the universities involved.

HELMI JÄRVILUOMA is professor of Cultural Studies at the University of Joensuu, Finland, and the co-ordinator of the project *One Hundred Finnish Soundscapes*. She has also been the chair of the Finnish Society for Acoustic Ecology (FSEA) for six years, and has now passed the presidency to the first Finnish soundscape PhD, Dr. Heikki Uimonen. She has also edited several books on soundscape studies, such as *Soundscape Studies and Methods* (with Gregg Wagstaff), the first *Yearbook of Soundscape Studies* (with R. Murray Schafer) and *Soundscapes: Essays on Vroom and Moo*.

Hush now and shake that tree!

The Recording of the One Hundred Finnish Soundscapes

by Ari Koivumäki, Meri Kytö and Heikki Uimonen.

One Hundred Finnish Soundscapes is a project/competition organised and executed by the Finnish Society for Acoustic Ecology. The goal of the project is to record, research and protect sonic environments which are considered important by the competitors. The final one hundred soundscapes were selected by the jury from almost 800 hundred written suggestions. (see Helmi Järviluoma’s article)

An integral part of the project is to record and archive the suggested soundscapes. This ongoing fieldwork is carried out in collaboration with the competitors. The reason for this is to gather additional information of the sounds and to get the soundscapes recorded in the way they would have been recounted by the writer.

The field work will be accomplished in close co-operation with the Tampere Polytechnic School of Art and Media and will be completed by the end of 2006. So far we have interviewed over 30 people. Because of the large diversity of descriptions of the sonic environments and the many different relationships to sounds, we needed to divide the suggestions into five categories, in order to evaluate the materials before heading into the field. The

categories, which are all equal in importance, are as follows:

- Startling curiosities
- Sound memories
- Personal favourites
- Literary merits
- Places of sounds and events

Startling curiosities consists of sound descriptions, that are important for the writer because the sounds are uncommon. They have grabbed the attention of a listener in some special way. Needless to say, these sonic phenomena are sometimes quite troublesome to record. They include for example various sounds of the freezing of water or melting of ice in lakes, seas and



Playing pool in a sound environment preferred by Kati Häkkinen

rivers. Luckily this year the weather conditions were favourable for the recording crew. On the one hand it was not snowing too much in early Fall, and on the other hand we got plenty of it later in the winter. First we managed to capture sounds which are very familiar to many Finnish kids: the clear sound of small pebbles rolling and sliding while thrown on thin ice. Another example of a fortunate sound hunt was the thump of the falling snow heaps gathered on spruce branches. The heaps needed some help from the recording assistant by giving the tree a little push. After numerous attempts the

sought-after thump was captured!

The Sound memories are subjective experiences, and perhaps somewhat nostalgic. In these writings the soundscapes act as a key of remembrance. Part of this category had to be found in the radio sound effects archive of the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE). We needed to rely on YLE since some of the sounds described cannot be heard anymore due to infrastructural and cultural changes. The YLE tapes were played to the interviewees in order to elicit from them spoken comments about the sounds of the past.

As one might expect, the archived sounds did not compare to the memories. The past recollections are sometimes so personal that a short sound object out of context cannot depict the memory of the lived sound event. In addition to that, there were some technical incidents worth mentioning. The threshers were recorded too close to the motor, so the ambience was not right; the hunting horn sounded correct but for some peculiar reason the supposedly Finnish hunters spoke German! However, we managed to tape some very interesting discussions concerning the above mentioned sounds.

The Favourite sounds category consists of sounds precious to individuals. In most cases the criteria were demonstrated clearly. There are many of these soundscapes and they are a common occurrence, since it is the subjective meanings attached to the sounds that make them important. However, their subjective nature makes it inherently challenging to record these sounds. Luckily the interviewees were very helpful. For instance, the school break was recorded quite far from the yard, since the description was written from the distance as well. With the help of the farmer who had lived close to the school for six decades, we managed to get more nuances, distance and echo into the recording. Unfortunately the occasional car and an airplane could not be captured as he had described them.

Literary merits is the fourth category. These descriptions are the proof for the very good co-operation between ears and verbal skills. Some of them are fictitious e.g. ghost stories and anecdotes, but so beautifully written that a recording of the described sounds would most probably ruin the meticulous narrative. It certainly is possible to make a radio feature about a little girl who sees a witch at the bottom of a well,



Listening to carpet washing at Kaivopuisto park

but it would be quite challenging to find the soundscape for that during the field work.

The Places of sounds and events category consists of sounds which are tied to particular places and times. Some of them, like the steam whistle in the town of Dalsbruk, were proposed for protection. This whistle had actually been saved from disappearing once before by local activists. It was recorded several times from different directions and distances in an attempt to capture the signal as the community hears it. In some places like Kaunissaari Island recordings should also be carried out during different times of the year because the sounds are part of the cycles of nature.

A book of one hundred Finnish soundscapes called Sata suomalaista äänimaisemaa with the CD supplement of selected recordings and interviews will be published in September. Samples of the material are already on the site www.100aanimaisemaa.fi. The first 10-minute radio documentary was aired in May of this year.

THE WRITERS have been participating in planning and executing the One Hundred Finnish Soundscapes project, including the ongoing field work. MERI KYTÖ works as the project secretary, ARI KOIVUMÄKI and HEIKKI UIMONEN are members of the FSAE Board.

