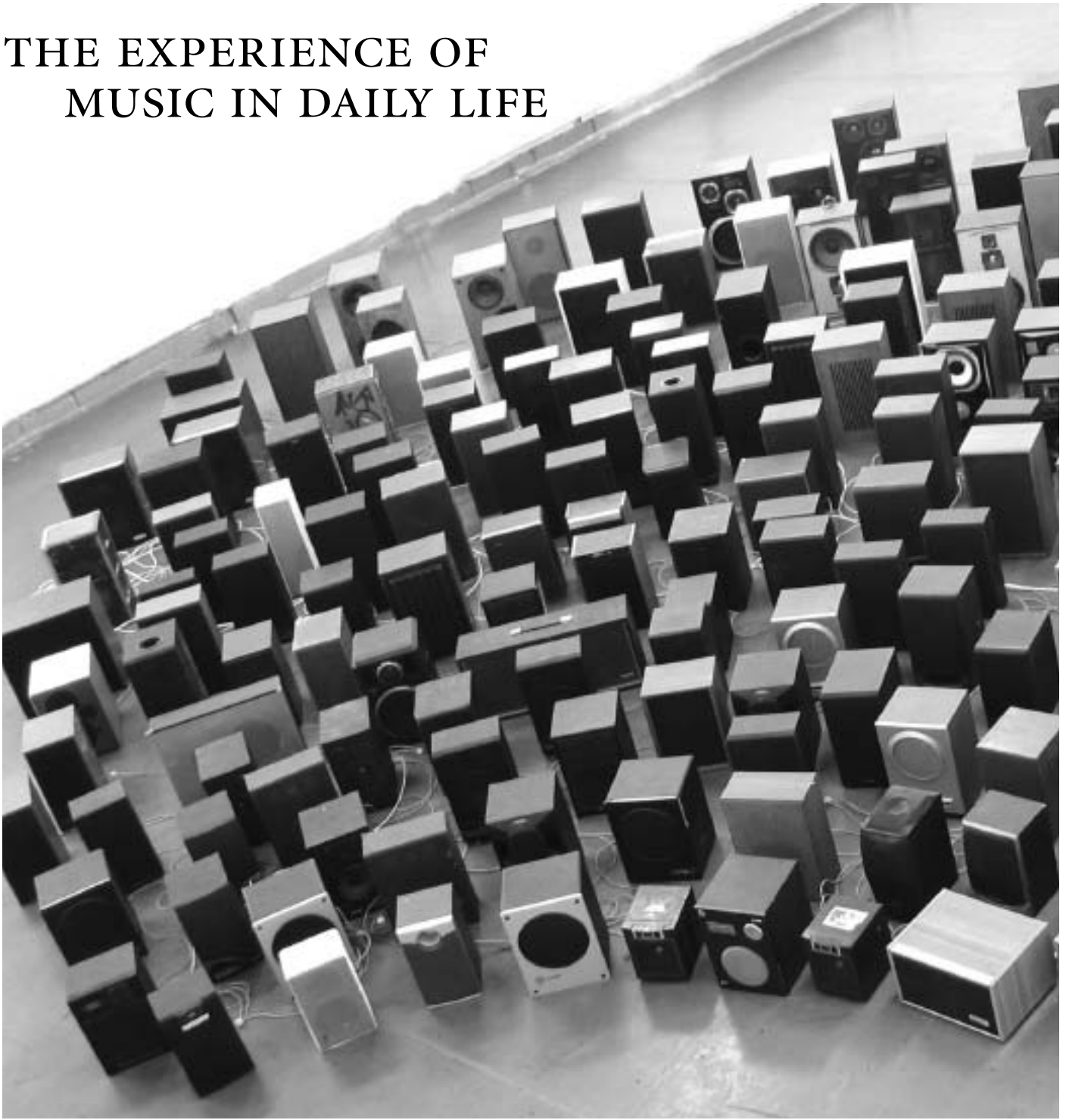


# *Soundscape*

VOLUME 5 NUMBER II | FALL/WINTER 2004

THE EXPERIENCE OF  
MUSIC IN DAILY LIFE



*The Journal of Acoustic Ecology*

*Soundscape*  
*The Journal of Acoustic Ecology*

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

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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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**CONTRIBUTIONS**

Ideas for journal themes, proposals for new sections, as well as visual materials, are welcomed. You may submit either a proposal or a complete manuscript of a potential article to *Soundscape*. The Editorial Committee would generally prefer to communicate with you beforehand regarding your ideas for an article, or receive a proposal, or an abstract. Please also download our Guide to Contributors: Instructions for the Preparation of Materials for Submission to *Soundscape* (PDF) on the WFAE Website at: <http://www.wfae.net>

**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, web sites, 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 Communication, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6 Canada. **NOTE: New E-mail Contacts.** (Please send your email submissions to the relevant address):

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**Submission deadline for next issue: June 1, 2005. Theme: Hearing Loss.**



Liliane Karnouk

# Soundscape

## The Journal of Acoustic Ecology

VOLUME 5 NUMBER II | FALL AND WINTER 2004

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#### — NOTE —

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

<http://www.wfae.net/newsletter/>

Submissions should be sent to:  
secretary@wfae.net

What is your experience of music in daily life? When and in which situations do you encounter music? How much of it is live, how much of it broadcast over loudspeakers? How often do you put on music with the intent to listen, how often in order to create a background ambience? When and how often do you make your own music, by yourself or with other musicians? How often do you turn music off, and stop to listen? Do you encounter situations in daily life in which you perceive music, but where others only hear random sound—where the boundary between what is understood as music and what is perceived as sound becomes blurred?

*Germany. Dec. 5, 2004. I open a door and hear the sound of church bells. This is normal on a Sunday morning, when many church bells ring to announce the beginning or end of church services. But something is different today. Despite the cold air, I find myself listening for twenty minutes, mesmerized by what I hear. The wind is strong and blows mostly from the West, carrying the bell sounds from the nearby town up to where I stand. The moving air equalises and filters the sound spectrum of the bells. The gusts of wind alter their volume, creating natural crescendi and decrescendi in the vibrating air. Sometimes the wind brings only the high frequencies of the bell sounds, sometimes only the lower tones. Sometimes the sounds come directly from the West in one big mish-mash of bells from various churches, then one individual bell sound comes from a nearby village, from a northerly direction, carried here by a renegade wind gust. The whole air seems to vibrate with metallic musical bell sounds, altered and processed by the rushing wind and the landscape through which it moves.*

Whatever your own experience of music in daily life may be, let it accompany you like a cantus firmus while reading the rather diverse articles in this issue on the same theme.

Michael Cumberland gives a fascinating account of how the powerful sound of

his alphorn interacts with and resonates in various landscapes. Although far removed from most people's daily experiences with sound and music, his explorations provide valuable insight into the interaction between sound and environment, precisely because the remoteness of the landscapes and the sound power of his instrument highlight the subtleties and complexities of such interaction. Henry Johnson explores the sound of the chanting voice that can be found at auctions, market stalls, horse races, sports events or political demonstrations—vocal sounds that surpass everyday speech inflections but are not yet musical expressions either.

In *Intermissions* with the Orchestra Christopher DeLaurenti gives us an intriguing account of his recording adventures during all those times when orchestras take a break from playing and audiences take a break from listening.

Milena Droumeva discusses the ecological implications of the all-pervasive presence of music in much of today's world and how it has blurred the boundaries "between private enjoyment of music and the public milieu." In a very different tone Jay Needham writes about the daily culture of radio listening in the context of American history and cultural tradition. Out of this emerges, in the same article, the written voice of Phylis Johnson as she speaks from inside her world of commercial radio production on the one hand and her parallel experience as radio listener on the other hand—hearing her own radio voice and musical selections as she moves through the public sphere in her daily life.

In *Perspectives* Carlos Augusto writes of a whole Portuguese town ringing with music and sound artists Ros Bandt, John Wynne and Massimo Liverani report about their sound installations in Australia, Germany and Italy respectively. Sound Journals from Mexico and India, Gregg Wagstaff's Soundwalk text of Kobe, Japan, Helmi Järvioluoma's update on the AEC Research Project in Finland and Andra McCartney's text in Dialogue "What is a sound ecologist to do?"—all this and more is what the following pages hold in store for you.

**Hildegard Westerkamp**  
for the Editorial Committee

# Report From The Chair

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There is an encouraging amount of activity going on out there in the WFAE Affiliates. The reports in this issue of the journal bear testament to the fact and there are many events and activities already in store for us in the next couple of years. This gives great heart and anticipation.

The WFAE board has busied itself with a range of activities including changes of personnel, the introduction of the bi-monthly online Newsletter, preparation of a promotional Flyer, discussing and endorsing conferences and the ongoing activities of the Journal and Membership committees.

It was with great sadness that we accepted the resignation of Gregg Wagstaff from the WFAE board as the UKISC Representative. Gregg has been a wonderful advocate for UKISC and a very active and thoughtful contributor to the running of the WFAE over many years. Gregg is very committed to the field of acoustic ecology and we look forward to his presence generally as a member at large. On behalf of the board I thank Gregg and wish him well for the future.

Gary Ferrington continues working tirelessly on behalf of the WFAE. His latest efforts have produced the fine addition to WFAE publications—the now bi-monthly online Newsletter. This quality document provides us with the opportunity to spread the word about the WFAE and related events in a prompt and timely manner freeing up space in the Soundscape Journal for more articles and papers. We encourage everyone to use the

Newsletter to both inform and be informed about current events related to WFAE.

The WFAE has endorsed three events this year, two of which happened in April. The Conference in Palermo, Sicily and the FKL Soundscape Conference in Potsdam, Germany are events which should prove to be of particular interest to our membership. The third event is the WFAE structured session at the International Institute of Acoustics and Vibration (IIAV) conference in Lisbon in July (p. 7). It is very gratifying that an essentially scientific organisation such as the IIAV has accepted acoustic ecology into the programme for the first time. This event provides us with the opportunity to present our ideas to a new audience as well as inform ourselves of the widest possible variety of topics and subject matters related to the world of acoustics. We hope to see you there.

In the coming months we hope to introduce a new affiliate organisation, the *Swedish Forum for Soundscape*, which is in the process of forming. Plans are already in motion for the next major acoustic ecology conference in Japan 2006 and a number of other events are being discussed around the world. So, we're looking forward to a busy future but not too busy for us to remember to renew our memberships :-). Yes it's that time of year again. Happy listening!

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

## Regional Activity Reports

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

By John Levack Drever

The community continues to grow, with many events concerning sound and the environment happening on a regular basis. In late summer 2004 I had a useful reminder of the historical precedence for this field in the UK. I spent an inspiring yet humbling day in Edinburgh with John Gray, a sound engineer who worked for the GPO Film Unit, working on such pioneering documentary films as *Night Mail*, *Spare Time* and *West Highland* (which he directed). I learnt that he was experimenting with field recording in the 1930s just down the road where I currently work in South East London. The quality and consideration for sound in the work of the GPO Film Unit (renamed Crown Film Unit) is well worth exploring, especially in my opinion the films of Humphrey Jennings.

We welcome Tsai-Wei Chen to the UKISC board. She is currently researching at Goldsmiths College. Considering the London soundscape as a space of globalization, Tsai-wei is interested in overseas travellers' auditory memories of homelands and their emotional responses to the present London soundscape.

By taking Taiwanese as a case study, Tsai-wei aims at conducting her PhD research through art practice and cultural theories. She completed her MPhil in the Department of Printmaking, Royal College of Art, London, in 2002.

Robert Jarvis, a UKISC member based in Canterbury is currently presenting a surround sound installation DISAPPEAR at The Royal Art Gallery, Canterbury based on endangered sounds. I presented my Ocholephonic Study No. #2, based on crowd sounds from Hong Kong, in the Budenell Social Club, Leeds in October 2004.

Sonic Arts Network's *Sonic Postcards* project is growing from strength to strength. It is aimed at young people in Primary and Secondary Schools aged between 9 and 14 years and their teachers, and is concerned with the impact of sound on our lives. With the help of visiting sound artists, the participants created a sonic postcard of their local area and exchanged this with other participating schools. The project is now firmly established thanks to NESTA funding, with many interesting projects and partnerships underway. The outcomes of the pilot project carried out last summer can be seen on the Sonic Postcards website, [www.sonicpostcards.org](http://www.sonicpostcards.org) where sonic postcards can be heard alongside other supporting material.

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

## Australian Forum for Acoustic Ecology (AFAE)

By Greg Hooper

It's been a quiet year for the Australian branch of the WFAE. The AGM opened with a presentation by Lawrence Harvey on the City Sounds project by RMIT and City of Melbourne—available at [http://www.sial.rmit.edu.au/Projects/City\\_Sounds.php](http://www.sial.rmit.edu.au/Projects/City_Sounds.php). The AFAE continues to grow its close relationship with RMIT and is planning joint events next year and assistance with the publishing of past conference proceedings. Greg Hooper stood down as President, to be replaced by Jim Barbour. The other members of the committee are Nigel Frayne as Treasurer, John Campbell as Secretary, with Helen Dilkes, Luciano Furfaro, and Ros Bandt as non-executive members. Lawrence Harvey is now the AFAE representative on the WFAE board and Nigel will continue as Chair of the WFAE as a non-voting board member.

Membership numbers in Australia have unfortunately been stagnant to declining since the Symposium in Melbourne. We hope to be able to reverse this trend with an increased web presence and are negotiating with a University about hosting an acoustic ecology site. Whilst the membership numbers are a concern there appears to be strong interest in acoustic ecology in the general music community in Australia. Translating that interest into increased membership has been the difficult part!

Contact: Dr Greg Hooper | [afae@wfae.net](mailto:afae@wfae.net)

## American Society for Acoustic Ecology (ASAE)

By Glenn Bach

The American Society for Acoustic Ecology (ASAE) is going strongly, with 21 official members, and several examples of substantive regional activity.

The New York Chapter of ASAE is participating in an event next Fall (dates not yet known), produced by the Electronic Music Foundation that will bring together a number of ideas on acoustic ecology. We will be introducing a new project, called NYC Soundmap, and hopefully coordinating some panel discussions and soundwalks. More information can be found here: <http://www.emf10.org/environment/index.html>.

The New Mexico Chapter of ASAE continued with its Acoustic Ecology Fall Series in collaboration with the College of Santa Fe Contemporary Music Program. Our third presentation was in early November, featuring Steve Feld. Speaking about his work, he explored the ways in which sound marks social and natural time, in both the Papua New Guinea rainforest and European cities and villages. We hope to build on the good response we've had (about a hundred members of the local community have attended the various events), and to continued the series in the Spring.

Regional groups are starting to coalesce in several areas of the US. We look forward to meeting face-to-face, sharing a sense of what we're each up to, and perhaps catalyzing some local public events. See <http://www.acousticecology.org/asae/regions.html>.

The ASAE newsletter is online ([www.acousticecology.org/asae/news0904.htm](http://www.acousticecology.org/asae/news0904.htm)), with articles, reviews, upcoming events, and announcements.

To subscribe to the ASAE listserv, please send e-mail to: [asaelist@yahoo.com](mailto:asaelist@yahoo.com). For more information about ASAE, including our mission statement and contact information for regional hosts, please visit our website: [www.acousticecology.org/asae](http://www.acousticecology.org/asae).

Contact: Glenn Bach | [asae@wfae.net](mailto:asae@wfae.net)

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

By Darren Copeland and Nadene Thériault Copeland

Between October 8 – 11, 2004, the Canadian Association for Sound Ecology returned for a soundscape retreat to Haliburton, Ontario, where it was founded under the auspices of a similar retreat. This time it consisted of two full days of activities on the Thanksgiving weekend (October 9 and 10) with enough room for a comfortable arrival and departure time as Haliburton is in a remote location.

The first day explored the thematic question "What is the ecology in sound ecology?" in a number of different ways. It was first posited at the retreat in a lecture prepared by Andra McCartney and presented by two of her graduate students from Concordia University—Lisa Gasior and Andrea Jane Cornell. For more about this lecture see the article by Andra McCartney in this issue of *Soundscape* (p. 8). Murray Schafer in his afternoon lecture looked at the origins of the acoustic ecology movement and concluded with some suggestions for future directions, emphasizing the need for more academic research. He also led ear-cleaning exercises and a soundwalk which brought participants in touch with two things in this remote wilderness environment: the degree of noise we make while moving about our everyday tasks and the extent to which our ears can be tuned to pick up subtle acoustic details.

The second day began with a "sounding walk" led by Darren Copeland. The soundwalkers were guided in groups of two (one in each group with eyes closed) on a path that included listening to Michael Cumberland playing alphorn, Nadene Thériault-Copeland and Richard Windeyer playing percussive objects, in addition to the various natural sounds of the area, a small hog farm and some motorized vehicles. Indoors, participants were encouraged to sound out the environs of the seminar room, which was a log cabin with various rooms. The central theme of the day was acoustic design and featured a lecture by Nigel Frayne detailing his work in acoustic design for museums and zoos. Previous to the retreat, Nigel Frayne also gave lectures to Architectural students at the University of Toronto and University of Waterloo. CASE wishes to thank David Leiberan for organizing these lectures.

In the afternoon, Nigel Frayne opened the session with an overview of the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology and its affiliate organisations. Participants were invited to discuss future CASE initiatives and new ideas and directions for CASE. The strongest notion among them seemed to be the need to introduce ear-cleaning exercises into school curricula, emphasizing the importance of soundscape listening in youth education.

The evenings of both days included presentations by retreat participants—opportunities for people to introduce their activity, work, and research and to receive feedback through discussions.

The retreat was attended by 22 people and affirmed that there need to be more retreats of this nature, which bring people together to discuss ways of increasing soundscape awareness and of improving the acoustic environment in Canada.

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# Regional Activity Reports (continued)

## Japanese Association for Sound Ecology (JASE)

By Keiko Torigoe

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

On October 24, 2004 the SAJ held its annual academic meeting at the Kanazawa Institute of Technology (KIT) in Kanazawa City. During the morning and afternoon, scholars and university students gathered from all over Japan, presented their studies and projects and had intense discussions with the audience, the members of the SAJ.

The meeting was noteworthy for its wide variety of themes. The nine presentations of the day included, for example, "A Field Survey on the Planning of a Sound Road in Yamanaka and Hashidate Regions", a project plan to create a route through the town that encourages people to listen to the local soundscape. Other presentations had themes such as "The Soundscape at the Foot of Mt. Hiei—the Ritual Sounds of Sakamoto", "How are the Televisions in Public Spaces Listened to and Watched—a Case Study of the Central Square of Fukushima University", as well as "The Characteristics of Soundscapes in the Contemporary Haiku" and "The Restoration of Ears—the Aural World in the Works of Michiko Ishimure", a well-known female novelist who is focusing on the problem of environmental pollution of Minamata City.

On October 23, the previous day of the meeting, SAJ also held a workshop, entitled "Sound Exploration of Kaga". Yoshio Tsuchida, an associate professor at KIT, organized a soundscape field trip for participants to Yamanaka Onsen, a famous hot-spring town, and the Temple Town of Kanazawa City, in order to introduce the participants to the unique local sounds of individual towns.

The SAJ together with JASE is now in the process of preparing the WFAE conference in 2006.

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## Forum Klanglandschaft (FKL)

By Albert Mayr

Günter Olias, FKL's coordinator for Germany, is working on the preparations of FKL's conference with the title *Sounds, Power and Landscape – Traces of Modifications in the Soundscape*, to be held, in collaboration with the Institute for Music and Music Pedagogy of the University of Potsdam April 22 – 24, 2005. The program includes lectures, workshop, demonstrations, sound walks, round tables, installations, and concerts. It will also be the occasion to celebrate FKL's 10th birthday. Info: [olias@rz.uni-potsdam.de](mailto:olias@rz.uni-potsdam.de)

Last summer a new sub-affiliate of FKL was constituted (by FKL members and non-members and so far informally), the Sicilian Soundscape Research Group. They organized a seminar with Albert Mayr in Catania "La città in ascolto" and have various projects under way. The most important one is a conference "Palermo ascolta / Ascolta Palermo", April 28-30, 2005 in Palermo in co-operation with FKL, the university of Palermo and other institutions. For information, please contact: Stefano Zorzanello, co-ordinator of the SSRG, [ne12662@iperbole.bologna.it](mailto:ne12662@iperbole.bologna.it).

Member news: Gabriele Proy was invited to the festivals *Soundings* in London and *Zeppelin* in Barcelona and Zaragoza, where, aside from presenting her compositions she gave lectures on soundscape issues. The Barcelona part of the festival included a symposium in which Gabriele participated, entitled "Ecologia Acustica: ética i estètica del paisatge sonor," organized by Manuel Berenguer. There was no connection with the WFAE (unfortunately on the one hand, one could say, on the other hand initiatives on our themes are always welcome).

Antonio Arpini participated with his university students in a one-day anti-pollution bicycle "raid" in Milan, wearing T-shirts with the slogan: LESS TRAFFIC LESS NOISE MORE HEALTH. Antonio Della Marina was invited as composer-in-residence at the Estonian Multimedia Festival. Massimo Liverano created a sound environment in the park of the splendid Villa Caruso, near Florence (see more about this project on (p. 37).

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### NEW! Online WFAE Newsletter.

<http://www.wfae.net/newsletter/>

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 by the 20th of June, August and October for publication on the 1st of July, September and November respectively. Submissions can be e-mailed to: [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.

### 6 BACK ISSUES OF *SOUNDSCAPE* NOW ON LINE

Adobe Acrobat PDF versions of *Soundscape* are now available for download at the URL below:

<http://www.wfae.net>

## Finnish Society for Acoustic Ecology (FSAE)

By Simo Alitalo

The Finnish *Radioatelier* is having its 25th anniversary in November 2005.

The history of radio documentary and radio feature in the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE) dates back to the 1950's. *Radioatelier* started in the 1980's as a small unit within the Radio drama department. Its first major production was a 12-part series "1984 – in the year of Orwell".

*Radioatelier* has been very important and influential in introducing new ideas about listening, sound and soundscape to Finnish radio audiences. It has helped to bring together musicians, writers, sound artists and poets and helped them to create new and original works for radio. *Radioatelier*'s head of production Harri Huhtamäki has served on the board of the FSAE 2000-01 and 2003. He says that *Radioatelier*'s aim has always been to bring quality to radio and to advance the culture of listening. With its productions *Radioatelier* has also paved the way for acoustic ecology in Finland.

### One Hundred Finnish Soundscapes

The WFAE Online Newsletter readers know that the FSAE's major project *One Hundred Finnish Soundscapes* has finally been launched. We have already received almost 30 proposals for interesting and important soundscapes. We will start making recordings of the proposed soundscapes in the winter months and the first recordings will appear on the website at the beginning of the year 2005.

In collaboration with YLE the FSAE will also produce a series of short radio programs which will introduce basic concepts and ideas behind acoustic ecology to the general public.

Reading through the proposals that the first participants have sent to our website <http://www.100aanimaisemaa.fi/> was very interesting. Sounds seem to play a very important role in the way Finns make sense of their environment and surrounding world. Claude Levi-Strauss used the word *bricolage* for an informal process by which one makes use of whatever comes to hand. As opposed to the logical systematics of the engineer, the bricoleur pieces things together as best as he can. Levi-Strauss used the term *bricolage* to describe how Amazonian Indian tribes used whatever was available for them from honey to tobacco, to build their cosmologies. Finns seem to use environmental sounds in a similar way. Ordinary and everyday sounds seem to contain many emotional, social and historical meanings. And in proposals for important soundscapes these sounds function as if they were building blocks of Finnish cosmology or a world view.

So far the descriptions of proposed soundscapes are only in Finnish, so you have to take my word for it. But we hope to translate some of them into English in the future.

### Web-based Soundscape Education

The next bigger project of the FSAE will be the development of an interactive web-based course on Acoustic Ecology and Soundscape Studies. We aim to present the first draft of the course at The Interactive *Technology in Education* conference in Aulanko in April 2005.

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

## Acoustic Ecology Session at IIAV Conference

Lisbon, Portugal | July 10-15, 2005

The WFAE is organising a Structured Session on Acoustic Ecology at the annual conference of the International Institute of Acoustics and Vibration (IIAV) in Lisbon, Portugal this year, 10–15th July. (see <http://www.icsv12.ist.utl.pt/>) A combination of a keynote presentation (Murray Schafer), concerts (Carlos Alberto Augusto), soundwalking (Hildegard Westerkamp), papers (John Levack Drever, Keiko Torigoe) and a panel session will allow us to represent acoustic ecology to this prestigious gathering of an essentially scientific community. The broader programme includes many hundreds of papers and presentations on every conceivable topic related to acoustics and vibration.

The format for our panel session as currently proposed includes short presentations from a panel of experts followed by a round table discussion. The theme of the discussion will be *Soundscape Phenomenology in Urban Design*. The final make up of the panel is unconfirmed but is expected to include Kozo Hiramatsu (Japan), Henrik Karlsson (Sweden) and others.

The Structured Session on Acoustic Ecology will be moderated by Nigel Frayne (Chair, WFAE Board).

For more details check out the WFAE website and Newsletter (<http://www.wfae.net/Newsletter>) as well as the conference website (see <http://www.icsv12.ist.utl.pt/>).

### WFAE— Electronic Contact Information

<http://www.wfae.net>

Home to an extensive collection of Acoustic Ecology related materials—assembled 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)

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**Journal:** [soundscape-editor@wfae.net](mailto:soundscape-editor@wfae.net)



# Dialogue

## What is a sound ecologist to do?

By Andra McCartney

Written for and presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Haliburton  
Soundscape Retreat October 8–11, 2004

This morning I want to think a bit about what sound ecology means—to the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology, to individual researchers, to me. I want to present a few examples of sound ecology situations that raise some questions about the definition of this term. I hope that this will help raise some questions for you as well, and suggest some tactics to work as a sound ecologist.

The World Forum for Acoustic Ecology defines acoustic ecology as: “the study of the relationship between living organisms and their sound environment.”

This is a scientific-sounding definition, and fairly open-ended. It concentrates on inter-relationships, which leads me to ask: what about taste ecology, smell ecology, touch or even visual ecology? Does anyone study these areas, and if so, even under another name, should we be making alliances with them under the banner of ecology? Do we care about sound primarily, or ecology? If ecology is about inter-relationships, does it make sense to separate sound from other senses? What do we gain by doing this? What do we lose? Do we need to prioritize?

