



Sound Art?

Part 1: Historical context with perspectives on sound
Part 2: Sound Art at MoKS
Part 3: Sound Art audio compilation CD

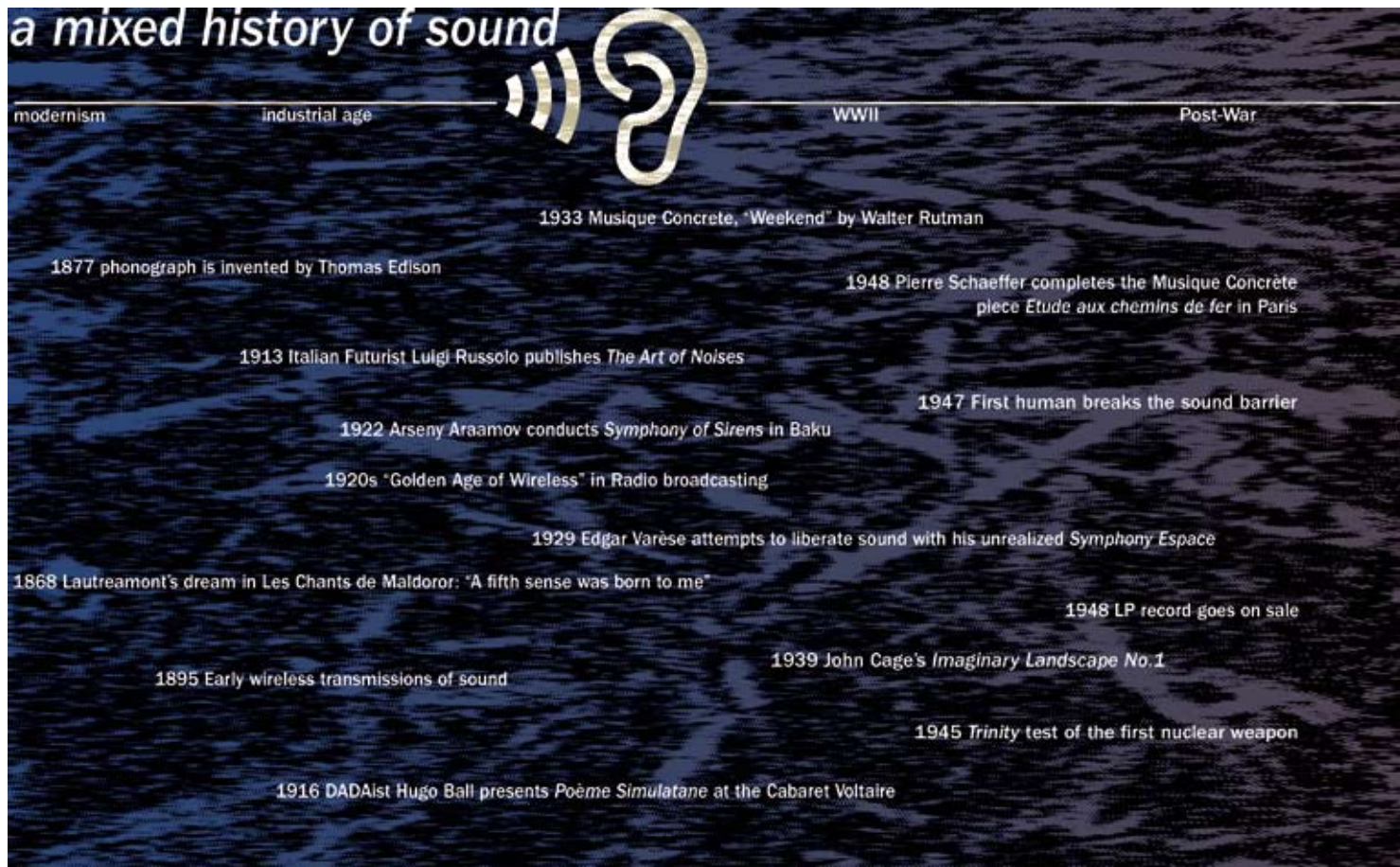
Let us think about waves, the movement of energy, converging points of patterns in space and the organization of matter... to this noise, we listen, move and respond to these surrounding forces. This then, is the playing field of sound.

What is this that we call sound art? The medium of sound is elusive. It is immaterial, or isn't it? Under special circumstances we can see it or feel it. Yet, in everyday life, our sense of hearing provides an important interface as the other senses. So what would drive artists and others to use sound as a means of artistic expression and where do we make the difference between sound and music? It wasn't until the early 1990's that the term "sound art" first started to surface commonly among papers and conferences and international festivals of music and art. It would take another 10 years before "sound art" would appear as an acceptable field among notable exhibitions operating on an international scale. The debates and discussions about the use of sound remain as open as ever, even as "sound art" becomes a legitimate area of practice within the wider context of artistic practices. This is certainly true, with myself and other colleagues, even after 10 years of practice and exploration with sound (if we dig deeper there are many artists with much longer histories and paths across disciplines with their use of sound). It is on this rich and fertile ground that I attempt to approach the many angles of this invisible medium. But with so much material to draw from, the task of editing a special section on sound art does not come without challenges. In my experience of working with sound within different contexts (US, Western and Eastern Europe), I have seen very little consensus as to what sound art actually is. The field is defined by many practitioners, but each with his own path. Therefore I see the topic of what "sound art" actually is to be an area for open exploration rather than definition. The line of people working with sound may seem new but the references to the artistic use of sound stretch back well into the origins of the modern era. The historical trajectories are many and often stem from isolated individuals or groups working anywhere from the edges of political

expression to the establishments of technological innovation. Also, we must consider the nature of the medium. Because of its immateriality, it is impossible to simply reproduce in print or represent as an image. For this I am thankful to be able to include an audio CD with the magazine. The aim with the CD is to illustrate the examples of sound art practices in Estonia through one particular trajectory, those related to MoKS in south Estonia. Finally there is the challenge of talking about sound or describing it in written language when we cannot hear the sound itself. This entails the development of a somewhat specialized language to properly articulate the concepts and ideas presented. And here we find the possibly the greatest challenge faced herein. As a foreigner living in Estonia I must rely on my native English language to compile much of the texts, so I am very grateful for the translation work and assistance with editing I have received. My intention with the *Helikunst* is not to present an authoritative view on the artistic use of sound or give an official history on "sound art" (as there is none). Rather I wish to show that "sound art" has and can offer a great number of diverse uses as with any other contemporary media (such as video, painting, performance, sculpture, etc.). The interest here is to inspire both young artists and experienced professionals to consider the importance of sound by raising awareness on this unique medium and show the relation of sound to our wider sensory experience of art. With that said, let us break the silence and enter into the noise to listen and see what we can hear.

editor: John Grzinich

All English texts of the original edition were translated into Estonian by Evelyn Mürsepp.



Before and After Silence

John Grzinich

Sound Art: genre, style or discipline?

Sound art is a creature that goes by many names. In this sense, one can argue whether "sound art" as a definable field really exists or not. Sound has been related to many other areas of the arts, some more deeply than others, but it is always there in the peripheries and the spaces in between. This is illustrated in the many cases and historical traditions that have spontaneously erupted or slowly evolved over the last century and is also closely related to the many social, political and artistic movements contained therein. Sound has then, often become associated as just a part of other artistic practices, other media and cultures that cross over with genres of music, rather than be a field in itself. For many people there can be no separation between sound and the stylistic differences within the various disciplines of traditional music structures. Sound has remained a lifeless and functional fact, a collection of waves that range in frequencies with loud or soft volume, yet it takes music to organize that sound into forms of value and aesthetic beauty. But somehow, throughout the modern era, sound has wanted to break free from

the historical constraints of music and be accepted among other creative media. After all, the nature of sound is that it cannot be contained within a frame or room. So eventually sound has found ways to manifest itself into other ways, either through other [electronic] media or as cracks within traditional areas of music. A partial list could include but is not limited to: *audio art, sonic art, radiophonic art, soundscape research, experimental music, field recording, noise music, sound design, electro-acoustic music, acoustic ecology, deep listening, film sound, generative music, electronic music, musique concrète, computer music, cybernetic music, networked music, minimal music, spoken word, installation art, kinetic art, mechanical instruments, dynamic sculpture etc.* Any one of these areas in and of themselves has a complex yet rich history, but at the core lies their essential connection to sound as a creative medium. So any one person's definition of "sound art" is likely to include one or more of these categories. But more importantly, rather than think about definitions and categories, my interest is to look at a wider concept of sound and how merged, not only with art, but in contexts of science and social research in recent historical periods.



Silence and noise

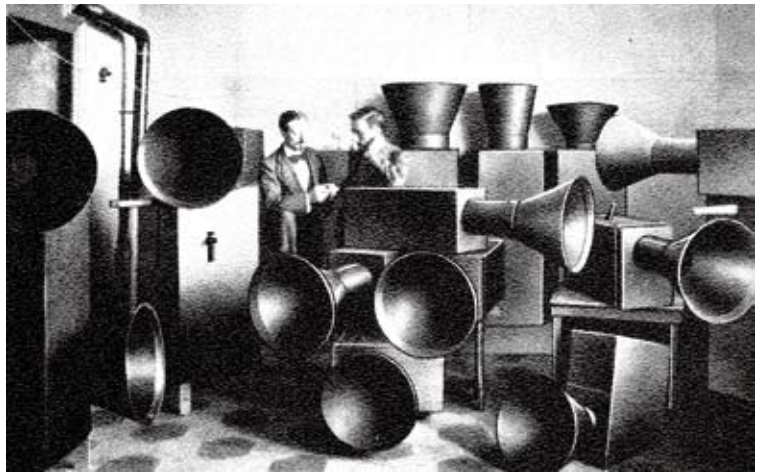
To go back and find a clear line of a “sound art” would require something more like a scientific method of research to discover patterns in the vast chaotic noise of history, where of course you may or may not ever find what you’re looking for. So, where to begin? At what point do we begin to understand sound as a phenomenon and how it’s properties can be used by artists and experienced by others? In a tract that we now see as a clear mark on the map of the modern era, the Italian Futurist Luigi Russolo wrote his manifesto, *The Art of Noises* in 1913. In this short and frank essay Russolo praises the innovations in machines and vehicles of the time and the complex noises they create. This newfound joy in noise was a fresh change to his view of music as an attempt to purify sound, to break it down into lifeless components of harmony and rhythm. “Nowadays musical art aims at the shrillest, strangest and most dissonant amalgams of sound. Thus we are approaching **noise-sound**. **This revolution of music is paralleled by the increasing proliferation of machinery** sharing in human labor. In the pounding atmosphere of great cities as well as in the formerly silent countryside, machines create today such a large number of varied noises that pure sound, with its littleness and its monotony, now fails to arouse any emotion.”¹ Russolo goes on to further illustrate the failure of music to celebrate the achievements of the industrial age and how we must find pleasure in every possible sound and combination of noises that could be heard. In true Futurist form there is a call to action, where we

must react to the stale use of instruments in traditional concert halls that he calls “hospitals for anemic sounds”. And of course this would not be complete without the celebration of destruction where we find quoted in a letter from the poet Marinetti, a detailed description of the great noises of war. The Futurists dream became the reality of Europe and the rest of the world. For nearly half a century following *The Art of Noises*, we would be faced with the deafening sounds of wars unlike anything seen in history. However brief, there were some who started to look for quiet within the storm.

In 1952 the american composer John Cage created 4'33", a “silent” piece of music where a performer sat silently at a piano while the audience watched and supposedly listened. The resulting sound of the piece was not what was played by the performer but the small incidental sounds that occurred elsewhere in the space. Cage’s intention was to make a perceptual shifting the viewers attention away from focusing on the piece itself toward everything else around. The audience in effect had to stop watching and start listening. Nearly ten years later Cage would publish his infamous treatise *Silence*, a concept that implies the antithesis of sound, where sounds and the human mind are at rest in the world. I imagine that Cage and many others who emerged from the extreme destruction of WWII and the swift clean response of the American Dream were looking for not another noisy solution, but a still moment, a quiet point in which to reflect on the world around them. He wrote that a composer should “give up the desire to control sound, clear his mind of music, and set about discovering means to let sounds be themselves rather than vehicles for man-made theories or expressions of human senti-

1 Luigi Russolo. *The Art of Noises*, 1917, lk 5.

On the 2nd of June, 1913, in Modena, the futurist painter Russolo, creator of the Art of Noise, explained and demonstrated for the first time the different noise instruments that he had just invented and built in collaboration with the painter Ugo Piatti before 2000 people in the Storchi Theatre. Right after this memorable evening, the futurist painter Russolo went back to work, perfecting his noise instruments and creating his first four Noise Networks that were finally performed during a first noise concert at Milano's Red House, on the evening of August 11. Inside the large hall, the leaders of the futurist group and several important Italian journalists were massed around this strange orchestra: they greeted with enthusiastic applause and hurrahs the four different noise networks. It is not clear how these instruments produced sound, since none of them have survived from that time.



ments.”² Some of Cage’s ideas could be shared with Russolo’s in an understanding of sound abstraction (much like the visual ideas of the abstract expressionists) with the addition of one important addition, the absence of sound that is silence. But any silence is temporary and can exist only under isolated conditions.

By the end of the 1960s there was little time to stop and listen or even see what was going on all around. A great noise could be heard among the widespread social and political uprisings in the west that could only be fought more noise, by turning up the volume with Rock n Roll. In the east, we saw another extreme approach. The sheer military force of the Soviet power structure tried to silence both what was happening elsewhere and the great many cultures and voices within its walls by filling it with high volumes of ideological noise (engineered, manufactured and distributed extensively). This construction of a singular voice was an attempt to over-ride difference and replace it with a new modernist ideal, a totality of the noise found in the symphonies of production and industrial machinery. But somewhere in the frozen silence of the cold divide, between the great powers, we now know... both sides were listening to each other, secretly and more carefully than anyone had listened before. Before we could understand silence, maybe we had to understand noise, but in even wider sense of the concept. Here we can look back to the late 1970s and early 80s when a number of new scientific and social theories started to influence those within the cultural arena, looking at noise from very different perspectives, and brought forth their own observations and realizations. The renowned French economist and theorician Jacques Attali wrote *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, a deeply critical look at the effect capitalism has on our understanding and relation to music. He warns that turning every aspect of music, including the cultural forms it takes into a commodity for a market economy, threatens to silence its meaning, hence its importance as a social code of sacrifice that binds us together. He writes “...we must establish two things: First, that noise is violence: it disturbs. To make noise is to interrupt a transmission, to disconnect, to kill. It is a simulacrum of murder. Second, that music is a channelization of noise, and therefore a simulacrum of the sacrifice. It is thus sublimation, an exacerbation of the imaginary, at the same time as the creation of social order and political integration.”³ Attali

reminds us that adding new forms of [economic] noise into the ancient roles of musical codes can have an extreme effect on social codes that will result in more random disruptive orders and ultimately a breakdown.

