
EDITORIAL

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Sound, Listening and Place II completes two issues of the journal devoted to this theme. The response to the original call for papers was extraordinary, and the quality of the contributions such that a double issue was warranted – separated by an interval of one year, due to practical exigencies. The first issue, Sound, Listening and Place I (16/3) was published in December 2011, and the papers in this issue were published online at that time, so that readers could encounter the whole collection simultaneously. Now the hard copy publication of the second issue provides the reader also with higher quality sonic materials on the DVD. Decisions on the distribution of the papers between the two issues was undertaken solely with regard to finding a well-balanced and varied group for each issue.

Since a full-length editorial was provided as part of Sound, Listening and Place I, what follows is a summarised version, and an overview of those papers that appear here. Contributors responded to a call that asked various questions of electroacoustic and sound-based music in relation to the environment, and in particular with respect to listening and a sense of ‘place’ – however the author wished to interpret this. Among the questions posed were: How can, or does, electroacoustic and sound-based music ‘rethink’ environmental aesthetics? Can sound-based music, and writing on it, nourish ecocritical debates? What is sonic ecology in art? Contributors were also encouraged to consider the aesthetic and ethical issues posed when field recordings are resituated, transformed or otherwise used to reframe ‘nature’ as art. They were also invited to respond to, critique or otherwise engage with existing philosophy on sound and environment familiar to composers working in the domain – such as acoustic ecology and ‘soundscape’ studies – as well as to explore the relevance of additional, multidisciplinary, approaches to thinking about listening in place. The diverse, often highly imaginative and innovative, contributions that arrived were notable for approaching sound, listening and place from a variety of angles, and yet were remarkable consistent in the range of sub-themes that emerged. As in the first issue of this collection, the papers share such interests as recording ethics, social and community concerns, memory, nature and sustainability – and, of course, listening.

The first two papers in this half of the collection provide contrasting, if not opposing, viewpoints on prevailing thinking on ‘soundscape’ composition and other approaches well established in electroacoustic work. Barry Truax, as a member of the original World Soundscape Project research group based at Simon Fraser University, reaffirms the case for soundscape studies and for his own extension of that work within a communications context. Partly in the nature of a review article, he provides a very useful survey of repertoire and discusses his own more recent work. Robin Parmar, on the other hand, parallels Timothy Morton’s critique of ecocriticism in literary work (outlined in the original call for this issue) in his own critique of both Schafer and Schaeffer’s continuing dominance in electroacoustic music. For Parmar, ‘pure phenomenology’ is insufficient rationale for an aesthetic, while the idealistic return to the ‘hi-fi’ soundscape that Schafer evoked in his early writings is now similarly unrealistic – and not necessarily desirable. His impassioned contribution joins other theorizing that draws on a variety of alternative voices, from Artaud’s body without organs, to Deleuzian rhizomatic processes.

With an account of the development and background to her sound installation *For the Birds*. Ruth Hawkins contributes a close and personal consideration of listening relationships with different kinds of sounds – ambient, background noises and recordings, as well as live bird song, which plays a contingent part in the work. Essentially an analysis of listening, in a place defined by listening, the paper is a welcome example of theorizing from practice-based research. Similarly, Chaves and Rebelo theorise a vocabulary of listening, one that takes account not only of the social and cultural context of sound but also contemporary cultures of mobile and networked technology, and environmental philosophies. Also proceeding from installation work, their focus is on participatory public art in urban or gallery situations, as well as broadcast and networked pieces. The latter present the physical ‘place’ of performance as geographically fractured, to be reassembled in the new place of broadcast transmission.

Budhaditya Chattopadhyay also examines the artistic mediation of the sound environment, and how

broadcasts, as well as recording and re-presenting field recordings of environment, can 're-place' place. Through an historical and autobiographical lens, he explores the ways in which location-specific sound recording transforms environmental actuality through its relocation into 'audio art' or electroacoustic composition. Charting his personal memories of sound and environment in a rural community, his views invert charges of 'sonic tourism' that some might apply to art made from field recordings of distant locations. For Chattopadhyay, growing up in a fairly remote part of rural India, it was BBC radio, broadcasting Western music, that brought an exotic, distant allure. Noting that ecosystems and biospheres are merging, his conclusion that 'I would not be surprised if I find my tribal counterpart from my early childhood in Tumbani in a metropolis with a laptop on the shoulder/tablet in his pocket' provides a telling reminder of how rapidly our experiential landscapes – and the listening that travels with them – have changed. We are constantly re-tuning our world.

And by now it is quite apparent that the artistic forms in which listening is entangled are broadening and cross-fertilising, and that, increasingly it seems, artists come to a heightened appreciation of organised sound through frames that are different from those provided by electroacoustic and sound-based music. Though it remains relatively unusual for a composer or sound artist to be 'raised' simultaneously in the experimental music world and installation art, and even more unusual that the person concerned would have environmentalism at the core of their being, John Luther Adams is just such an individual. In some respects he provides a contemporary foil to Schafer. It is therefore fitting that his work be represented here, through Tyler Kinnear's examination of *The Place Where You Go to Listen*, an installation formed from a sonification of environmental data. Kinnear provides a clear description and astute analysis of the many facets of this work's construction and intent – a work that Adams regards as music, albeit music with 'no beginning, middle or end' that is 'not complete until you are present and listening'.

The two contributions that follow survey the general and specific respectively, and both theorise

fruitful strategies for thinking about sound, listening and place in music, and about music in different contexts. Chris Bocast's paper is perhaps the widest historical survey in the whole collection, considering the 'place' of music in Western eco-cosmology through examining the general relationship of music to the environment, and music's history of associations with environmentalism. He revisits and explores suggestions on the genesis of language, and of artistic behaviour, and Levitin's argument for the evolution of music in order to promote cognitive development. Within this ambitious scope, Bocast calls on his research to make the case for music as a 'living inheritance' that can encourage cross-cultural and ecological understanding, especially in the context of the environmental debate. His reflections of course have great relevance for music made from documentary sources. Randolph Jordan takes a different tack, and provides an innovative analysis of 'reflective audioviewing' in the audiovisual milieu of film reception. He does so in the context of an analysis of Gus Van Sant's film *Elephant*. This film, unusual in its sensitive use of electroacoustic music, makes use of several works by Hildegard Westerkamp, and also by another composer featured in this double issue, Frances White.

My own contribution to his collection discusses three works made from rainforest recordings – by Feld, Monacchi and López – in the context of environmental 'connectedness'. I consider listening, sound and place within the phenomenological study of place and 'place making' activity, in particular as articulated by philosopher Edward S. Casey.

As for Sound, Listening and Place I, I would like to reiterate my gratitude to Leigh Landy and to Cambridge University Press, for welcoming two issues on this theme. I would also like to thank all the reviewers, whose contribution is so essential, and all those who submitted papers. Reading them all was a fascinating, enjoyable – and humbling – experience.

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