One Hundred Finnish Soundscapes: Some statistical information

collated by Meri Kytö:

Table 1. Age of the participants of One Hundred Finnish Soundscapes

Age	Number
0—10	19
11—20	52
21—30	55
31—40	17
41—50	35
51—60	42
61—70	41
71—80	20
81—90	12
91—100	1
AGE NOT KNOWN	42

Number of submissions: 762  
Written pages: 770  
Number of participants: 336 (some of them wrote several)

Of which:  
220 wrote in Finnish  
112 in Swedish  
2 in Finnish and Swedish  
2 in English

Gender of participants:  
212: women  
122: men  
2: unidentifiable

Table 2. The most common hometowns/ municipalities of the participants

Number	Place
56	Helsinki
50	Turku
18	Lapträsk
16	Kimito, Lovisa
9	Tampere
8	Espoo
6	Jyväskylä
5	Kajaani, Pargas
4	Joensuu, Kouvola, Kuopio, Vantaa
3	Mickelspiltom, Västansjö
2	Anjalankoski, Forssa, Hyvinkää, Kotka, Lahti, Muurame, Oulu, Pilkanmaa, Savonlinna, Suomussalmi, Taalintehdas, Vestlax, Virkkala, Vreta

From abroad: Den Haag (Holland), Karlskoga (Sweden), Köping (Sweden), Näsvisen (Sweden), Solna (Sweden), Tukholma, (Sweden), Tallinna (Estonia), Santa Fé (USA)



## Art Here, There and Everywhere

*Environmental art project of Pori Art Museum, Finland*

By Mirja Ramstedt-Salonen

## To Read, Hear and Understand the Environment



Babies under one year old in Janet Cardiff's exhibition *Forty-part Motet*

**A**rt Here, There and Everywhere is an art project of the Pori Art Museum for schoolchildren based on environmental art. In art the emersion of land and environmental art in the 1960s denoted an increasing interest in and even concrete involvement with the environment. The leading idea of *Art Here, There and Everywhere* is to study and comment on different environments and one's own relationship to the environment. It trains children to observe, read, hear and understand the messages of the environment in a holistic way through knowing, feeling and making art. Children are offered readiness and tools for reading the living environment, decoding its meanings. The main point is how people use space and mould their environments and how art moulds our surroundings and affects the things we see. How *am* I part of the environment? *Art Here, There and Everywhere* uses a multi-sensory, communal and cross-artistic



Schoolchild in the Prutina-workshop

approach. Workshops particularly focus on environments that we share with others: built environments, cultural and natural environments, social environments and sound environments. Artists and researchers from different fields visit the workshops to work with the children.



Schoolchildren on a listening walk

## Audio Approaches to the Environment

Walking—or moving in general—is a natural way to get acquainted with the surroundings. On the *Art Here, There and Everywhere* walks, the senses are trained based on different themes. The Listening Walk offers a way to concentrate on the



Schoolchild in the Prutina-workshop

soundscape and contemplate the messages conveyed by sounds about our environment and ourselves. Listening is a demanding task especially for children. Using a map during a walk is a good way to enable children to concentrate. A map with 'sound stops' guides them to stop for a moment at different sounding soundscapes. At the stops they can write or draw on the map the sounds they have heard. It is also possible to use colours to tell about the feelings of different soundscapes. Besides listening to the sounds, children have also studied and recorded the sounds made by themselves. In the museum's "Prutina"-workshops children have studied what kind of sounds they can produce by making and 'playing' all kinds of gadgets.

## Hear the Art

The Pori Art Museum in Finland is known for its exhibitions of international contemporary art. Starting in the nineties, the museum has been investigating the possibilities of art pedagogy based on contemporary art. The museum's operating environment is not only the museum building or even the city of Pori. In recent years the art museum institution has adopted a strong outward focus. Besides the traditional tasks of museums, the need of a more active interaction with the audience and the surroundings in general has increased. At the same time contemporary art has challenged traditional concepts of art and created art exhibitions in increasingly multi-sensory combinations of diverse materials, scents, spaces and sounds. It is also possible to hear the art, to explore relationships between vision and hearing. In 2004 people had a chance to visit Janet Cardiff's exhibition *Forty-Part Motet* in the Pori Art Museum based on Thomas Tallis' work *Spem in alium*. The work combined sound, movement and environment where the viewer/listener can move proactively through the space, activating sounds and unfolding narratives.

MIRJA RAMSTEDT-SALONEN is the museum educator at the Pori Art Museum.

## Towards the Sound.

**Listening, change and the meaning in the sonic environment.** [*Ääntä kohti. Ääniympäristön kuuntelu, muutos ja merkitys.*]

by Heikki Uimonen

## Dissertation Abstract

**T**owards the Sound is composed of an introduction and seven articles refereed and published in international (2) and domestic (5) scientific publications. The dissertation approaches the issues of sonic environment from the standpoints of acoustic communication, ethnomusicology and cultural studies of communication. This multidisciplinary is applied to issues of hearing/listening, meanings of environmental sounds and the change of various soundscapes.

The introduction deals with the history of Canadian soundscape research founded in the late 1960's in Vancouver and its relation to anthropology and communication studies. The history of senses in anthropology is briefly discussed as well as different modes of listening. Theoretical and methodological issues and the key concepts concerning the dissertation are also presented. The reproduction of sound and how it has transformed the sonic environment and the listening is dealt with in more detail. The ideas of the philosopher Walter Benjamin and the musicologist Theodor W. Adorno are interpreted in relation to soundscape and Canadian soundscape research. The first part of the dissertation also introduces the conceptual framework of actors, culture and structure which are recommended to be taken into consideration in future soundscape studies. In other words: micro, meso and macro levels are all manifested sonically in an environment and should also be researched together.

The articles *Soundscape Studies and Auditory Cognition* and *You don't hear anything 'round here! Cognitive Maps and Auditory Perception* deal with the issues of methodology, empirical soundscape research and related disciplines. Auditory cognition and cognitive musicology and their possible contribution to research of the sonic environment are discussed in more detail. The brief history of soundscape studies is also included in the first article. The empirical part of *Auditory Cognition* is based on field work carried out in the Swedish village of Skruv. The paper concentrates on the meanings attached to local sounds, and how different layers of the past can be detected in the same sound event depending on the listeners' enculturation and their soundscape competence.

*Äänestä kertomalla. Skotlantilaisen kylän puhuttu menneisyys* [Stories of Sounds. The Narrated Past of the Scottish Village] and *Pois maailman mellakasta. Sointulan siirtokunnan ääniympäristön muutos* [Away from the Din of the World. The Change of the Sonic Environment in the Colony of Sointula, B.C., Canada] are concentrating on the historical and cultural changes in environmental sounds. The past soundscapes of the Scottish village Dollar and the Canadian-Finnish village of Sointula were reconstructed with the help of diverse sources including artifacts, interviews, literature and newspaper articles. It turned out that the sounds, past and present, attach the community to broader historical and global contexts. In both cases the acoustic communication of the community consisted of local activities, cultural meanings attached to them, and sonically manifested features of national and global structures.