Attali’s use of noise as a central theme was by no means unique. He was drawing heavily on the language of the scientific world where noise was becoming an inescapable factor in analyzing the physical, chemical and biological world. The simplistic understanding of noise is viewed traditionally as an unwanted sound, a form of pollution. Yet a more accurate description of noise is referred to a type of signal be it electronic or corresponding to information and comes up in many fields from electronics to neuroscience. Biologists detect and monitor noise in the electrochemical signals in the firing of neurons in much the same way that engineers measure noise in audio and video signals. These noise signals can be wanted or unwanted depending on the conditions under which they occur, but the fact remains that noise is part of every system. This is one of the principles behind Information Theory which is a means to, “*separate noise from information carrying signals, now used to trace the flow of information in complex systems, to decompose a system into independent or semi-independent sub-systems...*”⁴ Although scientific topics of this kind get highly technical, it is important to know that the effects of noise within systems (natural or artificial) are an area of intense research and debate. My point here is that in both a metaphorical and literal sense, we are all part of the noise as much as noise is a part of us making it an important factor in understanding sound as a whole.

Independent music or musical independence?

But the effects of Attali’s noise were being felt outside of the intellectual world, as a type of social noise on the fringes of mainstream culture. More and more people were making their own noise with a philosophy that took its root in the musical underground throughout the west. The term “Punk” means beginner or amateur and was a label given to a number of rock bands in the mid-1970s in New York who displayed little talent or concern for making “serious” music. In light of the punk “scenes” of the time grew to become a world-wide phenomenon. One of the main bands from this time, the Ramones, were constantly

2 John Cage. *Silence*, 1961, pg 10.

3 Jacques Attali. *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*. 1977. lk 26.

4 Krippendorff. *Principia Cybernetica* Web: <http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/>

criticized and their music was written off as worthless noise. The band however went on to sustain a lengthy career built on simply structured, fast songs that get straight to the point. Their albums were produced with little or no budget and their concerts were fueled on the energy of the music, a stark contrast to the megalithic theatrical stage productions that were used to sell the mainstream rock superstars of the time. Many people attribute the rise of punk as a reactionary statement against the commercialization of music as a “pop” commodity. In many ways it was, but what sustained Punk as a movement beyond the style and the music was an idea and an understanding, that everybody could make their own music, in their own way. You didn’t need an industry to produce and sell your music and if you did, you created and managed it yourself.

Much of this philosophy has influenced many areas of sound experimentation from then until now. In the 1980s there was active movement known as the *cassette underground* where an international network of people produced and traded their own music directly with each other. Much of this material involved experiments with music and sound in ways that could not be found anywhere in the mainstream music industries. In a collection of essays reflecting on the cassette phenomenon, Steven Jones writes “Cassettes allow musicians to become the ultimate modern one-man band--not only because cassettes allow easy access to multitrack recording, but also because they are a mass medium

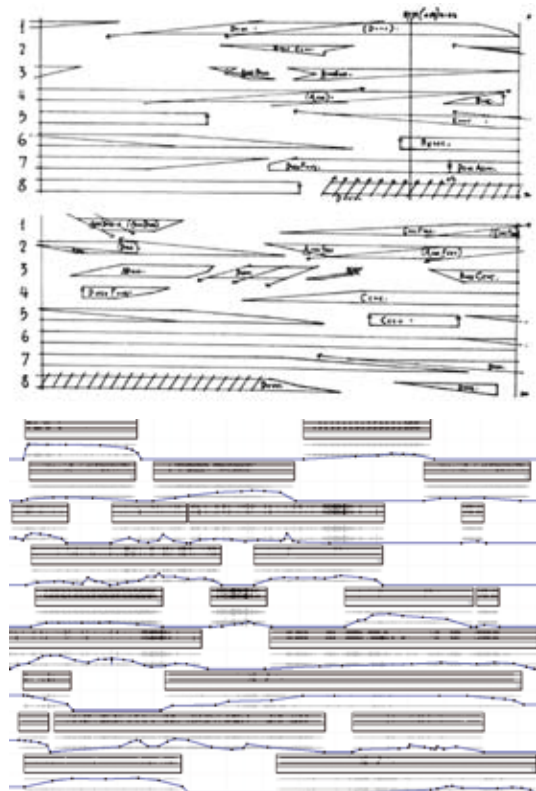
that allows individual control.”⁵ In relation to this activity, many so called independent labels were born in order to publish works of some of the more active artists on cassette, LP and CD. The press to cover this music was also carried out and sustained in an independent spirit. Small photocopied magazines known as zines published articles and reviews of the music as well as any other topic that seemed important to the editors. In that time, the term network was commonly used in a manner that would mirror yet pre-date the internet by almost a decade. The network was the active practice of exchange outside of centralized [commercial] distribution channels. The isolated pockets of noise of the 80s underground would eventually spread across the globe in the age of the internet, the age of a networked humanity, where everyone who is connected can produce and distribute their own work. In the literal network of open information access, any noise within the system will be distributed and felt at any other point in the system. The instantaneous act of information transfer remains silent yet everyone involved is a performer and everyone chooses what they wish to listen to and how they want to listen to it. It is within this unique context of information resonance that Sound Art was seemingly born. If the historical perspective shows us the art of sound has always existed within the spectrum of noise and silence, then we needed to reach a global understanding of sound beyond our control of the medium before we could hear and understand it.

5 The Cassette Mythos, Autonomedia 1990.

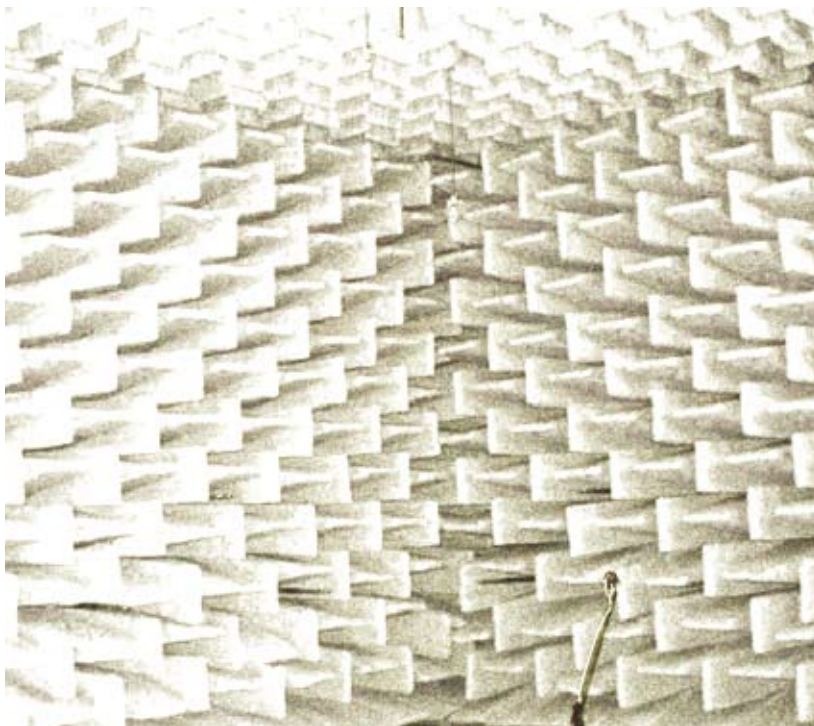
Then and now

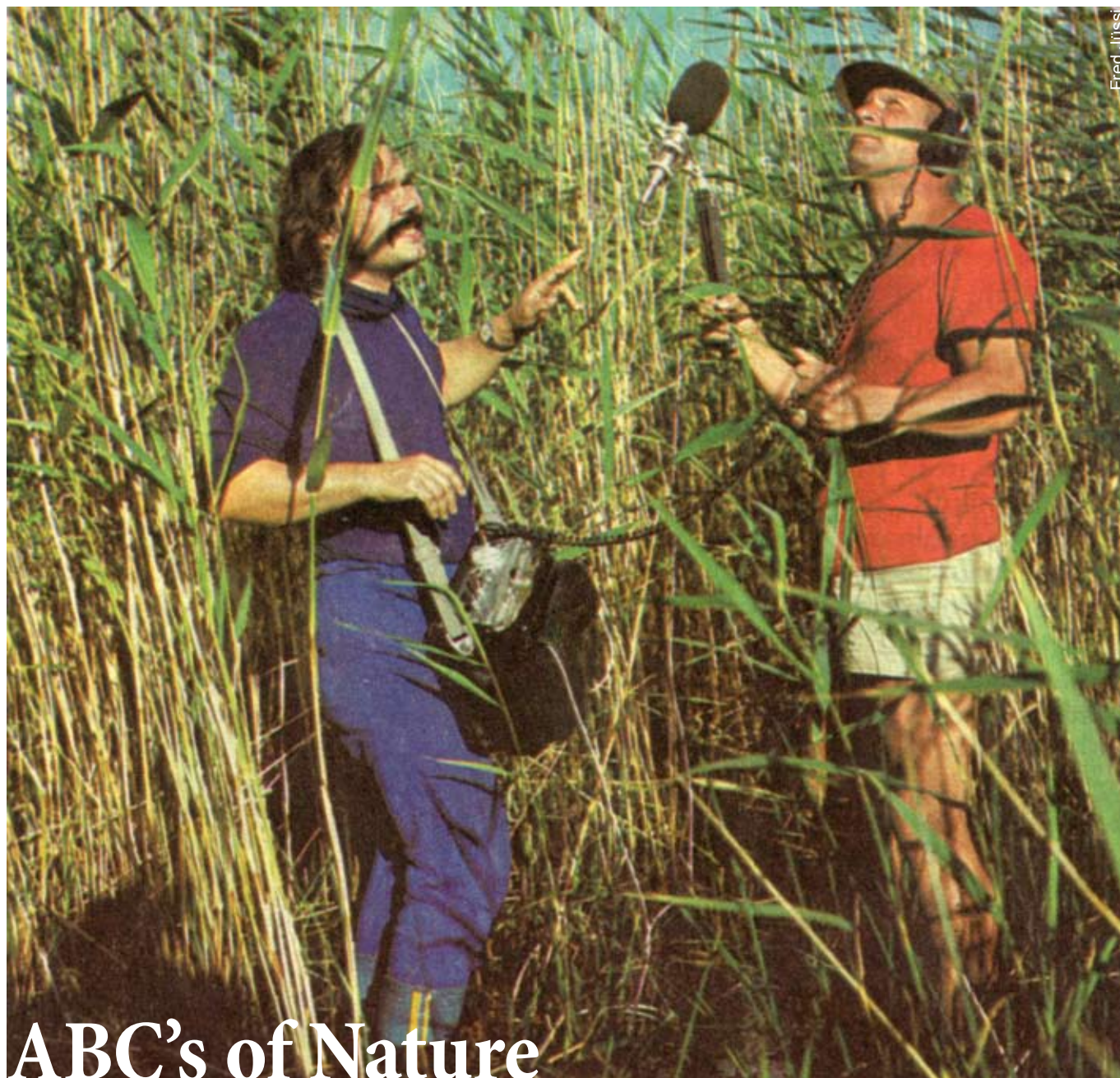
Top - John Cage, graphic score for “Williams Mix” tape piece, 1952.

Bottom - Graphical user interface for non-linear audio editing software.



Limits of noise and silence: John Cage entered an anechoic chamber at Harvard University in the 1940s expecting to hear nothing, but instead he heard what was believed to be the sound of his own bloodflow and nervous system. The experience inspired his famous “silent” composition, 4’ 33”.





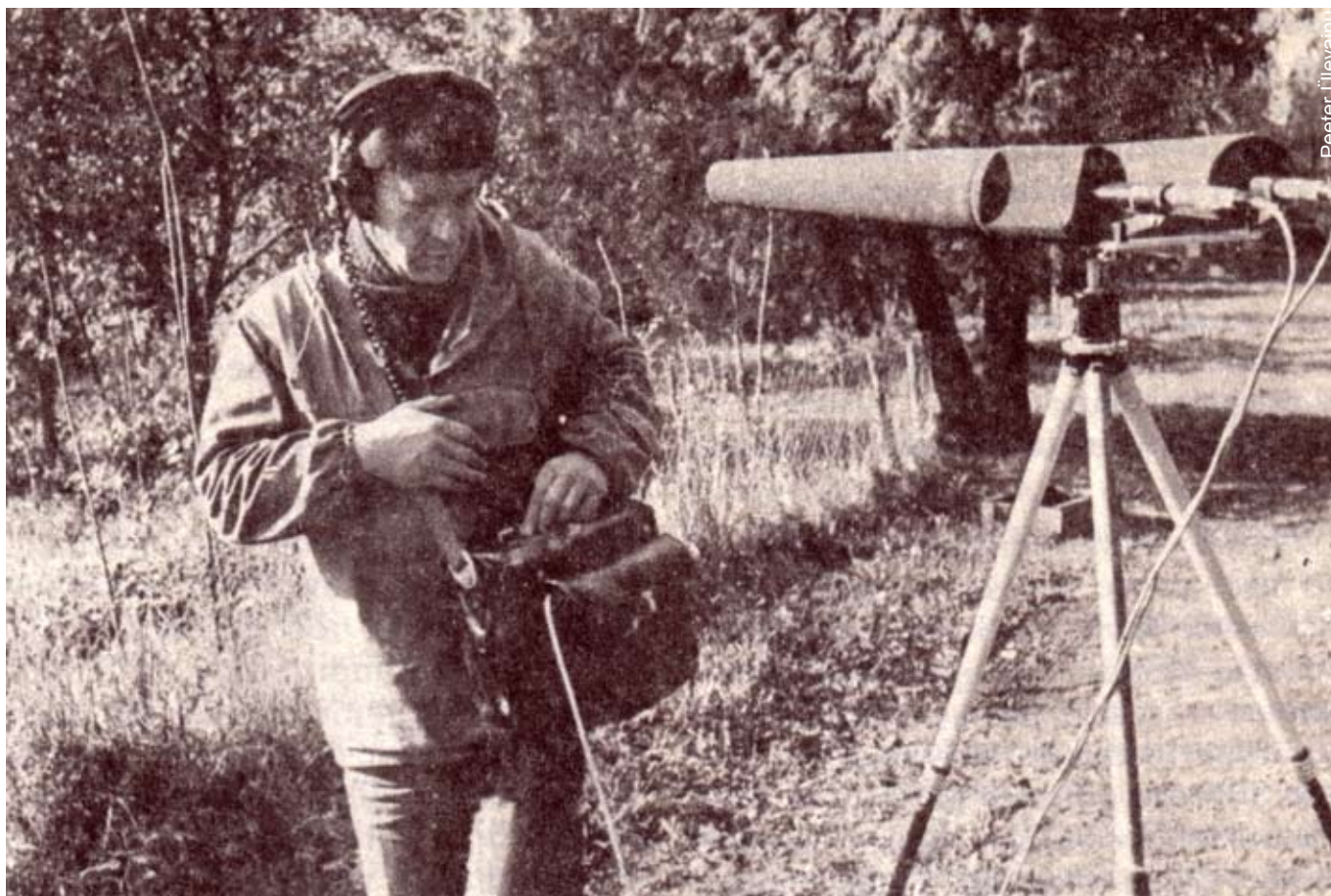
ABC's of Nature

Saarnaki laiul. Kevadsuvi 1979.