Steven Feld defines sound ecology a bit differently, on his documentary sound art website, voxlox.net. He says: “Our human rights recordings present exile, refugee, diasporic and indigenous voices muted or censored by mainstream media. Our acoustic ecology recordings present uniquely marginal, forgotten, endangered, and rapidly changing sound environments.” Now it seems to me that this definition of sound ecology as preserver of the marginal, endangered and forgotten is a particularly ethnomusicological approach, which makes sense since Feld was trained as an ethnomusicologist. Since the early days of the twentieth century, ethnomusicologists have travelled the world, recording the sounds of musics threatened by the relentless advance of modernity—recording these musics to become archives within the walls of modern institutions as they disappear outside of those walls. Is sound ecology a branch of ethnomusicology, or vice versa? When Feld presents the *Time of Bells* as unproblematically the time of men’s performance as in Kali Vrisi, keeping the women at this festival both inaudible and invisible, he separates sound ecology from human rights. Is this a good thing?

Gregg Wagstaff wants to keep human rights linked with sound ecology. He claims that presently, sound ecology is implicitly linked with deep ecology, a spiritually oriented movement, one of whose strongest voices is Arne Naess. Naess has been invited to attend a sound ecology conference in Sweden in recent years, the *Hör Upp* conference. Deep ecology advocates a deeper spiritual connection between humans and nature. The problem for Wagstaff and for me is that deep ecology tends to treat all humans as equal. Wagstaff suggests that sound ecology would do well to think about the aims of social ecology, which also considers social and political relationships between people, and is more socially activist in orientation. In his work on the communities of Harris and Lewis in northern Scotland, Wagstaff studied the social and political history of the islands, and included compositions by local residents about their sound environment and

*We invite your comments and criticism in response to anything you read in Soundscape, including other members’ comments. Please send your reactions to: jwfae@sfu.ca, or to the mailing address at the bottom of page 2.*



social histories in the soundscape work. This shifts the role of the sound ecologist from educator and expert to facilitator and participant.

I want to present a couple of examples from my current research, and my everyday life. First, the research examples.

On October 10, 2003, on a Friday at around 6 pm, I was cycling home from a listening ride. A cyclist approached me from the opposite direction, then leaned over as he reached me, yelling angrily “get home!” It was clearly directed at me, and I had no idea who this man was, but there were few other women on the bike path that day. In my shock at that moment, other memories immediately came to mind—it was only a block away and a month earlier that I was confronted with a young man masturbating in full view of the bike path. One of my research assistants, two years earlier, was approached and asked to stop recording by a man who had something private that he wanted to say to her. Much closer to downtown, a year earlier, I witnessed a young cyclist spit at a turbaned man who was sitting on a bench, eating an orange. Race as well as gender is related to people’s sense of entitlement to move through this visually beautiful park, to feel comfortable in this public place.

This personal history of disturbing social encounters in the park is mostly invisible. It is not readily evident by looking at photographs of the space, but rather needs to be recited, recorded, condensed and written to be remembered and acknowledged. Repeated soundwalks, and the sound journals associated with them, provide aural recordings and textual recitations that facilitate a more historical approach to subjective experiences of place.

It is the articulation of soundwalk and sound journal that is important here, in order to provide critical reflection on experience and historical connections between events, to focus attention on events not only because they are loud, but also because they are socially significant. In the case of the spitting cyclist just mentioned, the sonic imprint of this event was almost inaudible. Humming tires on pavement, an almost-silent swerve, a hork and a quiet splat. The turbaned man said not a word. My strangled grunt was carried back just a few feet behind the whizzing bike. If I had been concerned only about the state of the soundscape, if I had been watching the decibel meter while measuring sound levels, I might have paid little attention to this event. I may not even have noticed it. But my position as attentive observer, documenter and actor in this urban environment over time leads to consideration of this moment in the light of other similar events.

In the field of sound ecology, it may be tempting to assume that an acoustically balanced soundscape indicates an ecologically balanced environment, to focus on achieving quiet or sonic space, to aim for a high signal-to-noise ratio or hi-fi environment. Yet social oppression can create silence, and it is important to ask who is silencing whom in such cases.

The sound journal articulated with soundwalk recording can take sound ecology to the limits of audibility, to consider the social ecology of patterns in very quiet events that are politically



significant. Sound ecologists working in urban environments need to activate all the senses during soundwalks, to reflect on social and political patterns in experience, to consider who is silencing whom, and to recite and remember. This memory and recitation is facilitated by attentive recording (both audio and written) over time.

The question remains of what kinds of social actions to take as a result of this kind of research, beyond reflection and recitation. Wagstaff talks of working with communities to „enable or empower communities to organise (compose) themselves (1999, unpaginated).” However, it should be noted here that the communities that Wagstaff discusses are relatively isolated, geographically bounded communities, such as those that he researched on the islands of the Outer Hebrides, to the north west of Scotland. The researchers of the World Soundscape Project also focused primarily on small village communities, considering urban communities too complex. Villages and islands, considered as geographically-bounded, are like acoustic utopias. Urban environments are heterotopic, varied and contested. For instance, the Lachine Canal cuts through several neighbourhoods in its eighteen kilometers: Lachine, St. Pierre, Cote St. Paul, Ville Émard, Verdun, Little Burgundy, Vieux Montreal. It is visited by thousands of tourists, and people from other parts of Montreal. Factory workers, multimedia producers and lock personnel eat their lunches by the sides of the canal, and in the winter, ice fishers sit metres from buzzing auto racers flying by. There is not one community here, but many overlapping communities with different aims and desires. Who can be enabled to compose themselves, and how?

In this project, we have not attempted to empower any community, but rather to elicit commentary from inhabitants and visitors about their soundings of this environment. The recorded soundwalks were condensed (or composted) into a gallery installation at the Musée de Lachine. This composting process involved juxtaposing scraps of ambiances from different times at specific places along the canal, as well as choosing excerpts of significant moments, processes of sewing together fragments from different times; and the opposite process of focusing on a part that reveals something of a whole. These condensed and excerpted pieces revealed changes in the soundscape, for instance sounds that we recorded but which are no longer heard, such as the sound of loading bridge parts from the Dominion Bridge company. This vestigial industrial practice no longer takes place with the opening of the canal to pleasure traffic. Entire spaces in which we recorded, such as the CN sheds, have been taken down. Excerpting and juxtaposing sounds allowed us to hear seasonal changes in the soundscape, such as the quieting of construction during winter and the movement of ice during spring breakup, and daily fluctuations in traffic noise and pedestrian movements.

To provide historical context, we also included interviews with long-time local residents about the sonic history of the canal. These were not historical re-constructions, but rather collages in which contemporary and former sounds were juxtaposed, to indicate connections between them. Visitors were invited on public soundwalks followed by reflective discussions, which were recorded. They were also asked to respond in writing to the installation. The response book was made in the form of a 1950s style magazine intended to refer to the industrial period of the canal, that included articles on soundwalking and on the environmental history of the canal. The article on environmental history was in response to another aspect of the canal that is both inaudible and invisible: the toxic sludge at its bottom. We want to sound this sludge, to make it more audible. Beyond

making the article available, we are also planning to record narrated soundwalks about the environmental history, and to sonify data collected by groups that are monitoring canal toxicity, in other words, to take this data and find ways to turn it into sound. How would one represent polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) pollution, and what kinds of sounds might represent zinc, mercury, copper, or polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH), all of which are found in the canal but not audible? How will we represent the change in these chemicals over time? These are the kinds of questions we are starting to consider.

Over the next few months, we plan to prepare an interactive CD of sound pieces, to prepare a narrated soundwalk about the environmental history of a specific area, and to present a public performance of narratives about the canal to local audiences. These responses to the sonic ambiances of the canal are heterophonic and necessarily partial. They do not capture this complex sound environment, but hope to glean some traces of social interactions and environmental change, and to encourage further soundings. The theme of inaudibility that we have uncovered through this research suggests silent connections among social signifiers of misogyny and race, and environmental signifiers of toxicity. As we consider ways to make such silent signifiers audible to a listening public, soundwalks provide a continuing everyday connection to this place that can suggest new ways to theorize its audible and inaudible traces.

The other CASE study that I want to consider is one from my everyday life as a resident of Lachine. I am a regular customer at La Shangri-La, a Nepalese restaurant just ten blocks from my house, close enough to walk even in the winter. This summer, the city tore up the street in front of this restaurant, to put in new sewers, and this job which was supposed to take three weeks took the whole summer. This is a restaurant which rarely uses air-conditioning, opening doors to let the breeze through. The construction on the street was very loud all summer, with large backhoes, pile-drivers and trucks just a few feet from the window, ear-plugged construction workers guiding the work. Within a few days, clientele at the restaurant had diminished to a few hardy souls. As a sound ecologist, how might I react to this loud and unpleasant sonic environment? I reacted by stepping up my visits, going twice as much as usual, hoping that these kind folks would not go out of business despite their dwindling sales. Their position in the social ecology of my neighbourhood seemed to be crucial. It is a small business, locally owned, avoiding air conditioning and—most importantly—providing healthy, well-balanced meals (and mango lassis!). In this case, ecology was more important to me than sound.

Do we care about sound primarily, or ecology? If ecology is about inter-relationships, does it make sense to separate sound from other senses? What do we gain by doing this? What do we lose? Do we need to prioritize? With whom should we make alliances? Other sound workers? Other ecologists? How would we make alliances with these people? Should sound ecology be separated from human rights? How can a sound ecologist empower a community to compose itself? How would one define a community in such a case? Is a community defined by geography, affinity, biology? What kinds of social actions should a sound ecologist take? What is a sound ecologist to do?

**Andra McCartney** is Associate Professor of Communication Studies at Concordia University, where she teaches sound in media, with research projects in soundscape studies as well as gender and sound technologies. Work can be heard and read at <http://andrasound.org>.

## Acoustic Environments in Change – Report of work in progress

By Helmi Järviluoma

Our AEC-project has perhaps 'sounded silent' recently to the world outside of Finland. This is simply because the group of researchers is concentrating on the analysis of the materials. From the list of publications and papers below, you can trace the directions into which the interests of the analysers are going.

Spring 2005 will fertilize the field of soundscape studies with two doctoral dissertations (by Heikki Uimonen and Noora Vikman) and one licentiate thesis (by Tero Hyvärinen). Much of the content has already been published in the form of articles.

One of the most time-consuming efforts during 2004 has been a book called *Kuultava menneisyys*. The title can be translated as 'The Hearable Past'. The name in English, however, does not reveal the other sense of the word 'Kuultava': it means both *hearable* and *transparent* at the same time. The editors of the book, Outi Ampuja and Kaarina Kilpiö, are young historians. All four Finnish AEC researchers have contributed to this collection, which otherwise deals mostly with the sonic past of Finland. It would be important to find an international publisher for this, if I may say so, very interesting publication. It has been carefully edited and thoroughly discussed in long meetings between the writers, as well as once in the company of Dr. Justin Winkler, from Switzerland.

The AEC group has attended several seminars, sometimes organising a session itself, in order to get as much feedback as possible for the work in progress. Two times we have had the good fortune to have Prof. Steven Feld attending these sessions, who was brought to Finland in 2003 and 2004 partially because of his *Time of Bells* project. Interestingly enough, his first record from the project includes a recording from one of the AEC-villages, namely Nauvo (see [www.voxlox.net](http://www.voxlox.net) TARKASTA for more information).

At the moment many of the publications in this project are written in Finnish only, but the most important articles will be published in English in the final report. The book is in the planning stage, and as it seems, produced together with the previous *Five Village Soundscapes*, with the help of Barry Truax. Also CDs from the old WSP-materials and new AEC-CDs will be included. The plan was to publish the book in 2005 but it is possible that it will take until early 2006, before the book is in your hands.

I myself received funding for further analysis of the AEC data from the Academy of Finland. Thus, I am working as Senior Research Fellow for the next two years analysing *Sonic Memories and Emplaced Pasts in European Villages*. I have already done a wonderful new field trip to Lesconil, walking with the inhabitants, old and middle-aged, in the village talking about their sensory memories of the village. Noora Vikman has done several new visits to the Italian village of Cembra during the past few years, as well as Heikki Uimonen to Dollar and Skruv, and Tero Hyvärinen to Nauvo.

Unfortunately the AEC website of the project has not been up-dated for several reasons, but mainly because of lack of time and funding. However, we intend to do this as soon as possible. Website address: [www.6villages.tpu.fi](http://www.6villages.tpu.fi)

### Selected AEC publications up to November 2004:

#### A. Monographies, editions

1. Helmi Järviluoma and Gregg Wagstaff (eds.) *Soundscape Studies and Methods*. Helsinki: The Finnish Society for Ethnomusicology Publ. 9 & University of Turku, Dept. of Art, Literature & Music Series A51, 2002. 204 p. (Can be ordered by e-mail: [tykk@utu.fi](mailto:tykk@utu.fi))
2. Helmi Järviluoma, Pirkko Moisala and Anni Vilkkö: *Gender and Qualitative Methods*. London: Sage 2003, 160 s. (Includes a chapter on the analysis of sound, music and gender.)
3. Heikki Uimonen: *Ja radiosta kuuluu rokkeja! Radion merkitys työpaikan äänimaisemassa*. [Rock'n'Roll Radio! Radio Receiver as a Builder of the Soundscape at the Workplace] Acoustic Environments in Change. Working papers 2. Turku: Turun yliopisto ja Tampereen yliopisto 1999. (Sold out.)
4. Noora Vikman: *Akustisen ekologian ekogiset diskurssit. Internet-keskustelun analyysi*. [The ecological discourses of acoustic ecology. Analysis of a discussion in internet.] Acoustic Environments in Change. Working papers 1. Turku: Turun yliopisto, Tampereen yliopisto 1999. 101 sivua. (Sold out.)

#### B. Refereed articles in books and journals

1. \*Hyvärinen, Tero: Put-put ja mur. Nostalginen veneenmoottori. [The Nostalgic Motor of the Boat.] 15 p.
2. \*Järviluoma, Helmi: Äänimaisema ja sosiaalinen muisti. [Soundscape and Social Memory.] 26 p.
3. \*Uimonen, Heikki: 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, 20 p]
4. \*Noora Vikman: Ikkunaluukkuja äänimaisemaan - Äänimaiseman rytmistä ja kulttuurisista tauoista. [Window shutters into Soundscape: on rhythms and cultural breaks in the soundscape.] 20 p
5. \*Outi Ampuja, Kaarina Kilpiö, Heikki Uimonen & Helmi Järviluoma: Johdanto. [Introduction to the book *Kuultava menneisyys* (Hearable Past)] 10 p
6. Helmi Järviluoma: Äänimuistojen lähteillä Euroopan kylissä eli traktorin estetiikasta ja etiikasta. [In search for Sonic Memories in European Villages -- or the Aesthetics and Ethics of the Tractor] Forthcoming in a collection of articles from the seminar Aesthetics of Agriculture "*Pellossa perihopeat*", toim. Mia Kunnaskari & al. Helsinki: Maahenki (In print.)
7. Helmi Järviluoma: Oletko maisemissa? Äänimaisematutkimus. In Eerola Tuomas, Jukka Louhivuori & Pirkko Moisala (eds.) *Johdatus musiikintutkimukseen*. [Soundscape Studies. In *Introduction to Musicology*.] Helsinki: Finnish Society for Musicology, Acta Musicologica Fennica 24, 2003, p. 347-355
8. Helmi Järviluoma & Gregg Wagstaff: *Soundscape Studies and Methods – an Introduction*. In *Soundscape Studies and Methods* (see above).
9. Helmi Järviluoma: "Memory and Acoustic Environments: Five European Villages Revisited." In Waterman, Ellen (ed.)

*Sonic Geography Remembered and Imagined*. Toronto: Penumbra Press; Frost Centre for Canadian Studies 2002

10. Heikki Uimonen: "Sorry can't hear you! I'm on a train! Ringing tones, meanings and the Finnish Soundscape." *Popular Music*, vol.23, part 1, January 2004. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge
11. Heikki Uimonen: "Soundscape Studies and Auditory Cognition." Kärjä, Antti-Ville (toim.): *Etnomusikologian vuosikirja 14 (2002)*. Helsinki: Suomen etnomusikologinen seura.
12. Heikki Uimonen: Äänestä kertomalla. Skotlantilaisen kylän puhuttu menneisyys [Stories of Sounds. The Narrated Past of a Scottish Village] In Kärjä, Antti-Ville ja Aho, Marko (toim.) *Etnomusikologian vuosikirja 16 (2004)* (forthcoming in 2004)
13. Kuuloaistin valtakunta. Urbaani ääniympäristö ja radion musiikkitarjonta. [The Realm of Hearing. Urban Sonic Environment and Radio Music Policy] In Itkonen, Matti, Heikkinen, V.A ja Inkinen, Sam (toim.): *Eletty tapakulttuuri. Arkea, juhlaa ja pyhää etsimässä*. [Lived Culture. In the search for the everyday, festival and the holy.] Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän university 2004.
14. Noora Vikman: Hiljaisuus vaatii pohkeita - etnografisella vaelluksella kulttuuriseen taukoon. (Silence Demands Legs. Ethnographic walk into cultural pause.) *Kulttuurintutkimus* 20(2003):2, s. 16-25.
15. Heikki Uimonen: "You don't hear anything 'round here! Cognitive Maps and Auditory Perception." Järviluoma, Helmi & Wagstaff, Gregg (ed.): *Soundscape Studies and Methods*. (See above.)
16. Noora Vikman: "Looking for the Right Method in Cembra." In Järviluoma, Helmi ja Wagstaff, Gregg: *Soundscape Studies and Methods* (see above) p. 143-170.
17. Noora Vikman: "Changing Soundscapes of Cembra." *Annali di San Michele* (Seminaria Permanente di etnografi Andina). Museo degli Usi e Costumi della Gente Trentina. 2002, s. 211- 226.

#### C. Articles in other books & journals

1. Author? "Sounds, Space, and Gender in Everyday Life." In *Looking Back, Looking Ahead*, eds. Henri Terho, Rebecca Sullivan, Kimi Kärki. Turku: IASPM Norden 2002, p. 549-551
2. Helmi Järviluoma: "Listening and Walking in Nauvo with Steven Feld." *Soundscape. The Journal of Acoustic Ecology*, Fall/Winter 2003, p. 50.
3. Heikki Uimonen: Väärin kuultu! Ympäristön äänet ja merkityksen muodostuminen. [Misheard! Environmental Sounds and the Making of Meaning] In Niemelä, Marko & Skaffari, Lotta (toim.): *Musiikin suunta* 4/2002.
4. Heikki Uimonen: "KlangOrt - Vorstellung." Ipsen, Detlev, Reichhardt, Uli ja Werner, Hans U. (toim.): *KlangOrte*. Kassel, Universität Kassel, 2004
5. Noora Vikman: Kuuntelukävelyllä kaupungissa- "Sound Walk in the City." Teoksessa *Taidetta ympäri ja ämpäri II*. Porin taidemuseon julkaisuja 71. TUTKA Porin taidemuseon tutkimuksia 2. Pori 2004
6. Noora Vikman: "Travelling the World Soundscape Project Upstream— From Cembra to Vancouver." in *Soundscape—the Journal of Acoustic Ecology*. Vol.1, N. 2, Winter 2000, p. 29-30.

#### Multimedia Publications, Radio Programs etc.

About sixty short field reports from AEC villages. See news archives [www.6villages.tpu.fi](http://www.6villages.tpu.fi) 2000.

#### Exhibitions

*Acoustic Environments in Change* – Kylä kuuluu! Eurooppalaiset ääniympäristöt muutoksessa, 13.-7.10. 2001, Turku, Suomen Akatemian Kulttuuri 2001, Sibelius-museo ja Turun yliopiston

päärakennus; 8.-21.10. Lahden muotoiluinstituutin galleria. (The exhibition at Culture 2001 -event organised by the Academy of Finland. Sibelius-Museum, the main building of Turku University and the gallery of Lahti Design Institute.)

#### Selection of AEC presentations:

*AEC seminar with Prof. Steven Feld, University of Turku, 10.05.2004*

1. \*Noora Vikman: *Rhythms of Soundscape*
2. \*Heikki Uimonen: *Soundscapes in Transition: Villages, Radios, and Other Assorted Cases*.
3. \*Tero Hyvärinen: *Future, Soundscape Design and Nauvo AEC session at the 7th symposium of Finnish Music Research Northern Perspectives of Music as a Vehicle for Cultural Transmission, University of Turku, 15-17. 5. 2003*
4. \*Helmi Järviluoma & Heikki Uimonen: *Acoustic Environments in Change*.
5. \*Noora Vikman: *Music and Tradition in the Soundscape – Shaking Schizophonic Borders in Cembra*.
6. \*Helmi Järviluoma: *For or Against Methods*.
7. \*Heikki Uimonen: *Voices of Narrators, Stories of Sounds*.
8. Heikki Uimonen: *Comparing the Soundscapes in Five European Villages between 1975 and 2000*. Soundscape Dialog. Transdisziplinäre Anfragen und Zwischenräume aus Musik und Ethnologia, Stadt- und Dorfentwicklung, Analyse, Desing und Komposition. 4th -6th July 2003, Kassel, Germany.
9. Heikki Uimonen: *Matkapuhelinten signaalit ja musiikki*. Suomen Akatemian Kulttuuri 2001:n tiedekatselmuksen tapahtumassa luennot, Jyväskylä 1st October 2001. [Mobile Phone Signals and Music. Culture 2001, Academy of Finland, Jyväskylä]
10. Heikki Uimonen: *Ääniympäristön muutos ja radion musiikkitarjonta*. Radiofestivaali 5th May 2004, Tampere [The Change of the Sonic Environment and the Radio Music Policy. Radiofestival, Tampere] *Papers at seminar 'Eyes Closed', organised by Tero Hyvärinen & the International Institute of Applied Aesthetics and Lahti Institute of Design, Hollola, 18.-23.8.2002*
11. \*Noora Vikman: *Soundscape and Locality*.
12. \*Helmi Järviluoma: *Soundscape Studies: Some useful conceptualisations*.
13. Noora Vikman: *'Quietness' as Commodity. Crossroads of Cultural Studies*, Tampere July 2002:
14. Helmi Järviluoma: *Soundscapes and Methods*. International Summer School of Cultural Studies 'How reality becomes research material', Ilomantsi, Univ. of Joensuu Media Anthropology & NEFA-Joensuu 2001
15. Helmi Järviluoma: *Acoustic Environments in Change*. Culture 2001, main event organised by The Academy of Finland, Helsinki, 28.9.
16. Noora Vikman: *Towards the Draft of 'The Soundscape of Cembra Village' – Fragments for an Ethnography of Sounds*. Workshop on Ethnographic Self and the Production of Knowledge, Univ. of Tampere 2002
17. Noora Vikman: *Acoustic Environments and Local Identity in European Villages*. Methodological Approaches to the Environment-Society Interface. Post Graduate Course in the University of Turku. 2.-4. 9.1999.

\*Articles by AEC-researchers in the book Ampuja Outi & Kaarina Kilpiö (eds.) *Kuultava menneisyys*. [Hearable past]. Series Historia Mirabilis 3. Turku: The Historical Society of Turku 2004.

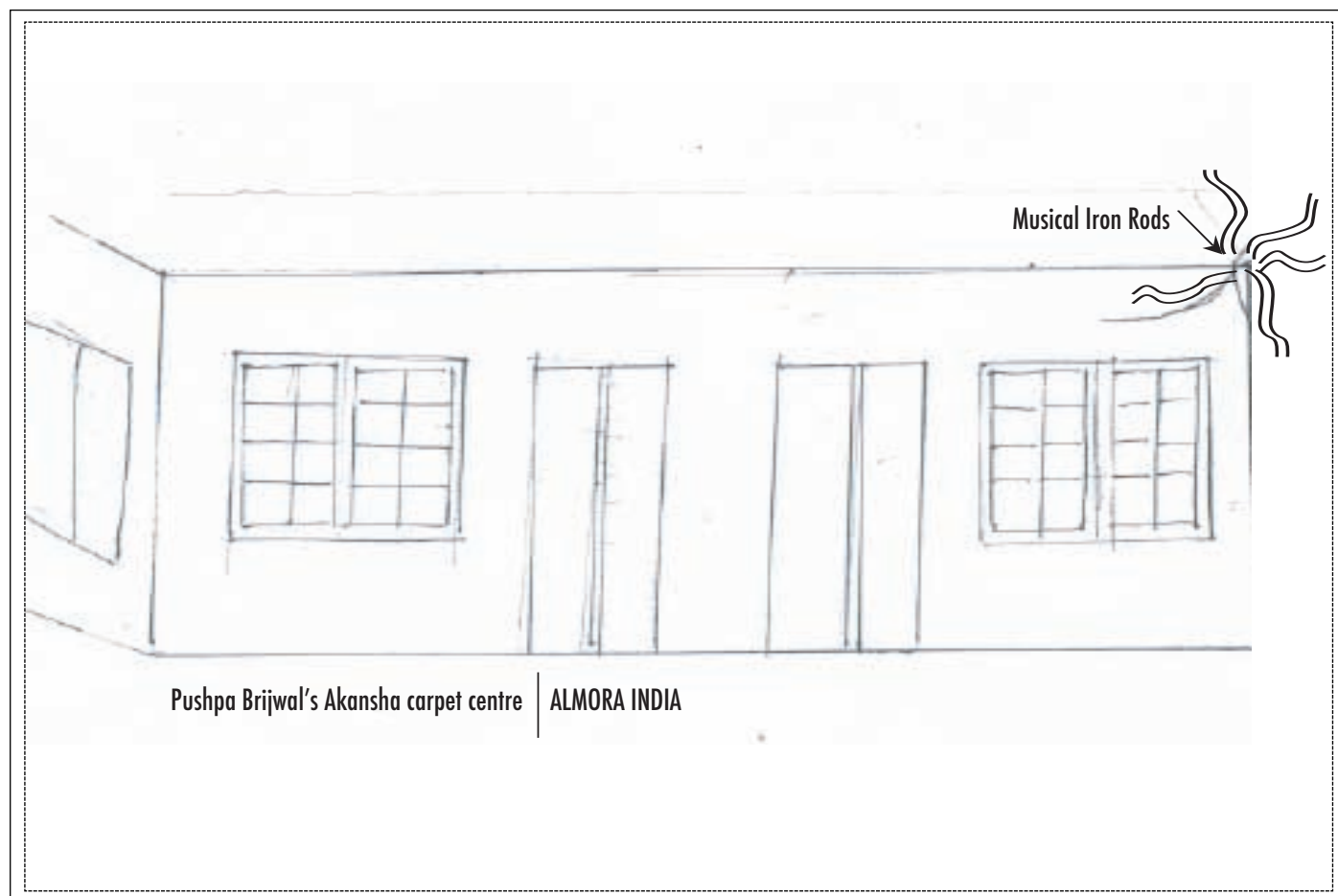
**Helmi Järviluoma**, ethnomusicologist and cultural researcher at the Academy of Finland/University of Turku, is currently studying sonic memories in Europe. She is the editor of *Soundscape Studies and Methods* (together with Gregg Wagstaff).