The last three articles concentrate on *transphonic or schizophrenic* phenomena i.e. how electroacoustic technology has moulded our sonic environment and what their cultural implications are. *Radio työpaikan äänimaisemassa*. [Radio Receiver as a Builder of Soundscapes at the Workplace] concentrates on the use of radio at the workplace. Drawing on research among radio listeners the article argues that radio enables the selection of music and thus makes somewhat tedious tasks more endurable. The selection of channels was regulated by the music policy of a radio channel and the preferences of the workers. Own cassettes were considered too personal to be played in a commonly shared work space. Some of the tasks needed more attention and thus the music that demanded more contemplative listening was excluded. Questions of sound and power are also in focus, since there was virtually no silent place in a commonly shared room. In order to withdraw from the soundscape one needed to use a Walkman and earphones.

*Kuuloaistin valtakunta. Urbaani ääniympäristö ja radion musiikitarjonta* [The Realm of Hearing. Urban Sonic Environment and Radio Music Policy] is an article concerning the music policies in Finnish radio after the deregulation of broadcasting in 1985. The deregulation put life into aired music when the channels started to compete with each other about who would be the first one to broadcast the latest hit songs. Present radio channels have made a virtue out of this: drawing on a case study of listings of the National Airplay Chart. The article argues that the same songs dominate on major Finnish channels.

Because of the economic depression in the early 1990's the ownership of the radios was reorganised and format radios introduced. For instance Radio 957, previously owned by the Student Union of Tampere University, was converted to format radio. Interviews were replaced with music and the show hosts were reduced and turned into announcers. The diversity of music was cut down: classical, folk, jazz and independent musics were no longer aired. Locality played a major role in the granting of licenses in the mid 80's. In the current situation, the idea of 'locality' should not be understood geographically but as an image or a commercial brand. Local music is aired locally but at the same time same songs are heard in other channels that belong to the same chain of radio stations.

*Sorry can't hear you! I'm on a train! Ringing tones, meanings and the Finnish Soundscape* explores how the use of mobile phones has changed the contemporary Finnish soundscape. The change manifests itself firstly via telephone conversations which have spread from private premises to public places and secondly via interchangeable ringing tones. Drawing on research carried out among cellular phone users the article argues that the ringing tones are selected on the basis of musical taste, so they can no longer be regarded as impersonal telephone signals. They can be used as a means of distinction and identity like any music. Even if the quality of ringing tones is inferior to the original interpretation of a tune they can still be considered to be music, because of their personal and collective associations.

The dissertation is available online at:  
<http://acta.uta.fi/pdf/951-44-6442-7.pdf>.

HEIKKI UIMONEN is currently working as a head of the Folk Music Institute (an information centre on Finnish folk music) located in Kaustinen, Finland. He has published several articles on issues of the sonic environment in Finnish and English and edited soundscape related radio programs. He is the Chairperson of the Finnish Society for Acoustic Ecology (FSAE).



# Soundwalking

## Willow Farm Nursery

by Hildegard Westerkamp

It was a memorable event for everyone involved: partially because of the co-operating weather—initially sunny, gradually clouding over and then right after the soundwalk pouring with rain; partially because of the place itself—a most beautiful acreage on the Sunshine Coast of British Columbia in Canada, consisting of forest with pathways and benches, a nursery area, a rocky hilltop with a large pond and a small stage, a house and a variety of small garden and sitting areas; and partially of course because of the sound makers, the sound making environment and the audience as participating, active listeners.

I want to give you an impression of this soundwalk event with the help of some photos and words. It is quite impossible to do this, of course. A soundwalk cannot be reproduced and the experience cannot be shared with those who were not present—the walking listeners and the environment create a unique piece together that can only occur during the time of the walk. But I can perhaps create another type of listening experience, an imaginary one, here on these pages for you of Willow Farm Nursery (while you are inside your own soundscapes at this moment and I am in mine as I write this): I will attempt to make sounds audible through words and images and you can engage your ears while viewing the photos and reading the words. Let's explore how this can work.



LISTEN to the soundscape of Willow Farm Nursery on this particular Sunday, August 28, 2005, 2:30 p.m.: crickets singing on the rocky hill near the pond, 2 ravens calling to each other while floating high above forest and garden, wind in the grass, in bushes, trees and leaves, single footsteps on gravel, distant voices, winged grass hoppers clapping their way through the air, voices of children, wind chimes clinking—all sounds springing from a basic quiet, which is transformed completely by an intense crescendo and decrescendo when seaplanes are flying over.



LISTEN to the 35 or so visitors who are here to do the soundwalk, listening and walking. Their footsteps are barely audible on the mossy forest floor, more noticeable in grass and on rocky surfaces, and clearly audible on the gravel paths in the nursery.

LISTEN to the soundmakers, Barry Taylor and his percussion students, Dillon Mennie, Amanda Smart, Mohammed Asgari, Tella Samtez, Bijan Asgari-Samtez, moving through the place playing on all available sound makers—on the various gongs and drums they brought along from home, playing the water in the pond, the wind chimes, rustling in bushes, playing on Jim Krieger's metal sculptures scattered around the pond and gardens, experimenting with bird whistles and rainsticks, and playing on the very resonant clay planters in the nursery as if they were percussion instruments.



LISTEN to Janice Pentland Smith playing her cello in a favourite part of her garden, exploring its sounds in musical dialogue with the soundscape around her.



