

Sound and the City: Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities
University of Cambridge, 22 February 2008

9.30 – 10.00 Registration and Coffee

10.00 – 10.15 Welcome and Introduction

10.15 – 12.00 Session 1

Eric Clarke (Faculty of Music, University of Oxford)
Various realities: sound, music, and ecological theory

Jacob Kreutzfeldt (Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen)
Acoustic territoriality in a Japanese shopping area

Moderator: Tiffany Greene (Peace Studies, University of New England)

12.00 – 13.00 Lunch

13.00 – 14.30 Session 2

Michael Bull (Media and Film, University of Sussex)
Sounding out cosmopolitanism – mobile technologies and the migration of difference

Graham Jeffery (Institute for Performing Arts Development, University of East London)
Expanding the learning soundscape: notes from some interventions in urban arts education

Moderator: Heba Mostafa (Architecture, University of Cambridge)

14.30 – 15.00 Coffee

15.00 – 16.30 Session 3

Juliana Hodkinson (Composer and arts writer, Copenhagen)
Instrumentality and the urban instrumentarium: representation and agency in urban sound art

Robin Rimbaud/Scanner (Sound artist and composer, www.scannerdot.com)
Imaginary Highways: Sound Polaroids in the City

Moderator: Meg Greenberg (Italian Studies, University of Cambridge)

16.30 – 17.00 Break

17.00 – 17.30 Video link to Janet Cardiff (Artist, Berlin/Germany and Grindrod/Canada)

Noise in the City.

17.30 – 18.00 Summation and Closing Remarks

Benjamin Morris (Archaeology, University of Cambridge)

This conference has been made possible by the generous contributions of CRASSH, the Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages and the Department of Architecture of the University of Cambridge

Paper Abstracts

Eric Clarke (Heather Professor of Music, University of Oxford)

Various realities: sound, music, and ecological theory

Following a brief introduction to an ecological approach to sound and music perception, I discuss the ways in which this approach might shed light on the perception of music in different real and virtual spaces. Music has always exploited real and apparent spaces in interesting ways, but since the invention of sound recording the opportunities for exploring virtual spaces, and for bringing them into interesting and sometimes paradoxical juxtaposition with the real spaces of urban (and other) environments has increased enormously. Using examples from electroacoustic and pop music I will illustrate and discuss some of the ways in which these effects might be explored and understood.

Jacob Kreutzfeldt (Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen)

Acoustic territoriality in a Japanese shopping area

The paper presents and reflects on a research project on acoustic environments, undertaken in Ishibashi, a suburban shopping area in Osaka, Japan. It is motivated by an interest in making sound studies contribute to the investigation of urban spaces as socially meaningful configurations of space. Focussing on social processes involving sound | public space | I suggest the term *acoustic territorialisation* as a way to conceptualise and analyse complex processes in a highly commercialised and amplified urban space. Interviews and questionnaires carried out in the area reveal aspects of de- and reterritorialisations, taking place in the medium of sound. While soundscape studies, initiated by R. Murray Schafer, tend to conceptualise environments as stable systems upholding equilibrium, the Deleuzian concept of territoriality points at the continuous practises of codification and signification, which shape the urban environments and sensibilities.

Michael Bull (Reader in Media and Film Studies, University of Sussex)

Sounding out cosmopolitanism – mobile technologies and the migration of difference

Abstract TBC

Graham Jeffery (Research Fellow, Institute for Performing Arts Development, University of East London)

Expanding the learning soundscape: notes from some interventions in urban arts education