## Wind operated Musical instruments of Almora

By Virinder Singh.

I lived at Almora, a district town in the north Indian state of Uttranchal, from the beginning of 1999 to the end of 2002. Even now whenever I can leave my work many miles from there, I visit the place. My wife operates a carpet weaving centre at Almora. The building of this centre is yet to be finished. Consequently, many iron bars protude out from the walls. These iron bars, which are sometimes one and half meters long, are in bunches of ten to fifteen. To any innocent observer these are very clumsy and odd looking parts of the unfinished building. However, to a keen listener these are also the source of a very rich aesthetic experience. Whenever fierce wind blows and passes through these bars, very pleasant musical notes are produced. One likes to stand and hear this unique music.

The first time I heard it I was relaxing in the bed room. It was a mystery to me, as we don't possess any string instrument, except a small EK TARA (a one-stringed musical instrument sold by hawkers in town) and a dholak (drum), used to accompany group songs at the time of holi (festival of colours). I searched for the source of this music, this unique sound, but there was no trace of it and there was no performer anywhere. When I tried to follow the direction, from which this sound originated, my little exploration was rewarded. But I had to wait for the next fierce wind. *It* was the performer and the bunch of iron bars was the instrument. Even now this unique musical phenomenon exists and shall continue to exist until the building is finished.



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## A February Day in Morelia, Mexico

By Ian McLoone

It was suggested that I keep a sound journal during my recent study trip abroad to Morelia, a colonial Mexican city in the state of Michoacan proudly known for its relaxed pace and friendly tranquility. This article presents a typical day in a city that proved to be a vibrant and textured setting in which this first-time sound journalist was able to learn about his own capacity to explore the soundscape around him.

I awoke in the morning to the sound of my clock radio playing a flowing Spanish guitar melody. Not quite ready to face the day I hit the Snooze button to allow myself another fifteen minutes of sleep. Upon the second alarm, I was surprised to hear a song by my favorite musical group from the United States. I found this interesting in that the group is not well known at home, but here they were on Mexican radio!

With the background sound of my host father squeezing fresh orange juice in the kitchen, I had a light breakfast and left the house.

The sounds of the outside world flooded into my consciousness. I can hear the loud CLANG-CLANG, CLANG-CLANG of the garbage man's bell signaling his arrival in the neighborhood. As I turn the corner every taxi that whizzes down the street seeks my patronage with a honking horn and electronic whistle.

No taxi this morning as my ride requires the use of a combi, a Volkswagen bus that carries up to fifteen people at a time. The combi approaches with a low then high-pitched rumble of the engine heard against the light bustles of the morning traffic. I flag it down and climb aboard. I give the ritualistic salute, "buenos dias" to the other passengers who, like a small friendly choir, return my salute and then remain silent until the next passenger boards.

In place of small talk amongst strangers, the air is filled with the sounds of impatient motorists on their morning commute. Horns honk at almost every moment and electronic catcalls are sent between combi operators and to pretty girls on the sidewalk. As my stop approaches I contribute to this morning chorus with, "la parada, por favor" – "next stop, please". I exit the combi to begin my hike through my university's neighborhood.

The splashes of water against the side of parked busses being washed and the light morning conversations of the drivers signal my entrance to the area. Walking by, I am greeted with "Hello, American", and other phrases from those wishing to demonstrate their mastery of the English language.

On the route to school, I pass through the preparatory hustle and bustle of an open-air market with the sounds of banging pots and pans, the grunts of vendors carrying and unpacking their goods, and the quiet clucking of caged hens being prepared for sale.

Kids laugh and scream, running through the streets just as the intrusive loudspeaker of a propane sales truck thunders by

blasting the theme song from the "Peanuts" TV cartoon. It drives by every hour. I go through my entire day at school with that song playing in my head.

At the day's end I leave school and I am once again offered rides by honking taxi drivers. But again I take the combi right through the Centro. This is the time of day when the city center is always its busiest.

I hear the sounds of the city's fountains, casual chatter between friends, rush hour traffic and even an occasional boom box greeting a department store's customer. School kids laugh and flirt together as we pass a high school. In the distance a man shouts from the top of his lungs, "Globos!" He is selling an array of balloons. There are so many balloons attached to him that he seems to be drowning in color.

The soundscape creates an eclectic aural fusion that makes my heart race. I have a moment of realization. Soaking in the chaos of the city sounds, it hits me that I am doing something of which I have always dreamed. I am in a different country, a different culture, and though this may seem a simple thing, it is too profound for words at the moment.

As darkness falls people leave for home and Morelia returns to its quiet and tranquil nature. The sound of my steps on the sidewalk and the closing of residents' doors are the only sounds that keep me company. I pass one oasis of activity, a taco and hamburger stand, which offers the sounds of people laughing around the hissing of grilling burgers. Orders are taken and a delicious aroma fills the air. I am startled by a taxi whizzing by as the driver whistles through an electronic device controlled not by his lips but by his fingers on the turn signal of his steering wheel.

I look at my watch and decide that bedtime is near. I hear one final sound that I had not expected in the city. While saying goodnight to Morelia, my salute is responded to by the mighty, regal cries of a rooster somewhere near. The wind blows lightly shaking the leaves off the trees and I make my way to the house, reflecting on this day of conscious listening.

Careful not to make much noise, I enter my host's home and soon fall asleep to the company of the soothing rush of water going through the plumbing system. I am comforted by the fact that tomorrow is a new day and the myriad sounds that fill this city will be eagerly awaiting my arrival—and I theirs.

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# ECHOES OF A DISAPPEARING PLANET:

## *Discovering Pluralism in Soundscapes Using Natural Pitch Resonance and the Sonic Properties of the Alphorn*

By Michael Cumberland



Figure 1: The author playing alphorn at The Grand Canyon

The title for this paper came after much thought and because the instrument I play is the alphorn, an ancient instrument dating back to 1400 BC in Denmark and Germany. It relies heavily on the subtleties of natural acoustics and echoes, which result from natural resonances. It is unique in its ability to create natural resonances in soundscapes and to carry its sound literally over miles of mountain ranges, across lakes and through forests.

The sub-heading refers to this text as a selected study of my own discoveries in natural pitch-resonance properties and acoustics from the past twenty years. From the outset I have chosen the Oxford Dictionary meaning of pluralism: “form of society in which members of minority groups maintain independent traditions.” It is precisely these independent traditions—a unique

element of our own world and local soundscapes—to which I refer when speaking of pluralism in this context.

From the listener’s soundpoint, the alphorn’s natural resonance in a large out-of-door acoustic environment is a sound which, in the immortal words of Richard Burton, “is a sound sweetened by distance”. The reason for this is found in physics and in the understanding of resonance properties in “air filled spaces, set oscillating by an oscillating body”. (Westphat, p. 154) It would be impossible for the instrument to sound the same indoors as out-of-doors.

I try, as Canadian author Farley Mowat once said on my behalf, “to be a pioneer of repertoire for this beautiful and neglected instrument which comes as close to any instrument to echoing the true voice of nature” as well as, “to be a tireless educator and experimenter using the alphorn to bridge the chasm between man and the rest of animate creation... performing for concert and out-of-door audiences alike, emphasizing Canada’s unique soundscapes and the living sounds of our land”. (Mowat, p. 1).

If this paper seems like a travelogue it is perhaps not surprising, for it has only been through traveling and going to specific places—through *doing*—that I have been able to observe and discover!

Since my earliest youth, summering in the Canadian North, I have been acutely aware of the contrast between the soundscapes of the north and those of Toronto, where I endured the other three seasons of each year. This awareness became heightened as I began studying music. While still a teenager, studying at the Banff Centre School of Fine Arts I met Canadian composer R. Murray Schafer. I had the opportunity to perform in his *The Princess of The Stars* hierophony. Becoming enchanted with the rehearsals at 3:30 am, with the way the composer integrated human activity, the arts, the natural stage and the soundscape of this particularly beautiful mountain setting and transformed it into a sacred music drama, became a pivotal point in my life.

Since that time twenty years ago I have continued to pursue my interest in soundscapes with a passion. I have found in my travels, throughout North America and in the few European locations I visited, that a sound *imperialism* is gradually taking over the world, leaving in its wake the death of pluralism in soundscapes. This seems particularly ironic in the social and political context of Canada, where the “cultural mosaic” is being touted as a benefit to society. To call into question the ideals of Canada’s pluralism and to give examples of how sound imperialism is destroying Canada’s unique soundscapes and those of other countries is reasonable.

However and more importantly, it is my hope that I can answer the question of what relevance today’s cultural diversity and the

preservation of particular soundscapes may have for future generations. In fact, the study of world soundscapes is of paramount importance in today's society, as it allows for continued diversification and enrichment of people's lives through observations and discoveries. Otherwise these aspects could be lost to the bland wash of sound imperialism, which is threatening to smother the world's sonic environments and to deafen its inhabitants.

My observations of acoustics, echoes and what I term natural pitch-resonance properties in soundscapes were done in twenty-three locations in the United States, from Alaska to New Mexico (Figure 1); over twenty-four locations in Canada, from British Columbia to Nova Scotia; and three locations in Switzerland. These locations differ not only in extremes of geographical topography—mountains, canyons, deserts, caverns, lakes and fjords—but also in humidity and temperature extremes, all of which affect how sound travels.

Four soundscapes were selected for this paper: the Mt. Patullo area in northern British Columbia, Canada; the Grand Teton mountain range, Wyoming, United States; the Valais, Switzerland; and Bon Echo Provincial Park in Ontario, Canada. With these four locations the reader will be taken on a step-by-step progression through the theory of natural pitch-resonance property and pluralism in soundscapes.

#### **Location One: Mount Patullo, Northern British Columbia, Canada (1984)**

This was my first alpine experience with alphorn acoustics, while playing by ice-capped mountains and glaciers in the Mt. Patullo area at an altitude of over 2000 meters. It was there that I discovered the incredible, large scale, resonant spaces and the resultant echoes. One particular mountain range where I performed split the top of a glacier into a "Y" shape (Figure 2). As I played to the glacier, I heard the sound divide into two. The two resulting sounds traveled behind the central peak, became silent, and then returned to me from opposite sides approximately six seconds later. The speed of sound at 20 degrees Celsius is 344 meters per second (Asimov, p. 164). The sounds thus had traveled over two kilometers, creating an extraordinary choric and overlapping texture of subtle sonorities. This led to, for me, a unique performance practice in highly unusual spaces. At the risk of throwing academic convention to the wind there was something special here—it was as if the mountains had been awakened from their eternal slumber and were speaking to me. It was love at first sound!

Later on that same trip I had a chance meeting with Canadian composer and pedagogue, R. Murray Schafer, at the Banff Center School of Fine Arts. We traveled to Canmore, a small town nearby. For an afternoon we listened to and recorded the sounds of alphorn and voice echoes in varying locations—experimenting with short and long distances; high, steep bluffs and gradual inclines; culverts in ditches; and two-mile long lakes backed by mountain sides. Responses varied from instantaneous, brass-choir effects to the subtlest of distant echoes repeating five times and lasting up to eight seconds. At 344 meters per second the sound must have traveled nearly three kilometers. For a sound to travel such great distances, audible to the human ear, is powerful and awesome. But the space and the extremely low ambient noise level required to accomplish this, is likewise staggering.

It was in this way that I became acutely aware of the uniqueness of certain soundscapes and to what extent we are polluting much of our remaining soundscape. In fact and generally speaking, many people have become so accustomed to environments with a poor signal-to-noise ratio that they tend not to be aware of the



Figure 2: "Y" shaped glacier in northern British Columbia

natural resonances and acoustical wonders surrounding them. In other words whole populations are becoming desensitized and literally deafened, because of the constant barrage of close-quarter sounds imposed upon them, like an aural stench and putrefaction of sounds. Is it possible that life in such lo-fi environments creates cravings in us for the hi-fi sound of the studio recording? In many city streets of the world it is impossible to hear beyond twenty feet, -let alone perceiving the subtleties of resonance, echoes and sounds over distances of two to three kilometers.

#### **Location Two: Grand Teton Mountain Range, Wyoming (1990)**

The Teton Range in western Wyoming is a fairly heavily populated tourist area. Although considered wilderness by Americans, from a Canadian's perspective it hardly seems like wilderness and the ruggedness of the actual mountain terrain discourages "Winnebago Warriors" from stepping too far from their lawn-chairs. My observations here were made during the summer months. From past experience I had learned that dawn usually is the best and quietest time to play, experiment and record echoes in natural soundscapes—literally, from the last hour of total darkness to first light, well before sunrise. There are several reasons for this.

Firstly, temperature difference has important effects: "During the night the upper levels of the atmosphere are generally warmer than air at ground level. Because sound moves faster in warmer air, at about 355 metres per second, the upper part of a beam of sound waves will quicken and, the whole beam will veer downwards. It is for this reason sound can be heard more clearly



and over greater distances by night than by day.”(Asimov, p. 164)

Secondly, there is more moisture in the air as the dew point occurs and this moisture can help the sound and enable the sound waves to transfer their sound energy more efficiently through the airborne water molecules. These characteristics give the sound a warmer, fuller quality and a sound, which is able to do, what I term “echo gymnastics”, with much agility. As soon as the sun is up for an hour these conditions are usually gone.

Thirdly, as the natural fauna, and I might venture to say flora, are still in states of repose, there is less noise. Fourthly, as tourists, the world over, rarely get up on their own accord before they have to—anywhere from seven to ten o’clock—there is much less likelihood of running into curiosity seekers and potential noise makers. In fact, I have never met a tourist climb-

with words and tape recorders. It is, however, probably best to discard such terms as magic and super natural in the context of academic and performance practice. Nevertheless, an experience such as this gives a special meaning to music, performance and resonance in natural soundscapes. It was here—I will venture to say—that I heard the mountains speak and the environment respond in dialogue with the alphorn.

This begs the question: is this possible? The answer could be a simple yes, it is possible to set soundscapes into oscillation by using an oscillating body and thus, for resonance to occur. In other words: “It is true a vibrating object may force another to vibrate in unison, so the second sets up the same wave pattern and produces the same sound. Such a forced vibration need not be the result of direct physical contact between solids. Indirect contact through air may be enough to accomplish this.”(Asimov, p. 164)

The experience of such an extraordinary natural phenomenon may be rare for human beings, especially on such a magnitude of space. However, perception and interpretation of such experiences can differ. Certainly, in some cultures it is understood that the environment can speak. Is this a result of explaining physical properties? It could be.

But the answer could be more complex, as it depends upon ones cultural perspective: imbuing inanimate creations with animate characteristics is not generally accepted as a commonly held belief in twentieth and twenty-first century western civilizations. Certainly the inculcation of anthropomorphism, both historically and recently, would pose an intriguing debate for this argument. Besides the literal response of the alphorn echoes, there was a natural liveness in the response itself that came from the mountains and forests below. This was generally not the kind of performance or performance practice of which people in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries would be aware.

Is this the scientific explanation for how the land responds? Does this explain the feeling that the land is communicating to the performer and the listener? Certainly, if one is still and listens, the land responds as if it wants to do so. But as a people we rarely hear this, because we tend to be too loud and too full of continuous motion. This makes it all the more important that we find ways to communicate such experiences and acoustic phenomena.

This alphorn—environment dialogue was not an isolated event, due to the capricious whims of a performer after hours of hiking in the early morning dark. Even serious musical academics relate that there are such things as the spirit of music, rarely, if ever, told in music handbooks. A listener or an audience member can easily sense the spirit of a sound or performance. Putting the experience into words is a different matter. But it was this experience, which strengthened my alphorn vision—alone amongst the peaks and glaciers of the Grand Tetons.

### Location Three: Canton of Valais, Switzerland (July 1999)

I was visiting this area to achieve three goals. The first was to pick up a custom-made alphorn from the master alphorn builder Gerald Pot. The second was to study traditional folk alphorn techniques and participate in master classes with virtuoso alphornist, Jozsef Molnar. My third goal was to experience the rarely seen Fete des Vignerons—festival of the vintners—which features alphorn players and the traditional Swiss Ranz des Vaches. This festival has its roots in ancient Greek mythology and dates back to performances and traditions of the seventeenth century. Performances now occur only four times each century.

As an added activity I hiked in the Alps taking my alphorn and recording equipment. The following describes what transpired during one of my impromptu hikes.



Figure 3: peasant alphorn player by precipice of the Wetterhorn, cattle in distant background, photographed c. 1904 in Switzerland by the author's great-grandmother.

ing at the top of a mountain prior to 6:00 am. Most of my work is done between 3:30 and 7:00 am. Lastly, extraneous sounds such as jets, helicopters, chainsaws, cars, trucks, boats and so forth are more likely to be absent.

In the Grand Tetons I hiked to a location called Amphitheater Lake, close to the base of the Grand Teton glacier, to experiment and record. The physical properties of the soundscape—the sound resonance and echo—created a magical moment. Again it felt as if the alphorn had evoked the spirit of the mountains. I heard the mountains and the entire environment engage in a dialogue with the alphorn.

It is easy to explain scientifically how a given air-filled space that has been set into oscillation by an oscillating body, created a resulting resonance (Westphat, p. 154). On a small scale this is analogous to finding the resonance—i.e. the strongest fundamental frequency, the *Eigenton*—of a small enclosed space such as a bathroom while singing. It is equally easy to record the event

I hiked for hours above the steep mountain village of Mayens-de-Riddes. The first day I found a herd of cattle at noon. As I walked above a ridge the sound of their bells suddenly enveloped me like a duvet of thick, sonic texture that had fallen across the land. It was intriguing how the sound came upon me so quickly. Mesmerized, I sat and listened till after the sun went beneath the horizon. I had no alphorn or recording equipment. I had simply been out for a walk. It was near darkness when, in awe, I began my descent.

The next day I hiked up the mountain again for another four hours this time with my alphorn and recording equipment. This time I was prepared. As I walked above the ridge, still so clear in my memory, I heard nothing and saw nothing. The cattle were gone!

Despondent, I trudged further up the steep mountainside, crossing small glacial rivers, hoping to find the herd in the now-decreasing sunlight. After another hour of going up and down the irregular slopes, fully laden with gear, I came upon another steep ridge—and once again the sound of the bells reached me in a heavenly chorus. It was a truly remarkable sound to encounter in a mountainous region, one I am sure no one who has heard it could ever forget.

Rejoicing, I once more set up my recording equipment in the oddest of locations and began to play and record. The magical sounds of the cows playing their bells, the alphorn rendering traditional folk tunes, the shepherd calling to the cows and the dog barking to alert its owner that three cows had gone astray—all of these are the sounds of historic Swiss folklore. It is what I call the “fugue of life”, for themes repeat themselves in intervals, whether daily or otherwise, which are in recognizable forms or in counterpoint.

To some of the Swiss, including a few herders, the sounds of bells represent strict and rational functions. They would not think of these sounds as having potential musical or artistic value. But to an outsider like me, the aleatoric nature of the sounds, combined with the repetition of sounds, seems truly musical.

While I was recording, many other sounds occurred. Most were acceptable, but not such twentieth-century ones as the motorcycles used by the herders and the helicopter which flew over during my recording. Needless to say that recording was made useless by the digital accuracy with which the equipment captured the sound of the helicopter. Manufactures of the internal-combustion engine rejoice, your sounds are indeed everywhere!

The sound of “les vaches avec cloches” (the cows with bells) is part of the folklore of Switzerland, one of the unique soundscapes of the world. In the canton of Valais, where many observations were made, the bergers (shepherds) and their families have, for the past thousand years, brought their cows from the tiny Swiss mountain village of Iserable across the valley to graze in the lush, summer, alpine meadows of Mayens-de-Riddes. For the bergers and their peasant families life was difficult in Valais and the people were very poor (Figure 3).

The original function of the bells in alpine or deep forest environments was twofold. On the spiritual side, they were used to scare away evil ghosts or wild animals; to combat misfortune, unhappiness, and epidemics; and to ward off robbers and thieves. This may likely be related to myths of old magic in which the blessing of iron and steel, through tempering or truing, would help to keep evil spirits away (Hambraeus, p. 1). This is also why many bells are decorated with a crucifix and religious motifs. Their other function was to help shepherds, mostly women and children, locate any stray cattle in the many crags and valleys of the alpine meadows.

Along this line I had a conversation with a friend, Bengt Hambraeus, Professor Emeritus McGill University. He told me

about his youth in the 1930's in the rural regions of Sweden. Bells there had a similar cultural significance for the farmers and certain magical rites connected to the bells survived into the nineteenth century. During the middle ages, the bells were removed from the cattle during the dark winter months, when all animals remained in the stables and barns. They were placed upside-down, and filled with specific dried flowers, collected during the night of Midsummer Day. These flowers were ground up, mixed with other natural components, and given to the animals as a Christian inspired, Holy Communion just before they were sent out for the first pasturing in the spring. As liturgical objects, the bells represented and conveyed magical powers to protect the animals from evil spirits and beasts of prey (Hambraeus, p. 1).

Professor Hambraeus also related to me first-hand information of the use of the bells in some rural Swedish regions. Amazingly, they were used for many types of animals. The herder could direct calls to individual animals within the herd and had different types of calls for sheep, goats and cows. In Switzerland, the use of bells is similar and commonly includes vocal calls as well as alphorn calls. Yodeling is common Swiss folklore. Herding calls in Sweden, especially the “kulning” which is used by women on remote mountain and forest farms in the central region as a means of communicating with the cattle—are less common sounds, though equally captivating (Hambraeus, pp. 74-75).

This ancient custom of using bells is falling into disuse because of a number of new trends. In Switzerland itinerant bergers, often from Tunisia now, ski during the winter months. They have no real connection to the Swiss folklore traditions and do not pass these traditions on to younger generations. Motorcycles are often used for herding. Portable electrical fencing is being used to contain the cattle. Walkie-talkies to communicate between herders and walkmans/discmans (actually worn to block out the sound of the bells) make the bells less necessary. Tourists carry off bells as mementos of their visit. All of these situations have led to a decline in the use of traditional cowbells. Now the herds with bells can only be heard in the highest, most isolated regions of the southern Alps and in some parts of Austria, far above the motorways where tourists languish in their rented vehicles and air-conditioned buses.

While in the rural areas of Switzerland I was able to make some interesting observations. I believe it is important to note that in this sonic/aural culture there is an unusual disposition to the pitch  $F\# = c. 370$  Hz. This paper will not go into the historical nuances and fluctuations of pitch over the past centuries. It should briefly be noted, however, that  $F\#$  at 370 Hz corresponds, for example, to  $A1 = c. 442$  Hz. Depending on which temperament is used,  $Gb/F\#$  could at least be anything between 364 and 380 Hz, even if the standard tuning pitch is an  $A1 = 440$  Hz, the usual practice in international orchestras during the last thirty to forty years. For the purposes of this discussion I will use  $F\#$  at about 370 Hz (Hambraeus, p. 2).

The historic tuning of the Swiss alphorn is  $F\#$ , a slightly odd pitch for westernized musicians. When I asked around nobody knew exactly why—it was just the way it had always been done. While researching further into the folklore it was written that the alphorn is traditionally the combined height of two men. Is this length equivalent to  $F\#$ ? It seems so! Obviously the combined length of two men could be any number of measurements. It could be slightly longer creating an  $F$  fundamental or slightly shorter creating a  $G$  fundamental. Suffice it to say that a canon was developed and  $F\#$  chosen. This is not to say other tunings are not used, only that the Swiss favour the  $F\#$  fundamental pitch.

While traveling the rail system in Switzerland I noticed that the high-pitched whistle of the trains was also in  $F\#$  with a  $C\#$

(the dominant of F#) also being used. A bit odd, I thought, but perhaps there is a connection. As I had dinner with a retired Swiss rail engineer shortly thereafter, I mentioned my observation. He noted that it was correct. He also noted I was the only tourist he had ever met to make this observation. When questioned about a possible folklore connection with the alphorn he thought it very plausible, but could not corroborate it, either as a fact or the intention of Swiss Rail engineers (Source: interview by Michael Cumberland with retired Swiss Rail engineer Charles Thevenin, Vevy, Switzerland, July 29, 1999).

Later, on reviewing my recordings of the cows with bells, I realized that I had captured a half dozen repetitions of shepherd calls to the cows (la, la, la, la, la, la, la) all based on the tonality of F#. I had recorded two different herds of cows, in different valleys, with different shepherds—but the call was very similar: the first six “la’s” were pitched on F# with the final “la” being a G. It was sung with great volume and considerable rapidity, and the tempo was a quarter note, equal to a metronomic marking of seventy-two, and each “la” was a sixteenth note.

While driving past a farm in the Luzern region I noticed a couple of cowbells for sale by a barn. The large bronze bells had lovely tones and I purchased one. When I got home I realized the bell was pitched in C#—the dominant of F#. For all I know the bell beside it was in F#.

Are these merely a set of charming and very fine observations? The coincidence seems too strong to be just that. I believe there is a “natural pitch-resonance property” of F# which belongs to the Alps. This led me to wonder whether, if the Alps have this property, all regions could have “natural pitch-resonance properties”. Hence, this led me to additional, more careful studies of soundscapes in the lake regions of Ontario in Canada.

The idea of a geographic space having a natural pitch-resonance property supported my observations made with the alphorn in many places and over many years. The basis for this tenet can be corroborated using physics.

For example a pitch of F (44Hz), a minor sixth above the lowest A on the keyboard, has a wavelength of 25.7 feet. If a corresponding soundscape space had dimensions equal to a multiple

Ontario at: The Haliburton Forest and Wildlife Reserve at Noname Lake and Bone Lake, in the Kawarthas at Stony Lake (Figure 4) and Methune Lake and in Bon Echo Provincial Park at Mazinaw Lake.

When assessing the natural pitch-resonance properties of a soundscape it is necessary to try to keep as many factors as common as possible. Factors which the listener/performer must be aware of are: exact location of the sound source; the pitches examined must be consistent and the reflecting surface must be consistent for each of the test sounds; the time of day, the time of year; and lastly, weather conditions, particularly wind must be taken into account. Next, each pitch and its wave length must be examined along with the distance from the sound source to the reflecting surface and back, at the speed of sound in an ideal temperature of 20 degrees Celsius. This is a time consuming process and one with which I have laboured to experiment in Ontario since 1999.

To keep the nomenclature simple, three guiding pitches will be referred to when relating the test pitches to the soundscape. These are: A, at 28Hz (frequencies in Hz are to the nearest 1.0) with a physical wave length of sound of 40.4 feet, this is the lowest A on the conventional keyboard; C at 262 Hz with a physical wave length of sound of 4.3 feet, this is middle-C on the keyboard; and A 440 Hz, with a physical wave length of sound of 2.6 feet, the tuning A for many contemporary orchestras (Egan, p. 4).