*The silence of our Western forests was so profound that our ears could scarcely comprehend it. If you spoke your voice came back to you as your face is thrown back to you in a mirror. It seemed as if the forest were so full of silence that there was no room for sounds.*

Emily Carr, *The Book of Small*, Toronto, 1951, p. 119

*I don't know the song of this place. It doesn't quite know its own tune. It starts with a deep full note on the mighty cedars, primeval, immense, full, grand, noble from roots to tips...*

Emily Carr, *Hundreds and Thousands*, Toronto/Vancouver, 1966, p. 56

LISTEN also to Barbara Robertson—sitting on a bench in the forest, looking like B.C.'s own painter Emily Carr—reading from Carr's writings about the sounds of forest. Gradually her voice becomes audible as we approach her, then some of the words and finally the whole text-meaning emerges along with all the subtle intonations and expressions in her voice. As we continue to walk along the forest paths her voice appears and disappears among the rocks, trees and bushes.

LISTEN to yourself listening. Listen inside and listen outside, to the dialogue between yourself and the environment.



Many thanks to Stephanie Crane and Janice Pentland Smith for making their Willow Farm Nursery available; to Giorgio Magnanensi of Vancouver New Music for initiating the soundwalk events and inviting me to 'compose' and lead one of them; to Barry Taylor and his students Dillon Mennie, Amanda Smart, Mohammed Asgari, Tella Samtez, Bijan Asgari-Samtez for their sensitive, inspired and competent soundmaking activities; to Janice Pentland Smith for daring to play her cello in this context; to Barbara Robertson not only for her wonderful reading of Emily Carr's writings but also for her spirited impersonation of Emily Carr. And finally many thanks to the audience for its listening presence.

HILDEGARD WESTERKAMP has been leading soundwalks wherever possible in recent years. She continues to compose with environmental sounds, is co-editor of this journal and is on the board of the WFAE. In her new role as grandmother she is learning to listen in new ways.





Sound of Mount Desert Island

Aaron Lewis  
2CD set, Agile Productions, CD01  
Agileajl@gmail.com;

The Sound of Light in Trees

David Dunn  
CD, Acoustic Ecology Institute,  
CD ee0513  
www.EarthEar.com;

Sweet Sounds of a Sugar Town

2-disc set (one CD and one DVD)  
produced by the Bundaberg Media  
Research Group  
Central Queensland University, Australia  
www.bmrg.cqu.edu.au

Why Birds Sing

David Rothenberg  
CD, Terra Nova Music  
terranova@highlands.com; CD01D

Centro De Creacion Experimental in Cuenca, Spain

2CD set, CD SGAE:RAS-1&2  
www.uclm.es/cdce

Reviewed by Harold Clark

Soundscape has received numerous review submissions of books, CDs and DVDs since our last issue. Although an in-depth review of each of these submissions is desirable, the Journal’s editorial committee prefers to single out items which are of exceptional interest or can contribute to a fuller understanding of exactly what soundscape work may represent. However, this may include thought-provoking items as well as critical issues related to the concepts and practice of acoustic ecology.

Case-in-point in this issue: I have selected items from no less than five submissions towards such an understanding. They can be divided into the following sub-categories:

- 1) Nature Documentation recordings
- 2) Nature—Music Integration recordings
- 3) Philosophical—Aesthetic commentary and illustration in recorded formats

Considering such recordings from the acoustic ecology perspective raises the question: *what value for humanity is exhibited through a recording which sound ecologists or cultural workers produce, but*

*the listener does not actually know the physical setting where the sounds occurred?*

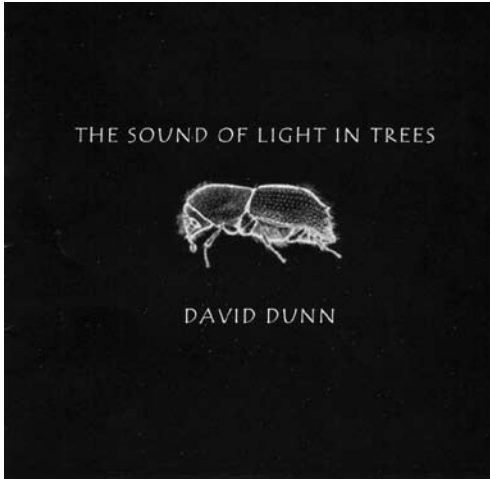
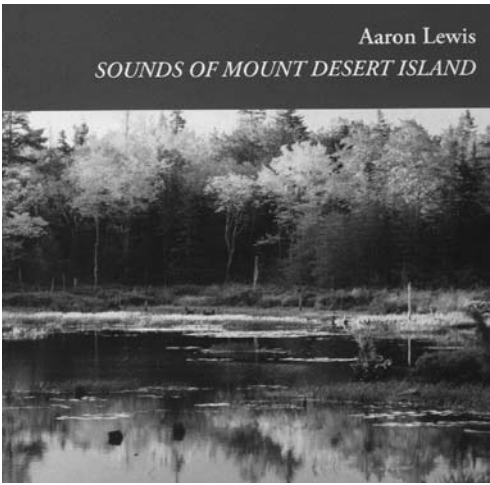
If we are losing our sensibility of sounds in a space, in a context and thereby the meanings surrounding acoustic ecology all around the world in various cultures, is it vital that we document these? Can this be done through recorded sound alone? Should this task be done literally, as a field recording, much as western ethnographers recorded the disappearing musics of rural, third-world villages, for example? Or should this task be artistically construed as a “representation” of a particular soundscape, through composition? Is there another way recordings can capture, educate, preserve and stimulate?

1) **Nature Documentation** is represented here by two different audio documentarians: Aaron Lewis, in his *Sound of Mount Desert Island*; and David Dunn, in his *The Sound of Light in Trees*.

Aaron Lewis lives on Mount Desert Island on the coast of mid-Maine, USA. From the text, Aaron appears to have been on a quest of getting to know a place by its sonic attributes. This includes referencing locations visited during his one and a half year journey, recording everything from natural habitats, a restaurant, to tourists watching the Queen Mary II dock at Bar Harbor pier.