Enne kui hakkame kuulama looduse hääli, tuleb õppida KUULAMA VAIKUST!

Fred Jüssi otsib elusat vaikust.

1980. aasta 4. mai varahommikul, kui kõndisin Külvandust Kreo Väikejärve poole, köitis mu tähelepanu tee ääres kuuskedel laulev punarind. Õigupoolest olin tollel hommikul kavatsenud jahtida järvede ääres sõtkaste tiivavilinaid, aga valjenev tuul muutis mu meele – seesama tuul, mis nüüd punarinna laulule nii erilise kõlavärvi andis. Lind ei laulnud eriti kõrgel, vahest tosin meetrit maapinnast või veidi enam, lubas endale läheneda ega lasknud end segada isegi pikkade suundmikrofonide paarist, mis nüüd lausa lagedalt teelt tema poole sihtisid. Punarind laulis ennastunustavalt. Laul oli hoogne ning parajalt pikkade pausidega, ja kui tuli tuulehoog, siis näis, nagu laseks linnuhääl end kuuselatvade tasasest mühast kaasa viia, päriselt ühes kanda. Tegin sealtsamast teelt esimese paariminutilise lindistuse, siis teise veelgi ligemalt, lausa puu alt, ja et punarind ikka veel ära ei lennanud, hakkasin otsima mikrofonidele sobivat paika ja suunda, et saada helipildis meel-



Peeter Ülevainu

Haeska. Lindude sügisrände aeg 1983.

divam vahetult oma tuules musitseeriva solisti ja eemalt kuulduva laulurästa laulule. Nõnda saadud lindistuste rodust valisin lõpuks pildi, mis mulle kõige ilusam tundus.

Kõnnin sellel teel alatasa, aga hommikutundidel ma rasket mikrofononi enam kaasas ei kannan. Juba järgmisel kevadel oli see üsna mõttetu: olgugi et punarind teeäärsetel kuuskedel endistviisi laulis, polnud võimalik seda lindistada, sest kuskilt Voose tagant kostev laudamasinate undamine reostas lootusetult vaikuse. See võib tunduda uskumatuna, aga Eestimaal ei olegi nii lihtne

LEIDA VAIKUST

Selleks, et teha laitmatu helilindistus mõne looma häälsusest või mis tahes muust loodushelist, on vaja vähemalt kolm minutit vaikust. Vaikuse all mõtlen siin kolme minutit ilma tehismüradeta. On oluline, et need kolm minutit oleksid käepärast just sel hetkel, mis sobib mõne häälsuse või heli lindistamiseks. Kui karjanaanised oma masinad laudas hommikul üürgama panevad, siis on see kuulda kuue kilomeetri taha, eriti vaikelsetel hommikutel, või tuuleõhust kantuna koguni kümne kilomeetri kaugusele. Ühel kargel novembriõhtul kuulasin Vetla metskonnas Kõlvandu metsavahi õuel seistes, kuidas rongirattad Tallinna – Tapa raudteerööbastele jätkuvalt raksusid. Raudteeni oli sealt umbes viieteist kilomeetrit metsamaastikku. Vaikelsetel aprilliöödel on raudtee müra kuulnud veelgi kaugemale. Kes tahab süvenenult nautida metsavaikust, sel tuleb minna oma vaikuseelamust otsima lähimast tihedama liiklusega teest vähemalt viie-kuue kilomeetri kaugusele ja valida hetked enne seda, kui esimene piimaauto külatee ringile läheb või kaste alla jäänud ehaline sääreväristaja selga istub.

Oma lindistajategevuse algusaegadel arvasin, et elumajade lähedal on puhkepäevahommik see kõige õigem aeg mikrofonide ülesseadmiseks, ja üritasin kord Kärkla linna serval püüda helilindile vesipapi laulu. Pole ühti! Puhkepäevadel tõustakse hoopis varem kui tööpäevadel, sest siis tuleb hakata tegema oma tööd: saagima küttepuid, servama laudu ja nõnda edasi.

Kuuekümnendatel matkasin sageli Muraka ja Ratva raba ümbruses. Neist aegadest mäletan sealsete rabade vaikust. 1977. aasta mais vanade mälestuste peale magnetofoniga ette võetud jahiretk nurjus, sest lennuliiklus oli vahepeal teinud tohutuid edusamme. Ja ainukese lindistuse, mis mul Varessaare kaasikute vahel peaaegu õnnestus – emakäo trillerdamine isandate kukkumise saatel – rikkus nädalavahetust veetma tulnud üksindusepürgijate vali jutt kell veerand kolm hommikul: juhuslikult kokku saanud kolm-neli matkameest arutasid hüljatud maja õuele süüdatud lõkke ääres valju häälega maailma asju. Ühel neist oli kaasas raadio. Kui ka kõike kogetut ja kujuteldavat arvesse võtta, siis juhuste vastu pole ometi mingit kaitset.

On omamoodi tore, kui külas või metsamaja juures hauguvad koerad, aga kui nad hauguvad mõttetult ja lõputult, siis võib see meeleheitele ajada. Parem ei ole lugu ka siis, kui sind maiõhtul lahkesti linna taha erakordselt lauludeka soo-roolinu juurde sõidutatakse, seal lähikonnas töötab aga kolmes vahetuses kivipurustusmasin. Või rohujahuveski või vilja kiirkuivati või ma ei tea mis masinad ja agregaadid need veel võivad olla, mis läbi ööpäeva nii palju kõrvuväsitavaid helisid sünnitavad. Elu on mind õpetanud olema ettevaatlik igasuguste kutsete suhtes sõita kellegi suvemaja või vanematekodu ümbrusse hääli püüdma.

Kutsujad on mõnikord valmis vanduma, et seal valitseb täielik vaikus, aga ometi näitab tegelikkus hoopis midagi muud. Tegelikkus näitab, et

INIMESED EI KUULE

Kui maastiku liikudes juhtida kaaslase tähelepanu näiteks ronkade kronksumisele metsatukas, siis selgub hiljem, et ronkade hääled jõudsid küll päralt, aga selgesti kuulda olnud mootorsae häirivat lärinta tagaplaanil ei märganud. Ka kõige tähelepanelikumal kuulamisel läheb osa helipildist ikkagi kaduma: helide liikumine, varjundid ja värvid jäävad tavaliselt märkamatuks. Poisina teadsin vanameest, kes oma kodumaja trepil seistes kuulas rabalt kostvaid hääli ja selle järgi õhtuks ilma ennustas. Rohkem ma niisuguseid mehi ei tea.

Inimesed harjuvad müraga. See on tõsi. Ent on veel midagi, mida linlasena mõistan kui omamoodi kurdistumist. Inimese kõrvad ja kuulmiskeskus suudavad koos on terved, aga

HING ON KURT

Astuge keskpäeval Tallinna tänavamüra ükssõõks missugusesse kohvikusse või baari, et juua tass kohvi ja vahetada lõunatunnil mõni sõna sõbra või tuttavaga, ja teid võtab vastu uus müra – rütmi-muusika. Seda on võimatu vaigistada. Veerandtunnist vaikusehetke pole võimalik tellida isegi tasu eest (“Ei saa, külastajad kirjutavad kaebuse! Mis me siis teeme, kui tulevad kontrollid: magnetofon on,

Härmo Saarm ja Hannes Valdma 14. mai 1975
Soonlepa lahe Valgekareel.



Fred Jüsi

aga ei mängi!?”) Avalik kohvikute ja baaride muusika on üheülbaline, mõnikord ei jõuagi väljaveninud lindilt läbi puhastamata helipeade valjuhäälditesse muud kui tümpsu rütm ja ebamääraseid kähinad. Mõned aastad tagasi arvasin veel, et sellele epideemiale vahest piir pannakse, nüüd enam ei arva. Masinamuusika näib olevat narkootilise toimega. Tubakasuitsust on külastajad vähemalt kella viieni säästetud – seda heal juhul –, mitte aga mürareostusest. Kas pole vaikus niisamasugune loodusvara kui puhas vesi või õhk? Miks küll arvatakse, et inimene ainult haiglas rahu vajab?

SURNUD VAIKUS

Kurdistumine on märksa tõsisem õnnetus kui pimedaksjäämine. “Kuulmise kaotus on kõige raskem saatuse löök, see tähendab tähtsama eluvõlu – inimese häälekõla kaotamist,” kirjutas pime ja kurt ameerika kirjanik Helen Keller 1911. aastal (ENE, III, lk 504). Tsiteerin siinkohal Peeter Lastingu loal üht lõiku tema loengute tekstist: “Kui valutunne kõrvale jätta, siis on inimesel emotsioonidega kõige rohkem seotud auditiivne süsteem. Kuulmismeel on oma arengult vanem ja kogu meie psüühikaga sügavamalt ja tugevamalt seotud kui nägemismeel. Eks näita kuulmise tähtsust seegi, et loodus on andnud meile kõrvad, mida ei saa sulgeda. (Silmi võib kinni pigistada, pilku mujale suunata või pea ära pöörata.) Kuulmismeele sügavad seosed meie psüühika kõige pingelisemate mehhanismidega tulevad ilmekalt esile haigusnähtude korral. Psüühiaatrid näiteks teavad, et kuulmismeelpeetud viitavad sügavamale, püsivemale ja raskemale psüühikahäirele kui nägemismeelpeetud.” Selleks, et ennast müra vastu kaitsta, pole vaja põgeneda hauavaikusesse. Hauavaikus ei ole väljapääs, see on teine äärmus, müra kahjustatud inimese psüühikale sugugi mitte vähem ohtlik. Talvituspaikades nahkhiiri pildistades ja nende häälsusi lindistades olen veetnud pikki päevi hüljatud kaevanduskäikude surnud vaikus ja pärast seda välismaailmas alati teatud kergendust tundnud.

On inimesi, kes ei talu enam elusatki vaikust. Niisugune inimene ei saa õhtul maamajas und silma, metsas aga, kus tundmatu lind hüüab kauguses midagi arusaamatut, hakkab tal öudne. See tuleb vaikuse stressist. Siis ei aita muu kui peab sõitma tagasi linna ja taastama müranarkoosi abil vaimse tasakaalu. Harjumatu vaikus pole parem kurdistavast müra.

TASAKAAL PEAB OLEMA

Tasakaalu peab igaüks leidma enda jaoks ise vastavalt oma vajadustele ja hetkeseisundile. Minu meelest on mõeldamatu, et inimene võiks olla midagi muud kui maailm tema ümber. Tasakaalustatud, elusa vaikuse vajadus tähendab tunda sedasama vaikust ka iseendas. Muidu ei kuule ju inimene iseenda sisehäält, mis siis veel rääkida neist signaalidest, mida ümberkaudsed välja saadavad. Olen märganud, et väga head kõrvaharjutust nii otseses kui ka ülekantud tähenduses pakub meri, olgu veepind kas või peegelsile. Nagu öö pole mere kohal kunagi päriselt pime, nii ei ole ka merevaikus kunagi täiesti hääletu, me ainult ei tea, et kuuleme mere hingust. Neil puhkudel aga, kui tunnen sisemist sidet vaikusega iseendas katkeda ähvardavat, otsin üles lökkepaiga kõrgete määndide all jõekaldal. Õhtust tule ääres piisab tavaliselt selleks, et kõrvad sisse- ja väljapoole lukku ei jääks ning et ellu äratada häälte ja vaikuse tuhmuma kippuvaid värve.

Lühendatult autori loal. Eesti Loodus, märts 1985.



Jaana Nõu

Interview with Kiwa

Palun räägi mõtustest, mis inspireerisid sind eksperimenteerima muusika ja heliga?

Mida rohkem meenutan subjektiivselt erilisi kogemusi heliga, seda varasemast ajast neid mäletan. Seega, parem oleks vist kohe vihjata sünnieelsele kogemusele. Kunstikontekstis on pigem inspireerinud võimalus ületada füüsiliste, jämemateriaalsete nähtumiste ja ilmutumiste diktatuuri, samuti kunsti-institutsioonide jääka, aga "püha" kõneviisi. Ühelt poolt utoopia tühjast ruumist ja sellise metafüüsilise situatsiooni loomine, teiselt poolt tühjale ruumile helilainetega tähenduste peegeldamine, ajutise eraldi tähenduskogumi või igas punktis kattuva paralleelruumi loomine.

Kas teed vahet sound art'il ja muusikal, olgu see siis eksperimentaal-muusika, popmuusika, klassikaline jne? Kui jah, siis mille poolest need erinevad? Mille järgi sa neil vahet teed?

Näen seda rohkem nagu paljude platoode dimensionaalset süsteemi, nendevaheline liikumine ei allu reeglitele. Klassikaline minimalism ja elektroonilised eksperimendid on neid *sound-art'i* ja muusika sildamisi piisavalt loonud. Kuna mul õnnestub suhteliselt hästi hoiduda *mainstream*-popkultuuri pealetungist, siis võib teinekord ka näiteks taksoraadiost kuulnud popkliše tunduda mingi eriti marginaalse helikunsti eksperimendina. Kuuldava puhul eelistan siiski, et see tekitaks oma abstraktsuses või konkreetsuses visioone ulmelistest maastikest või arhitektuursetest keskkondadest.