The alphorn used in the acoustic experiments can be played in the keys of F, F#, G and A<sup>b</sup>. Each extension has the possibility for 17 playable testing notes. All of these are in the harmonic series and range from the lowest fundamental in each key to the sixteenth partial. This allows for a four-octave range. The lowest possible sounding note is the F at 44 Hz, with a physical wave length of 25.7 feet; and the highest sounding note is the A<sup>b</sup> at 934 Hz, with a physical wave length of 1.25 feet. This top note is the A<sup>b</sup> above the treble clef. The first two octaves, or fundamental, and the following three partials will be referred to as the low range. Partial five through twelve are the mid-range. Partial thirteen to seventeen are the high range.

#### Location Four: Mazinaw Lake in Bon Echo Provincial Park (September, 2004)

Mazinaw Lake is ideal because its physical geography is extraordinary: the lake is long and narrow—to the east a 300 foot sheer rock face plummets into a lake and continues underwater for another 300 feet (Figure 7); the rock face width is close to two kilometers with a natural amphitheatre and bay to the south. To the west are rolling hills and to the north the lake continues for approximately six kilometers twisting and turning. The width of the lake where I was recording was approximately 1312 feet from the west shore to the rock face on the opposite east shore of the lake

This location is also notable because it is a historic and sacred location for the indigenous native tribes. It is considered the centre of their local world because it is a meeting of the sky, symbolic of the spirit; the earth and rock face, symbolic of the living; and what was perceived to be a bottomless lake, symbolic of the underworld. For thousands of years this has been a sacred location. When one listens to the echoes in the location there is no doubt this too would have held a special place in the conceptions of the native world in communicating with their spirit world.

At Mazinaw Lake in Bon Echo Park the following summary was observed and recorded. In the key of F# the fundamental and second partial, at physical wave lengths of 24.4 feet and 12.4 feet respectively, resonated reasonably well. This is notable, as these partials tend not to resonate well in many soundscapes. The seventh partial, F#, and ninth partial, A#, with physical wave

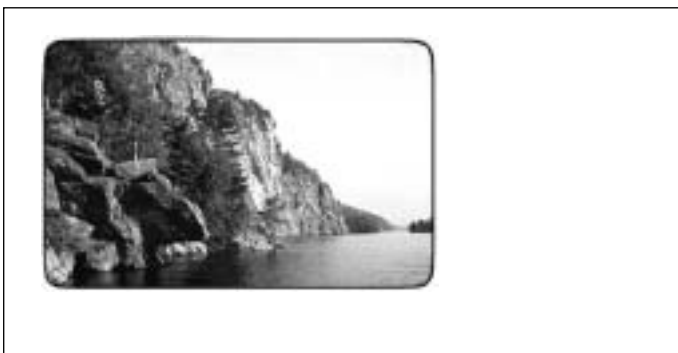


Figure 7: Mazinaw Lake rock face.

of the wavelength produced and with sufficient amplitude (dB), the space could be made to resonate by using an oscillating body (the alphorn) and indirect contact through air to create sympathetic vibrations. Thus, a clairauidience would occur when pitches, which have wavelengths that are arithmetical factors of the out-of-door space, are played using the instrument.

Approximate measurement of distance of a large space like a lake, canyon or natural amphitheatre could likewise be determined using the speed of sound—344 meters per second—and listening to time measured echoes per second during the period of one minute. Experiments using this tenet have been done in

lengths of 2.45 feet and 3.05 feet respectively, both just above middle C, resonated particularly well.

In the key of G the third partial, G below middle C, with a physical wavelength of 5.8 feet; and the seventh to eleventh partials, with physical wavelengths of 2.9 feet – 1.9 feet resonated well.

In the key of A<sup>b</sup> notable resonance was heard with the fundamental, first, third, seventh and ninth partials. Of particular note were the fifth partial, middle C, and the C one octave above.

The most outstanding observations were noted in the key of F. From the fundamental F at 44Hz, with a physical wavelength of 25.7 feet, to the thirteenth partial D# fourth line treble clef, with a physical wave length of 1.8 feet, resonance in this key was outstanding. Although a generalization, many of the physical wavelengths of this key tended to divide fairly evenly into the distance from the sound source to the echoing rock face—which is about 1312 feet. The fundamentals echoed better than any other key and the mid and high ranges resonated exceptionally well.

Observations made from recordings at Mazinaw Lake also clearly indicate an interconnectedness between man-made sounds, music on the alphorn, and the fauna: a crow caw pitched

Reserve; and F on MacKenzie Bay on Stony Lake in the Kawarthas.

Although natural pitch-resonance properties seem to be more than coincidence the tenet is not yet an exact science. In theory, observations can be corroborated using physics and mathematical formulae. From a practical standpoint it is certain that ranges and patterns of notes tend to resonate more clearly than others, given ideal conditions in a soundscape.

This may explain the ancient Swiss cultural tradition of alphorns being pitched in F#. Could this explain the sacred and pluralistic traditions surrounding native cultures around site-specific cultures like Bon Echo Provincial Park in Ontario, Devil's Tower in Wyoming and the Gila Cliff Dwellings in New Mexico? All are locations, which I have performed and recorded, and all have had a certain spirit evoked by the alphorn.

How many more sacred soundscape locations can be discovered? Can compositions be harmonized with the natural pitch-resonance properties of a soundscape, its fauna and flora? Some of my own compositions are created relating the most resonant pitches of a location. They are location specific. Could R. Murray Schafer's performances on Wildcat Lake in The Haliburton



Photography by Michael Cumberland

Figure 4: a typical dawn on a lake in northern Ontario, the ideal conditions for playing

at F above middle C, a nuthatch call at C two octaves above middle C, a blue-jay cry at G above middle C, and a robin's call note of C an octave above middle C. It would seem these animal sounds are literally in tune with the natural pitch-resonance of their soundscape. The alphorn in the key of F with a strong dominant C corroborates these observations.

Other observations recorded demonstrated that when sounds in F# were played the caw of the crow sounded F#, a semitone rise from the F; the chatter of a red squirrel was recorded in F# and the nuthatch call ascended temporarily to a C#. In the key of G the nuthatch call descended to a B. In the key of F the blue-jay cry ascended from a G to an A. When the playing ceased the animal calls resumed their previous pitches. For me these observations beg the question: are we interconnected with a sonic web of life?

Other examples of natural pitch-resonance properties have been: F# on Noname Lake in the Haliburton Forest and Wildlife Reserve; G on Bone Lake in the Haliburton Forest and Wildlife

Forest and Wildlife Reserve be realizing a sacred soundscape through the performances and re-enactments of the Patria series and the Canadian masterpiece "The Princess of the Stars"?

Currently, R. Murray Schafer is working on a composition for alphorn and soprano, alto, tenor and bass voices. It is being discussed that Mazinaw Lake in Bon Echo Provincial Park may be a performance venue. Of interesting note is the orchestration. The soprano, alto, tenor and bass (SATB) voices are scored for two reasons; the first practical, it is hoped that with SATB the work will have more opportunity for performances as choirs are more common than orchestras in Canada. Secondly, for more experimental reasons, there is a relative ease with which keys can be changed by the alphorn and choir. This ease of changing keys is not possible with written music for orchestras. This has the unique possibility of creating an out-of-door work, which could be transposed depending upon the natural pitch-resonance properties of the soundscape. This is certainly a first—at least as a compositional technique for Canada! Could this be a beginning of a new Canadian tradition?

Central Europe is an old well established culture where change, particularly in rural settings, can be slow to occur—and where some older traditions are still practiced. Could it be that these older well established cultures are literally in-tune with their environments? Could the relatively closely spaced mountains of certain locations create the circumstances for natural resonance to exist as a phenomenon, explained by the physical properties of space? Could this kind of phenomenon be discovered in a newer culture such as Canada or from the old traditions and spaces of native North American populations?

Could the ancient Chinese elaborate acoustics based upon the *huang-chung* or “yellow bell” fundamental—derived from blowing air through a bamboo tube 9 inches long and 0.9 inches wide—relate to a “natural pitch-resonance property” phenomenon found in certain regions in ancient China? Chinese records, dating back to the third century BC, note that a set of pitch pipes was tuned, using the cycle of fifths, to the love song of a pair of phoenixes. Could this even date back to the records from the reign of Emperor Huang-Ti and his musical minister Ling-lun c. 2698 B.C. (May, p. 11). The ability of the Chinese to hear subtle changes in tone and timbre of sound is well documented in the ancient performance practice of the Ch’in, which could easily be said to go far beyond the nuances of much western music. Is this a sign of a culture highly attuned to its aural senses?

A corollary to this on a macrocosmic scale would be the ancient Greek Pythagorean concept, furthered by Johannes Kepler in *The Music of the Spheres*. In the ancient Greek story from the end of Plato’s Republic, is the wonderful and apocalyptic-eschatological myth of Er, son of Armenius and by descent a Pamphylian, who died in battle and was, on the tenth day, carried off and taken up—and later found to be still fresh. On the twelfth day Er was laid upon a funeral pyre. It was about to be lit when he revived. He told of what he had seen in the next world and of his vision of the sounding of the cosmic spheres. He saw a distaff in motion with eight circles going around it. On the upper side of each circle was seated a siren which uttered a single note in a single tone. As the total number of sirens was eight, they composed one harmony. This story provides the best-known description of the phenomenon of the music of the spheres (Plato, p. 304).

It could be purported that our present culture has lost touch with sacred relationships to soundscapes due to worldwide sound imperialism, the manufacturing of mass media and the internal combustion engine.

It is crucial to understand under the current circumstances of and attitudes towards the world’s soundscapes—that is, the insidious nature of noise pollution and its inculcation and legitimization into our psyches through basic societal misconceptions such as “progress for the sake of progress at all costs”—that these kinds of observations may not be able to occur in the near future and could be lost forever. Some of the world’s northern countries, such as Canada, still have relatively large areas untouched by constant sound imperialism.

It would behoove us as a population to study these areas while they are still audibly available for research. Let us remedy ignorance with education and knowledge before our global village continues to shrink to a micro-chip, is lost to progress, and all sense of exploration is gone forever from our planet.

In conclusion let us not forget that pluralism in soundscapes is important. It preserves and creates traditions, which may or may not become sacred, but allow for continued diversification and enrichment of our lives. Now, more than ever, people must become aware and help to preserve soundscapes for generations to come.

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## Credits/Thank You:

Bruce Bateman (Superintendent of Bon Echo Provincial Park); Mildred Cumberland, the author’s Great-grandmother, photo of peasant alphorn player c. 1904 taken in Switzerland on tour of Europe (figure 3); Mark Malby, photo Stony Lake (figure 4); Farley Mowat; R. Murray Schafer; Laura Steen; Geoffrey Tait, photo “Y” shaped glacier (figure 2); Mary Talbot; Hildegard Westerkamp.

**Michael Cumberland** was born in Toronto and currently resides in Port Hope, Ontario with his wife, two sons and daughter. He received his Bachelor of Music and Education Degrees from the University of Toronto, his Master of Music from The University of British Columbia and continued his studies at Trent University and McGill University. Mr. Cumberland currently teaches and performs with alphorn and tuba in Southern Ontario. He has premiered numerous compositions, writes his own alphorn music and has been recorded for CBC. He has produced his own alphorn/soundscape recordings, has just released an alphorn DVD and can be heard on Centrediscs—Composer Portrait Series: R. Murray Schafer. Mr. Cumberland would welcome comments regarding this paper. Email: [alphorn@mikecumberland.com](mailto:alphorn@mikecumberland.com) or 347 Lakeshore Road, Port Hope, ON L1A 1R2, Canada. [www.mikecumberland.com](http://www.mikecumberland.com)



# Daniel Maggiolo

1956—2004

Daniel Maggiolo was a multi-faceted person as composer, teacher, researcher and artist. In the year 2000 he initiated a research project studying the soundscape of Uruguay, the *Proyecto Paisaje Sonoro Uruguay* in Music School of Udelar-Universidad de la República. He invested an enormous amount of energy into this project. And to help it grow and deepen quickly in these few years since its inception he invited some of the more prominent members of the soundscape community, such as Hans Ulrich Werner (2001/2002), Hildegard Westerkamp (2003) and Sabine Breitsameter (2004). The project also participated in RADIOTOPIA with soundscape recordings of such Uruguayan places as Montevideo, Piriápolis and Salto. One of the strongest tools developed in the project is the web site <<http://www.eumus.edu.uy/ps>>.

Daniel left us a lot to think about—our environment, our sounds and our ethic ways of working. But we are sure that on the way, his sounding steps will keep going.

Leonardo Fiorelli is Daniel Maggiolo's former student and main research assistant, who is now following in Daniel's footsteps, continuing his legacy of soundscape studies in Uruguay.

## “Despite all the Ship Wrecks”

Composer and Soundscape Researcher Daniel Maggiolo dies unexpectedly in Montevideo, October 2004

By Hans Ulrich Werner

A definitive „Bueno! (Es)TA (bien)?“ was his personal Soundmark, which brought significant pragmatism into the often meandering discussions about the Uruguay soundscape. During the last few years Daniel Maggiolo, born 1956, worked in Montevideo as professor for musical acoustics and soundscapes. Before that, since receiving his Tonmeister degree at the Hanns-Eisler-Hochschule in East-Berlin in the mid-80s, he freelanced as music and studio director. The dictatorship in Uruguay had driven the Maggiolo family to Venezuela, where both his parents died in exile and from where his sister returned to Montevideo only recently.

During Spring 2004 the Music Academy at the Universidad de la República re-elected Daniel as its director, not only because of his unique, sometimes provocative ideas but also because he was known for his immense motivation for work—which finally contributed to his exhaustion.

Daniel Maggiolo composed electroacoustic music, also for multimedia contexts and, in recent years he became an untiring catalyst for soundscape studies and acoustic ecology in Uruguay, reaching out to many academic disciplines.

He found enthusiastic supporters for his soundscape ideas and projects at the Goethe-Institut in Montevideo—specifically in the working group around Dr. Kristiane Zappel—who promoted his efforts greatly and drew me as well into his rich intercultural experience and friendship. I got to know him as a “transdisciplinary networker”, who in a way continued the work of his father, director of the university until the family had to escape to Venezuela. Maggiolo's intense engagement with transdisciplinary education and new ideas therefore also meant a commitment to making continuity and growth possible even in a society in permanent crisis.

The type of soundscape research conducted in Montevideo and Uruguay was an expression of this attitude and formed the nucleus of his personal productive cosmos: as “Sound Education”, in the sense of Murray Schafer, through a social analysis of sound and a dialectical world view, with documentary audio ‘snap shots’, as well as through minimalistic pieces and collective workflow.

For example he integrated into his soundscape composition *M(eta)S(onte)Video*—composed for Studio Akustische Kunst at the WDR (West German Radio) in Cologne—the work of his research assistant Leonardo Fiorelli, architect and composer, who embodies within the *Grupo Paisaje Sonoro* the soundscape activist of the next generation. Similarly, at the Symposium *SoundscapeDialogue—KlangOrte* organised by Detlev Ipsen at Kassel University, Germany, Daniel Maggiolo together with musician and composer Laura Robales gave intensive insights into their shared soundscape competence.

After this interdisciplinary symposium the composer and Tonmeister traced his steps back to East-Berlin for the first time—to the *amici collaboratori* of his student days—a journey he wanted to continue in the Fall of 2004. But his health failed. The more he felt the symptoms throughout the last few years, it seems, the more he threw himself into the pursuit of soundscape activities, musical creativity and professional tasks.

When we received the message of his death on October 8, he was already buried. The grief is deep and all those who are connected to him are left with a strong sense of incomprehension and loss. What remains are vivid memories of this very human listener, Daniel Maggiolo, his openness and his sensitivity. In his countercurrent, sometimes stubborn, independent ways he insisted on creative education for a liveable, worthwhile future—*despite all the shipwrecks*.

This is the title of one of his best compositions, for electronic sound processing and four percussionists, inspired by the ritualistic, deep drumming music of Uruguay and expressed in his life through sound. He writes: “the drums, that I have borrowed from Candombe and the electroacoustic sounds occur in interaction with each other. Each soundworld affects the other. The solution, the re-solution between the two can only be dialectical. Respect for the diversity of the OTHER forms the common thread of this piece”.

**Hans Ulrich Werner** is sound designer for Media, author of Soundscape texts and composer of environmental electroacoustic forms.

# INTERMISSIONS WITH THE ORCHESTRA

By Christopher DeLaurenti

*Then, I grant you, the composer-conductor lives on a plane of existence unknown to the virtuoso. With what ecstasy he abandons himself to the delight of “playing” the orchestra! How he hugs and clasps and sways this immense and fiery instrument! Once more he is all vigilance. His eyes are everywhere.*

Hector Berlioz,  
*The Memoirs of Hector Berlioz*  
(Ed. and trans. David Cairns, W.W. Norton, p. 285)

I have spent the last several years at orchestra concerts and ballet performances on my own singular plane of existence. Furtive, vigilant, with my eyes everywhere (for I might get caught!), and my ears carefully attuned to “playing” the orchestra, I am on a secret mission: to surreptitiously record intermissions.

Here in Seattle, symphony musicians often return to the stage during intermission, sometimes mere moments after the entire orchestra has exited. Alone or in pairs, cellists, oboists, clarinetists, trumpeters, timpanists, trombonists, and others warm up and work through the difficult passages that await them on the remainder of the program. I do not know if this soundscape is particular to Seattle or American orchestras. In my regrettably limited experience, European orchestras, after the program’s first half, remain backstage until the second half of the concert begins.

Why record intermissions? One duty of the soundscape composer is to expose the unexpected, overlooked, and hidden skeins of music woven in the world around us. Culling sounds from the world for a soundscape composition subverts long-standing essentialist notions of music being comprised of notes, melody, traditional instruments (violin, guitar, drums, piano, etc.) and so forth as well as flouts contemporary expectations of abstract agglomerations of *musique concrète*-ized noise.

Throughout history, the definition of music has remained a moving target. I hope recording and presenting these intermissions in some small way abets and accelerates the ongoing re-definition of music in our culture towards moving, meaningful, coherent listening.

Making such recordings is illegal, a result of rules negotiated by the Musicians Union and various venues, yet I believe the importance of documenting these intermissions trumps antiquated copyright laws and misguided prohibitions. There’s little money to be made—I doubt Deutsche Grammophon has plans

to release a compilation such as *Favorite Intermissions* any time soon—and seems unlikely to damage anyone’s reputation, though it might tweak a conductor’s ego to find out that the best “new” music is heard between two halves of his or her meticulously planned concert program.

Recording these intermissions preserves a soundscape that could be blithely abolished by the arrival of a new music director—who might forbid on-stage warm-ups during intermission—or rendered extinct by the eventual implementation of noise cancellation technology that silences a room and hermetically seals conversations, confining them to the person next to us.

How do these intermissions sound? Each follows a similar dynamic curve, yet every intermission I have recorded is unique. One musician strolls on stage, leafs through music, and trills a few notes. Other players emerge, followed by a gradual influx of stagehands dragging chairs, shifting desks, pushing the piano. The intermission concludes with the remaining musicians of the orchestra filling the stage and adding their own individual parts to the soundscape. Fragments of notated music and music-related sounds collectively become an unintentional improvisation: different instruments sound at different times and collide melodically, harmonically, and rhythmically in sometimes interesting, novel, and exciting ways.

I’m “playing” the orchestra too, as I continually orient my hidden body-mounted microphones to capture what I hope is an interesting confluence of musicians and the crowd, whose voices intrude and obtrude, then coalesce and congeal into a mass murmur. One unexpected benefit of such listening is that I’m beginning to hear crowd sounds polyphonically. At the last possible moment—or when the ushers begin to eye me suspiciously—I rush back to my seat to hear even *more* music.

**Christopher DeLaurenti** is a Seattle-based composer who is perhaps best known for his soundscape composition, *N30: Live at the WTO Protest November 30, 1999*. 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. Also [http://www.seasonalbk.net/addenda\\_feb5/](http://www.seasonalbk.net/addenda_feb5/) has a recording of an intermission along with other recent works of his. He is planning to post more intermissions on his site very soon.



“  
 THE LIGHTS MUST NEVER GO OUT.  
 THE MUSIC MUST ALWAYS PLAY: REDEFINING THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE  
 LEST WE SHOULD SEE WHERE WE ARE;  
 LOST IN A HAUNTED WOOD,  
 CHILDREN AFRAID OF THE DARK  
 WHO HAVE NEVER BEEN HAPPY OR GOOD”

—GEORGE ORWELL, 1984

By Milena Droumeva

In Plato's *Republic* a city-state was spatially defined by the vicinity within which the orator's voice was heard (Schafer, 1977). We can hardly imagine this classic acoustic community today, but it nevertheless demonstrates the power of sound that is still at play—whoever controls it, controls public life.

With the advancement of sound technology in the 1900s, amplification allowed sound to carry much farther than its implied or target audience. Music and speech, once ephemeral contained sound events, bound by their physical qualities, now share the modern soundscape with synthesized electronic sounds in simulated acoustic spaces. Our environment has become a “technological milieu for [schizophonic] sound” (Franklin, p. 15). Seen as a metaphor for progress, this technological ‘sonic invasion’ of the public space has met very little opposition.

In fact, it has radically redefined people's relationships with their soundscape and with notions of sharing space. Instead of being alert to sounds, people become passive listeners, habituated to noise and alienated from the urban environment by sonic alternatives such as personal music players, car stereos, personal mobile phones, and Muzak. We train ourselves not to pay attention to sounds and aural cues, to turn our acoustic environment off: ‘Oh, that's someone else's cell phone, I'll ignore that,’ and ‘that's just Muzak, I'll tune it out.’ Such reactions occur because of our habituation to ‘background listening.’ In addition, electroacoustic sounds occupy so much of the public sphere that our private space can hardly exist in that context, while truly public space inevitably diminishes. Silence is suddenly not a public right but an expensive and elusive rarity.

There are many definitions of *public* and *private*, both as geographical spaces and as socio-economic spheres. In terms of sound, I would define the public as the communal, shared acoustic space, owned by everyone but belonging to no one in particular. The private, on the other hand, is the individual, controllable/controlled space, which we physically and psychologically define for ourselves. What is important is achieving a holistic balance and a public consensus on which sounds should and should not be allowed in the public sphere. An acoustic community contains both private and public acoustic spaces, but a positive acoustic community is an “information rich” one, (Truax, 2001, p. 66) where aural cues have a distinct character and an immediate importance to the community. A balanced acoustic community also contains distinct occurrences of silence as an “enabling environment” (Franklin, p. 15) for human creativity, rest and

self-actualization. It enables people to meditate or ‘unwind,’ connect with their environment and experience the universe in a holistic way (Franklin, p.16). But where does silence stand in the world of consumerism and privatization? Is it our inherent right, or do we in fact end up ‘buying’ our silence at a costly price?

Many would argue that the spilling of ‘private’ electronic or schizophonic sounds into the public sphere and ‘public’ sounds into the private sphere, creates sound pollution and a diffused, disorienting and lo-fi environment (Schafer, 1977). Not only does such an acoustic community not carry vital communication, but it also discourages soundmaking and human interaction with the environment (Westerkamp, p. 227).

Background music is probably the first phenomenon to start blurring the boundaries between private enjoyment and the public milieu and it dates back to the beginning of the last century. The Telharmonium from 1906 was perhaps the first to provide background music as a ‘mood setter,’ to guide and affect consumer behaviour seamlessly interwoven in shared spaces. The Telharmonium ran over the telephone line, often interfering with voice transmission, and delivered narrowband, phonograph-style atmosphere music to restaurants (Weidenaar, p.134). This device thus replaced live musicians, structuring a surrogate experience in semi-private shared spaces. A similar shift followed by the 1960s with radio broadcasting. In an increasingly alienating, urban environment the radio became a surrogate background to life, a structured daily flow in which all other activities took place (Mendelsohn, p. 244). It created an artificial sense of community, a middle ground between the public and private spheres—a semiprivate space where music provides private entertainment for people, and audiences for advertisers. When radio loudspeakers in the 1920s started invading the street from shops and offices, they were banned quickly as people perceived them to be a rude imposition into their public life and shared space (Noise Abatement Commission, New York 1929). Thus the audio *medium* truly turned out to be the *message*—the very technology of loudspeakers helped create this imbalance—whoever owned the amplification system owned the public space within its reach. “Ultimately, noise problems are always a matter of *who controls a certain area, who can assume the right to probe or exceed geographic limits, and who can afford to pay.*” (Karlsson, p.11).

As community soundmarks and acoustic signals become masked with noise, private electroacoustic events take their

place in the shared public domain. And whether it is to escape or enhance the private soundscape, these technologies offer people a way to take control. With this shift in aural culture, what Paul du Gay calls 'hedonistic technologies' emerge personal music players, car stereo loudspeakers, and mobile phones. In the acoustic realm, the shared public soundscape becomes more and more layered with amplified private sounds, further engulfing and shrinking one's already reduced acoustic horizon in cities. Car stereos are a case in point—there is a subculture of peripherals manufactured especially for cars—from bass boosters, subwoofers and amplifiers to 400-Watt loudspeakers. Such technology itself is capable of reducing all other acoustic elements in a given environment to obscurity. Yet the schizophonic liberation of sound from its source also brings with it an urban prestige and imposition of individual power. In discussing the modern soundscape in his book *Noise*, Attali describes how birds mark their territory and assert their acoustic presence by soundmaking—by singing a specific, unique song (Attali, p.6). A striking parallel is the modern presence of mobile phone ring tones, as unique copyrighted 'songs', that mark our territory in the shared acoustic space. This soundmaking, however artificial, asserts a cultural and socio-eco-

consumerism and the emergence of individualism. According to Cheryl Russel, the shift from the communal to the personal happened largely with the Baby-Boomer generation who were the first to grow up thinking "for and of themselves." (Russel, p.29) Individualism as a cultural phenomenon fragmented the public sphere, culturally and acoustically. It emerged from a society of alienated, self-contained and affluent people with "an unwillingness to sacrifice for the public good" (Russel, p.28). Silence, as Schafer points out, has gradually taken on a negative quality in the Western world. It represents a vacuum, the absence and rejection of [acoustic] communication (Schafer, 1977). In order to compensate for this lack of community, media such as radio and companies such as the Muzak Corporation created the industry of 'background listening.' This "music-as-environment" (Westerkamp, p. 227) envelops us in an anonymous artificial community. Proposed originally as an antidote for the 'crowded' public environment, Muzak in fact encourages an antisocial culture that silences human creativity and soundmaking (Westerkamp, p. 227).

Moreover, as Ursula Franklin suggests, Muzak symbolizes "the programmed" which prevails in our electroacoustic envi-



nomic power in the sonic environment by subjecting all who share the space to the personal 'soundscape design' of cell phone owners. Not surprisingly, ring tones have become some of the most prominent aural cues to which we are conditioned to respond, with either attentiveness or annoyance. And since it is impossible to regulate such events in a public domain, it is left up to individuals to negotiate their interaction with sound according to their perception of and relationship to it.