Journal notes indicate time of day and date of recording. Although many of the audio tracks appear to be consistent audio journeys, I am uncertain about the “editing” which was done on ProTools at the College of the Atlantic’s A/v lab. All of the tracks are short (roughly 4 minutes long) and seem like miniature audio *postcards* of a “place.” One could argue whether it is possible to experience the essence of place merely by such short hops into an aural world with nothing more than a few descriptive words on when and where it was documented. Moreover, how much are these tracks a collage of many hours of editing? What is the truer context of these places?

David Dunn’s work takes place in the southern Colorado Pinyon pine forests and is set to the context of this specific tree’s ecological systems audible through bark beetles (now becoming a major menace to pine trees throughout the rocky mountains and the Pacific Northwest), insect communications, branch sway sounds from wind and other minute encounters with weather conditions and sound producers living in and around the trees. It is a virtual aural *microscope* of a particular life environment of which few people would be aware and is put into a scientific context with excellent liner notes. David is attempting to bridge the gap that exists between those artists who have opened up the idea of “acoustic ecology” by utilizing a scientific approach which regards the aural environment, and those who merely make ambient recordings. David thoroughly examines a phenomenon that contributes to a deeper understanding of the systems at work



here. He even utilized spectrographic examples of the sounds relating to the activity of the beetles.

Nor is the sonic journey uninteresting. Quite the contrary, it is a continuous playback of 59 minutes and 13 seconds of a fascinating micro soundscape—perhaps something which one would hear if one lived in a tree such as the Pinyon. (It makes me think that those brave, tree-loving warriors in the Redwoods of northern California must have developed rich sound experiences living in the tops of trees for up to one year.)

Again, this is a recording which has a temporal compression (editing) of sonic events which could not naturally take place during just one hour. Does it reflect the true context of an environment or merely a snapshot of it? While it does much to raise the awareness about the destructive nature of the bark beetle amidst the lively activities in and around the tree, it only lightly taps one on the shoulder of awareness. It’s prolonged quiet and extensive (primarily) high-frequency audio saturation creates more of a meditative state in this listener. As an artistic statement about the inner life of trees, it works very well, however remotely the actual events are represented. This is thought provoking!

2) **Nature-Music Integration**

When I was growing up, I listened to the radio near the bedside. Night radio helped me to develop a love for classical music and—since this was also a short-wave radio—a fascination with other cultures of the world. In those days the *quality* of the sound was not as important as the contents of what was being listened to. This experience educated my ears to listen through the buzzes and static of AM or SW to extract the inherent meaning in the voices of Renata Tebaldi, Joan Sutherland, the New York Philharmonic, or Radio Moscow’s English service broadcasts. The *nature* of static noise was an inherent part of the experience in this form of music listening.

This brings me to consider our third submission, a 2-disc set (one CD and one DVD) produced by the Bundaberg Media Research Group at Central Queensland University, Australia. This is a beautifully-recorded media work, in every way, which I am certain would feel quite at home on any of Australia’s network television documentary-hour programs. My point here is: the work is quality-rich without necessarily challenging the human ear (or mind) to search into a world of sonic meanings closely related to the subtleties of sugar harvesting. Is this a “soundscape”?

“Compositions inspired by soundscapes and rhythms of the Bundaberg sugar industry,” it says. *The Sweet Sounds of a Sugar Town* (featuring Dane Costigan, drummer/composer) reminded me of industrial music ensembles in which some of my musician friends were contracted to play at Disneyland in Southern

California in the mid 1960s. (Many of them went on to work as musicians for car shows, conventions, or Hollywood studios). The emphasis was on entertaining sounds and studio versatility.

Sound effects (crickets, birdsong, trucks, sugar harvesters, sugar processors, and a commercially-inspired music ensemble, including prodigious drumming) serve as a backdrop to video footage shot in and around a sugar plantation in Central Queensland. This is set against the many generations of lives and people involved in maintaining the sugar industry. The work is primarily a documentary flick with a soundtrack. One could say it also is a kind of commercial for sugar.

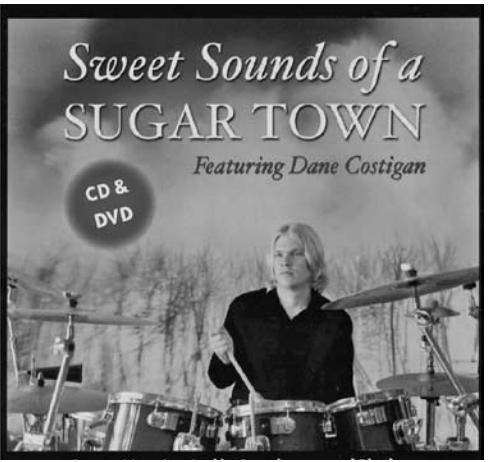
When does incidental music with added background natural sound effects (who knows how they were gathered) constitute the *soundscape* of a particular region? I would argue that studio production has relegated the “Sweet Sounds of Sugar Town” into mere *accompaniment* in a setting where people actually *survive* from sugar production. The slick production of a secular life of commerce and of entertaining stories *is* the medium here. It dominates completely and contains little or no sonic message (as McLuhan would say) that would reflect the deeper values of daily life on a sugar plantation. I am sure it would be pleasurable for many in Sugar Town to watch themselves on TV.

However, there is no correlation to a true “soundscape” and no apparent attempt at a method. (If only our National Libraries and University foundations had this kind of production money directed at acoustic ecology, perhaps we could do wondrous projects exploring the deeper implications of acoustic ecology and “place”).

Our fourth submission, *Why Birds Sing* is an example of nature—music integration by David Rothenberg. This is, however, a supreme work of art produced by Terra Nova Music. David makes no pretense that this is a soundscape. It is an extraordinary encounter with the Australian Alberts and superb lyrebirds. These peacock-like ground birds develop a sonic repertoire of imitations from

other birdsong, requiring nearly six years. David and his musician-friends have traveled to Melbourne and played alongside these extraordinary creature-improvisers. This recording represents (including editing) a nature-culture experience rarely encountered in any human cultural setting, where musicians play with or alongside non-human creatures. The context here is clearly musical performance and it is beautifully performed by fine musicians and even more virtuosic birds. This is an art—nature work on par with such western composer/sound-explorers as Olivier Messiaen, Ravel or Pierre Schaeffer.