Kas oskad kirjeldada, kuidas sa kasutad heli näiteks oma installatsioonides või näitusel (mis ei ole live-muusikaettekannne)?

Nimetaksin seda reaks rohkem või vähem üllatavateks kontekstuaalseteks niheteks. Mu esimesel näitusel 1995. aastal oli juba see väga eksperimentaalne, et viibisin ise DJ-na koos plaadimängijatega kogu näituse lahtiolekuaja helitausta luues galeriis. Nüüd eelistan igasugusest visuaalsest ja materiaalsest "mürast" loobumist ja pigem just nn *live*-ettekandeid, kui need koos ruumiga totaalininstallatsiooni mõju tekitavad. Ürituste sarjaga "metabor" praktiseeritud erinevates imelikes ruumides ja keskkondades ajutiste helisituatsioonide tekitamine, kokkumäng arhitektuuri või kohaspetsiifikaga tundub ka jätkuvalt võimalusi pakkuvat.

Palun räägi rohkem "metabor'i" ideest? Kuidas sinu helieksperimentid suhestuvad koha ja kontekstiga?

Olulisim märksõna oli "sünergia", mille osas kohalikes oludes oli tühik. Helide, visuaalide, ruumide, objektide, heliobjektide ja tähenduste sünergia, nagu ka erineva põlvkondliku, rahvusliku ja kunsti-*scene'i* taustaga osalejate oma. Kutsusin koos eksperimenteerima vähesed kohalikud helikunstis oma joont ajavad "helifriigid": eesti modernismiklassiku ja kineetiliste heliobjektide autori Kaarel Kurismaa, noore müra-DJ autorinimega Masin, psühhoakustika praktiseerija p0rti, Tartu relikte elektroonikaga töötava avangardisti Martini jt.

Heli sisemise liturgia otsimine, teadvuse seisundite muutmine, seega sissepoole ja mikrotekstuuri suunatud lähenemine on muidugi vastuolus poolavalike sündmuste läbiviimisega. Arhitektuuri ja ruumidega kokkumäng, ajutised heliga täidetud tühikud ja katkestused sotsiaalse ruumi lineaarses kulgemises oli ainuvõimalik, kuna helil on nagunii omadus olla tajutav ruumide ja objektide tõttu. Bassides ja müras vibreeriv jäälohkuja, vaikusemasin ufoplatvormi meenutaval nõukogudeaegsel memoriaalkompleksil, heliüritused üksikul meresaalet, endises tehases, mahajäetud katakombides jne.

Kui sinu helilooming muundada arhitektuuriks, milline see võiks välja näha?

Ta ON JUBA muundunud katkendiks olematus peatükis raamatust "Roboti tee on nihe":

"IR oli mitmel võimalikul puhul üritanud mulle rääkida raamatust, mida ta kunagi ehk lugenud oli, ent mis, nagu ta ise rõhutada armastas, teda mingil isevärki moel painama oli jäänud.

Juttu alustades püüdis ta laduda lauale mängukividest torni, et sel kombel kas või vihjamisi manada kuulajale toda kõrgtornidest laskumise ja nende kõrvalt vaid uute, seest õõnsate kõrgtornide tõusmise aindust.

Muu seas oli IR mulle seletanud, et kõike selles raamatus painas arhitektuur. Kõik oli kuidagi seotud majaga, mida IR oma sügavaimates unenägudes olla otsimas käinud, jõudes vaid selle kaudse olemasolu võimalikkuse aimamisele. Raamatus olnud arhitektuur rohkem või vähem seotud motiivivalikuga, IR leidis end mitmel korral seletamatutest ruumidest, kurioosumi lahendused põhinesid mõnedel vihjetel, mida esimese korruse avar võlvkaartega hall lubas oletada hoone välisilme kohta, mida keegi samuti kunagi aimanud oli, aimanud sellel kitsal ribal, kus aimamine küünitas lootusetult kirjeldamiseni, ning – nagu üks elanikest rõhutas – ei selgunud see ka peale lõppu. Miski ei ole kindel, pidas IR vajalikuks siinkohal rõhutavalt näppu tõsta.

Kindlasti oli ruumis teatav valgusallikas, ent midagi täpsemat selle kohta ruumide rohekashallis hämaruses väita ei olnud võimalik. Nägusid ja nende järgi ka raamatu tegelasi ei olnud võimalik valdaval enamusel juhtudel tuvastada või eristada. Vaid siis, kui ruumi keskele pillatud siidisallile langenud valguskiir endale mõne eksinud tähelepanu nõudis, oli parajasti minategelasena figureeriv olend muidu näotust tegelasgaleriist mõneks minutiks saanud aega täpsemalt ruumi jälgida. Ilmselt tähelepanuväärseim ja teisi kirjeldusi enim tõepärastav tähelepanek oli mõned põimuvad reljeefid halli sammas-tekst muunduvatel seintel. Teine tähelepanek, mis põhines mõningatel katsetel, oli sama huvitav. Nimelt võis uurimistulemuste põhjal väita, et üks ja sama arhitektuurne objekt oli absoluutselt identsete olendite jaoks täiesti erinevad objektid. See sõltus sellest, kas nad sisenesid objektisse ukse või akna kaudu, või mõnel muul viisil."

Ki wa

Aprill-mai 2006



sound art: analysis and poetry

erkki luuk

0 esimene ja kindel asi, mida helikunsti ja (eksperimentaalse) muusika vahekorra kohta saab öelda, on järgmine: selget vahet pole. pole kindlat eraldusjoont, kus algab helikunst ja lõpeb (eksperimentaalne) muusika ja vastupidi. ometi tarvitatakse neid mõisteid eri tähenduses ja saadakse aru, kas üks või teine asi kuulub pigem helikunsti või muusika alla. seega tuleb eeldada mingite kontseptuaalsete fookuste olemasolu, mille suhtes neid mõisteid defineeritakse – või vähemalt defineeritakse üks neist, misjärel teine defineeritaks sellele vastandumise kaudu.

1 hiljuti osalesin vestlusringis teemal “tants ja/või *performance*”, kus vastavaid mõisteid püüti defineerida. tagantjärele võin öelda, et tantsu ja *performance*’i (tegevuskunsti) ning muusika ja helikunsti vahet on hämmastavalt sarnane. mõlemal juhul on tegu aktsepteeritud kunstiliigiga, millel on juba teatav kontseptuaalne kese, millele uuem (“kunstipõhine”) žanr (vastavalt siis tegevus- ja helikunst) vastandub.

2 tantsu kese on koreograafia, muusika oma kompositsioon. need on muidugi üldistused, mis kumbki genereerivad (või vastupidi) konkreetse žanrilise eksemplari, mille suhtes seda keset hakatakse konkreetset mõõtma. tantsu puhul on selleks ilmselt tänini klassikaline ballett. muusika puhul kas klassikaline või (sõltuvalt teoreetilisest diskursusest) tänapäeval vb juba ka popmuusika. klassikaline ballett ja klassika/popmuusika on vastavalt koreograafia ja kompositsiooni etalonid “tantsu” ja “muusika” jaoks. st, mida kaugemale me neist liigume, seda suurem on tõenäosus, et tegu pole enam “muusika” või “tantsuga”.

3 selle vastanduse, kontseptuaalse kauguse kehastamiseks on marginaalsemate žanride nimetus-tena tekkinud / käibele võetud “tegevuskunst” ja “helikunst”. (eelistan siinkohal *performance*’i, mis eesti keeles tähendab ju õigupoolest kõigest etendust, kohalikku, kuid samas, erinevalt originaalist, mis tahes muust “etendusest” siiski eristuvat vastet.) kuigi ka neil žanridel on ilmselt oma kontseptuaalsed fookused ja neid kehastavad konkreetset eksemplari, on need primaarselt *defineeritud siiski muusikale/tantsule vastandumise (st marginaalsuse) kaudu*.

4 sekundaarselt võib need heli/tegevus-kunsti fookused siiski konstrueerida/leida. kui väheinformatiivsus kõrvale jätta, pole sellega mingit probleemi. need fookused on nimelt tegevus ja heli.

5 tegevuse ja heli analüütilised, hierarhiliselt kõrgema keerukuse ja renomeega paarilised on vastavalt tants ja muusika. miks ma ei räägi siinkohal “liikumisest”, mis on mõiste, mille kaudu “tantsu” tavaliselt defineeritakse? põhjus on selles, et “liikumine” on liiga üldine mõiste. tantsuna isegi kõige laiemas mõttes ei nähta siiski mitte igasugust, vaid mis tahes koreograafialet allutatud liikumist, “koreograafiline liikumine” ja “tants” on sünonüümid. niisamuti on sünonüümid “laiemas mõttes muusika” ja “mistahes kompositsioonile allutatud muusika”.

6 samas on selge, et “mittekoreograafiline liikumine” ja “mittekomponeeritud muusika” pole iseenesest veel tegevus/heli-kunsti piisav määratlus. see on lihtsalt materjal, millest tegevus/heli-kunst sageli (kuigi mitte alati) sünnib. nii tegevus- kui ka helikunstiteosed võivad sisaldada (ja pigem sisaldavadki, sest kindla piiri tõmbamine (vt 0) on võimatu) koreograafilisi/komponeeritud elemente.

7 see, et igasugune muusika on heli ja igasugune tants tegevus, kuid mitte vastupidi, näib enesestmõistetav. heli on muusika ja tegevus tantsu ainus meedium.

8 aga võtame nt sellise aspekti nagu paigalolek. paigalolek ei ole liikumine, kuid kuulub tegevuste hulka. tegevus on seega laiem mõiste kui liikumine. niisamuti pole vaikus heli, kuid kuulub akustiliste fenomenide hulka. akustiline fenomen on seega laiem mõiste kui heli.

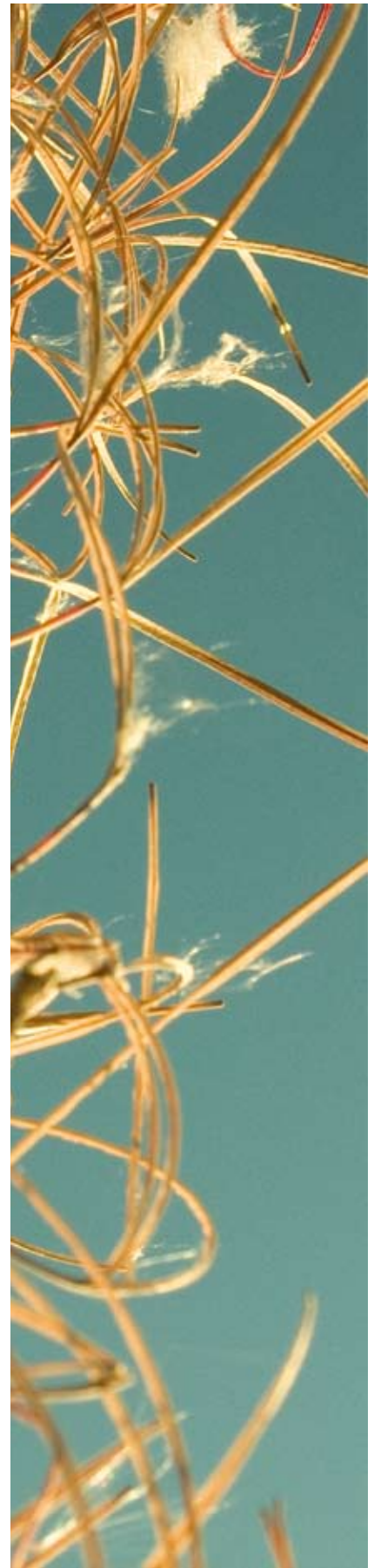
9 eristus on seega järgmine: tantsul/tegevuskunstil ja muusikal/helikunstil on sama meedium, mis pole aga mitte tegevus ja heli (nagu öeldud – 7), vaid tegevus ja akustiline fenomen. tants, rääkimata juba tegevusest, komponeeritakse liikumisest sama palju kui paigalolekust ja sama, asendades “liikumise”, “heli” ja “paigaloleku” “vaikusega”, puudutab muusikat/helikunsti.

10 tegelikult on see kõik muidugi üks ja seesama “liikumine” ja “paigalolek”, sest heli on õhu (kuuldav) liikumine ja vaikus õhu (kuuldamatu?) paigalolek. miks kuuldamatu järel on küsimärk? sest keegi pole midagi sellist kunagi küll kunagi *kuulnud* (sest see oleks loogikaviga), mistõttu kellelgi pole sellest vähimatki tõendit, kuid sellegipoolest suudavad kõik seda – st absoluutset vaikust – endale suurepäraselt ette kujutada. “vaikus” on seega pigem kujuteldav kui reaalne. mis puudutab absoluutset paigalolekut, siis selle kohta kehtib sama (kuigi selle ettekujutamine on veelgi hõlpsam kui absoluutse vaikuse ettekujutamine – lihtsalt sellepärast, et visuaalse fenomeni ettekujutamine on hõlpsam kui akustilise fenomeni ettekujutamine).

11 kompositsioon ja koreograafia, nagu defineeritud punktides 5 ja 2, ei väljenda mitte ainult kontseptuaalset ja sotsiaalset, vaid ka sisulist korda. näide: mis tahes klassikalise muusika teosest saab suvalise toimetamisprogrammiga teha helikunsti, vastupidine on aga võimatu. see näitab, et korra – kaose vastandus määratleb muusikat/helikunsti (nagu ka tegelikult tantsu/tegevuskunsti, aga seda ma ei hakka siin eraldi tõestama) vähemalt kolmel tasandil. (see, et kaos on kergemini saavutatav kui kord, järeldeb muidugi entroopia printsiibist.)