If technology allows individuals to control the public space within their reach, then whoever owns the public space is able to control the taste and consumer behaviour of the public. Advertisers and the Muzak Corporation started packaging amplified compressed sound in the early 1930s, as a background to public activities and places. If silence is the absence of sound, then the new silence became Muzak, as an absence of a meaningful soundscape, with its ever-flowing satellite-controlled programming.

This could not have happened if it were not for two very powerful shifts in North American society—the ideology of

ronment. It is "the silencing that comes with the megaphone, the boom box, the PA system...[so a planned event can take place]" (Franklin, p.15). This concept of programming plays out in more ways than one—as an aural habituation, and also as a cultural uniformity. It ties in with the idea of internal rhythm in a given soundscape, which, as Truax suggests, has "strong psychological implications for the way it is understood" (Truax, 2001, p.75). No wonder the repetitive oversimplified tunes of Muzak have bred a generation of alienated, passive listeners, 'programmed' to recognize the latest pop hit in the mall, but unable to and disinterested in making sense of and connecting to their acoustic environment.

This artificial public space and the lack of real community are heavily reflected in the listening habits of people and their relationship with the acoustic environment. Social isolation has not caused people to stop listening; on the contrary, they want to listen but with the added bonus of a consumer choice. In an intensely individualistic society the very obtrusiveness of other

people's sounds, not their loudness, has created a culture of tuning out. Since the traditional domain of listening-to-music is in the private space of the home, the Walkman revolutionized this relationship by taking the "private pleasures [of music] in the public domain" (du Gay, p.113). This new technology associated with prestige and social status allowed people to enhance their soundscape by "composing their own soundtrack" of life. (du Gay, p.92)

All in all, our society is a product of our choices and desires. Who would have thought that the pleasure of listening to music could turn into the public annoyance of Muzak? As early as the 1900s with the invention of the Telharmonium it was predicted that "the output could be wired to any place in the house, out on the lawn, down the block," (Weidenaar, p. 123). Later, in 1946, a similar description appears in George Orwell's vision of a utopian resort article: "Music, seeping through hundreds of grills connected with a central distribution stage...the radio programme can be caught, amplified and disseminated" (Orwell, p. 78). Only this time Orwell sees this phenomenon not as a cause for celebration, but as a dangerous trend producing uniform, numbing environments.

omni-present environment to the more ecological view of receiving our environment with a conscious ear and thus better understanding the soundscape and our relationship to it. (Westerkamp, p. 227).

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Illustrations by Milena Droumeva

Is there a sustainable way out of this vicious circle of privatization and exploitation of shared acoustic space? How can we (and should we) change our listening habits from a distracted background cycle of 'tuning out' to an interactive, engaged two-way flow of communication with our soundscape? As Ursula Franklin suggests, it is never too late to reclaim what is inherently our common good—silence. We can start by redefining silence as an "enabling environment" (Franklin, p.15), incorporating it in our daily lives as an important spiritual and/or structural element, but most of all, we should start demanding it from our governments as a democratic necessity, just as important as clean water and air (Franklin, p.18).

Ultimately, technologies are not the cause of human silencing. They are only the consequence of our alienation from one another and from our cultural and acoustic environment. Technologies are not neutral—they symbolize control and power, but their effects are also reversible and negotiable. Our social paradigm needs to shift from putting up with music as an

<http://www.abcnews.go.com/sections/scitech/CuttingEdge/cuttingedge010831.html>

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# VOICESCAPES: THE (EN)CHANTING VOICE & ITS PERFORMANCE SOUNDSCAPES

By Henry Johnson

## Introduction

This is an exploration of a type of chanting that is not ordinarily considered music, but through “musical” parameters such as pitch, vocal style and intensity, it is often performed in settings in a musical way in order to create a vocal soundscape that surpasses that of everyday speech, although is distant from the singing voice in terms of its context and style of performance.<sup>1</sup> This paper draws on Schafer’s work on soundscape in order to explore the ways the voice forms part of a meaningful sound environment (e.g., 1977, 1992, 1993). A performer who uses chanting, or a vocal style very close to this creates its soundscapes, or “voicescapes”<sup>2</sup>, in order to position it within a particular social situation and context to command a position of intense affect. This exploration of the socially performed voice shows that in some contexts it clearly has musical traits—something that challenges the boundaries of what music is or is not—and that social performance is an important process allowing such vocal performances to carry meaning. The discussion presents several examples of the chanting voice as a performing instrument that is essential to many contexts of everyday life. It is an instrument that creates voicescapes in a multitude of social settings in order to, for example, capture the attention of listeners, add expression to a situation, or position the chanter vis-à-vis an audience. The contexts in which such vocal performances are found include auctions, horse races, sports commentaries, marches, and markets. In such contexts the voice is performed in a chant-like way in order to capture the attention of an audience or to express in an emotional way a scene or image. In each, the voice is usually raised in pitch, in intensity, and it chants.<sup>3</sup>

## Speech and Song

Particularly fascinating about the chanting voice is the fact that it is extremely difficult to differentiate it from what is usually thought of as an everyday voice. In terms of acoustics, “the voice organ seems to be used in the same way in singing as in speech,” although “in singing . . . the possibilities inherent in the normal voice organ are used in quite special ways,” that is, through such areas as breathing, vibrato, register, and pitch (Sundberg 2001, 123-25). This division is based on the two extremes where speech is seen to be at one end of a continuum and song at the other. However, there is no mention of the performed intricacies of, for example, breathing, vibrato, register, and pitch, in many everyday utterances that bridge the continuum between speech and song. This dichotomy was taken up by List (1963, 3) who noted that “certain cultures make a distinction between what is

referred to as speech or talking and what is referred to as song or singing. Other cultures do not necessarily make this distinction. Other cultures distinguish forms other than speech or song which to us may seem to be intermediate forms.” Indeed, it is only through ethnographies of speaking that one can attempt to understand the interconnections between verbal art and social use (e.g., Bauman and Sherzer 1989). Sherzer and Wicks, for example, have done much to examine and challenge the relationships between music and speech in Kuna discourse:

The relationship between language structure and musical structure, like the relationship between speech and song, can raise issues familiar to ethnomusicologists. . . . In this way linguistic and musical precision combine toward a descriptive understanding of the totality of Kuna ethnography of communication, from the perspective of a discourse-centered approach to both language and music. (Sherzer and Wicks 1982, 163)

In the discipline of ethnomusicology (the anthropology of music) the work of List (1963) is of particular importance in terms of examining classifications of speech and song and conceptual boundaries that help in its analysis. List’s research attempted to classify the boundaries of speech and song as “two forms of human sound communication” (1963, 1). He noted that “both speech and song are 1) vocally produced, 2) linguistically meaningful, and 3) melodic.” However, one wonders why the last category was not labelled “melodically meaningful”, and why the performative aspects of the voice were not taken more into consideration. After all, surely it is through performing the voice that one can add not only expression, but also lace a spoken phrase or word with added or symbolic meaning through musical variance. List produced a classification system accompanied by various analytical charts and diagrams. The classification system moved through speech, recitation, monotone, chant, song, intonational chant, *Sprechstimme*, and intonational recitation (List 1963, 9). While important in its attempt to look at the musical aspects of the voice in its plethora of styles and social contexts, it is the classificatory aspect of the model that, while based on a logical path through different types of technique used in voice production, lacks specific recognition of the social means by which such instances of vocal utterances are produced in the first place. That is, it is the social interaction of humans in meaningful situations that provides the conceptual framework for the voice to be performed in musical ways. It is

through social performance that the voice is used as a musical instrument, which expresses literal and symbolic meaning through every style of voice production.

Any distinction between speech and song is questionable when it examines not the concepts used to define different types of vocal utterance, but the performative types of expression produced at any point between a continuum of kinds of vocal production that might place speech at one end and song at the other. In connection with liturgical drama, as Enders (1990, 49–50) notes, “given the mnemonic interplay between linguistic foundations for music and musical foundations for language, it becomes unimportant to distinguish between either performative manifestation inspired by imagistic contemplation: speaking or singing, rhetoric or music.” In other words, one can examine the human voice in all its manifestations as one performing voice.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, it is in its capacity to perform anywhere between each end of this conceptual boundary in ways that include similar dynamics of voice production that allows a study such as this to stress the musical and performative traits inherent in socially significant vocal utterances.

The human voice is performed socially as a means of expression, which allows it to embody meaning through sound aesthetics in every vocal articulation. But it is the performative sound expressions that allow the voice to be communicative and musical, whether one perceives the sounds as speech or song, or indeed anywhere in between. Closer examination of such utterances can highlight the contradictory ways in which some styles of voice production are conceptualised and the ways in which they are performed as a means of social communication.

## Voicescapes

The chanting voice performed socially in all its forms produces culturally meaningful vocal soundscapes. It is these contexts that provide a level of connotation beyond that of a linguistic text. Whether a conversation, an announcement or commentary, for instance, in each context the speaker/singer performs the voice by creating a voicescape in musically meaningful ways. This point has been illustrated in a study of sound alienation in Asian rituals by Gerson-Kiwi (1980, 29) who notes that “although not generally observed, every single one of us in the course of ordinary speech runs through a broad range of melodic curves or rhetorical intonations accompanying dry speech, and dividing, for the sake of clarity, its syntactical parts.” It is such “melodic curves” and “rhetorical intonations” that point to a performed, musical, chanting voice. There are many occasions in everyday verbal communication where the boundaries of speech are challenged in many cultures. Just about every expression of everyday spoken life is performed socially and musically, at least in terms of the expressive melodic contour of the vocal line.<sup>5</sup> Phrasing, timbre, tone, and more importantly, creative performance using the voice allows for communicative expression through human interaction.

There are many cross-cultural comparative examples of different vocal classifications. One noted by List (1963, 5), for example, is of three types of “sound communication” of the Māori of Aotearoa/New Zealand. List points out that Māori differentiate speech (*koorero*), ritual chant (*karakia*) and song (*waiata*). Furthermore, he also compares the *haka* (warrior dance with chant) to *Sprechstimme* (List 1963, 11). While one can identify musical and performative elements in speech, List’s identification of chant and song as different types of voice pro-

duction helps show concepts and vocal styles cross-culturally. *Waiata*, according to McLean (1996, 110), are sung styles that contrast with recitation. In connection with *karakia*, or prayer, of which there are many kinds and might be called spells or incantations (McLean 1996, 35–36), McLean notes with regard to the chanting voice that they “are performed usually in a rapid monotone punctuated by sustained notes and descending glides at the end of phrases” (1996, 37). The *haka*, as McLean (1996, 44) mentions, “is a posture dance with shouted accompaniment.” However, while chanting is characteristic of the genre, many other styles of vocal accompaniment are indeed used (see McLean 1996).

In Japan, for example, I have always been struck by the spo-

ken voice taking the form of a type of chanting in many different contexts. While I certainly heard the chanting voice—using a more common definition of the term—at Buddhist temples and Shintō shrines, it became apparent in everyday speech that the speaker was performing the voice, chanting the voice, and being creative in these utterances. One such context was found during a telephone conversation. For example, a woman in her early twenties at the receiving end would introduce herself in the context of her company; her voice would be raised in pitch significantly from everyday speech almost to a falsetto voice; and she would speak her words in a melodic, almost chant-

ing way and seemed apologetic in her musical response to the caller. In this context the woman is socially lowering herself, or raising the position of the caller. In doing this she creates an aesthetic soundscape and performs her voice through vocal manipulation to alter it from other social utterances.

In connection with oral performance of the Kuna people of Latin America Sherzer (1986, 175) notes parameters in the poetics and rhetoric of the voice during curing that allow dramatisation. In another ethnographic example connected to the classification of the use of the voice and its function, List (1963, 3) notes, “the Hopi Indians of north-western Arizona distinguish between speech, *laváyi*, song, *táwi*, and announcing [intonational chant], *tí:ngava*.” It is the announcing voice with its changes of vocal style that demands study of its performative social expression.

Discussing the junction between the language of the street and that of the stage, Clidière (1993, 138) comments that “all sorts of entertaining speech can be found in the town: salesmen with their smooth talk, the voices of the preacher or the propagandist, the simple drunkard insulting passer-by.” Indeed, announcements are made in many ways. For example, while watching television an advert appears on screen noting a discount at a certain store: “Up to 50% off.” The tone is loud, raised in pitch, it announces in a musical way. Or, while sitting in a plane the cabin attendants walk the aisle serving tea and coffee. The voice is raised in pitch, it is louder than it was when asked which meal one wanted, and the end of “tea” is extended. Another context might be walking through a market where the stallholders chant their latest offer. Their voices raised, they belt out their message, and they perform. Another street performance might be that of someone selling a newspaper: “*Evening Standard*” . . . “*Standard*.” Indeed, I recall a male street vendor selling one particular local paper in Shrewsbury (U.K.): “*Star*” . . . “*Star*.” But again the word was not simply spoken. This was chant; it was indeed a type of song. The chanter started the word at a low pitch; the “ar” was stretched – it seemed extremely long – and the

The human voice is performed socially as a means of expression, which allows it to embody meaning through sound aesthetics in every vocal articulation.

final “r” seemed to leap upwards in pitch and suddenly cut off. Also, while walking through Oxford recently a man was observed standing on a street corner selling magazines. He catches my eye fixedly and chants: “*The Big Issue*, sir.”<sup>6</sup> His voice is raised in pitch, it is loud (in a belting style – what one might call the Martin Luther King voice).

A London soundscape that has stayed with me for a long time was on the underground. There is (or at least used to be) an announcement at many stations when one gets on or off the train: “Mind the gap.” The vocal quality is exaggerated to get the attention of the passengers. It is not everyday speech, the words are stretched and the pitch raised. In each context the speaker chants an announcement in a heightened voice. At a train station, for example, one might hear: “The next train on platform . . .” The words are spoken on the one hand, but chanted on the other. This is a performed voice beyond that of everyday speech. It is a voice that wants to be heard, one that must exaggerate sounds in order to be noticed and to give a sense of authority. The composer Steve Reich, for example, has explored the melodic soundscapes of New York in his orchestral work *City Life*. In Waffender’s (1995) film of the making of this work one can see Reich’s influences from the melodic chants of a street seller. “Check it out . . . Every item \$10, check it out. . . Excuse me young lady, check it out.” The last phrase is exaggerated with an extended “u” in “excuse” and “e” in “check.” While the written text does little to illustrate the chanting character of the voice, Reich indeed explores the melody by building a section of his work around the melody of “Check it out.”

There are many situations where one can hear a commentary. The horse race, for example, must be one of the most unique occasions where the human voice passes through a number of performed sounds. The speaker, or commentator in this case, usually introduces the race in what might be seen as an everyday voice—the spoken language of the culture. When the race begins the commentator starts to speak, which soon develops into a chant. Between now and the end of the race the chanter’s voice increases in pitch, in speed and performs for the listener a commentary full of suspense and excitement. Other sporting events too often produce similar effects at moments of excitement. The commentary of a soccer match, for example, produces a fairly steady soundscape that is interrupted momentarily at points of excitement preceding a goal. Another context that highlights the chanting voice is the auction. Here, the chanter is both announcing and commenting. The auctioneer performs a solo in front of an audience and interacts to create an aesthetic soundscape of the chanting voice. In connection with this context List notes that:

Distinctions made according to function rather than melodic type are also common in our own society. “Auctioneering,” the form of communication used by the auctioneer, is not usually considered “song” or even “chant.” Nevertheless, “auctioneering” often takes the form of a monotonic chant in which the monotone and the few auxiliary tones used are quite stable. On occasion, types of melodic cadences are also used.

When speech is heightened in a socially structured situation, such as a dramatic production or in the telling of a tale, two opposite tendencies appear. The first is the negation or the levelling out of intonation into a plateau approaching a monotone. The second is the amplification or exaggeration of intonation, especially of the downward inflection that serves in most languages as a phrase, sentence, or paragraph final. (1963, 6)

A workers’ protest is another context where the chanting voice creates a soundscape/voicelandscape that has a particularly poignant effect on ideas of space and place. The chanting strikers, for instance, are extremely effective in creating a resonating “scape” with poetry and political meaning: “What do we want?” “More pay!” “When do we want it?” “Now!”

## The (En)chanting Voice

This paper has argued for the examination of the chanting voice as a performed voice. As well as referring to several everyday contexts that show a chanting voice, it has suggested that the voice in every context could be seen as a creative and performed voice, both in the sense of the sound produced and the performative context in which it is used, socially and culturally. It is not only singing or even chanting that produce a heightened vocal expression, but also many other—if not all—forms of the socially performed and chanting voice. In the same way that Klein (1986) looks at styles of speaking in Toba (indigenous people of Latin America) discourse as a verbal art that was suppressed by Spanish domination, one might view speech in some cultures as a creative and performative art that is not always conceptualised as such in everyday discourse.

Some of the events mentioned in this paper—especially commentaries and announcements—are of particular interest in this discussion because they are performed as creative events. Several ethnographic examples help to illustrate this point. Darnell (1989, 315), while noting the social essence of narrative performance in Cree (Native American) culture, stresses that it is essentially “creative performance.” There is “a continuous interaction between context of performance, individual performer, and culture change.” (336) There are indeed many other examples that could be mentioned, but the ones chosen have been identified in order to emphasise the performative qualities of the voice in spheres of everyday life outside of what is usually referred to as singing. Through oral discourse and poetic process, therefore, the voice is frequently dramatised through rhetorical devices as a vocal art that is performed socially and culturally in an array of creative contexts to create vocal soundscapes of meaningful and creative human expression. The chanting voice in all its forms is, indeed, enchanting.

## Endnotes

1. For anthropological studies of the voice see Revel and Rey Hulman (1993).
2. The term “voicelandscape” is used here to denote a setting where the chanting voice is foregrounded during oral communication in a way that distinguishes it from singing or speaking, and to emphasize the way it is used in a performative way, whether explicitly or implicitly.
3. See Graham (1986), for example, for useful ways of illustrating graphically melodic complexities in vocal expression.
4. Seeger (1986, 59) has stressed that the separation of discipline which study different aspects of “vocal and verbal art has had a disastrous effect on the development of our thinking about them.”
5. On the voice and joke telling see Sacks (1989).
6. The magazine is sold by homeless people and the income helps in their support.

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# CHANTING OUR WAY TO ECSTASY

By Bethany Brown

*This Sound Journal was originally written as part of an assignment for Acoustic Dimensions of Communication, CMNS 259, at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C., Canada. This course is available both as a regular course taught on campus by Norbert Ruebsaat as well as through Distance Education [www.sfu.ca/cde/cp/05-2/cmns/cmns259.html](http://www.sfu.ca/cde/cp/05-2/cmns/cmns259.html) taught by various tutors.*

This sound experience begins in a highly reverberant room called 'soccer central' at Simon Fraser University. It is constructed mainly of cement and metal. The first sound heard is the clicking of 20 pairs of cleats against the cement floor, bouncing off each wall to create a conundrum of clicks; then the rustling of each player finding a seat on the bench, which squeaks as the rubber stoppers are forced across the cement by the players' movements. We sit in silent anticipation, listening in readiness. The silence seems thick in this highly reverberant room.

We are waiting for the sound signal of the wooden door scraping against the porous cement door-well to begin the chanting. When it occurs we all, in chorus, chant "here we go, here we go, here we goooooo, here we go, here we go, here we goooooo-oooo!..". Each of us focuses on gaining maximum resonance in our voices by utilizing the lower frequencies. The words carry no semantic meaning for us. It is the paralinguistics that resonate in and around us creating the mood and excitement. The listener cannot tell if the voice is activating the space, or if the vibration of the space is activating the resonances of the body. The sound creates a unity between self and environment. As an avid participant I contribute to the composition while also being penetrated by all the contributors around me. This unites us in a common chorus, having the same goal, and chanting ourselves into ecstasy together.

The sound of the chanting is a loud fortissimo yelling that resembles 'talk singing' in that our inflection rises as we come to the end of each phrase. We attempt to create such strong vibrations with our united voices that it shakes and rocks the opponent. In actuality it shakes and rocks every person in the room. And because of the intense amount of reverberation in the space the vibrations are amplified significantly. I am completely inside this chanting and the chanting is completely inside me until the last reverberation has died away to the point of inaudibility. I am left with the feeling of excitement, almost as if the sound energy has been transduced into neuro-electical energy stimulating my entire body.

**Bethany Brown** is currently in her last semester at Simon Fraser University completing her undergraduate degree in Communication Studies. This excerpt was extracted from a sound journal entry written while under the instruction of Norbert Ruebsaat in Acoustic Dimensions of Communication at SFU. With her extensive musical background she wrote "Acoustic Community Rituals: Chanting Our Way to Ecstasy" as a composition of the Simon Fraser University Women's soccer team prior to the game.



# MEDIATED MUSIC & MEDITATION IN MODERNITY:

## *Radio Pop and Train Whistles in Public and Private Spaces*

By Phylis Johnson & Jay Needham



Stereo Forest

*We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn...*  
(Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, 1854)

Influenced by the Massachusetts Peace Movement of the early 1800s, transcendentalists Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau believed that peace was derived from an awareness of an internal state of being. Thoreau longed for peace within his soul and surroundings. He retreated into the woods that embraced his Walden, a respite for time and space appropriate for independent thought.

Thoreau lived on the fringe of town, yet he was close enough for an occasional visitor to stroll by his cabin. He was attentive to the sounds of birds, yet he spent much time contemplating the trains that crossed his sonic terrain:

The whistle of the locomotive penetrates my woods summer and winter, sounding like the scream of a hawk sailing over some farmer's yard, informing me that many restless city merchants are arriving within the circle of the town.  
(<http://eserver.org/thoreau/walden04.html>)

The train perhaps provided a connection to a larger, inescapable sphere of influence that bordered his Walden. The train was a reminder of the "spiritual" distance between his sound sphere and the burgeoning modernized world. Its encroached upon the natural sounds of the Walden woods and foreshadowed the coming industrial era.

The sounds of nature and the roar of machines intertwined have inevitably become part of the same sonic scape in urbanized

society. Ironically, naturalist writer John Burroughs died on a train while traveling from California to the family farm in Roxbury, New York in March 1921. Before his death, Burroughs (1919) wrote *Field and Study*, in which he calls attention to the regularity of nature at a time when industrialization was coming of age:

All our song-birds sing with mechanical regularity and persistence. It is as if they were instruments wound up to go off at a certain time, and to continue for a certain time. I know of no species that during the breeding season does not repeat its song many thousands of times a day or night. (p. 97)

The sonic context of the industrial era, driven by scientific thought and productivity, gave rise to a new type of modern noise that challenged personal and social soundscapes. Emily Thompson (2002) points out that in this new era, what she calls the "soundscape of modernity," a unique culture of listening began about 1900. This culture encroached upon private and public sonic spheres, as sounds of machines intruded into personal and urban spaces (Sterne 2003).

Radio was born into this industrial era, and its reproduction of sound would envelope our thoughts as radio became mobile. The portability of radio would create a new sonic backdrop at beaches, stores, and in our cars. Under such circumstances, radio squeezed out the audibility of incoming tides, seagulls, and the rush of wind, and redefined concepts of solitude.

As much as we attempt to escape industrialism, we seek ways in which to escape solitude. The mediated voices and sounds from household radio and television sets contribute toward our sonic sphere. The impact of radio—as words, music, ambience,

physical vibrations, or subconscious impressions—is rarely studied for its significance in our daily lives, other than the broad-based questions regarding the impact of popular music on society (although relevant).

## Daily Culture of Radio Listening

Recorded music became an inexpensive way to fill commercial airtime. Yet, as all radio stations began to sound alike, they began to differentiate themselves from each other with on-air personalities, live appearances, and gimmicks. With the disc jockey as the moderator, music offerings fed a daily culture of listening for many Americans. Storr (1992) states music evokes an emotional connection between people, similar to that of an exchange of ideas. Interestingly, what is disturbing for one listener might provide peace and relevancy to another person. Thoreau was both fascinated and disturbed by the train that passed through his sonic sphere.

Likewise, there is a love and hate relationship among radio listeners. Many listeners complain to each other that they tire of the repetition of popular songs; yet they seek those stations that deliver the comfort of familiarity. Although they may say that they anticipate the new, they remain captivated by the songs of their youth and what has become pop culture. These melodies or constructions provide collective meaning to individuals, groups, and societies, much like Burroughs' birds that found consensus and communication.

With radio as a companion, listeners complete household chores, drive to work, and spend time listening on the beach or at the park through their portable units. They bring these contraptions into their personal Waldens. They visually retreat from the cityscape, and sonically they remain captive to manufactured sounds and songs with little appreciation of what sonic opportunities they might miss along the way or the sonic distress that these constructed sounds bring to the natural beat of the woods.

## Radio in Private and Public Places

Radio music pervades our life in the public arena in a variety of places; music seeping through the bedroom walls of our adolescent children, blaring music emanating from cars (sometimes only heard as bass vibrations), the backdrop of our household chores as we hum along, our traveling companion as we do errands, and the soundtrack of our grocery shopping and shopping sprees. Radio has found its way on crowded and secluded beaches. The disc jockey might be viewed as a music ambassador, one who introduces culture to nature, and subsequently reconstructs our perceptions of tranquility and peace as we allow music to invade our sonic environments.

Many people have become accustomed to the sound of modernity, as described by Thompson (2002). Sound is evolutionary, rarely revolutionary, in this sense (Attali 1985). Revolutionary music is often commoditized and dismissed as a trend or noise or "bad" (Attali 1985; Keil and Feld 1994) until it is assimilated and no longer perceived as a threat. One female deejay told me, "I become unaware of the terrible message of the song and become numb of it, not realizing how revolting it is after hearing it every hour."

Radio stations have a way of embracing sexuality and violence in a catchy beat. Rap music has been both an individual and cultural means of expression that has been simultaneously criticized and lauded among cultural theorists (Mitchell 2002;

Rose 1994). Reggae, punk, and electronic music have significant identifiable audiences, and they often exist outside the public listening sphere. Radio provides a place for music assimilation across all genres, and ultimately its success is defined by its ability to disconnect itself from cultural meaning.

## "Oneness" with the Music: Inside the Studio

I have sonically traveled with radio for 25 years, as a radio disc jockey and avid (and biased) listener. I have heard my station play in the grocery and clothing stores where I have shopped. I have heard it shout from the car next to mine at the stoplight or play as background music in the dentist office.