David has also written a book, *Why Birds Sing*, which explores what birdsong means to both avian and human ears. This is a seminal work which deserves to be reviewed in future issues of the Journal. It was published in 2005 by Basic Books.





**3) Philosophical and Aesthetic Commentary** comes from a submission by the Centro De Creacion Experimental in Cuenca, Spain to our Journal for review. This is a 2-disc set published by the Centro. While I would not consider the works on these discs to be “soundscape” examples, they do deserve a mention because of the first disc in this set alone. It is an extraordinary mix of interviews with five well-known artistic personalities about their experiences with “sound art.” The philosophical and artistic basis of “sound art” is exposed and challenged here by the luminaries Raoul Hausmann, Salvador Dali, Otto Muehl, Rolf Julius, and Max Neuhaus, most of whom are visual or performance artists.

Although this reviewer was unable to fully understand the German of Otto Muehl or the Spanish text from the liner notes, it was very clear that this publication represents an attempt to verify the existence of discrepancies in the philosophy of western art with regards to sound and how society is currently characterizing its sonic forms.

The *context* of perception is expressed particularly concisely by Dali when he attributes the outpouring of his painted images, what he calls “paranoic imaginations”, to the influences of the surrounding rocks and landscapes in his Mediterranean Spanish village. The paintings are extensions of the landscape, transformed through his imagination into “monstrous visions.”

Max Neuhaus directly questions the presumption of new ‘sound art’ forms, stating that most of what is heard at such presentations has little to do with sound (as not being the most important component of what is being exhibited) and even less to do with art. Almost every activity in the world has an aural component to it. He says: “sound art has included anything and everything that makes a sound, and in some cases, some things that don’t. Most often, that which presumes to be “sound art” is simply music, or a diverse collection of musics with a new name. Why do we now call new music (of the 20th and 21st centuries) something cowardly different—‘sound art’—rather than what it really is?” Art being a refinement of distinctions, requires a proficient level of development from a basis that evolves into a particular form. Neuhaus complains: “the phrase ‘sound art’ has been consumed!”

Perhaps this is also the point of my review selections: what does acoustic ecology mean to our members and those attempting to sustain and develop our interests in it as we receive such diverse recorded works, many of which pivot between art and pure field recording?

The remaining works on disc 1 and 2 are largely sound-text pieces, [Muehl exploring the range of emotive states in prose and Hausmann portraying a phonetic “sound” work for human voice], and electro-acoustic compositions from *El Arte Sonoro en Mexico*. While some of these works, such as Javier Alvarez’ *Mambo a la Braque*, or Germain Bringas and Julio Clavio’s *Delajurta* are artistically exciting, they cannot represent what one would call “soundscapes.” They are clearly 21st century music compositions and as works of art, reflect the philosophical and aesthetic considerations of their composer–creators.

Reviews in *Soundscape* usually attempt to cover submissions which distinguish themselves as soundscape presentations and are relevant to acoustic ecology issues. Works like this are often

characterized by a quality and depth of relationship between a particular cultural and/or nature-born sound field—which includes human inhabitants of a particular place and time—or by efforts expressed in recordings which draw our attention towards the relationship between human beings and nature (sentient or otherwise) within an acoustic ecology, threatened or intact. There are numerous journals and periodicals to review new music and the exhibitions of contemporary artworks. At the same time, where art meets nature in new ways will also remain of interest for us to explore.

HAROLD CLARK, (born in Nebraska, USA) studied music at the University of California, San Diego, the Musikkonservatoriet i Oslo, Norway, with graduate research at the University of York, England. Working as a studio musician and sound designer, Harold launched his compositional career in Norway during the 1970’s, working with Arne Nordheim, Olav Thommessen and Mauricio Kagel. At the Henie-Onstad Artcentre, Harold co-founded Norway’s first computerized music centre NSEM where he directed the studio. His works, lectures & broadcasts have appeared widely in Europe & North America. He has worked with children’s music education in the 1980’s in England and Sweden. Harold’s book, *Steps to an Ecology of Contemporary Music*, is currently being edited for re-publication. He lives and works in Vancouver, Canada.

**Sounding Art. Eight Literary Excursions Through Electronic Music.**

(Includes a CD)

**Katharine Norman**  
Ashgate Publishing Limited, Aldershot, England (2004)  
US\$99.95/£50.00  
ISBN 0-7456-0426-8

**Reviewed by Adrian Newton**

Imagine that you decided to write a book about sonic art. How would you tackle it? I reckon there are three possibilities. One option would be to write a technical manual, describing the mechanics of composition, perhaps like Wishart (1994). Or you could write a polemic, a philosophical treatise, extolling the merits of a particular compositional approach, or a critique of others. Examples might be Wishart (1996) or Landy (1991). The third, and perhaps most ambitious alternative, would be to write something that is itself a work of art; a piece of literature that is an expression of an artistic viewpoint, perhaps composed in a similar way to a musical composition. It is this approach that Katharine Norman has adopted here, and the result is something wonderful, a book that is as rich with ideas as the music that she describes.