12 looja seisukohast juhivad muusika/tantsu vs heli/tegevus-kunsti teose valmimist kaks tegevust: kompositsioon vs toimetamine. esimese all mõeldakse siin nii koreograafilist kui ka helikompositsiooni. heli/tegevus-kunst on miski, mida primaarselt toimetatakse, tants/muusika seevastu alluvad peamiselt kompositsioonile. need on kaks põhimõtteliselt erinevat toimumisloogikat (kuigi tulemus võib olla üsna sarnane, ja neid kasutatakse ka kordamööda ja segiläbi). komponeerimisel on viimane sõna proportsioonil ja seosel, toimetamisel tehnilisel valikul ja kunstlikul töötlusel. tegelikult loomeprotsessis, olgu muusika/tantsu või heli/tegevus-kunsti puhul toimuvad tavaliselt mõlemad. erinevus on ainult nende kasutamise määras (ja vb ka järjekorras: muusikas enne toimetamine, siis kompositsioon, helikunsti enne kompositsioon, siis toimetamine). nt klassikalise muusika puhul on tehniline valik (etteantud instrumentide hulk) minimaalne ja kunstlik töötlus niisamuti (piirdudes filtritega torude otsas jms; interpreedi, dirigendi ja heliresissööri valikuid kui *live*-efekte muidugi teose koosseisu lugeda saa). helikunsti puhul on tehniline valik piiramatu ja kunstliku töötluse vahendite hulk samuti piiramatu. täpselt sama puudutab klassikalise tantsu / tegevuskunsti vahet. kui võtame konkreetseks žanriliseks eksemplariks (vt 2) mitte klassikalise, vaid popmuusika, kasvab valikute/töötlusvahendite hulk klassikalise muusikaga võrreldes tohutult, jäädes helikunstiga võrreldes siiski piiratuks.

13 seega on vabadus ja marginaalsus heli/tegevus-kunsti vastavalt eelis ja puudus muusika/tantsu ees. oma otstarbalt ja ideoloogialt on helikunst (*meie*) *helikeskkonna kujundamine ja mõtestamine*. see väljendub kõigepealt juba selles, kuidas mingid loigud sellest helimaastikust salvestatakse (mis on tehniline valik punkti 12 mõttes) või mitte (mis on samuti tehniline valik – algheli tehniline süntees), niisamuti selles, et neid löike seejärel töödeldakse (kunstlik töötlus – 12) või mitte. tavaliselt muidugi töödeldakse. lihtsam töötlus on juba sümpli kordumapanek, “keerulisematel” juhtudel lisanduvad filtrid jpm vahendid, mis suurendavad vabadusastet ja äratavad (looja) huvi. tavaliselt mängivad (punktides 6 ja/või 12 toodud põhjustel) rolli ka mingid kompositsioonilised kaalutlused. kompositsiooni kaasamine helikunsti valmistamise protsessi tuleb kahtlemata ka soovist vastu tulla kujuteldava (statistiliselt kõige tõenäolisema) kuulaja maitsele (tal on mingi kompositsioonilise korruga seotud ootused ja eelistused).



Sound in a Space Between

One of the founders of Singuhr – hörgalerie in parochial in Berlin, Carsten Seiffarth, talks about the history of Singuhr, and the problematics of exhibiting sound art.

Carsten Seiffarth: How about sound art in the Baltics? Is there anything happening?

John Grzinich: Yes, lots of kids with computers, but a few people who are active.

CS: I imagine you mainly see something like “sound art” in the Baltics only in the 1990s, but for me it is really interesting to see what was happening (in the east) before the 90s because I come from eastern Germany. At the time I only knew of one other artist from East Berlin and a group of guys in Russia who were doing tape experiments, but there must have been more.

JG: There are guys in Estonia like Sven Grünberg who made electronic music experiments and Bronius Kutavicius in Lithuania who made a lot of experiments within contemporary music, but they come from musical backgrounds.

CS: Ah yes, as usual... Well, just yesterday I did an interview with a music journalist for a newspaper where we talked about the whole history of the gallery which is a long story, and then he asked, why sound, why sound art? I explained that this is not new and you have here a real history with sound in Berlin. In the 1950s and 1960s there was the Fluxus movement here coming through connections in New York. Then in 1980 the exhibition ‘For Eyes and Ears’ at the Akademie der Kunst gave a good overview of sound from the theories of Satie and Cage to mechanical instruments and kinetic sound works from real living artists like Bill Fontana and Christina Kubisch. Then there was a small gallery in a shop in West Berlin that had some 33 exhibitions with people like David Berman and Nick Collins. Of course I never went there because it was on the other side of the wall. But you have to show there is some history of artists working with sound.

So then we started with Singuhr in 1996 where we could rent this church space for exhibitions that would be part of a larger festival. Our program would run inside the festival (Sonambiente – Festival für Hören und Sehen) and they said here is a list of artists, choose who you want for the space, which is a nice situation to be in. So we had an



installation by Matt Heckert from San Francisco and Erwin Stache who is another East German I did not know before. I met him first in Graz around that time. And from this we started to develop this network of artists working with sound. But getting back to the concept of an exhibition space for sound, for me sound art comes from the idea of space related installation art. This can include individual objects and sculptures with sounds but mainly we want to include the space as part of a whole installation. So in 1998 Carsten Nicolai had his table piece with 4 turntables that you could mix in your own way and listen on headphones, but this wasn't really sound art as in sounding objects. Except for two other projects like this, all of the exhibitions in Singuhr were developed for the spaces in the church. So not only the main hall (the nave that was a storage space in the GDR), but the room in the tower on the third floor and a small space in between without windows used for small dark installations. You could also call these “audio works”, but really the terms are open, like the definition of “sound art” is open because it has a very different meaning in America than it does in Germany. Some people in Germany try to push it in the direction of the American way, that sound art is everything without a written score, every performance, every form of computer music and so much of the academic stuff as well and even radio art or whatever you put on

speakers. You can put the speakers in a space even with 4 channels or more, but then this could be any space where it doesn't matter in the end. But this I call more audio art, still coming from the side of music. Maybe sound art is more like an idea, that along with the art factor you can concentrate really on the installation. There are a few examples of museum shows of installation art that include sound works, but if you look around the world right now, and I travel a lot, there are still no spaces which are focused on sound art or sound related art. In this way Singuhr is unique in that we have this historic continuity since 1996 with over 50 exhibitions. As a gallery it's also different in that it's not like a private gallery that represents artists. Once you make an exhibition here we will not take you again. Not because of a bad experience or whatever, but because there is such a big field of interesting artists working with sound and we want to see how this field develops.

So the history of the space goes back before us. As I said the church was used as storage during the GDR which was good because this means they maintained the roof so there was not much damage to the structure. But then after the wall fell, the storage company went bankrupt and as with many spaces in the east, artists moved in like partisans of the underground to run many projects. So in the church you had everything from improvised music concerts to classical music concerts along with exhibitions and other events. Then after a while we formed a group called "Kunst im Parochial" to have an organization to get some money for basic things like rent for the space and printing flyers. It wasn't big money and after a while we saw it could be difficult even as a non-profit project, because you only sit and wait for your proposals to be accepted. In this way you can't follow an idea or really develop a focus. At that time I was studying and my background comes from music. I also organized contemporary music festivals and played in a few ensembles, but academic contemporary music is really an island, not only in its communication process, but also within society. With sound art I was interested in more complex relations to space, as a form of space related music. So I started to see how you could have different kinds of experiences inside of a space, being inside sound installations. There were then pieces done inside the church, like from John Cage's "Writings through the Essay" for 36 CD players and Robin Minard which were all organized by other organizations in Berlin. All we provided was the space. So we saw that the church, which is not a working church, is really one of the best places for sound. The space reacts well to sounds and the belfry (on the third floor) has a dry sound, very neutral. On the other side of this situation, I only saw that there were festivals who tried to deal with sound. But these are temporary situations where there is no space for things to develop. And we know the festival culture forms an event culture where sound art is connected to events, but only because this is an easier way to get money when you need to pay people and install works. Nobody was interested to support an ongoing process like a gallery for sound. So we had big events, sometimes for five days, sometimes for three weeks, but there were so many events that it was difficult to follow any direction to develop something. For me, the festival culture is really amazing because it is good for the public but it's not my idea of art. You can have your Biennales like Documenta and Venice but there not not any space there for sound works. You can have an exhibition of 6 works where only one guy will have a deep good sound but the other five mix in and the sound is carried everywhere. For instance, a few years ago Carsten Nicolai had a piece in the Venice Biennale that was nice but then on the other side of the building you also had some nice paintings. You stand there and look at the paintings, but every second you get this grinding sound coming in from the other piece. Maybe those paintings had their own kind of music? But in this case even a painting doesn't have a chance to let you hear what it tries to



Main Nave

say. So where does a sound work fit in? Even with modern buildings the high frequencies come up over the walls through the ceiling and the low tones come right through the walls. In this way, I don't like how sound is used in the festival context. You need time, money and space. It's important that an artist develops work in the space to be working there at least five days or it could even be three weeks depending on the nature of the piece. This needs a longer process otherwise there is no chance to install the work within the space. OK, not every artist works this way, but we have to allow the possibility. So we started to work with the timing of each project and to program the exhibitions for a full year in advance to give each project the time it needs to develop and install. I think it's clear in the way you get to see the different colors or different ideas possible in sound art. This is how it has worked with the artists in each of the spaces within the church. Unfortunately, the situation has changed this last year. We had to make a new contract for the church but the owner wanted more money for the rent of the space. We can no longer afford the rent for the nave, the main space and we now only hold exhibitions in the belfry on the third floor. The new renters of the nave still hold art exhibitions and use it for fund-raising parties, but it usually has nothing to do with our sound exhibitions upstairs. And I don't like this. Not because they make bad neo-dali shows, but because the church is not just another museum, it's an idea, a unique space with its own qualities. But nobody seems to understand this, so they use it as a museum. We have thought to move to another space but this is a whole different problem. As it is now, we work from year to year and try to move into the future.

JG: What kind of responses do you get from the art world, from the critics and so on? Do they take Singuhr seriously or do you have to push what you're doing? What kind of response do you get from the public?

CS: Oh, you have to push. There's no other way. We are not near any of the gallery districts so it's hard to get the art crowd, but on the other hand we have developed a special interface for the public which also separates us from the usual art venues. We have people working as security, but they are trained. Because it's common that people will come into Singuhr and ask, "What is this, what is happening here?". Since it is not obvious like in other galleries then the guard must explain a bit about sound art and what the exhibition is about and for us this costs more. Sometimes we pay more for the security than for the directors of the gallery. And for the art world... well, if I call up



"in die länge gezogener geistesblitz"
Installation by Berlin based artist
Stefan Rummel.

a critic and ask for a review of a show, they say something like 'Sorry, I don't know about music' and I say 'It's not about music, it's about sound' and then they say 'OK, I don't know about sound art'. You can see how there is not much space for sound art because there is also not a culture for it. But this is not the main problem. Talking again about the festival culture, you can see how much the art world is extremely closely connected to the market. Many of the artists exhibiting in the festivals and bienales these days are directly connected to many of the main galleries, which then have their place in the market and of course do not represent sound artists. Sound is not like other art forms that relate so much to physical objects, which in other words, means you can't sell it. If you can't sell it then it's not so interesting to the art world. Even more known artists working with sound like Carsten Nicolai or a big name like Elias Olafsson work with other media. You can even sell light works. There is a tradition there, of making lamps, artworks and even light installations that you can sell. With light pieces they are easy to block out or turn off. With sound it just goes everywhere. You can close your eyes, but you can't close your ears. This means everyone must follow the work because you are completely inside the space, inside the content of the work and then the idea follows you throughout the space as sound frequencies that affect you. Normally, I don't say it so explicitly, but in this way there is not much chance for sound art in the art world because you can't sell it. More and more artists are working with sound and more and more exhibitions are dealing with sound which is interesting but I'm not sure how far this can go. If you have a sound art exhibition, like the current piece in Singuhr, what can you sell? What can someone buy? The soundtrack? Well that's not the exhibition alone. What can you sell then, the material, the speakers, or

better yet, the building? (Laughs)

You can try to sell the documentation but usually documentation for sound exhibitions is terrible. This is even a problem for other kinds of installation art as well, like with Joseph Beuys pieces where you can't communicate the whole experience. There is no atmosphere in the documentation. Hartmut Böhme, the German philosopher of aesthetics has been writing about the idea of acoustic atmospheres. We worked with him to write a text for a book we produced with Hans Peter Kuhn. The consideration of atmosphere in art is one of the main themes of our time. You enter a space and something is happening, you are brought to another level, either up or down. We can no longer talk about the 19th century idea of the isolated art object. There is so much more that affects you. So the atmosphere taken from an acoustic environment, you can't export or transplant that into another space. So sound art has its roll, but somehow it will remain between other things. In this case, maybe what Singuhr is doing then is coming together as a new kind of architecture, where you include sound artists or ideas from sound into the architecture. I heard of a Japanese artist who worked with some architects who realized you could not completely close a building off to sounds from the outside. So the artist helped to design the sound in a way that allowed certain frequencies to flow through the building. And here I see a big chance for sound artists to work in this other kind of context because they work in such a different way with space. Not only with the atmosphere but with perception.

Berlin - April 22, 2006



Maaheli

a brief biography of a sound explorer

understanding the spectrum

With each artist who has an interest in sound, there are often specific reasons how he or she found themselves working with this mysterious medium. Many people ask how I became a “sound artist”, but in this open field the answer is not so simple. As far as my practice goes, it is something that developed over years and continues to change even now. As far as my reasoning goes, I have a sort of “big bang” theory of something that has always been there, but you don’t know how or why it happened. During my childhood I was fascinated by listening to the radio. My father gave me a special Multi-band radio that had extra “channels” for receiving signals outside the usual FM and AM bands. In this outside zone things were much more exotic, much more open. Channels like Shortwave 1 and 2, Marine Band and World Band offered access to a unique space beyond the standard music and news programming of radio stations. As a young boy these extra channels were like a door to outer space where you could scan the spectrum and discover signals from around the world and even from the earth itself. The spectrum was alive. *Out there* were people speaking different languages, unusual music from different cultures, pulsing tones from ships on the seas, crackling sparks from distant storms, clouds of static phasing in and out, all going on like a beautiful symphony of noise. I would sit for hours some nights and try to tune myself in to studying the different sounds. Through these radiophonic experiences I learned more than just an understanding of radio waves and atmospheric influence. I realized that between the stable points of the radio stations there is constant activity within the whole broadcast spectrum, even on farthest reaches of the periphery. Also, all of this activity goes on continuously as waves in the ether, whether or not we tune our radio box into it in order to translate all that noise into recognizable sound.