To what extent is the embodied experience of the sonic open to exploration and reinvention within formal educational settings? Arguably the tools are cheap and ubiquitous, and in popularised forms they are persistent in the everyday lives of young people - from customising ringtones, making iPod playlists to beatcrunching and sonic cut-ups using readily available technologies. But music education often seems locked into a fairly closed view of its limits; the place of sound and its meanings is rarely discussed, and 'school music' is almost a sub-genre of its own, often displaying more conservatism than the fields of professional music-making. Tracking down an alternative story to the easy norms of 'music education', I will share some experiments in sound which were developed between artists, students and communities in East London in the first half of this decade. These are perhaps best understood when located in experimental traditions of arts education, participatory arts and sonic experimentation; and gain some of their expressive power from times of turbulent social and economic change, diverse multiethnic communities, collaboration with theatre, dance and the visual arts and the gradual uptake of digital technologies in the music classroom. The projects surveyed also depend on subtle interactions collaborative pedagogies, conversational learning, and exploratory approaches, playing attention to issues of place, space and the auditory, and so pointing towards a much broader conception of the 'music curriculum' than most syllabi and formal examinations allow for.

Juliana Hodkinson (Composer and arts writer, Copenhagen)

Instrumentality and the urban instrumentarium: representation and agency in urban sound art

Let us listen to our cities, say philosopher Jean-Francois Augoyard and sociologist Henry Torgue in the introduction to their alphabetical sourcebook of sound effects, *Sonic Experience* (Augoyard & Torgue 2005). From Walter Ruttmann's Berlin sound-collage 'Weekend' (1929) to Murray Schafer's soundscape project from the 1960s (revived in the 1980s), representations and conceptual abstractions of the city have been crucial to the development of sound art, just as the ubiquity of sound has come to serve as a paradigm in thinking about the city. The sonic turn in urban studies offers an excellent perspective from which to consider models of how we perceive and use the city. Looking at Else Marie Pade's Copenhagen collage 'Symphonie Magnétophonique' (1959) alongside contemporary works such as Jacob Kirkegaard's installation 'Broadway' (2007), Jessica Corr's soundrecording pendant 'LyreBird' (2007) and Christina Kubisch's electromagnetic walks (2003-07), tells us not only about the development of sound art from collage through installation to soundwalk, but also about how the urban listener has changed from detached flaneur to immersed individual with a high degree of mobility and agency. Augoyard & Torgue appeal to us to reflect on the instrumental dimension of urban space. Here, the above works will be considered partly in terms of their uses of the urban instrumentarium (its sonic effects), but also in terms of the modes of instrumentality by which sound artists and their audiences structure these sounds. Enquiring into how our perceptions of urban instrumentality and personal agency have changed since the broadly industrialist view of early musique concrète also involves an appraisal of the impact of Schafer's conceptual rhetoric of the urban soundscape on sound art today.

Robin Rimbaud/Scanner (Sound artist and composer, www.scannerdot.com)

Imaginary Highways: Sound Polaroids in the City

In essence my work is concerned with capturing sound from many inaccessible spaces and bringing it out, whether it's the private phone conversations I found in an airspace that proved more public than anyone thought, or location recordings from the restricted access sites which my art projects take me to. It explores the relationship between sound and architectural space and the spaces in between information, places, history and relationships, where one has to fill in the missing parts to complete the picture. Most often this is represented in sound, at others a blend of the visual and the aural.

Janet Cardiff (Artist, www.cardiffmiller.com)

Janet Cardiff is a sound and installation artist, based in Berlin and British Columbia. She is best known for her audio and video "Walks", in which visitors, while listening to portable CD players or camcorders, follow the artist's directions through (often urban) sites. Often created in collaboration with her partner George Bures Miller, Janet Cardiff also however uses sound and image to create sculpture and installation. She has exhibited in many contemporary arts centres and festivals, such as the Skulptur Projekte Münster (1997), *The Museum as Muse*, MoMA New York (1999), a mid-career retrospective at P.S.1 (2001), the Tate Liverpool and Tate Britain (2000; 2006), *Forty Part Motet* and *The Missing Voice* at London's Whitechapel Gallery (2001), and the award-winning *The Paradise Institute* at the Venice Biennial (2001), among many others. For the present event, she will mainly focus on her New York and London Walks, as well as on the strategies she has used for other places, such as the Münster project.