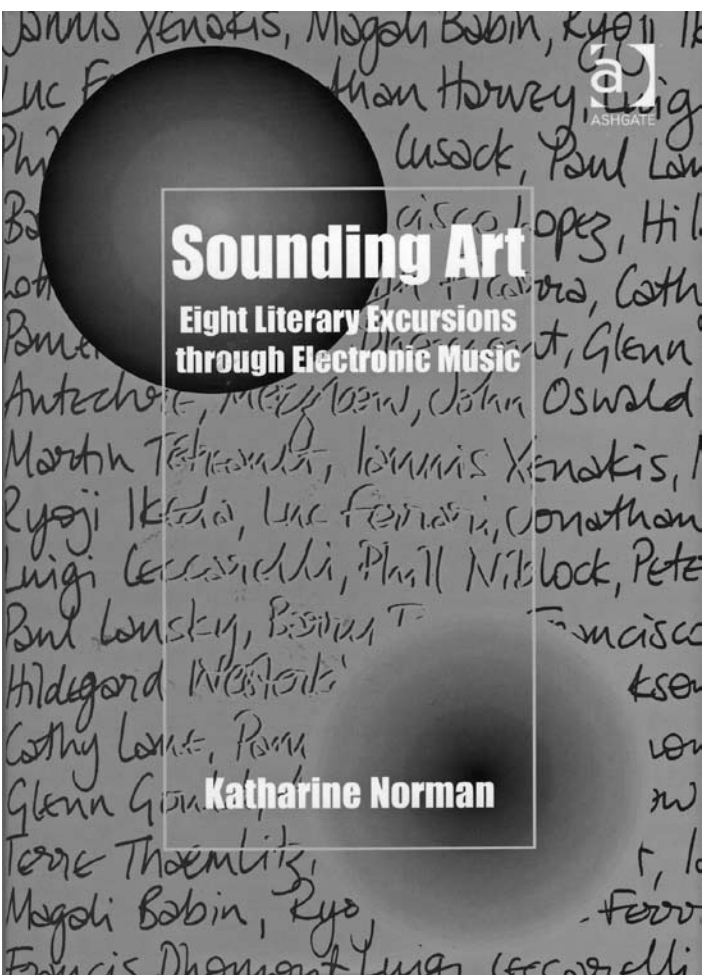
The book comprises eight chapters, arranged in four parts, which respectively consider sounding spaces, worlds, voices and edges. A glance at the chapter summaries given in the introduction is enough to indicate that this is far from being a conventional music text. The second chapter weaves a thread through such diverse themes as metaphors of flight in works for instruments and tape, an analysis of perspective in da Vinci’s *Annunciation*, an assessment of Gaston Bachelard’s philosophical writing, and

emblem books. While these references might sound almost outlandishly broad in scope, the effect is mesmerizing, and the result convincing. Following the author’s line of thought is at times a real challenge, but always a worthwhile one. I repeatedly had the feeling that she was really on to something. At times this feeling received surprising support, such as Jonathan Harvey’s reference to flight in his own written work, mentioned in a footnote. The book is so rich in ideas that I felt obliged to read it at a very slow pace, rationing myself to just a few pages each day, to provide adequate time for digestion.

Katharine takes us gently by the hand and leads us through many of the current sub-genres of electronic music, including acousmatic music, radio art, electroacoustic music, noise, and, of course, soundscape composition. Given the diversity of modern music practice, this could easily be a disorientating or even confusing journey, but the author is an expert navigator. The text is structured rather like a soundwalk, moving from one chosen piece to another, each carefully considered and used to illuminate the narrative of the respective chapter. Katharine chooses her soundmarks with great care, and provides original, thoughtful insight into many of the pieces featured, both the familiar and little-known. One of the main reasons that I liked this book was that many of my favourite composers are considered along the way: Xenakis, Jonathan Harvey, Peter Cusack, Laurie Anderson, Francis Dhomont, among many others (but sadly no Trevor Wishart). The choice of pieces on which she hangs her narrative is surprising, eclectic, even idiosyncratic, but above all, it is highly personal, and therein lies its charm.

There is a risk that such an approach could result in something precious or pretentious, but I found these personal reflections immensely stimulating. Some are very penetrating. For example, I have long admired Paul Lansky’s seminal *Night traffic*, without thinking deeply about why. In fact, it has bugged me for years. I was astonished to find out that Katharine feels precisely the same about it, and adeptly puts her finger on why: through its deft processing of traffic sounds, this piece spans the division between abstract and literal, and somehow conveys what listening to a highway *feels* like. Spot on. (Although whether the composer himself has realized this is moot, given what he subsequently did with the piece).

A whole chapter is devoted to the work of Hildegard Westerkamp. I have to confess, as an ardent admirer of all things Westerkamp, I bought this book for this chapter alone. I wasn’t disappointed. Katharine uses the novel, and highly appropriate device of basing the chapter on a transcription of a soundwalk in the rain in the company of Hildegard. Like any good soundscape composition, this chapter has a strong sense of place, the soundwalk having taken place in Lighthouse Park, Vancouver, which has featured in Westerkamp’s own composition *Talking Rain*. The result is an intimate portrayal of two friends discussing their approach to art in the process of producing it, discovering things together, and is absolutely delightful. As with the other chapters, the author has been creative in arranging the text. Reflections on the sounds recorded during the soundwalk, and the process of composition, are interleaved between fragments of conversation. Gaps are included in the text in lieu of pauses in conversation, in an attempt to mimic the natural rhythm of speech. There is plenty of evidence of the fun she has clearly had in experimenting with different typefaces and layouts. This approach to presenting the book as a piece of graphic art, as a way of illustrating the compositional approaches that she is writing about, I found highly effective. Sat



on my shelf, this book deserves to rub shoulders with Cage’s masterpiece *Silence* (Cage, 1961), and not only because they both begin with the letter S.

Criticisms? I was a little disappointed by the accompanying CD; many of the excerpts were too short to do the pieces justice, and somehow the CD failed to match up to the originality of the book. Maybe the author might have been a little more adventurous here—I would have been tempted to follow the lead of plunder-phonics (considered in Chapter 8) and constructed an original composition out of these fragments. The least successful chapter, for me, was about Francis Dhomont. Perhaps language acted as a barrier (an interesting thought in itself), but I felt that the text in this chapter did not offer such depth of insight as some of the others. The text is presented in four parallel columns, an original device and appropriate to the piece under consideration (*Sous le regard d’un soleil noir*). The effect, as intended, is schizophrenic, and rather disconcerting. I left this chapter feeling rather unfulfilled; many interesting questions remained unasked, which might have revealed something more about Dhomont’s distinctive approach to composition.

But these are minor quibbles. This is a magnificent book, recommended to anyone with an interest in modern music. Perhaps its greatest virtue is what it reveals about the author herself, and what it says about being a composer today. The text is disarmingly honest—how many other sonic artists would confess to pre-teen squealing for Donny Osmond? What comes through is her enthusiasm for music, in all its guises; very little of the criticism presented here is seriously negative. As she wrote this, Katharine underwent a major change in the circumstances of her own life.