I am the "woman inside the magic box." With a touch of the screen, I can set the station on automatic, or I can play each song manually. But it is the computer, with only its gentle hum, that decides what next to play unless I decide to become rebellious and break format by inserting a song from the back screen in a moment of indiscretion only known to me and my boss (if he or she is listening). I minimally interrupt the flow of the songs with promotional announcements and song titles. I love the feel of speaking over my favorite song introductions, conveying a personal sense of empowerment and oneness with the song. I am transformed into the song. Alone in my studio, the ominous speakers serve as my personal headphones.

One particular day, three radio remotes were scheduled in a matter of six hours. Songs were replaced with music talk beds, as if we might fool the listener into thinking that the music never stopped. Nearly all of our commercials have music beds. My particular shift covered two of those remotes: the first one occurred at a local motorcycle store that was giving away a motorcycle to the contestant that could keep his/her hand on the shipping crate for the longest. The remote spanned the weekend. The other remote was at a car dealership; in fact our station sponsored a remote there nearly every weekend. The music beckoned listeners to drop by and join the celebrations ("sale-brations"). I listened to the live breaks of the disc jockey positioned at the remote broadcast, as I ran the show from inside the station. When the live break was finished, the microphone was switched off and the Marti line was filled with static. I was disconnected from the other disc jockey.

Just before each break, he would activate the microphone, at which point I could hear our station's music echo through the parking lot. I felt like I was eavesdropping on the chitchat between the other announcer, listeners and sponsors whose voices bled through the audition channel of the audio console. Occasionally, listeners would walk up to the announcer to request songs to be played while car shopping. I heard all these distractions while the music played continuously in the background. As the final song of a scheduled set faded, both I and the other announcer would momentarily connect into conversation as I introduced him and his location on the air. The music bed ran continuously to cover the chatter, but it was obvious that the station had come to a crossroad. I imagined listeners wandering away as the station moved further away from their favorite songs (pre-determined, of course).

## Sonic Travels Outside the Studio

One of my recent voyages was to the grocery store where a "sister" station entertained me as familiar music sifted through ceiling speakers. I listened to myself, now prerecorded, but on a different station. I had recorded my voice hours earlier on this

As much as we  
attempt to escape  
industrialism, we  
seek ways in which  
to escape solitude.

station, which was also owned by my company. I looked around to see if anyone was listening, but most people seemed oblivious to the music playing in the background. It was Saturday night, and most people had better places to be than shopping at a grocery store. Only the store clerk made note of one of her favorite songs to another checker.

As I left the store and got into my car, I listened to myself in the car as I tuned into the same station. The music again was only minimally interrupted by a few of my cliché ramblings over the air. I raised the volume and then lowered it, and imagined myself driving along listening to me, but not being me. There was a sense of solitude, for only I might interrupt myself as I listened to the songs transmitted into my car. It was a sonic escape from reality.

At a local festival crowds gathered around our radio station booth that blared song after song. Some people looked over for a second in curiosity, only to turn away immediately. Others walked by, with heads bobbing to the beat. A few gathered under the radio tent, and picked up stickers and buttons as if to immortalize this sonic experience, and reaffirm their station loyalty.

On another occasion, one of the songs “it’s getting hot in here, so take off all your clothes” pumped over loudspeakers behind a church parade float (unfortunately it was my pastor on the float). In all these places, radio invaded public spaces. Blaring popular music attracted “wandering” people to action, so to speak, in much the same way balloons on a store sign shout out “celebration.”

## Geographic Considerations of Radio Music Listening

Soundscapes, in their totality of urban and rural geographies, provide listeners with an opportunity to participate in aural contextualization (e.g., ambience, voice, music and noise) and allow for comparison among personal and public sonic spheres, beyond their communities. Schafer (1992) states that the world’s music primarily exists in “counterpoise to the soundscape” (36). Our listening habits, and the very essence of creating social construction, should encourage us to look upon music as part of a larger soundscape in a global context. It is upon this foundation that music, as a narrative, should be constructed to provide us with a framework for sound analysis and appreciation.

The relationship of one’s personal sound sphere should be viewed in relation to a multitude of personal, localized, and global music public and subaltern public spheres. Sound spheres might be measured theoretically by their perceived distance between communicators in their respective spheres of influence and their frequency of salience (i.e., similar sound spheres communicating the same message).

Multiplicities of sound spheres coexist in a particular geography of space and time. A radio station creates a sonic sphere for the listener, who is somewhat limited by the station’s song playlist as well as his/her listening preferences already constructed by life experiences in the local and global community. The airwaves should be viewed as a meeting place for negotiation, but only if we presume that all participants are provided access to the selection process. The definition of music, furthermore, should be exclusive of the natural beat of daily life, and not limited to manufactured ditties that disguise the rich solitude of our personal Waldens.

I hear beyond the range of sound,  
I see beyond the range of sight,  
New earths and skies and seas around,  
And in my day the sun doth pale his light.

A clear and ancient harmony  
Pierces my soul through all its din,

As through its utmost melody—  
Farther behind than they, farther within.

—Excerpt from Thoreau’s poem *Inspiration*  
(Witherell, 1991)

Alas, among my many mediated memories are times when I observed several radios tuned to various competing pop stations, as their owners rested nearby in lawn chairs and on blankets along the stretches of lake shores or sandy beaches. In the latter case, the squawks of seagulls were indistinguishable among the synthesized drumbeats.

## One Final Note

Pop radio has a way of crossing into a variety of public and private spheres, whether or not welcomed by its so-called unsuspecting victims or appreciative fans. Thoreau’s train raced across his sonic terrain, as he mused the coming industrial era:

The startings and arrivals of the (train) cars are now the epochs in the village day. They go and come with such regularity and precision, and their whistle can be heard so far, that the farmers set their clocks by them, and thus one well-conducted institution regulates a whole country.  
(<http://eserver.org/thoreau/walden04.html>)

I am compelled to consider myself analogous to the train conductor who blows the whistle to announce the arrival of manufactured icons of modernized America. Newly arrived songs soon fill the airwaves. In a moment, a familiar melody from a radio station playing in the woods captures my attention, as the whistle fades into the distance. Some nearby campers are tuned to the local pop station in the heart of their Walden. Reactions to a person’s sonic environment surely create an oral reservoir of personal observations and impressions, as one interacts with both nature and man-made sound.

Macnaghten (1998, 131) suggests that sound “organizes sight” in some instances, especially in underdeveloped countries. In North America we tend to underestimate the richness that sound brings into an experience—whether it is an impression formed from a spoken word, familiar melody, or cacophony of birds. Memories are cued by our sonic play list. What we hear often leads us to venture toward the sound’s point of origin. We affirm our experiences through repetition. Sound artist and anthropologist Steven Feld (1990) has studied the cultural significance of sound in Papua New Guinea. Everyday living is interpreted in a “world that is full of birds and alive with their sounds. Myths, seasons, colors, gender, taboos, curses, spells, time, space, and naming are systematically patterned: all of these are grounded in the perception of birds, as indicated foremost by the presence of sound (83-84).” Popular song titles like “Sunshine,” “Happy Ending,” “Confessions,” “Slow Motion,” and so forth also create a sonic vocabulary in today’s modern culture.

Popular music finds itself in our movies, at our homes and workplaces, across the Internet and in nearly every aspect of our society. Radio packages music as sonic commodities that represent and encapsulate our casual conversations. The danger of commodification, of course, is a culturally biased assumption of a ubiquitous melodic worldview of what might be considered “popular.”

Peace is more than solitude. Rather it is the ability of nature and human beings (along with constructions such as songs and other popular icons) to reside harmoniously in the same sonic sphere. In the 1920s, French composer Edgard Varèse trans-

formed New York's sonic environment into an orchestrated soundscape. His audience, however, was apprehensive and fairly unappreciative of the performance. Paul Rosenfeld argued that Varèse had come into "a relationship with the elements of American life, and found corresponding rhythms within himself set free" (Thompson, p. 139). Alas, the significance of seeking rhythm in one's daily life cannot be overstated as a way to better appreciate sound in spaces of the private and public as well as the natural and human-constructed.

The authors are currently working on a piece, entitled *Stereo Forest* that sonically captures the intrusion of mass manufactured recordings (i.e., contemporary pop tunes) into natural settings, such as lakes and woods. The campuses of Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, are nestled between the Shawnee National Forest and Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge.

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## Quotes

Songs live in the air and they appear at all times. If you're a songwriter you like music, but what you really want is for music to like you. You want to be an aerial, or an antenna, for songs to locate you, and they do.

Tom Waits

Music comes closest to meditation. Music is a way towards meditation and the most beautiful way. Meditation is the art of hearing the soundless sound, the art of hearing the music of silence—what Zen people call 'the sound of one hand clapping'. And when you are utterly silent, not a single thought passes your mind, there is not even a ripple of any feeling in your heart, then you start for the first time hearing silence. And silence has a music of its own. It is not dead, it is very much alive, it is tremendously alive. In fact, nothing is more alive than silence.

Osho in: *The Book of Books*, Vol. XII

I think I should have no other mortal wants, if I could always have plenty of music. It seems to infuse strength into my limbs and ideas into my brain. Life seems to go on without effort, when I am filled with music.

George Eliot

I believe the use of noise to make music will increase until we reach a music produced through the aid of electrical instruments which will make available for musical purposes any and all sounds that can be heard.

John Cage 1937

The dawn chorus sings a requiem  
for all that was, is and could be  
if only the ear could listen beyond  
the rush of morning's traffic.

Gary Ferrington

Many were the evenings when, after her friends had gone home, [Momo] would sit by herself in the middle of the old stone amphitheatre, with the sky's starry vault overhead, and simply listen to the great silence around her. Whenever she did this, she felt she was sitting at the centre of a giant ear, listening to the world of the stars, and she seemed to hear soft but majestic music that touched her heart in the strangest way. On nights like these, she always had the most beautiful dreams.

From: *Momo* by Michael Ende, Puffin Books, 1984

## "Coimbra Vibra!": The Power of Music — Music and Power

By Carlos Alberto Augusto



**D**emodocus is the bard in Homer's *Odyssey*. Like Justice he is blind. In the *Odyssey* bards are said to be honoured and respected throughout the world. The Muse taught them their songs because she loved their tribe. We got very close to this idyllic view of music and musicians on October 4, 2003 at Coimbra, Portugal. *Coimbra Vibra!* gathered 1,200 musicians, 500 students and over 8,000 spectators throughout the streets of the town for quite an unprecedented musical event.

The project started in late 2001. Coimbra had been appointed Portugal's "Cultural Capital 2003". I had been invited to curate its Music and Sound Arts Program. I wanted a project that could synthesize the principles that were behind this major cultural event and the Music and Sound Arts program. "National Cultural Capitals" is a project undertaken by the Portuguese Government with the goal of producing a change in the cultural landscape of the country, particularly in those geographical areas that are usually outside the main centers of cultural production and financial resources sharing.

Coimbra is an old town of 150,000 inhabitants, situated at the centre of

Portugal, dominated by its university and tradition. In its older quarters you can still listen to your footsteps on the cobble stone pavement. They resonate against the old medieval building walls, stairs and balconies. This contrasts dramatically with the rest of the city's soundscape dominated by high-level traffic noise.

Coimbra's musical tradition continues today with its two conservatories, the active music department of the School of Education and a burgeoning musicology research program at the university. The town has its choirs in every imaginable size and genre, its numerous marching brass bands, and the Coimbra guitar (Coimbra's own variation of the traditional Portuguese guitar). Our aim was to combine all these resources, and at the same time bringing in others hitherto unavailable in the city. By mixing these together we wanted to produce a new dynamic which would raise the quality of the city's musical life and have a lasting effect even after Coimbra 2003 ended.

The one project that embodied all these concerns was undoubtedly *Coimbra Vibra!*, written exactly like that, with an exclamation mark underscoring amazement and excitement. The title was a play on the words "vibra" (meaning "vibrates") and "viva" ("living").

### The Project

In November 2001 R. Murray Schafer accepted the invitation to direct *Coimbra Vibra!*. This project seemed to embody many aspects of Schafer's thought and we at Coimbra 2003 were proud and honoured that he accepted to be its leader. We wanted to involve every musical resource in the city: Music schools, teachers, choirs, bells, church organs, soloists, the chamber orchestra, and Portuguese guitar groups, without forgetting anyone. We

also wanted to include an acoustic ecology dimension. The Coimbra soundscape would play a crucial role in this project. We sought out the involvement of musicians and the public and the cooperation of local environmental agencies, schools, the university, the municipality and other local authorities. We wanted to produce better listeners, and with it perhaps better citizens, more tolerant, more conscious of their role in society, through the use of their ears. We also wanted to create an alternative to the dominant passive artist/spectator relationship. In *Coimbra Vibra!* everybody would be actively involved beginning with an increased consciousness of their acoustic environment. This process was as important as the event itself. The idea of an event like this is not entirely new. The novelty, in this case, lies with the scale and the level of involvement of all these different agents.

In April 2002 Schafer visited Coimbra. It was his second visit to the city in 25 years. He met with a first group of teachers, musicians and local authorities. Everybody showed an incredible enthusiasm that far surpassed our expectations. We were all learning how to produce an event of this nature and the enthusiasm that surrounded us was quite encouraging. We set a date for the final event (October 4, 2003) and scheduled our work accordingly.

Schafer came back in October 2002 to formally start the project. Long days of work awaited us. The first meetings with the brass bands, teachers and choirs ensued. Exploratory walks through the prospective routes for the event were the first step in the preparations. In his usual high energy pace Schafer led the production team in a research tour of downtown Coimbra to identify the sights best suited to hold the event. We met with the



Photography by Carlos Alberto Augusto

inhabitants and the owners of gardens, houses, patios, public buildings and shops. We explained the project to them and everybody looked as if they'd been expecting this kind of activity all their lives. We held meetings at the Coimbra 2003 headquarters to discuss production matters. In the evenings we arranged to attend the rehearsals of the music institutions that would be involved, particularly the choirs and brass bands. We explained the project to each of these would-be participants. Everybody seemed eager to participate. This also gave us quite a detailed view of the town's musical landscape and possible ways of integrating these groups began to suggest themselves. In addition it helped us to define what kind of homework was necessary to propose to them.

One particularly difficult area to handle was that of schools. The teachers were eager to participate but they lacked proper support. We decided to devise a special program for the teachers and schools with the help of Carlos Guerreiro (who also built the huge sound sculptures) and the students of the School of Education's music department. Schools had to create their own projects and these would later be integrated into the final event. They consisted of ear training, building of instruments, later writing original music pieces for the instruments built and learning how to perform them. This took the best part of the academic year. The results showed such promise that we

decided to create a type of avant-premier of *Coimbra Vibra!* just for the schools: a gathering of students and their teachers to show their year's work. We called it *Coimbrinha Vibra!* (Little Coimbra Vibra). It was set for the end of the academic year in July since many of these students and teachers would not be able to come back in October. When the date arrived a crowd of over 1,200 children with their teachers met at the Choupal National Park. It was one of the most moving events I've ever witnessed: children from every type of school in Coimbra showing, in all its simplicity and trueness, their beautiful sounds and music. They displayed an unmistakable happiness that almost made us forget the seemingly unsurpassable production obstacles that we had to face. Let's admit it: only music and sound can produce a smooth gathering of such an energetic crowd! The event was a tremendous success and hinted towards what was still ahead of us.

### Coimbra's good vibrations

The October 2003 event approached. After having visited every imaginable corner of the old town and met every musician, musical institution and school in Coimbra, Schafer had carefully designed the master score of the whole event. Stage two was about to begin. To give you an idea of the type of problems we were about to face I'll give you the example of the final choir, the very last group to

appear in the Old Square. Schafer assembled a 150 voice choir. Each singer would be placed in a window of the buildings surrounding the Square, holding a candle while singing. Meetings went on with the conductor to choose the piece to be performed, to visit the square, to solve problems such as the conductor's visibility and the placement of the choir's sections. We also needed to decide how the windows would be assigned to each singer, how they would access each apartment, how to hold the score, turn the pages and hold the candle simultaneously (a music stand could not be used) and a myriad of other problems. Each singer had to be contacted individually; each had to be given a score and a timetable. Rehearsals had to be scheduled, visits by all singers to the square and a "dress-rehearsal" had to be arranged, candles (and a match box!) had to be acquired and distributed. A master map was drawn. Owners of each building were interviewed to obtain their permission to use the space. Each singer had to know exactly from which window he/she was going to sing and had to be given access to the house for rehearsals and for the final performance. The conductor had to use a pair of portable hand signal lights, similar to those used by ground controllers in airports, so she could clearly be seen by all singers in such a large space.

Multiply these problems roughly by ten and you have an idea of the dimension

of the problems the *Coimbra Vibra!* production team had to face. They included carrying and installing huge sound sculptures, handling the theatre groups' props and sets, the DJ's setup, recording and broadcasting the sounds of cats, dogs and crows, getting 3,000 ping pong balls, one fire engine equipped with a large bell, two police cars with sirens, rehearsing the firemen and cops, providing spaces for the musicians to set up their equipment, getting food for thousands of spectators, musicians and the production crew itself and a myriad of other minor and less minor details. Letters had been sent out to every inhabitant informing them about the project. Public authorities were informed and asked to cooperate. A newsletter was prepared and distributed.

The event itself had four different components. Three different routes led through the old part of Coimbra (each spectator had to pick a route and then he/she would be lead by one of the guides through the different musical and sonic events that were placed along these routes). The three routes lead into the Old Square where a final ceremony was to take place. Individual musicians, groups, choirs, bands, sonic sculptures, theatre events, sound "jokes" et al were placed throughout these routes in windows, stairs, balconies, patios, roofs and gardens. These spots had been carefully chosen by Schafer for their special acoustic characteristics, location or simply because they looked interesting. Each participant was given a special location. Rehearsals were scheduled with each participant at each precise location. As it turned out these rehearsals created anticipation towards the event since they raised the natural curiosity of the inhabitants. Everything was ready.

Once the *Coimbra Vibra!* final event began the most striking sound source normally dominating Coimbra's soundscape, namely traffic noise, entirely disappeared! Traffic had to be blocked off totally around and inside the area where the event was taking place. Instead of traffic noises, as one spectator observed, people's voices, laughter and other sounds of human origin became dominant. Suddenly the city's acoustic horizons had expanded. As the spectators/listeners started to walk along the routes expressions of surprise and humour became a constant feature: they turned around a corner to suddenly discover a soloist playing, say, a flute; a few meters ahead they had to go through a set of gigantic bamboo chimes; peeking inside a shop they'd discover a piano player; walk-

ing from one location to the other they'd listen to a smooth cross fade from a children's choir into perhaps, a DJ's handiwork; a few meters ahead they'd catch a concert by an "orchestra" of old radio sets with a proper conductor dressed in formal attire complete with a baton. Sounds of amazement mixed with the sounds of the musicians and other sonic elements placed along the routes.

Spectators/listeners were thus taken through the ancient little streets and squares into the big Old Square where a meal was served. For the event the Old Square had been divided into three main areas. Two stages were built at the high points of the square and at its center an

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improvised arena was set up. Initially performances of several groups on each stage alternated with each other, but then would overlap increasingly until they coincided completely. A brass band wandered through the crowd. At a certain stage of the performance several groups of traditional Portuguese drums entered the square from its different entryways, slowly walking towards the centre playing an increasingly louder drum roll. When they reached the middle of the square and the cacophony was at its peak the police sirens and the fire engine bell sounded loudly for a minute or two. This was all brought to a sudden stop when the lights of the square were turned off! At this point the choir started, each window opened and a singer emerged with a candle. 8,000 people listened reverently to this choir singing a piece by Gorecky. The choir finished its performance, the singers put out their candles and *Coimbra Vibra!* ended. After warm applause the spectators reluctantly started to leave the square. As R. Murray Schafer returned to the production tent, which had been set up in the square, the enthusiastic, and energetic production team of *Coimbra Vibra!* greeted him warmly and spontaneously with applause. The Muse had been present.

## Back to Greece

The Greeks were almost certainly good listeners and evidently had great hearing acuity. There is the example of the Greek theatre, the root of modern Western theatre. Acoustically, these amphitheatres were masterpieces of design. Analysing some of the historic documentation of these places we realize that the performances must have been above all astounding acoustic experiences. Spectators demonstrated their reactions to the plays in an all but quiet manner. The theatres held up to ten thousand people and they were required to listen to the actors' voices from a considerable distance. Between the proscenium and the last row distances of up to 400 m were measured. Actors in turn relied almost exclusively on sound: the fine intricacies of their voices and good projection were the sole means by which they delivered their lines; without amplification or wireless mikes; without lighting design or elaborate stage sets; and perhaps with a mask—to make acoustic matters more complex. A celebration of hearing.

When Homer described the Gods' love for music in his poem and the role of the bards in society he was simply reflecting on the special role that sound and music must have played in the genesis of Greek civilization. Describing the *Coimbra Vibra!* experience is a very hard task indeed. The look of genuine and pure happiness on everyone's faces is an unforgettable memory. What we experienced during this whole year of preparations leading up to *Coimbra Vibra!* was probably the closest one can get today to this Greek ideal. We witnessed the power that listening and soundmaking can have in the creation of a more human and balanced society.

Schafer and his team also demonstrated that established systems of power can be challenged by exercising some control over the overwhelming sound sources of today's societies—which long ago, he has defined as Sacred Noise—and replacing them with the harmonious sounds the Muse taught us. Listening and soundmaking in this sense demonstrates a political stance. For a brief moment utopia ran free on the streets of Coimbra.

**Carlos Alberto Augusto:** Portuguese composer. Curator of the Music Program Coimbra 2003. Studied with R. Murray Schafer and Barry Truax. Worked in the area of noise control. Writes music for the stage: theatre, theatre-music, an opera is in the works.

<http://www.euphonium.pt/augusto>



## Interpreting a Garden

A Sound environment in the park of Villa Caruso Lastra a Signa  
Florence, Italy

By Massimo Liverani

The Villa Caruso Lastra a Signa, near Florence, Italy, sits within a beautiful park where we artists, members of the new group “XL’A” for contemporary art, were given the challenge to create a one-day event that included a sound installation along with visual installations and performances. In addition, there were soundwalks led by Albert Mayr and myself, and Francesco Michi presented his participatory work “Jam session”.

### Introduction:

When creating the sound installation for this event the following factors were taken into consideration: 1) The natural sounds of the environment, 2) the history of the Villa and park and 3) how the installation was to be used by listeners.

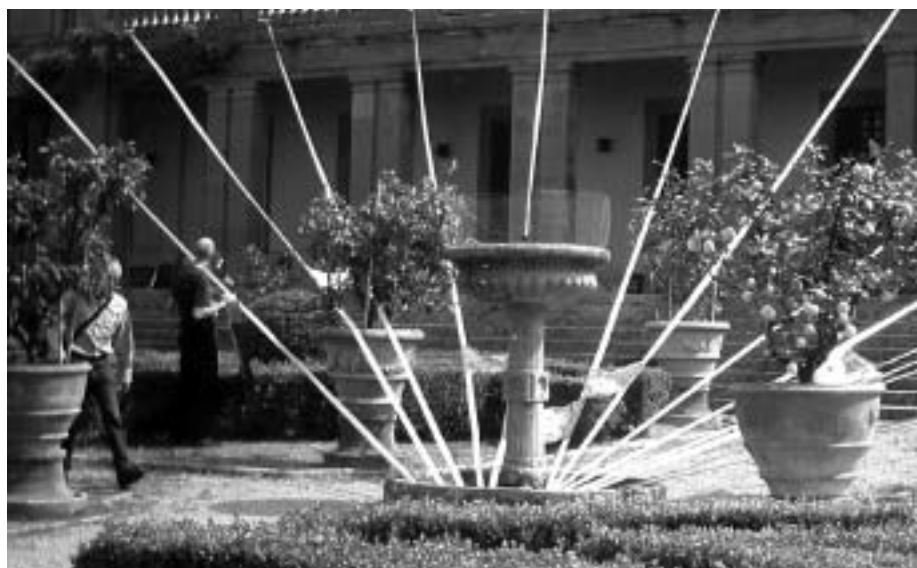
### 1. Environmental Sounds

The following sounds were detected in the park:

TYPE	LOUDNESS	FREQUENCIES
various birds singing	high	medium
insects buzzing	medium-high	medium-high
airplane roar	medium-low	medium-low
industrial vehicles	low	medium-low
voices of people, dogs, etc.	low	medium
low rumble (in some parts)	very low	very low
light breeze (in some parts)	medium-low	high

The environment had a rather clear acoustic quality without much noise pollution. This allowed for bird song to be a more prominent sound.

The low rumble, mentioned in item 6, is possibly explained by the fact that the park is located on a hill in a strategic position above the Arno valley and the village of Signa (see map above). The valley is very large (15-20 km) with many settlements, autoroutes, etc. Sounds appear to be collected there and transformed into a barely audible rumble at around 60-150



Photography by Massimo Liverani



Above: Installation at the front of the villa. Right: Under the tent: The technical equipment. Left: Map of the Arno valley.



Hz. It is only audible on the side of the park looking out into the valley. These frequencies are not easily masked.

### 2. The History

After my analysis of the acoustic environment I focused on the history of the villa.

The first building on the site belonged to the Pucci family (from Florence) and one of the initial owners was a clergyman with a passion for medical herbs. As a result the villa contains a good collection of plants and an informative library on herbal medicine.

The villa then passed through various owners. Some of them enlarged the garden creating a park in rhomboid shape. It was interesting to find out that the villa had, at

one time, belonged to the famous tenor Enrico Caruso. The idea of using his voice, though not very original, proved effective.

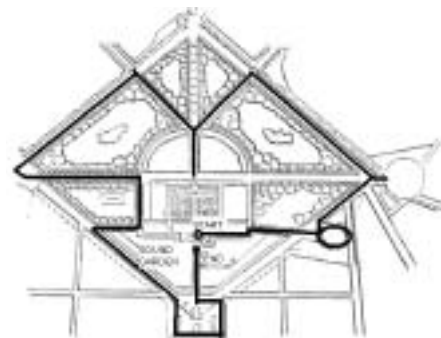
### 3. The Listening Situation

The principle question was how to avoid disturbing a normal conversation and the existing soundscape and yet, at the same, create a unique listening experience. I opted for ‘discrete’ and non-invasive sounds. I used special low-powered loudspeakers to distribute the sound evenly.

### The Artistic Project

For the sound installation I decided to record sounds from the park’s own environment. I processed those recordings taking into consideration only the para-





Left: The Italian garden with omnidirectional speaker. Above Right: Soundwalk map. Bottom Right: The park with omnidirectional speaker.

meters of frequency and time. I noticed, for example, how many bird songs, when slowed down by an octave or two, became particularly beautiful and full of associative qualities.

As mentioned, I added a historical element by using fragments of songs sung by Caruso. I also took excerpts from music by the Russian composer Eduard Artem'ev for films by Andrei Tarkowskij. These, in my opinion, suited well the idea of 'Land Art' as it was represented by some of the exhibited works.