A new form of listening

My interest in what could be heard on the radio developed in parallel with my interest in music. Throughout high school and college I began

to seek out any and all forms of music that I could find. Early on I taped music off the radio from my favorite programs, then I collected records and CDs whenever I could afford them. One of the greatest educational resources was the local student radio station from Vassar College. As far as I understood the student DJs at the station played whatever they wanted in special programs they designed, be it about indie rock, progressive jazz, polka, heavy metal, punk, new age or simply free-form radio. For me this was radio at its best, where people shared the music they enjoyed and were passionate about it rather than pushing standardized formats only for commercial promotion! A few programs on the college station were really different, playing “music” that didn’t really sound like “music” at all. The common terms used then were either *industrial music* or *experimental music*. Very deep into the night, after 2am, you could hear artists like Asmus Tiechens, Achim Wollscheid, John Duncan or groups like Throbbing Gristle, Psychic TV, Zoviet France or Nurse With Wound. This was stuff that turned your head inside out, a collage of deconstructed music mixed with atonal sounds without rhythm or harmony that simply did not sound like anything else. For me this unknowing, this mystery behind the music of not knowing how or why it was produced, is one of my biggest inspirations. It showed there were undefined territories in music. These new sounds coming through the radio late in the night started to reverse the role of music for me. No longer was music something of a product of consumption to enhance your social life or play into your personal emotions as if it is merely an accessory, like a *soundtrack to life*. Music became a portal, a space to enter into, an active medium of communication and it’s language could be understood through the abstraction of it’s elements into sound.

Sound and space

It would take another 5 years before I would begin to work on my own forms of music. In the mean time I went off to study another passion of mine, the perception of space in the human environment, what most people call architecture. Throughout my youth I remember



Point+Periphery. Sound Performance, December 2005
John Grzinich, Seth Nehil and Hitoshi Kojō
Rajatila gallery, Tampere Finland

being interested in ways that people can shape their environment, particularly in constructive ways, like how architecture functions both on a localized scale of furniture and houses and on the macro level of cities and interconnecting transportation systems. However my interest in architecture as a profession waned, in light of the difficulty to actually realize ideas. On the other hand my curiosity in musical experimentation continued to grow. My years of listening to anything and everything possible was more than an interest in music per se, listening became an understanding in how the ear functions as a “lens” for spatial perception, to mirror the physical world in the mind. Through perception, the inner world can be shaped by sound. To play with this, means not only to create a kind of music but generate a form of meaning to how a person can react or respond to what they hear. Sound is an active medium, that is, it is energy moving through space (as waves through air). In this way space is also dynamic. It is architecture but with social meaning, a fluid form of content. The art of affecting these parameters using sound is for me one way to look at sound art. Through a long process of artistic experimentation I would come to see how spatial organization and social relations changed from the (permanent) physicality of architecture to the (temporal) ephemerality of sound.

from passive listening to active creation

I would describe my earliest experiments with sound as “playful”. Like “punks” I worked with others to carry out simple activities of sound creation. This meant using cassette multi-track recorders and reel-to-reel tape machines to record and manipulate sounds. From my constructive approach I built instruments, large guitars that used different gauges of piano wire. These self-made instruments were played in a specific way, not using anything like a musical notation system, but an intuitive means of getting the “right” kind of sound to come out. These were primarily drone instruments but to this other kinds of recorded sounds were added. This work was not done in isolation, but more often through collaborations.¹ My early relationships to others experimenting with sound grew strong through our collective motivation to understand and try to develop our artistic motives. We often stopped to question just what was it we were doing? With our primitive instruments and sounding objects we also made site-specific improvisation sessions in acoustic spaces. We looked for and played in tunnels, open fields, quiet rooms, small studios, neighborhoods during the day and through the night. Time and space were not a limitation but a factor to always be considered and integrated into the process. These ideas of the totality of sound extended even into the

¹ mnortham, Seth Nehil, Olivia Block, Daniel Plunkett from ND Magazine and others.

social realm. I developed with Seth Nehil different models of group interactions for both generating sound and expressing actions using sound. The earliest of these started with Seth's "party horn orchestra" in which a small group of people marched around with small horns fitted with large paper cones and blew as loud as possible. The result was a dense sonic weapon that nobody could ignore. We recorded some of the horn sessions but could never find a way to integrate the noise into a composition until one day, years later I would play Seth a recording of an anti-Milosevic demonstration a friend of mine had made in Belgrade. The only noise compatible to our horns was a real world noise of a thousand car horns shouting in a unified social opposition.² There were more subtle group actions involving sounds from dried beans, humming, glass bowls and other objects. These experiments were not only designed to generate sound but were an attempt for people to find a resonance with each other through sound and through listening. I would later come to call this an exercise or a "resonance ensemble". If we decided to work with specific ideas and concepts about sound the outcome was a self-organised performance. This may have looked more like a traditional performance with stage and audience but experimentation would remain the key motivation in what we presented.

Technology

Although I have been writing a lot about theory and ideas behind sound art, there is of course the other side of making things concrete. The techniques employed to record, process and compose sound also involves a close relationship of the author to the technology he uses.³ The means of doing this were passed on to us through established forms of technology. In the beginning, we used what devices were available to us; cassette players and multi-track recorders, simple microphones, guitar effects pedals and eventually we would use the digital equivalents (DAT, ADAT, DSP Processors) if we could afford to rent them. While this approach seemed humble at the time we would eventually be able to see our position of using such technology in retrospect to the history. That is, the technologies we used (not so long before us), were once the exclusive domains of state and commercial radio. The important difference was, that we ourselves did not initially know that legacy. However much we were working on the outside of the established traditions, it gave us a certain amount of freedom to develop our own ideas and methods of practice. Since there were few rules, we were not reacting against anything but working towards our own ability to understand sound in all its forms. This meant that the exploration of sound ran in parallel to the exploration of technologies behind it. The importance for me is that sound art, as a perceptual art, is about intuitive ways of researching and expressing your ideas. So understanding effects pedals, DSP units (Digital Signal Processing) or plug-ins first means hearing the ways these processes affect the sound, then deciding whether or not they are necessary. This trial and error approach works as long as the technology is not a limiting factor, that is, you have a general understanding of how to use it. The recent transition between analogue and digital technologies is a good

2 Heard on the composition *The Distant Edge* on the jgrzinich/ Seth Nehil CD *Confluence* on Intransitive Recordings, 2002)

3 Douglas Kahn has noted how "...both sound and listening have been and continue to be transformed through the cultural elaboration of technology. In fact, I work under the assumption that the history of the arts using auditive technologies, including those in concert with vision, constitute a large and rarely acknowledged portion of the history of the media arts." *Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts*, p.15



The author recording on Saana in Lapland, summer 2005

illustration here. I learned to record, process and layer sounds primarily on analogue equipment. Changing the pitch of a sound meant physically changing the speed of tape that moved across the play head of the machine. Creating an 'echo' meant aligning two tape recorders and determining the distance between them to determine how long the signal was delayed. Most of these processes also happened in real-time. Each layer recorded and bounced down on a multi-track machine lasted exactly as long as the original which meant the process of composing never happened very quickly. Now with the development of digital technology I see that most of the ways of treating and affecting sound remain the same, but the time in which the processing takes is greatly compressed. I personally see that my own ways of working with sound are still rooted in the analogue world, and while tools like portable computer offers the ability to work anywhere, I still find the need to keep a balance with the physical world. The effect sound has in a particular space is stronger for me if recorded in an actual space rather than modeled by reverb. Objects and materials found or constructed make up the base for much of my work so I rarely use synthesised sounds. Nature is my main inspiration.

Maaheli - Sound of the earth

All objects have acoustic properties. Stones, sticks, grass, metal pieces, jars, bottles, wires and cans all contain sonic potential. These objects may be rubbed, dropped, scraped, crushed, dragged or burned and the results will all sound different. If you start to combine objects and different ways of acoustically treating them, the combinations become infinite. Add to this that these actions can occur in any range of spaces, from small rooms to large churches to open forests and



Site and sound: making recordings in specific locations using what is found. Contact microphones (piezo transducers) pick up internal vibrations from various materials. This is one alternative to open-air microphone recording.

the very essence of the sounds will be altered dramatically. The art for me, in using objects as sound material, has several aspects. One part is to develop a structure for creating and combining the use of sound-objects, that is, how, where and why to play them (and maybe record them). Another part is to develop a “language” for expressing the sound that is generated. This could be simple process of changing the sound or take on more complex forms such as a composition, performance or installation. I use the word language because of its connotation to listening, much in the way words are like the material objects I just described, and contain a certain potential until they are assembled and spoken in verbal form. The result is what we hear. I would hesitate to say there are clear meanings expressable through sound, mainly because we are often left without words to describe what we hear. So what might be the intention of the sound artist? My work with sound has evolved from playful curiosity into several more focused directions. Here I attempt to outline these directions as sketches of my own experience:

Sound metaphor: Structure in sound composition can viewed as structure of the environment or a structure of time. Long continuous drones be they tonal or not can extend onward toward a horizon. The sounds can remain even as an open prairie or shift upwards as hills or mountains. Events occur on different but parallel time scales. Geologic time approaches the infinite, beyond our perception. Human time occurs in cycles; hours, minutes, seconds. Microscopic time is experienced from the insect down to the cellular. Sound events happen within these time frames as molecular noise or human rhythm, as complex orders of nature or regulated orders of machines. The sound metaphor is written as a story or conducted as a performance.

Sound association: We dream in associations, through fragments in an immaterial world. Collected experience falls into pools of emotion or flows of rational direction. We hear something that sounds like this or reminds us of that; place, feeling, person, or situation. Memory fuels desire or induces fear, composed sound can trigger both or neither. A phonographic excursion, quest to capture sounds, can be a search for a lost place or an adventure to discover the new. Music keeps us on familiar paths while noise can drive us away. Sound



association can be intentional or inspired by mistakes; glitches in technology, emotional manipulation, cheap entertainment or conceptual challenges. Sound association can be samples of a political speech or soundtrack effects for a film.

Sound relation: Sound travels through air, water and physical materials or as signals through wires and electronic circuits. The sound artist uses devices to capture sounds from the air (microphones) or extract vibrations from solids (contact microphones) and record the results on devices (tape, disc, drive) or process the sound (computer). At any point the sound may be released in a closed atmosphere (headphones) or an open space (speakers). The quality of the sound can be affected by or determined by all these factors at any point in the process. The artist decides whether to take the path of high or low fidelity, to preserve the sound signals or to filter, transform or degrade them. Types of signals can range from acoustic noise to synthesized forms of pure harmonic frequencies. Amplifiers and speakers guide the accuracy of reproduced sounds and can vary in number and location; one (mono), two (stereo), five (surround) or more (multi-channel array). We relate to sound as it travels, as a kind of feedback, be it internal (personal) or external (audience) and can operate in open (public) or closed (private) feedback systems. The factors that make up the complex web of sound relations all affect the signals between creator and listener.

John Grzinich



A Culture of Sound at MoKS

The first section of the Helikunst eri was dedicated to giving an overview of many theoretical considerations within the field sound art. This section illustrates more practical outcomes and is aimed at broadening the use of sound in both artistic and educational contexts. MoKS is a small cultural center in southeast Estonia which is gaining a reputation for its diverse range of artistic activities related to its position in a rural context. Over that past several years MoKS has hosted a number of sound artists from around the world. This has led to an informal development of an artistic culture dedicated to sound that includes projects, residencies, workshops and symposia.

Paulo Raposo (Portugal – PTM, MoKS AIR)



I distinctively remember the bewitching sound of the wind blowing through the 'pilliroog' and the sound of snow falling in the course of the night. Coming from the south of Europe, I was mesmerized by how the white austerity of snow transforms the landscape profoundly but also transforms our own perception of the place. Like in a desert of sand, snow, as it falls, slowly eliminates narrative element there might be in the landscape, to give us the heart of the place. My interest, was to collaborate with other artists and discuss issues that are at the core of our common activities and approaches. I also explored what lies under and breathes in the place itself, its resonant quality in a conceptual level, despite minor, intrusive or daily occurrences. This was not just to provide a descriptive frame, somehow instrumental for the visitors pre-determined lens, but rather to achieve a compulsory level of identification where ideas and actions emerge in a way inseparable from the flow of surrounding circumstances. So, rather than accepting the surface signs, I sat down in the border of the lake and waited... listening.

Pushing the Medium

October 15-22, 2004

(Heli+Visioon in Estonian)

Pushing the Medium was an international meeting of sound and video artists brought together for a one week symposium in Tartu and Mooste. The event includes a series of Performances, Lectures and Workshops for the artists and the public. This one week event had a wide agenda and therefore a set of different goals in mind.

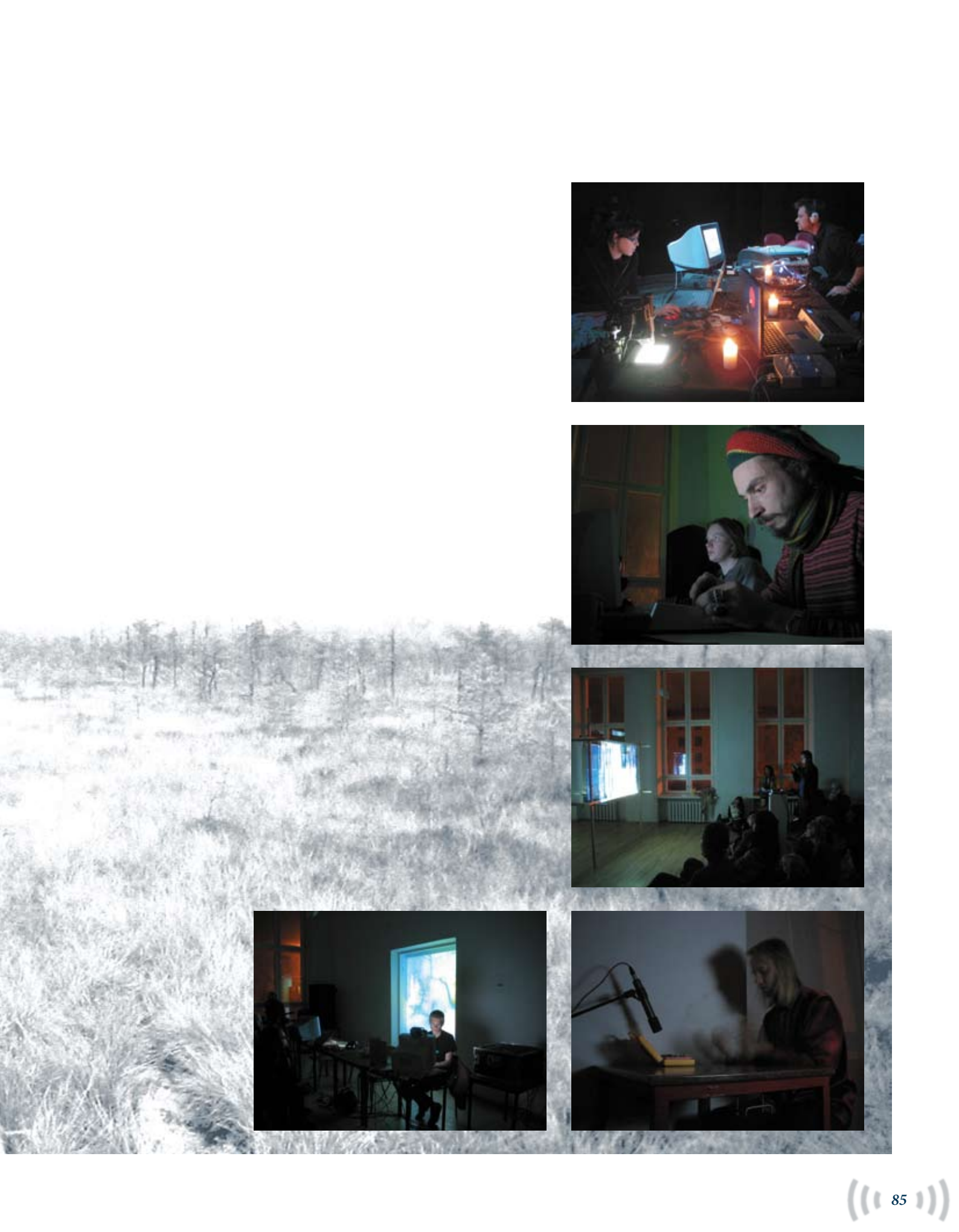
1. Education - opening of a medium. While Video Art has achieved a general acceptance in both educational institutions and exhibition spaces, the field of Sound Art remains somewhat marginalized and/or obscured from public attention. The combination of both Sound and Video Art was to open up the relationship of the two and introduce these disciplines to a wider audience by expressing and discussing the work of high quality contemporary practitioners (the artists).