## Reviews *(continued)*

Is there any sense of personal crisis in the book? I could not find it; rather, much evidence of questioning. I wondered whether the process of writing this book had itself been something of a cathartic experience for Katharine, perhaps leading her to question her own compositional approach. She has described this book as not being about electronic music at all. Certainly, the reference in the subtitle to 'eight literary excursions' is an accurate guide to its contents. I was pleased to learn that she is now combining text with sound in her compositions (see [www.novamara.com](http://www.novamara.com)); it would be sad indeed if she were to abandon writing, having discovered such a talent for it. I believe that Katharine Norman has found her vocation.

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ADRIAN NEWTON is part-time acoustic ecologist, and part-time *real* ecologist, living in Dorset, England. Current projects include soundscape compositions of local woods and rivers, and he is just about to start on a sonic circumnavigation of Stonehenge. More details at [www.nemeton.org.uk](http://www.nemeton.org.uk)

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Photo by Hildegard Westerkamp

*see page 20 for details*



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401 Richmond Street West, Suite 358, Toronto, ON

M5V 3A8, Canada

### United Kingdom & Ireland Soundscape Community (UKISC)

Individual fee: £20 GBP — Institution: £50 GBP

Concessions: £10 GBP

*Cheques should be made payable to the UK and Ireland Soundscape Community and sent to:*

c/o Tsai-Wei Chen

Music Department, Goldsmiths College

University of London

New Cross, London SE14 6NW

Email: [ukisc@wfae.net](mailto:ukisc@wfae.net)

### Suomen Akustisen Ekologian Seura (Finnish Society for Acoustic Ecology—FSAE)

Individual fee: €20 — Student fee: €15.

*Please pay to the bank account:*

Osuuspankki 571113-218325

Suomen Akustisen Ekologian Seura

c/o TAMK/Taide ja viestintä/Meri Kytö

Finlaysoninkatu 7

33210 Tampere, Finland

### American Society for Acoustic Ecology (ASAE)

Individual Fee: US \$35.00

*Cheques should be made payable to*

*American Society for Acoustic Ecology and sent to:*

American Society for Acoustic Ecology

Attn: Membership Coordinator

PO Box 503, Greenpoint Station

Brooklyn, NY 11222-5053, USA

### Forum Klanglandschaft (FKL)

Austria, Germany, Italy, Switzerland

FEES:	Normal	Studierende	Gönner	Institutionen
EURO	27	17	50	60
CHF	40	25	75	85

Austria: Bank Austria Creditanstalt, Account-No. 52297120901,  
BLZ: 12000

Germany: Mittelbrandenburgische Sparkasse Potsdam, 350 300  
4032, BLZ 160 500 00

Italy: Conto corrente postale nr. 100 075 08 Firenze, intestato a  
Albert Mayr, con l'indicazione della causale "iscrizione al FKL/  
WFAE"

Switzerland: Postcheckkonto 40-551632-1

### Japanese Association for Sound Ecology (JASE)

Individual fee 2,000 ¥/year

*The JASE fee should be paid with and in addition to the annual fee  
of 6,000 ¥ for the Soundscape Association of Japan (SAJ) by postal  
transfer.*

Postal transfer number: 00110-6-612064

Japanese Association for Sound Ecology (JASE)

c/o Keiko Torigoe

University of the Sacred Heart

4-3-1, Hiro-o, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo, 150-8938, Japan

### WFAE Affiliated Individual Membership

Regular: US \$35 — Students: US \$20

(with a copy of your current student ID).

### WFAE Associate Membership

Regular: US \$75 — or as negotiated depending on size of  
organisation.

*Please send US cheques, international money orders, or travellers  
cheques made out to the WFAE. Do not send drafts, as bank charges  
are very high! Mail to:*

World Forum for Acoustic Ecology (WFAE)

Membership Secretary

P.O. Box 268, Fairfield, Victoria, 3078, Australia

Email: [membership-secretary@wfae.net](mailto:membership-secretary@wfae.net)

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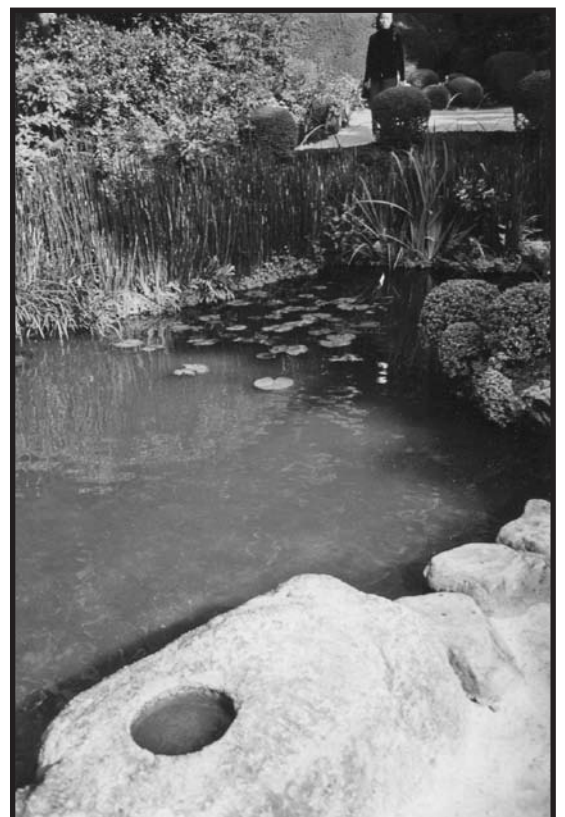
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THE SOUND OF DANCING DIES;  
WIND AMONG THE PINE TREES,  
INSECT CRIES.

— *written by the nun Sogetsu (c. 1804),  
paraphrased by Harold G. Henderson*<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> *An Introduction to Haiku*, Doubleday Anchor Books, 1958. p.116