There was a live section in which I used synthesizers activated only by the movements of hands playing over a sensitive small dome. These included two 'air' synthesizers by Alesis: Air Synth and Air FX. These sounds then could become looped and further processed live through an old, but effective Jamman and a Lexicon Vortex that produced modulated delays.

## Installation

Creating a sound installation presents many technical problems. For example, which loudspeakers to use and where to place them. I used four omni-directional loudspeakers built by myself and placed them in strategic locations. These speakers are optimized for open spaces as they distribute the sound at 360° and thus give no impression of directionality.

Two speakers were solar-battery-powered and (occasionally) linked via radio. The photos above illustrate the location of two pairs of speakers with one in the park and the other in the garden.

We attempted to use the technology in a way that it would not create excessive disturbance in the environment. Thus we placed the equipment under a tent and tried to minimize the number of cables lying around by using radio transmitters.

## The Sound Walk

A part of the whole project was the Sound Walk led by Albert Mayr and a short sound performance by Francesco Michi. It was laid out in such a way as to permit an appreciation of the different acoustic environments. The participants could use a little map with instructions (see above), including a quotation from Hildegard Westerkamp's "Soundwalking" article in *Sound Heritage*. The participants could also make notes about their observations.

In the park's higher section one could hear the 'valley rumble' while in the lower section many animal sounds were present, particularly those of a variety of birds. At the walk's end listeners were led through the sound environment that I had created.

## Conclusion

Although the sound installation lasted from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., I think that it never became tedious, something that often happens. In fact, I modified it slightly with a laptop computer as the situation changed. It was hard work but worth it. We were blessed with gorgeous weather.

I would like to thank all the participants and collaborators: Albert Mayr for contributions and translation, Francesco

Michi for the performance. And all the other artists: Luciana Alterini, Pierpaolo Pagano, Pino Gori, Carlo Bastiani, Giulia Cappelletti, Patrizio Pampaloni, Ada Visconti, Serena Arcieri, M.Cristina Biagiotti, Mauro Vegliante and Kiyoko Hosoda, Gianluca Guzzi, Sandro Frati, Laura Raggioli, Ivano Vitali.

**Massimo Liverani** was born in Florence in 1961. He has played the guitar since age 15, also with some rock bands. In the '80s he founded the experimental group "Distant Noise". His work includes music for poetry readings, sound tracks for short films, CD-ROMs, theatre performances and sound environments. In the '90s he and a few others started the "Modest but Honest" productions and worked in the fields of acoustics and musical informatics. Later he founded the "Koan Loop Ensemble". At present he works as an informatics engineer and promotes the association "Officine C.R.O.M.A." In 2003 he attended a soundscape course and participated in the creation of the sound environment for "Città della scienza" in Naples. As a member of FKL he has collaborated with Francesco Michi on the Net-Sound-Project "Thebigear"

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## The Listening Place: Alma Park's Cross Cultural Voices

By Ros Bandt

*The Listening Place*, East St Kilda, Melbourne, Australia is a sound installation located at a new seat in Alma Park, with the word 'Listen' inscribed in six different languages into the seat's bluestone footing.

**T**he *Listening Place* is a contemplative space that reflects the community's love of Alma Park for its social and reflective qualities. A seat and sound installation gives the community a new perspective on the park that takes in a key landmark, the Olive Grove—a symbol of multiculturalism and diversity. The sound installation is a mix of stories in many different languages from current and past users of the park, old and young, dog walkers, nearby residents and newcomers to the area. The coincidence of voices asks us to listen to each other and reminds us that everyone has a story to tell. When the sound work is silent the user is invited to listen to the sounds of the park. The sound recording is also available at the local St Kilda library.

### Listening in Public

Sitting on a bench in a public park is always an interesting sound experience. One never knows quite what one will



Photo Iain Mott

*The Listening Place*

Sound Artist Ros Bandt, Inscription Design Julie Shiels, Project Manager Ilka Tampke, Creative Writer/artist Julie Shiels

hear. It depends on the time of day, the weather, the train timetable, ground and air traffic, the presence of other people, adults or children, animals in the park and the individual's choice as to the length of the visit. In Alma Park, in Melbourne's St Kilda, there is a sound-specific story seat, entitled *The Listening Place*, where you can hear voices converge, coalesce, depart in snippets of Russian, Polish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Greek, Korean, Italian, English, Hungarian and Yiddish. These are the voices of the culturally diverse society of St Kilda.

Many nations coexist here and they all share the park. Yet the individuals cannot necessarily understand each other. Some sounds are familiar, others very strange. The soundscape in the seat provides an opportunity to listen to the known and unknown sounds of St Kilda and its voices. The stories are told in their original languages, which are in themselves sonically rich. But the sound of the voices also conveys much non-verbal information about each speaker, such as age, experience and the personality through the pitch and tonal qualities of each individual's voice. One can feel affinity with some voices through the sound alone, whether the language is understood or not. These become individual sonic signatures which together are woven into a rich tapestry of sound. Each time one visits the seat, the fragments change. Alma Park, St Kilda and the people are constantly changing.

### Sound of and for Cultural Diversity

The seat itself was designed to be sonically active during daylight hours only, receding into quiet for the comfort and peace of the night. The elaborate concrete

Photo: Ros Bandt



*The Listening Place*  
A Public Sound Installation Detail  
Alma Park St Kilda, Melbourne Australia

Photo Iain Mott



Bluestone Plinth under seat inscribed with the word *listen* in six languages, Chinese, Italian, Russian, Greek, English and Polish.

plinth under the seat contains inscriptions of the word *listen* in different languages, encouraging the practice of listening as an important vehicle for understanding differences between humans.

Here the languages, age, experiences, and activities of the people are sometimes shared and sometimes not, with many people having little opportunity to spend time with the sounds of the unfamiliar in a restful situation such as the seat provides.

It was quite fortuitous that the launch of *The Listening Place* was on September 11. To see the multi-cultural community assemble and see the different voices meeting each other in some cases for the first time, felt like a reconciliation for goodwill on this day.

*The Listening Place* was commissioned by the city of Port Phillip as part of their *Margins, Memories and Markers* project. I was one of 6 artists commissioned to help execute the community's ideas and reflections about its own town. The idea for an audible sculpture in this context was very unusual and it is to the credit of Ilka Tampke that a sound artist was suggested. Very often the acoustic domain is seen as too difficult and expensive to implement. The City of Port Phillip could see the value of the medium as giving the locals their own special voice and revered the authenticity it contributed as sound marks, which would increase the sense of belonging and community in the region. This was an important part of the rationale for the entire project *Margins, Memories and Markers*.

## The Commissioner's Description

Councillor Johnstone explained the project and the stories in this way in the City's press release September 3, 2003:

The seat is located near a key landmark; the Olive Grove—a symbol of the multiculturalism and diversity which characterizes East St Kilda. We hope that park users will find *The Listening Place* just the spot to contemplate the universe, while taking in the different stories.

The coincidence of voices asks us to listen to each other and reminds us that everyone has a story to tell. When the sound installation falls silent, people are invited to listen to the sounds of the park—not quite the sounds of silence, but the whispers made by leaves rustling and dogs barking in the distance, she said. Artist Ros Bandt interviewed and recorded thirty-three people in sixteen locations, including Alma Park, over a nine-month period. The resulting ten



The speaker plates designed by Adam Nitschke, pictured during installation

hours of materials were mixed and mastered into a one-hour sound installation...

The stories in the sound installation include those of Ella Elkonina who says, "My husband and I were walking through Alma Park one day in 1997, shortly after we arrived from the Ukraine. We noticed a group of Chinese people doing their morning exercises. They invited us to join them. Afterwards they said 'See you tomorrow'. From that day on, we exercised together every morning. In all honesty, we never felt better."

One resident says, "Alma Park is my favourite place—it caters to all sections of the community and the trees are magnificent. I love the private path with its seats to rest on along the way. We should treasure the variety of trees, from Cork Oaks to Stately Pines, Olive Groves and spreading Gums. Also, St Kilda East bird life is varied and plentiful. We are very lucky." Others talk about how they find the inspiration to write poetry in the Alma Park Rotunda or about their favourite shops in Carlisle Street and how they like to meet friends on the bench outside Coles.

Under the artistic direction of Julie Shiels, *Margins, Memories & Markers* found a way to fully engage and involve the community and also produce works of outstanding quality, through the telling, gathering and selecting of stories, and the distilling of those stories into lasting public monuments.

"The stories that are told and represented in the artworks often flow from individual recollections. But by conceptualising those stories into public monuments, the artists have vested those stories with shared meaning. The artworks mark our memories of place, and so give those places renewed public value. We remember our shared past, not in the form of monuments to famous men and public figures, but in a celebration of the everyday life of the community," she said.

The stories told by the 300-plus people who've participated in workshops across the municipality have sparked a new and exciting focus on the development of shared public space. Newer residents and old timers have been rubbing shoulders with interesting results. A different, hybrid society is starting to emerge and it will be reflected, we hope, through the placement of permanent public art in neighbourhoods across the municipality.

## The Sound Artist in Collaboration

As the commissioned artist, I felt honoured to be listening to the stories told by so many fascinating people from so many cultures and from all walks of life. I was asked to be sure to cover the interests of every section of the community as part of the brief, old and young, rich and poor, long time resident and newcomer, straight and gay. It was the first time that

such an inclusive brief had been defined by a council project and I was impressed with the amount of support and effort supplied. This not only functioned at a philosophical level but also on the financial and practical levels. There was full facilitation, of all aspects of the installation's complex hardware and speaker system. New speaker plates were designed to specifications by the council's landscape designer/engineer Adam Nitschke and checked collaboratively with the artist, the installer and the electrician checked to make sure no secondary vibrations would occur. They had to be weather and vandal-proof.

Adam Nitschke also supervised and coordinated all matters of subcontracting and site management so that a truly remarkable artwork was integrated at all levels of park management including the power box construction, drainage, garden heritage design, the lighting and the excavation and electrical connections.

## Sound Installation as Public Art for the Community

As the park is heavily used by a variety of groups, both day and night, it was important that the exact location of the seat within the park would not interfere with any of the other activities. Ilka Tampke called a public meeting to hear the dog walkers and other community park users' concerns to ensure the seat was away from the track where the dog walkers

commonly went, as some people felt threatened by close dog proximity. Obviously if listening is to be relaxing these issues must be taken into account. The entire project was implemented with full community consultation and participation at every level.

Personally I would like to thank all the members of the community and council who worked with such energy and commitment to make sure that all the voices were heard and that everyone's needs were taken into account. The storytellers who so generously shared their lives, stories and precious voices are to be thanked for their generosity and time. I would also like to thank the Australian Sound Design Project for providing mixing facilities for the master disc. Working on this project affirmed for me that sound installation can be, at its best, a vehicle for cultural expression, democracy and equality where matters of difference can be integrated and the familiar and unfamiliar can have exciting sonic results.

You can listen to *The Listening Place* on The Australian Sound Design Project's website: [www.sounddesign.unimelb.edu.au](http://www.sounddesign.unimelb.edu.au) and the documentation of the full project, *Margins, Memories and Markers* can be viewed on the Port Phillip council website: [www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/margins\\_memories\\_markers.html](http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/margins_memories_markers.html).

Thanks to the voices: Harry and Marge Greenberg, Klara Tranis, Estir Fridberg, Lisa Fam, Richard James, Anna

Rogalino, Zhen Wang, the Grunden twins, Leo Shiels, Lisa Mitchell's Multicultural Arts Group (including Shinobu, Nozawa, Phenporn Lord, Karn Hounslow, Akiko Takizawa, Noami Tanaka, Naoko Takavo, Mehmet, Zhen Wang), Danny Schwarz, Anna Linders, Greg Horne, Meyer Eidelson, Helen and Joe Eisenberger.

And to Associates: Julie Shiels, graphic artist, Ilka Tampke and Adam Nitschke who made this work possible through the City of Port Phillip. This is a *Margins, Memories and Markers* artwork.

© Ros Bandt 2003, *The Listening Place* Sound Sculpture and Alma Park Voices Audio composition. Sound Mixing by Iain Mott

Ros Bandt is an internationally acclaimed sound artist, composer and researcher. She interprets and sounds sites in unique ways, having created over 45 installations, and many radiophonic works worldwide. She is a pioneer of sound playgrounds, sound sculptures, interactive spatial music systems and sound installations. Her original compositions and writings on sound are published by EMI, Wergo, New Albion, Move Records and Fine Art Press. She is director of the *Australian Sound Design Project* at the University of Melbourne.



Story Contributors to *The Listening Place*, at the Opening

## Fallender Ton für 207 Lautsprecher Boxen

2yK Galerie, Berlin, 2004

By John Wynne



I've been collecting speakers on the streets of London for many years. This summer, I filled my car with as many as I could squeeze in—about 45—and drove to Berlin. Once there, I secured sponsorship from a recycling company and collected another 162 discarded speakers.

In the studio, it became immediately apparent that each of these rejected pieces of consumer technology had a story to tell, a history which endowed them with a kind of personality. Although it was far from my original intention, I decided to arrange the speakers in what the curator, Wolfgang Schlegel, described as “a field of social tension,” which would suggest a narrative. But it also would draw attention to the personalities of the individual speaker boxes, projected through their design, the marks of use and misuse, the modifications carried out by their owners, and even their smell.

The huge speaker which appeared to be emerging from the wall (or was it crashing into it?) must have lived in a pub

once, as it was sticky with old beer and smelled of stale cigarette smoke. The sound emerging from it was a set of very slow Shepard Tones, which give the illusion of falling continuously in pitch—forever. This is impossible, of course, because the sound would soon go below the frequency threshold of human hearing. Shepard Tones, as developed by Roger Shepard in 1964, are the aural equivalent of an optical illusion. Circulating through the other 206 speakers in seven audio channels were fixed frequency sine tones tuned to the resonant frequencies of the gallery, as well as a set of sounds I synthesized in response to the ambient sounds of the building and the surrounding environment. When the falling tones crossed the frequencies of the fixed tones, a pronounced beating occurred as the sound waves moved in and out of phase with each other.

Although a story of some sort was clearly suggested by the ‘personalities’ of the speakers and by their arrangement, the interpretation of possible narratives

was left open. I wanted to create a feeling of suspension in time, of travelling but never arriving. But I also wanted it to remain unclear whether this was a moment frozen in the middle of a disaster, a miracle, or something altogether more quotidian. Consequently, some visitors saw it as a concert hall scenario or a choir, others as a cityscape, still others as a political rally. Although most people immediately saw the humour of this absurd gathering, after a time some found the atmosphere contemplative, others unsettling. Associations were made with the Jewish Memorial in Berlin, with 9/11 and with wartime bombs.

From the gallery visitors' book:

- It sounds like Heaven ... and Hell.
- It reminds me of this neighbourhood.
- I am used to the fast media—I am not convinced, but I might not want to be impressed.
- Scary and impressive at the same time—this enormous, huge energy, this cruel



curiosity of waiting for the crash. The end within sight and the infinity of the falling tone ... after listening for a long time you do not ask yourself if it is pleasant or unpleasant: just knowing that something has happened creates fears in me. This is a successful presentation for us know-it-alls.

- The intersection of the tones: you think you hear something and it is coming from yourself.
- Falling tone: monkey-horny.

At the opening, Ulrich Jansen spoke to me about how strongly this collection of speakers brought back memories of all the music he's heard in so many different places in his life. After my return to London, he emailed me the following thoughts:

*Speakers—there are really a lot of them during my life. Some of them I could have said were mine, some of them I wanted to own and some of them I really didn't even want to touch.*

*At the age of 16, I had a girlfriend whose parents had an open living room with an open fireplace and a classic big stereo. Sometimes if her parents were not home we played some of our stuff (I was into Rory*

*Gallagher), and it was cool to hear the difference between my own little Universum Stereo Compact Amplifier System and this really big one. One day just before her parents were due to come home, I had this thought that if her parents realized that we played our music on their stereo, they might think that the speakers could go out of tune—I mean really get out of tune like an instrument.*

*In our kitchen we had a little radio 40x15x15 cm and my father was very proud of it. It was made of wood imitating plastic. All day this little cube was yelling the news—there was very little bass and the high frequencies were a bit cut off. Sometimes we changed the station and with a little luck they played Popcorn. As trashy as this song was, it was perfect for this kitchen radio.*

*With the first money he earned, my brother bought himself 2 big Dual drei weg Boxen—3-way speakers, wood or wood imitation, who knows. After a few months I found him in father's workshop in the basement opening these speakers with a screwdriver, and there was something else inside this cube, a kind of rock wool, like house insulation. Later I heard that the real ones use sheep's wool.*

*Although only wood, metal and ugly grey paper, it was speakers that helped my tears run, hearing Wild Horses and wondering why that red-haired girl didn't want me. I mean, I was 13 and not so much interested in the physical theory that waves travel through a cable and give their impulse to a magnet which personally tells the story to this ugly grey tick paper, so that the paper starts to swing, and with it the air around it and then directly into my ear.*

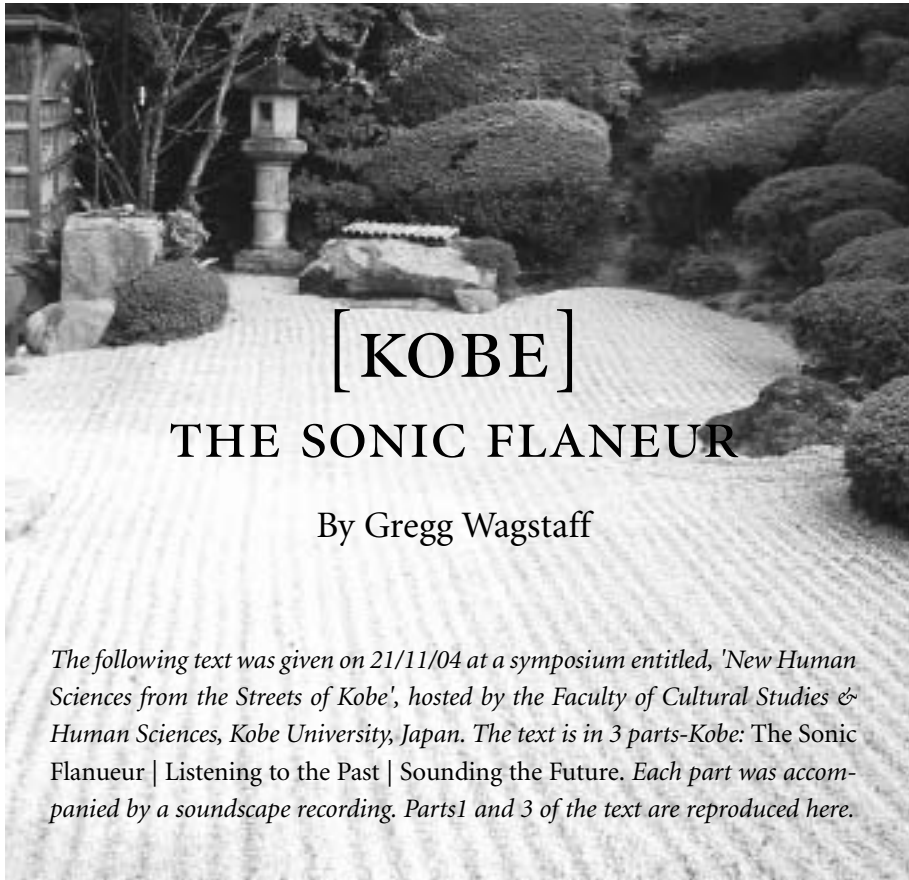
John Wynne's work includes electro-acoustic and radiophonic work with recordings from Africa and a photographic sound installation based on the speakers of endangered 'click-languages' showing in Botswana, Namibia and London. His multichannel installations for auditory warnings of his own design include a piece banned by the city council of Copenhagen for "frightening and confusing" the public and *Response Time* at Metro Hall Square in Toronto, described in *MusicWorks* as "an ambient, ghostlike presence". He is a Senior Lecturer in Sound Arts at the University of the Arts, London and has a regular programme *ResonanceFM* called *Upcountry*.



Photography by John Wynne

# Soundwalking

Photography by Gregg Wagstaff | The garden of Basho, Kyoto



## [KOBE] THE SONIC FLANEUR

By Gregg Wagstaff

*The following text was given on 21/11/04 at a symposium entitled, 'New Human Sciences from the Streets of Kobe', hosted by the Faculty of Cultural Studies & Human Sciences, Kobe University, Japan. The text is in 3 parts-Kobe: The Sonic Flaneur | Listening to the Past | Sounding the Future. Each part was accompanied by a soundscape recording. Parts 1 and 3 of the text are reproduced here.*

The 19th of November 2004, around 5 p.m.  
I'm walking through Motoki  
shopping arcade,  
in the heart of Kobe.  
These enclosed narrow lanes stretch for  
hundreds of meters,  
left and right,  
boutique after boutique,  
curving beneath the city's overland  
train track —  
Motoki.  
I'm walking and *listening*,  
and sounds spill  
from open fronted shops  
into the corridor;  
fragments of conversations,  
of amplified music (reggae, dub, trance,  
jazz, pop, hip-hop),  
the rumble of trains, footsteps.  
One emerges now and again,  
To motor-traffic  
and Kobe's murmuring,  
before immersing oneself once more,  
in the kitchen doorways of restaurants  
and the hum of extractor fans.  
The entirety of these sounds,  
as they unfold,  
intermingle,  
heard or unheard,

all of these, we can refer to as *Soundscape*.  
Motoki.  
Walking and listening —  
Am I, a 'sonic flaneur'?  
Or, something else?  
Being a flaneur, one could say,  
is an act of leisure,  
of pure self-indulgence,  
originating in the 19th century,  
in the upper middle classes of Paris.  
See Walter Benjamin,  
and those of an assured income, who  
had no need or desire to work  
but made an art out of strolling, and  
observing, 'others'.  
City-dwellers,  
wandering without purpose,  
Flaneurs were at home  
in the arcade and crowd.  
Out to see and be seen,  
their movement drawn from  
*sight to sight*.  
Am I, a 'sonic flaneur'?  
Someone who,  
*follows his ears*,  
drawn by a particular sound or noise,  
with no fixed route or agenda.  
A listening for listening's sake?  
Delighting in gossip,

in overheard voices  
from the exotic to the banal.  
The 'sonic flaneur', absorbed in  
this sea of everyday happenings, in  
the play between *noise* and *musicality*,  
attending to sound's minute details;  
its resonances, reflections and modulations.

Benjamin writes,  
"signboards, streetnames, passers-by,  
roofs, kiosks, or bars  
must speak to the wanderer like a  
cracking twig under foot in the forest,  
like the startling call of a bittern in  
the distance."

The flaneur, with pen or microphone,  
distils essence from the transitory,  
from the ebb and flow of life.  
Benjamin, Baudelaire, to say nothing of  
Basho.

But, to my mind,  
and my ear,  
this is not flanerierie,  
but something else, let's call it—  
*soundwalking*. For there are those who are  
out to listen but not be heard,  
who, whilst at home *in the crowds*,  
also find their place,  
*unaccompanied*,  
in the quiet of the park,  
garden or temple.  
For, some might say,  
to really practice the art of listening,  
one requires silence.

[pause]

The *soundwalker*,  
whilst finding beauty and enjoyment  
in everyday sounds,  
is not out for an idle stroll.  
Sounds are not just sounds.  
They carry with them an *imprint* of society,  
of our natural environment,  
our languages,  
cultural traditions,  
beliefs, values,  
weather systems, even.

*Soundwalking*, then is  
an essential method of soundscape studies:  
an art and science, promoting  
sound awareness and education,  
qualitative listening and  
community participation.  
Motoki.  
Walking and listening,  
it is part of a larger picture—  
an 'acoustic ecology'.

# [KOBE] SOUNDING THE FUTURE



Photography by Gregg Wagstaff

The 21st of November 2004, 7 a.m.  
This is Nunobiki,  
one of Kobe's parks,  
at the edge of the city  
and the slopes of the green Rokko hills.  
I'm sitting and listening.  
The city is just audible,  
and all around are the calls  
and screeches of birds.  
Nunobiki,  
is just one of Kobe's 1,453 parks.  
With a population of over 1.5 million people,  
that is an average of around  
16 square metres of  
green space per person.  
What sounds like a small figure is *in fact*  
the highest ratio of all Japan's major cities.

I read that,  
the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake has  
led a generation of Kobe citizens to  
"respect the immense power of nature",  
to "conserve and nurture" its green spaces.  
In July 2001, the city government  
formulated a 'Green Kobe Plan',  
recognising its parks as "citizen's  
common property,  
an asset to be preserved for  
future generations".  
In the future,  
the plan aims to secure 30 square metres  
of parkland per person, and 30% of green  
spaces in Kobe's urban area.  
A tall order do you think?

The city government also has a Master Plan —  
the fundamental concept of which is

"a city of creative citizens  
open to the world"  
By the year 2010 their projected  
growth will be,  
1.7 million people,  
700,000 households  
and industrial growth of over 3 billion Yen.  
But how does one measure human  
happiness?  
Quality of life?  
Quality of soundscape, even?

The plan speaks of  
'Citizen Participation',  
"Increasing local participation in  
local government",  
Developing structures that  
"allow communities to fulfil their  
maximum potential"  
a "citizen-led city",  
a *Municipality*,  
"closely related to the lives of the people".  
Is this the reality?  
Are the people of Kobe truly  
politically empowered?  
Can they *meaningfully* participate in  
the decision-making  
that affects their everyday lives,  
their communities,  
green spaces,  
their *soundscapes*, even?

Over 1.5 million voices  
(3 million ears)  
but just *who* is listening?  
And who is sounding our future?  
The soundscape is in our ears  
but not in our hands.  
How can the citizens of Kobe best  
sound their own future?  
a 'Letter to the Major' perhaps?  
Why not designate the soundscape as  
"citizens common property"  
to be managed *by communities for*  
future communities.  
Along with the new creation of  
'green spaces' and 'citizen's parks'  
the design of diverse listening spaces  
places of relative quiet.  
*Soundscape* rejuvenation.  
Not only *noise* reduction and regulations  
but positive soundscape design,  
*creative thinking for creative listening*.

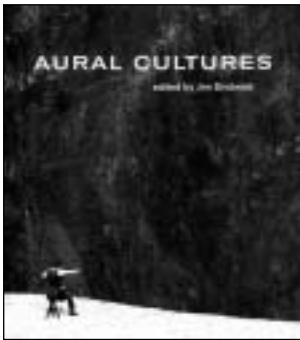
I am told,  
that following the devastation of 1995,  
the possibility of another natural disaster,  
has strengthened the city's preparedness,

its citizen's cooperation,  
community spirit and  
togetherness.  
It has called for a better understanding  
of one's community,  
a sharing of this knowledge between  
generations.  
Another 'Letter to the Mayor' writes,  
"10 years after the earthquake we  
cannot stop here.  
This is not the ending,  
but the beginning of our work"  
Could this spirit be the seed  
for a more radical change?  
A move toward a  
true Municipalism and  
"citizen participation" —  
a 'grass-roots' politics?  
Placing the soundscape in the hands  
(and ears) of those  
who *listen*.