2. To give the opportunity for an international group of artists to visit, exchange ideas and show their work in Estonia. While there are a number of important festivals dedicated to new electronic media, most are representational in nature, and are limited in their scope for allowing participants to structure and direct the event themselves.

Participants included: Derek Holzer (US/EU), Sara Kolster (NL), Antonio Della Marina (ITA), John Grzinich (US/EST), Paulo Raposo (PT), Taavi Tulev (Estonia), audums (Kiril Lomunov, Janis Bikis, Maxims Shentelevs, LV), Ki wa (EST), Alt Ctrl Del (Kurt Korthals, US/DE)

The project was developed and coordinated by: John Grzinich, Evelyn Mürsepp and Maarin Ektermann







suveFLUX

Loren Chasse

On the evening of June 19th, 4 sound artists came together for a unique type of performance in south Estonia at the Sõmerpalu Mansion. The event was called suveFLUX, as a note to mark the passage of spring into summer. The artists were Loren Chasse, Hitoshi Kojo, Michael Northam and John Grzinich. The Sõmerpalu Mansion was chosen because of the special acoustic properties of its main concert space and the natural beauty of its surroundings. The artists were interested in using both acoustic and amplified sounds from a variety of instruments and objects.

suveFLUX was an experimental sound event that combined elements of music, visual art and performance. The concept originated when Michael Northam, three months earlier, organized vernalFLUX in Geneva Switzerland. The idea was to bring together several sound artists and experimental musicians for a one night performance event. Rather than have each artist present their own work in a linear order, the performances are allowed the artists to mix, cross over and freely develop the sounds and performance together, depending on their own feeling and will. From the beginning the four artists worked together as a spontaneous group and carried on this way through the evening.

The original plan was to allow 12 hours for the complete event, from 21:00 to 9:00 the next morning. The actual duration of the sound performance lasted 6 hours. Also, for suveFLUX the traditional borders between audience and performers were abandoned. The audience was asked to bring mattresses and sleeping bags so they could “camp out” in the middle of the performance. The resulting event was full of dynamic energy that constantly shifted between the performers, their objects, the audience and the whole concert room of the Sõmerpalu mansion.





Hitoshi Kojo

*Michael Northam (US/Europa – MoKS AIR,
PostsovkhoZ 4 ja PostsovkhoZ 5)*

One memorable moment was an extended experience of emptiness in an abandoned house, a place I found after a feeling of being totally alone and reaching a peak of frustration. I often walk randomly and this time found myself in old ruins, where the silence was so deep that the light of the sun rang in my ears. Birds flew around me as if I was not there. Such silence is like a cleaning of the soul. it echos in the most ancient of places. The most important work with sound in estonia was the work I did alone, or in rare and exceptional cases with others. It was work with uncontrollable substances... with feedback and resonace in decaying materials. Therein I found some momentary passages to create and further increase my ability to work seamlessly with my equipment.

The experience in Estonia further asserted my growing need to work in synchronicity with emotional states and not to pretend that it might be otherwise. Situations can always present clear paths, not as some mechanical/obligatory practice, but that the work itself comes from agreeable situations where the act of creating a work with sound arises from a deeper personal calling.





Ici-Même

Les Concerts de Sons de Ville

"City Sound Concerts" is on the one hand very delicate, but on the other hand very simple and non-pretentious performance that takes place within the public city space. Direct participation is possible for the small group varying from 1-30 people. Participants are asked for the course of the performance (1-1 1/2 hour) to close their eyes and rely on the performers (ie. members of Ici-Même group). After what performers are taking close-eyed participants to the walk around the public city space. The walk is carefully planned beforehand by the members of the group, concrete cityspace points and possibility of chance is considered, accidentally occurring incidents and personality of the "walked one" is kept in mind by the organisers. Somewhere in the middle of the walk, the participants are comfortably seated to the benches, soft blankets are wrapped around them and their listening organs, deeply focused on close-eyed listening are "separated" from the outside world with setting the sound protecting headphones. After that the members of the group start intensive sound creation themselves, besides already there existing city sounds- sometimes whispering by the seated ones, sometimes screaming in the distance, sometimes playing prerecorded sounds from the dictaphones, sometimes spreading soundfrequencies over the seated ones from the portable speakers. "City Sound Concerts" opens the way to unknown labyrinths both in inner and outerspace, both inside and outside you. Due that one sense is inhibited, the other senses take over the functions of getting information from the outer world, you are going to hear, to smell, feel the surface you are walking, feel the play of light in the skin of your eyelids and thousands of other new sense combinations what occur thanks to the combination of these senses.

- Evelyn Müürsepp

Ici-Même (Grenoble, France) debuted in 1993 as a poly morphous collective bringing together anywhere from three to thirty people depending on the project and how it intersects with different artistic practices (dance, acting, performance, film, mixed media, field sociology, writing, architecture...). According to the people we meet, the projects we follow, the collective most specifically pays attention to the modes of diffusion of the living arts. This is the space of the "artistic act" and the conception of culture in an ever-changing context. A Mobile Laboratory: Our accessories are often found materials and our scenography is built on walking. Coming and going for us is an opportunity to confront the social realities and specific environments. Our range of activities is vast: inviting, being invited, using, disappearing, sneaking into places, appropriation, dwelling here and there, conversing with people... Ici-Même's research field takes into account demographic ebbs and flows, of goods and services, geography, urban folds and paradoxical spaces, seasons, the news... Conversation for us has become a material to be reckoned with, a plastic form on its own, as sounds, images, objects or gestures are. Conversation is also language, different levels of speech that constitute the polymorphous memory of the present. Forms emerge from this slow day to day motion, as 'City Sound Concerts', 'Urban Walks', or 'Conversation Agencies' for example.

- Ici-Même

This configuration of Ici-Même to land in Estonia was:
Corinne Pontier, Samuel Ripault, Tomas Bozzato, Anne-Laure Pigache,
Cecile Cuney.



I asked two members of Ici-Même to briefly reflect on their experiences in developing the “City Sounds Concerts” project and carrying it out in Tartu.

Corinne Pontier: Well the City Sound Concerts idea grew out of a more general work and general way to think about how we can talk about all the experiences we made in the past, talking about the city and the way to go through the city and the way to be in the city. We looked at many experiences in several directions and through this the sounds slowly became part our activities with the senses. So this performance came really from all our other previous experiences. It all came little by little, from a very synesthetic point of view talking about the city.

John Grzinich: So the sound is a result in a way or the kind of step in the process of experiencing the city and interventions or actions in the city.

CP: Yes.

JG: But why sound, how did that come?

CP: There are several reasons. Its perhaps the visual always comes first. We forget to listen to the sounds. All is done for the visual but not for sound. First perhaps we were looking for the experience of how we can share something and how to talk about travel without only making story. We are looking for the situation where we can talk about travel in the city and the sharing of experience.

Anne-Laure Pigache: ...and without being narrative.

CP: Ja, and with living something together, in an active situation. Not- you sit down and I make you a concert, no- we were looking for something more active. We tried a lot of things but the idea of sharing was in the center of the situation. So we had to negotiate something to talk and say, “we are going to try something together, do you agree?” It came from this way to thinking.

JG: So if you are talking about this experience you do together with the person, you know, how you interact, then you are also saying that these concepts develop with people in the city?

A-LP: Corinne was talking about the negotiation, when we are preparing the performance, when we arrive in the city we have to take time to negotiate with the shopkeeper, or with the people in the streets. We just explain that we are walking with people just to hear the sound of their activities. This is the negotiation because they might realize that, “Oh yes, my activities produce sounds that could be heard by others”.

JG: So my main question is about this interaction with the city. You obviously have a different experience in every place. I know this is also looking at cultural phenomenon, but if you could mainly think about how the people here in Tartu reacted to your different requests and also the experiences of the participants. Are there some things you really noticed here?

CP: We have a strategic way to try things. For instance we always try the experiences on ourselves. We start by walking with closed eyes, with a guide. She guides me and it's the way to feel the reactions in this exact situation. This is a new situation really. When we arrived we didn't know

anything about Estonian people, and we were afraid. We were thinking, “Oh, Tartu, it's absolutely not possible here... how? Who are we?, doing that and sitting down here, even moving the benches... how can we manage? are we allowed to do that? all these questions are there.

A-LP: It's like surfing the situation...

CP: Will people here say “no” or “yes”? Perhaps its better not to ask and just to try something. I do it... what happens? Oh its good, we can do it a little bit at a time. Its really a kind of surfing.

JG: Were there any surprises?

A-LP: So yes, the reaction of the others... It is hard to say because maybe it's how we interpret something. For example, at the beginning it was a bit strange, even just to walk in the street and you smile to people because you do not understand anything... even in the shop we are used to the talkative French way, and here, nothing, no “hallo!”

CP: In Budapest, people wanted more to touch us after the performance. They need to touch the hands of the guides. They need to be sure its this guide, who took care of them. Here it was not so much, there was a more global way to accept the idea. A lot of people were asking here: how did you get this [project] idea? It was something new here I think.

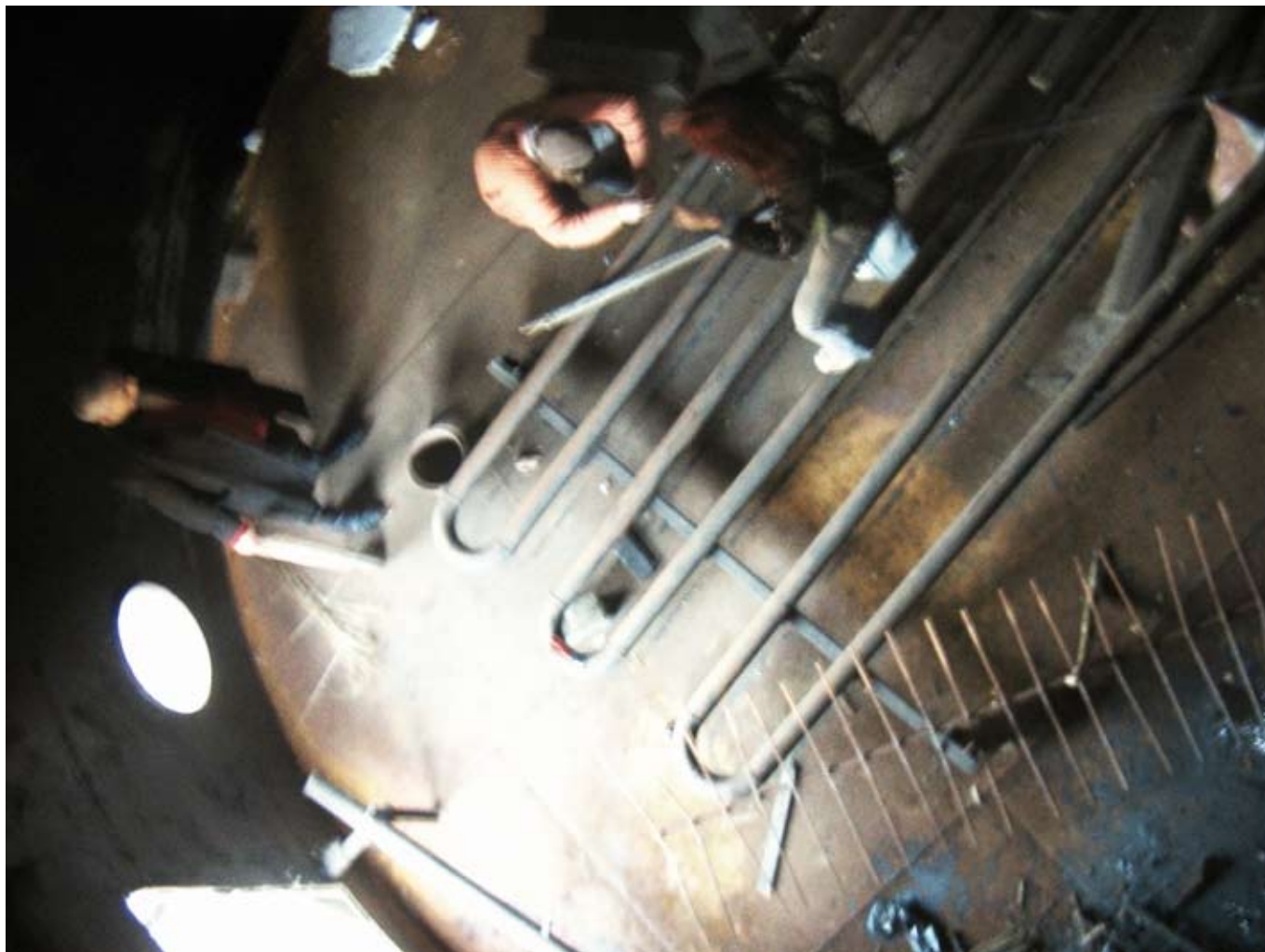
Laughing...