*The author would like to thank Hildegard  
Westerkamp, Yu Wakao, Kozo Hiramatsu  
and Keiko Torigoe.*

**Gregg Wagstaff** has specialised in the Sonic Arts since 1992, having studied in the area of Fine Art and Time Based Media. His practice is particularly concerned with the sonic environment and he is currently a self-employed soundscape designer, recordist and researcher. In 1998, Gregg undertook a three year long community soundscape project—the *Touring Exhibition of Sound Environments* (TESE)—on the Isles of Harris & Lewis, Scotland. In 2003, he completed a compositional M.Phil entitled *Sound, Art & the Environment* and he has presented and published papers internationally on this subject, and co-edited the publication, *Soundscape Studies & Methods*, with Dr. Helmi Järviuoma from University of Turku, Finland. Gregg's soundscape work has featured on the BBC Radio 3's *Hear & Now* programme and was performed at the ICA as part of its *Cut 'n' Splice* festival (May 2003). Recent commissions include permanent interpretative sound installations for Jersey Heritage Trust (Mont Orgueil Castle), and Jersey Public Sculpture Trust (Victor Hugo). Along with similarly earminded individuals, he co-founded the UK and Ireland Soundscape Community (UKISC) in 1998, and was their representative on the board of the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology until 2005.





## AURAL CULTURES

(Includes a CD)

Edited by Jim Drobnick

YYZ Books / Walter Phillips  
Gallery Editions, Toronto/Banff,  
Alberta, Canada (2004).  
ISBN 0-920387-80-8 | US \$29.95

Reviewed by Katharine Norman

In “Listening Awry”, his introduction to this satisfying collection of writings, Jim Drobnick adroitly sets the tone of the occasion by referencing cultural theorist Slavoj Žižek’s influential 1990s tome *Looking Awry*. While Žižek spent much time gazing at Lacan sideways, through popular culture, here the emphasis is on listening from an angle, through the culture of sound. Primarily focussing on Canadian audio art, but also with a decent sprinkling of anthropological, philosophical and other concerns with sound, this group of papers—hailing from *Uncommon Senses*, a 2000 conference held at Concordia University, Montréal—sounds out a variety of approaches to aurality.

As Drobnick succinctly intones “As the parameters of sound increase, so too does the diversity of its discourses”. “Aural culture” seems an appropriate phrase for gathering this fertile diversity into some kind of collaborative intellectual feast. No matter that everyone brings a different dish to this interesting-sounding potluck supper: philosophers come bearing armfuls of Merleau-Ponty and Bergson, cultural theorists cast a hungry glance at film, Canadian sound ecologists (in particular) relish home-grown gurus like Murray Schafer, communication theorists stir in Marshall McLuhan for an added ‘sound bite’ or two, while anthropologists arrive somewhat breathless, clutching hand-picked field research from the cultural outback. Drobnick—an astute and patently expert editorial guiding ear—is quick to acknowledge the value of avoiding compartmentalization. But, of course, some compartmentalization is inevitable in navigating through such a wealth of dishes.

*Aural Cultures* is divided into distinct sections, each grouping papers that tackle related areas, “Arts of Listening”, “Bodies, Voices, Text”, “Sound, Media and Environment”, “Acoustic Hegemony and Contestation”, and “Aurality and Alterity”. As with every conference collection I have read, the groupings appear necessarily a little contrived at times. The problem with sound is that it hangs out in all the wrong places, leaks past boundaries, and won’t stop making a noise. Cleverly, the form of this beautifully produced book embraces this confusion, interleaving papers with visual images by artists—either works in themselves that complement the subject, or stills from audio-visual works also represented on the CD. It is a pleasure to find a book that attempts—on the whole successfully—a useful integration of practice and theory, rather than grudgingly including practice as an almost forgotten adjunct to academic verbosity.

Space does not permit a detailed description of the many contributions in this book; they’re all worth attending to though a few betray their conference origins as oral presentations, and sound a little flat on the printed page. Two particularly strong texts also serve to illustrate the diversity to be had in aural culture, and the sound it can make in our lives: Christof Migone’s

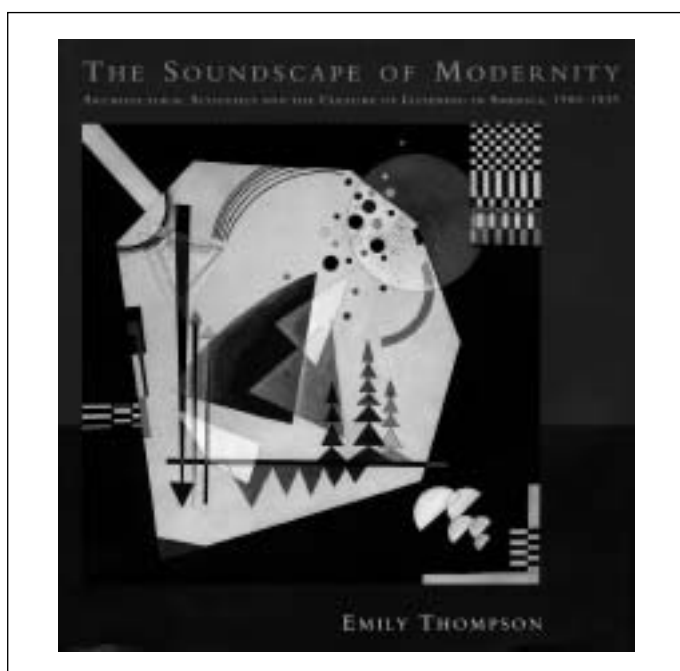
*Flatus Voices: Somatic Winds* is an enthusiastic bound through the joy of farts, ricocheting (if that’s the word) from a fascinating description of ‘Fin-de-siècle fartiste’ Joseph Pujol, towards Artaud’s theatre of the body. Robert Desjarlais’ *Echoes of a Yolmo Buddhist’s Life, in Death* is an extraordinarily sensitive telling of his interviewing of Ghang Lama, an aged Tibetan, which is as much concerned with how his subject experiences and understands the process, as with the life story he is transforming into anthropological record. The orality of aural culture is well-represented; the infinitely deep resonances of language and the aurality of oral communication are plumbed, not only in Desjarlais’ work but, perhaps more explicitly, in Jennifer Fisher’s subversion of museum audio guides, and in Georgina Kleege’s encounter with the spoken reading voice.

The dilemma concerning what “audio art” actually is continues. Many of the works included on the CD have an additional visual component as installations, videos or performance art, and within the papers there is little reference to audio art that simply stands for itself, as sound: it seems we still need something visual to “hang on to”. Or perhaps this conference—which must have been an exciting, lively event judging from this collection—arose primarily from the theoretical concerns of cultural theorists and conceptual artists. Exceptions from this continued preoccupation with aurality as part of the visual include Andra McCartney’s presentation of her work on soundwalks and, in particular, on Canadian composer and sound ecologist Hildegard Westerkamp. Writing with her usual clarity, McCartney explains notions of listening and place familiar to many readers of this journal, but still somewhat novel elsewhere.

There does appear to be a growing body of works where political engagement is overt and aurally challenging—represented on the CD by Santiago Sierra’s collaged recordings of anti-capitalist protestors. But often, as frequently seems the way with audio art, the work included is more invasive and surreptitious in its processes than its purely visual sibling. The subjects of audio art are quirky, even half-voiced, indeed “listening awry” to make subtle points on past and present, now and then, real and unreal. Two examples here are Susan Hiller’s *Excerpt from the Witness Archive*, relating believed experiences of UFO encounters and the like, and Anne Hamilton’s *Speaking the Hand’s Pace*, drawing on vocal instruction into calligraphic techniques. In such works sound does what perhaps it does best; it gets under the skin, resonates in consciousness and blurs some fine lines between memory and imagination.

Perhaps even now there is a tendency for practitioners and theorists to circle around the subject of aural culture somewhat defensively, from the safety of their different camps, looking awry at each other with a little suspicion rather than listening to each other’s insights (and inhearings). But this collection goes a long way to showing that listening awry to the sound of aural culture can be a fruitful endeavour, from any angle.

Katharine Norman is a British-born composer, sound artist and writer, who now lives on Pender Island, in British Columbia, Canada. Her recent book of experimental essays, *Sounding Art: Eight Literary Excursions through Electronic Music* was published by Ashgate in 2004, and is not really about electronic music at all. For more information visit her web page at [www.novamara.com](http://www.novamara.com)



## THE SOUNDSCAPE OF MODERNITY

Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900-1933

By Emily Thompson

MIT Press, Boston, USA (2002 / 2004).

ISBN 0-262-70106-5

US \$27.95 (paperback) \$47.95 (cloth)

Reviewed by Barry Truax

Emily Thompson's book, *The Soundscape of Modernity*, is a major contribution to the growing literature on aural culture, several examples of which have been reviewed in this journal. In this new work, Thompson focuses on what is arguably the period of greatest significance to the emergence of the modern listener, America from 1900 to 1933. The changes in the science and practice of acoustics, the emergence of electro-acoustic technology and audio media, and the rise of noise levels in major cities heralded contradictory cultural changes, the implications of which we are still dealing with today.

Thompson, an Assistant Professor of History and Sociology of Science at the University of Pennsylvania, demonstrates how that history should be documented, not merely as technical progress but in terms of the social and cultural context which it inevitably alters. She refreshingly makes the argument that it is not only the soundscape that changes, but that listeners change as well. "By 1933," she observes, "both the nature of sound and the culture of listening were unlike anything that had come before." Thompson's approach, though based in the history of architecture and architectural acoustics, is interdisciplinary in that, for the first time, she brings together three themes that in the past have been dealt with as separate histories.

First there is the rise of the modern science of acoustics, starting with the pioneering work of Wallace Sabine in the 1890s and early 1900s, which gave a scientific basis for the design of concert halls, auditoria and offices by controlling excessive reverberation

with acoustically treated materials. Even as the public became exposed to the orderly sound of these acoustically designed spaces, the external environment, particularly in large cities, was being inundated with mechanical noise and other irritants, Thompson's second theme. New York City responded to this situation by appointing a Noise Abatement Commission whose 1930 report, *City Noise*, was the first such public document. The third theme, possibly having the greatest implication for the listener, is the phenomenal rise of reproduced and transmitted sound via electroacoustic technology. Amplification, radio, the sound film and recordings all appeared during this period and changed listening habits and preferences. Thompson adroitly frames this period of profound change with the opening of Wallace Sabine's acoustically designed Boston Symphony Hall in 1900—a building looking backwards to the classical music of the 19th century—and the opening of Radio City Music Hall in New York in 1932, an acoustically deadened space that relied on amplified sound to promote the new, popular culture of the 20th century.

One hopes that Thompson's approach to writing will become the norm among a younger generation of academics. She has an engaging narrative style, complete with telling insights into the personalities involved, particularly Sabine's, but her research and documentation are impeccably detailed. Moreover, she has a set of themes that she weaves throughout the narrative, connecting threads that give meaning to the wealth of detail, which often are technical but never dry or unduly simplified. Perhaps the clearest theme is the advent of a new kind of aural preference for clear, direct, non-reverberant sound and the critical listening habits that it encouraged. This theme makes sense of the progression from the control of reverberation by Sabine's famous formula based on the absorptive properties of materials in a room to the disembodied audio signal picked up by close miking that eliminated space entirely. The control of acoustic space ultimately becomes a separation of sound from space, a signal that can then be reproduced in any other time and space.

This control of the largely indoor environment (linked to artificial lighting and ventilation) was in keeping with the ethic of "efficiency" in the modern Machine Age. As such, it was the antithesis of noise that came to be regarded as wasted energy, as well as a physical and psychological danger. Thompson carefully documents the stages of the technical mastery of sound, the most important being the ability to measure sound, thus surmounting the major obstacle to the development of acoustics as a science in the early 1900s. The microphone and amplifier, famous for their media usage, were key elements in the measurement of sound, allowing the creation of the decibel scale. It is this technical divide that separated the acoustics of Wallace Sabine from the "new acousticians" who exploited the new technology and founded the Acoustical Society of America in the 1920s. They also used this technology to tackle the more intractable problem of urban noise, but with less success. The earliest measurements were based on a curious combination of calibrated signals (produced by machines carried around the city in a truck) judged subjectively by a listener who compared them to the street noise. This approach became standardized in the next decade as the Equal Loudness Contours, the foundation of modern psychoacoustics.

A fascinating section of the book is devoted to noise and modern music during this period, specifically jazz, Russolo and

the Futurists, Ives, Varèse, and Antheil. Besides documenting how the new technological noises invaded and influenced the music of these composers, Thompson includes intriguing accounts of how the experience of that music changed at least certain listeners' reactions to the city noises they heard following the event. As music critic Paul Rosenfeld described it in highly modern prose, "You walk, ride, fly through a world of steel and glass and concrete, by rasping, blasting, threatening machinery become strangely humanized and fraternal; yourself freshly receptive and good-humoured"—clearly a vanished breed of critic. Although Thompson makes passing reference to Thaddeus Cahill's Telharmonium as a modern musical instrument, she misses the opportunity to document its use in providing what we now call background music in upscale restaurants in New York during this period, the perfect antithesis to the city's noise and a good example of the appearance of disembodied sound in the new soundscape; however, we can turn to Reynold Weidenaar's 1995 book for those insights.

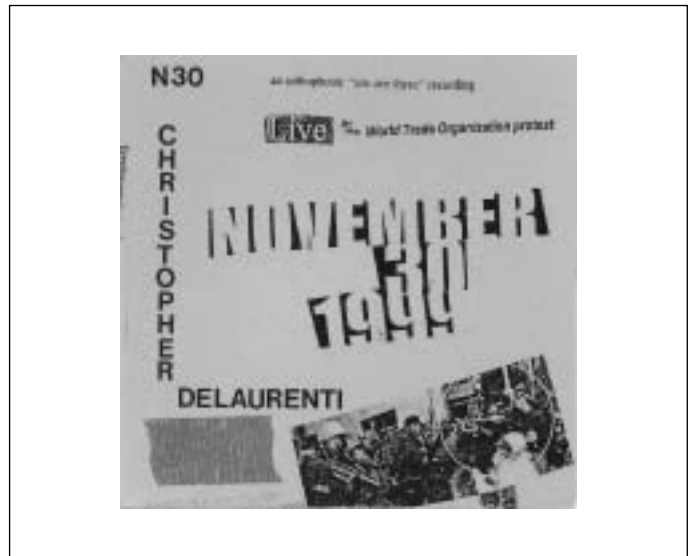
In the final two chapters, Thompson turns to the most profound of all of the aural changes brought about by modernism—the impact of audio technology. The possibility of sound reproduction brings with it, among other things, a new type of "critical listener", as Thompson terms it, or "analytical listening" as I've described it (Truax, 2001), whose task is to discern the quality of reproduction and obtain the best possible sound, a process of education that the audio industry pursues to this day. Radio, recording and the sound film eventually settled on close miking to produce the clearest sound within an acoustically isolated studio, with the mixing engineer in charge of combining sounds for the clearest result. Thompson returns to her principal architectural concerns as a conclusion and documents the trend in the 1920s and 30s towards theatres with shorter reverberation times, aided by amplified reinforcement to achieve a type of sound the audience had become used to hearing via electrical recording. Thus we arrive at the detached listener, able to listen critically and analytically to reproduced sound as an escape from the disorderly soundscape; all that is needed is to add the ubiquitous presence of background music to create the distracted listener, and we have all of the essential elements of contemporary aural culture.

In tracing this crucial set of intertwined developments, Emily Thompson has created a seminal book that sets a standard for interdisciplinary research in acoustic communication. The fact that it grounds contemporary aural culture makes it indispensable for understanding our own ambivalent attitudes about the soundscape and technology.

## References:

B. Truax, *Acoustic Communication*, 2nd ed., Ablex Publishing, 2001.  
R. Weidenaar, *Magic Music from the Telharmonium*, Scarecrow Press, 1995.

**Barry Truax** is a Professor in both the School of Communication and the School for the Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University where he teaches courses in acoustic communication and electroacoustic music. He has worked with the World Soundscape Project, editing its *Handbook for Acoustic Ecology*, and has published a book *Acoustic Communication* dealing with all aspects of sound and technology. More information at [www.sfu.ca/~truax](http://www.sfu.ca/~truax)



## N30, LIVE AT THE WTO PROTEST NOVEMBER 30, 1999

Christopher DeLaurenti  
[www.delarenti.net](http://www.delarenti.net)

Reviewed by Michael Rüsenberg

Remember the Honeycombs? I believe it was in 1963 or '64 when they sang, "Have I the right?" ("...to kiss you" completing the line). Have I the right to review this? I asked myself this question as I listened to this double album. A native US-English speaker (or listener) would get much more out of it because most of the content here deals with (American) speech: walkie-talkie type messages by security forces observing the WTO protest in Seattle, on November 30, 1999 ("N30", the two hour-long tracks), travellers at Dallas airport passing by the sound recordist (the track "DFW"), someone trying to sell something in New York ("Adrift in NYC"). What I got quite easily though was people on the street speaking the word "cocaine" into the microphone on request (the track "cocaine"), and also "Harbinger", the only non-vocal track on this album—an instrumental track that sounded quite like someone had just unpacked their new synthesizer and recorded the manual instructions. As 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.

I am quite accustomed to listening to languages that I neither speak nor understand, since in most cases I can follow the written intentions of the composers or—if they refuse to give them (see López *et al*)—I can at least have a guess at them, since I am aware, in my listening, of being part of an aesthetic process. Even if I can't quite grasp the latter, I can go for the sound, the element most colleagues might rank as the most important. But I can't grasp any of these here. Taking my prejudice into account, the lesson I learnt here is that nothing is more boring and time consuming than an open microphone directly linked to a CD-recorder, 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".



## BUILDINGS (NEW YORK)

Francisco López

V2\_Archief V232 [www.v2.nl/archief](http://www.v2.nl/archief)

Reviewed by Michael Rüsenberg

Admirers and detractors of Francisco López alike are familiar with his frequent practice of not titling his compositions, instead numbering them in chronological order. But they also know that he didn't always do this, and still sometimes returns to more common practice (in CDs such as *whint*, some years ago, and *a szellem alma* in Autumn 2004). More importantly though, he never reveals his sonic sources. Those who have teamed up with him (as I did in 1994 and 1998) might discover a soundbite here and there, but this is by no means sound of any "representational" value. López places a strict distinction between object and sound, his belief being that "a sound is a sound is a sound". As a biologist by profession, he is closer to ecology than almost any other of his composer colleagues, yet very much at odds with acoustic ecology.

However, in recent years there have been two exceptions to his refusal to name compositions and reveal sources: *La Selva* (1998), his recordings of rainforests in Costa Rica, with all the accompanying details required by a dutiful soundscape composer, and the CD reviewed here, *Buildings (New York)*.

The comprehensive booklet provided with *Buildings (New York)* provides all details of recording data, locations and dates. López did not visit the buildings as such, but the machinery inside them: boiler rooms, laundry rooms, freight elevator rooms and the like. If you'd like to know how Starrett Leigh

Building sounded on 1/3/01 or the New York Psychoanalytic Institute on 3/6/01 skip to between 4:56—7:52, and 59:28—63:42 respectively. You might also witness what an empty studio on the 91st floor of the World Trade Center sounded like on 1/19/01—the most "legendary" location, but not the most sonically interesting. Or a Brooklyn apartment building—then John Hudak's house—on 1/5/01. Having known this building previously only for its breathtaking view (before 9/11) I was most surprised by the boiler room, which sounds more appropriate for a large skyscraper. Other buildings produce rhythms, as in the power & elevator room of the Clocktower in Manhattan, but most emit almost meditative hums and drones. Listening to these recordings is a lesson in ascribing aesthetic values to sounds that are not musical in intent.

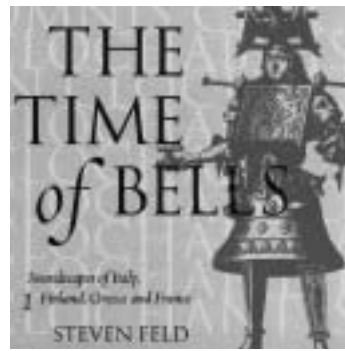
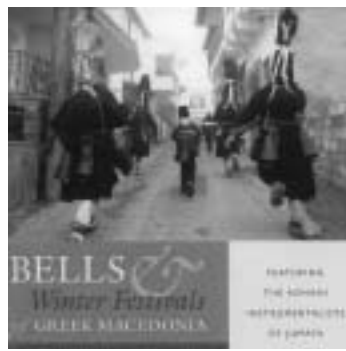
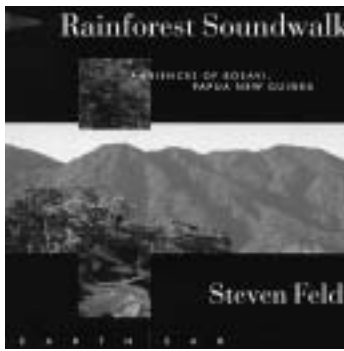
To quote López's liner notes: "Buildings are sophisticated hyper-bodies we build around ourselves. Their physiology is controlled by metabolites and fluids such as electricity, air, water and gas... ...A community of machines that breathe, roar, hum, rattle, beep, crackle...compartmentalized and separated from us, working

constantly while we sleep, when we are working, making love, cooking, listening to the radio. A city from the inside, an unconscious futurist paradise."

Those who know his work, whether they like it or not, might think, "Isn't that the perfect description of what López's art is all about?" And indeed it is.

In personal conversation, some months after this album's release, López even rejected the assumption that this could be a "documentation" of the locations visited, even though there was in fact no sound-processing at all, simply smooth fades from one recording to another. And even before he finishes his liner notes López indicates that perhaps he has spoken too much: "My recommendation is—having the knowledge of the [sounds'] existence—to keep them closed".

**Michael Rüsenberg**, born in 1948, has had a professional affair with jazz (for example radio shows since 1972) before his ears inexplicably wanted to open up towards this non-swinging, non-grooving type of compositional endeavour called soundscape composition. That was in 1991, after meeting Dan Lander and John Oswald in Toronto (no soundscape-man the latter, but of influence), Claude Schryer in Montreal and especially after listening to Hildegard Westerkamp. Switched from reporting about sound art to producing it himself, and has done so back and forth since 1994, when his first album was released, *Lisboa—a soundscape portrait* (with Hans-Ulrich Werner). On the upcoming DVD *Lisboa. Reloaded*, where some German and Portuguese colleagues will go video, he will remain in the audio-stereo domain. [www.realambient.de](http://www.realambient.de)



## THREE SOUNDSCAPE CDS BY STEVEN FELD

*Rainforest Soundwalks: Ambiences of Bosavi, Papua New Guinea*  
CD ee1062 eartheart.com. 2001

*Bells and Winter Festivals of Greek Macedonia*  
SFW CD 50401.  
Smithsonian. 2002

*The Time of Bells: Soundscapes of Italy, Finland, Greece and France*  
CD104. voxlox.net. 2004

Reviewed by Andra McCartney

Of birds and bells...

Since 2001, Steven Feld has produced three soundscape CDs: one is based on his extensive ethnomusicological research in the Bosavi rainforest (*Rainforest Soundwalks*) and the other two are based on much shorter field trips to Europe (*Bells and Winter Festivals of Greek Macedonia*, and *The Time of Bells*). All three are well-recorded and a pleasure to listen to, while at the same time they raise some questions in relation to soundwalks, and soundscape research more generally.

On repeated listening to these CDs, I am a bit confounded by the use of the term soundwalks to describe one and not the others. To my ear (and to a few others I have asked to listen) the rainforest soundwalks do not actually sound like soundwalks, while the other two do. Soundwalks imply motion and the audible presence of a recordist. But the rainforest soundwalks seem to stay still, except for cross-fades between recordings done at different heights in the forest canopy. I never get the sense of recordist presence in these pieces. My favourite track on the CD is not the soundwalks (tracks 2-4), which are rainforest ambiences from different times of day. The most interesting for me is track 1, "Seyak, the butcherbird". This track has the most elaborate program notes, which give the ecological and epistemological importance of the seyak to Bosavi culture. Feld also leads the listener into the sonic texture of the track by pointing out that the seyak's calls slow in pace over the duration of the recording, as if to make room for other bird calls during early morning hours. These program notes are detailed and important to contextualise the track. However, for the other tracks, the descriptions are

very brief and to an ear uneducated in rainforest environments, leave me needing more.

*Bells and Winter Festivals of Greek Macedonia* is a CD intended to accompany a book, *Bright Balkan Morning*, by Charles and Angeliki Vellou Keil. The CD features the Romani instrumentalists of Jumaya, and yet even though specific instrumentalists are named in a couple of cases, a complete list of instrumentalists is not given in the CD liner notes, which seems a strange omission. The prominent place of bells in ritual and everyday life is explored, and the CD includes two tracks of belled animals, as well as several tracks of festival music in which celebrants wear bells, which interact with the Romani instruments. One question, which arose for me, is that music is described as performed by men and boys, except in the case of a brief reference in the text to antiphonal weeping by old women. There is no women's music included on the CD. Yet photographs of festivals and café scenes include women in the background, celebrating. Are these silent celebrations? Why is the role of women in festivals elided?

The third CD, *The Time of Bells*, does not include photographs, but only historical engravings. Feld discusses the role of bells in Europe as being similar to that of birds in Bosavi culture, as timekeepers. The engravings and use of a quote by Rabelais point to the connection between bells and memory in the history of Europe. The recordings as well, done in villages primarily, present a pastoral image suffused with bell sounds coming from animals and distant churches. It is true that in tracks 4-6, called "ringing the angelus", we sometimes hear the sounds of road traffic. Yet the overall tone remains one of nostalgic ringing: we hear how bells sound the time of day, and the time of prayer. Yet their less benevolent uses in institutions such as schools, hospitals and prisons are not recorded here, nor are we reminded of how bells were melted down for armaments during wartime (as in the famous sound documentary, *Bells of Europe*). I love the sound of bells, and these recordings are very well produced. And yet I still wish for more sonic and textual exploration of the complicated history of bells in European culture and institutional hierarchies, which is just as complex as their beautiful and sometimes dissonant harmonics.

Andra McCartney is Associate Professor of Communication Studies at Concordia University, where she teaches sound in media, with research projects in soundscape studies as well as gender and sound technologies. Work can be heard and read at <http://andrasound.org>.

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