A-LP: There was the possibility for me to go really close normal people in the street because people kept doing what they were doing. That it's OK, whatever you want to do. It's no problem.

CP: I also found something within the city space, but only after a few days of exploration. In Tartu you have to go inside the buildings, or rather that some spaces attract you because they have an interior life. There are the shopping spaces that you don't notice so much from the street like the Kaubamaja or the small spaces that are like streets inside the buildings. Or there were some unusual spaces like the café across from Y-Gallery where there seems to be three shops without any clear border between. I liked this after I discovered it. This became important for guiding people, to take them in and out of the different spaces where you notice the real changes in the city sounds.

Mooste, April 28, 2006





Working in the sonic spaces of Mooste

Two Sound Workshops for youth

In the autumn of 2005 MokS held two educational workshops for youth focusing on sound. The aim was to set up a learning environment in which to conduct listening exercises and ways to generate, manipulate, compose and perform with sound. The first workshop was held at MoKS in Mooste in cooperation with Loovkeskus and was conducted by Giancarlo Toniutti. The second workshop was held at the Tartu Lastekunstikool and was conducted by John Grzinich and Seth Nehil.

1.

Giancarlo Toniutti lives in Udine Italy and works as an independent researcher and composer. He studied at Venice conservatory from 1982-1985 (electronic music course) with Alvise Vidolin. Since then he has published several works on LP and CD (epigènesi, Tahta Tarla, *KO/USK-) along with several essays on different subjects (from music and acoustics to anthropology and linguistics), as well as live-installations and lectures.



What do you feel is the importance of working with young people to increase their awareness and understanding about sound?

I think that there is always a moment in life when things get to a certain stage, where you think they assume a prominent role. Usually this moment comes quite soon. Around 12/15 years I think. It is during this period that people tend to fix their attitudes and inclinations. Because of this, young people tend to be quite affectable by any occurrence. The learning model is typically viewed as shaping, but for me, awareness is one of the main focal points. So giving young people an open world is a way to let them see what's interesting, to let them observe reality through all the possible lenses available to human mind. As much as this is chance it also becomes an opportunity.

How did you structure the workshop in Mooste? What were your intentions?

It is in this sense of open possibilities that I approached my workshop in Mooste. I had it clear in my mind that people might know very little or nothing about different ways of working with sound or even less about listening to sound structures. I tried to give the basic forms of what the experimental music is about, but trying to avoid the simple didacticism. I tried to come directly to the point, with examples to listen to. After such an "quick" background, my idea was to let them put their hands into sounds for what sounds are: phenomena, either natural or man-made (or man-induced...). In this sense I wanted and saw that the point for them is to be exploratory. We as humans tend to explore reality to get knowledge and from this comes a better awareness of things. Young people do this from the very start and they do that with a sense of pleasant uselessness, with a sense of here and now. Through this sense of low-level "projects", they want to be lightly conducted, and so I adopted this form of "weak symmetries" between them and myself. So in this way it can always be guided by their direction, but through my intentions.

Did you find anything useful or interesting in the workshop that relates to your personal interest in sound?

I re-discovered my own basic approaching to sound. I didn't intend to go any further than my "usual" things, because I didn't want to "spoil" their attitudes for my own sake. And through this coming back to basics, I re-discovered a form of relation between sound and myself that kind of informed all my work. It's being becomes a step in awareness itself. I cannot say that I can now be able to do more than I did before the workshop, but certainly I can say that what form I poured into this experience came back molded.

How did the young people react to your talks and exercises? Were you surprised by what they did, with the making of sound objects for example?

It's been a bit difficult to fully understand reactions by these young people. It seemed they were shy, or rather unexpressive (or I was frightening them?)... But I have seen more from actions than words, that they seemed interested to learn, to put themselves into a new territory and follow a path, somehow. They were smart in making observations and moving from there into other points. I was surprised by their attention even when they seemed to not express it. They really put their intentions to the limits by what they did and following most of my simple rules they were apt to create and work on the materials both in making the sound objects and using them. It's very very interesting to see young people try to reach points within the inevitable rules and project their own self into that with a quite coherent spirit, I would say..

Looking back...



Short talk before making field recordings



Simple instrument construction and testing



Collection of sound objects

Photos: Evelyn Mürsepp



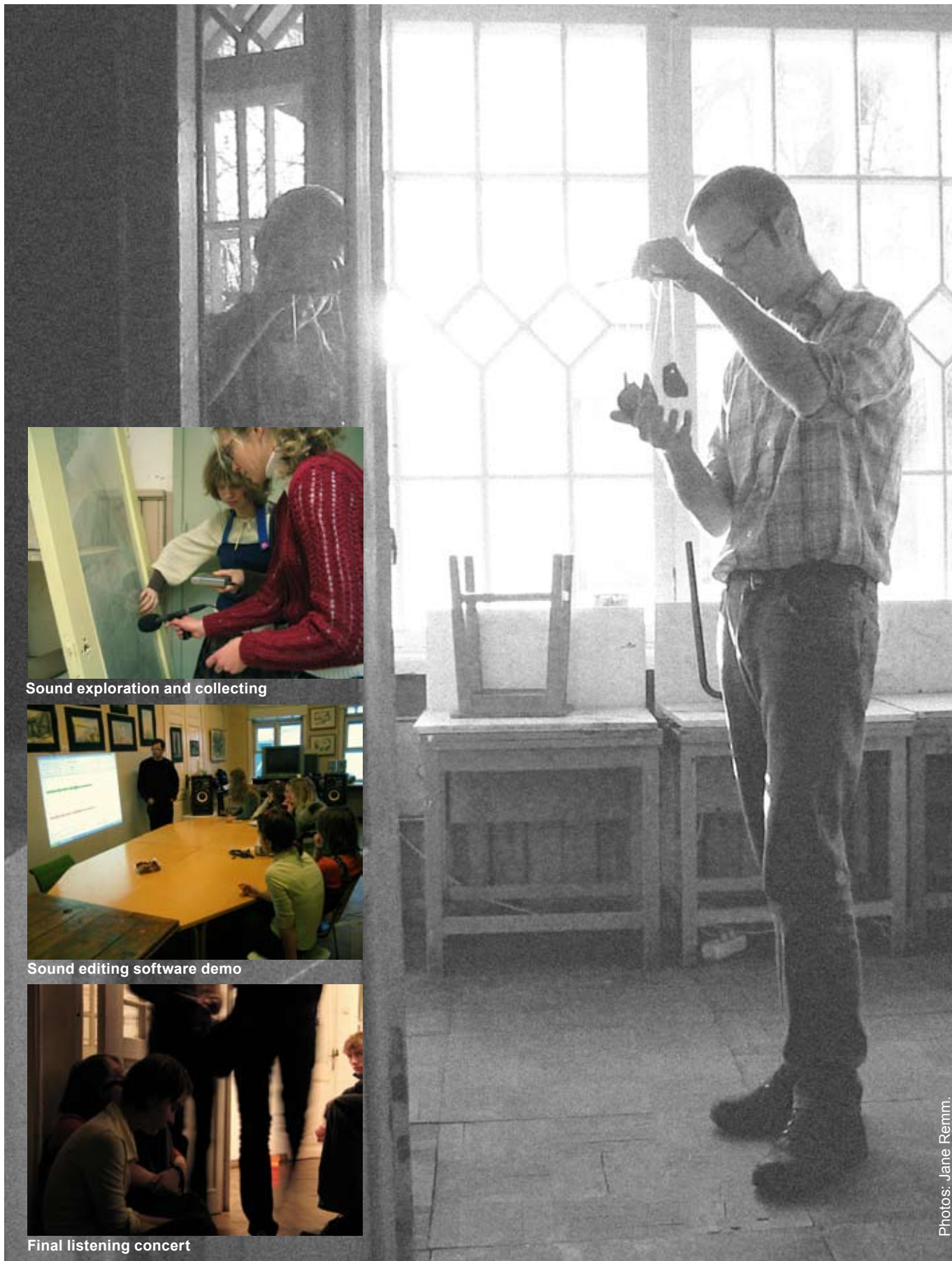
Listening exercises: collective sound-making with simple objects

2.

Seth Nehil and John Grzinich have made sound-based artistic collaborations since the early 1990s. They have released an number of CDs together (Confluence, Stria -2002), as well as develop performance and installation sound works. Nehil recently received a masters degree in Sound from Bard College. John Grzinich lives and works in Estonia.

With this workshop about sound the direction we gave was toward an increased attention to listening. The first step in working with sound as an artistic medium is to open the ears. This hopefully leads to a deeper and more careful interaction with the world at large. It places the body into a fuller, broader and more localized space. It can lead the ear to seek out micro-environments (inside small objects or unlikely spaces) and to reach out towards large soundscapes (far away or quietly pervasive sounds). So, before we even came to ideas of passive analysis, of capturing sound through recordings and creating compositions, we had see benefit of attention to hearing the world around us in the widest possible sense. Afterwards, devices like the microphone can help lead to paths of discovery, because of its sensitivity and the new perspective it gives to once-familiar places. On the other hand, it was also our hope that working with sound can free the expressive spontaneity of young people by loosening their voices through group exercises, encouraging their curiosity to hear all kinds of spaces, to enter previously unexplored rooms or alleys to test their resonances, and picking up and testing all kinds of materials to find their sound-

making potentials. So the basic structure of the workshop (over 3 days), was to: 1) to provide a very basic history of sound and music experimentation in the 20th century, 2) to introduce basic ideas of spatial acoustics such as distance, reverberation and resonance 3) to show the potential of recording and editing technology and to allow a beginning exploration of those tools in the creation of short team-created sound compositions. It was refreshing to see the eagerness and curiosity with which these young people approached using sound recording tools like the microphone and mini-disc recorder. There was a value in thier raw urge to explore and hearthings in a way they were not used to. Seeing that many of the activities and understanding of sound experimentation came naturally helped us to loosen some notions of sound art as being a “fringe” activity. In the end, it was most surprising to see the ease and intuition the students brought to working with sound-editing software. They very quickly mastered the basic techniques of editing and moved on to questions of layering and sound-on-sound interaction. This allowed a restrained approach to their compositions, allowing them to remain abstract (without the introduction of rhythm or melody) and also allowing moments of silence and pause which brought a dramatic force to the flow of their pieces. Although the time was limited, the students were able to assemble a series of 5 minute pieces that we later played simultaneously in a separate gallery space. Parents and friends were then invited for a listening style “concert”, which was one of many possible ways to show the outcome of the workshop.



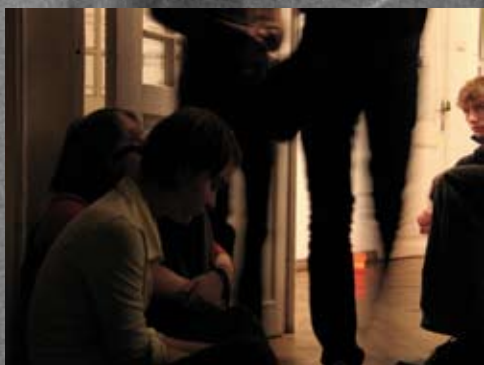
Photos: Jane Remm.



Sound exploration and collecting



Sound editing software demo



Final listening concert



Track 01
03:16

Art Sounds of the Estonian Wilderness, winter 2006

Sounds from the art festival "Kaamos 006", in Hellenurme village, Looga farm



Track 02
03:22

copperless in saaropera – jgrzinich + mnortham, Hitoshi Kojo

Spontaneous recording in an abandoned pumping station on the Peipsi Lake, spring 2005



Track 03
07:48

Forage – mnortham + Tero Naulha, Lars Larson

Composed by mnortham from sounds collected during the Forage project - PostsovkhoZ 4, Mooste 2004

Lars Larson



Track 04
02:12

jgrzinich - end of an age

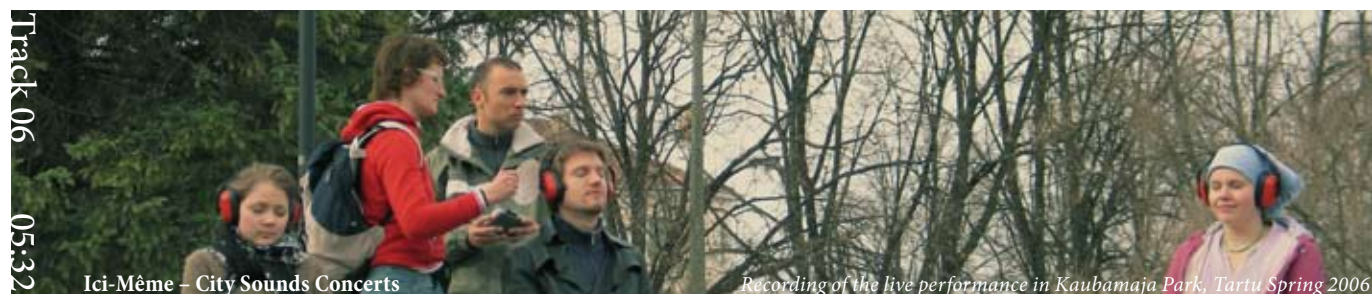
Site specific sound action recorded on old metal oil tanks near Põlva, summer 2005



Track 05
06:27

Kiwa – Live, Heli+Visioon

Recorded during the second concert evening of the symposium at Tartu Artist Union Gallery, Autumn 2004



Track 06
05:32

Ici-Même – City Sounds Concerts

Recording of the live performance in Kaubamaja Park, Tartu Spring 2006



Track 07
07:25

Ctrl Alt Dlt – Live, Heli+Visioon

Recorded during the second concert evening of the symposium at Tartu Artist Union Gallery, Autumn 2004



Track 08
02:11

Maxims Shentelevs – Ant Hill field recording

Contact microphone recording of an ant hill near Mooste made during PostsovkhoZ 4

Maxims Shentelevs



Track 09
03:25

Sound Workshop for Youth

Recording of the final sound installation from the workshop in the Gallery of the Tartu Childrens Art School, Winter 2005.
Pieces were played simultaneously on 4 CD players from 4 pairs of composers: Merili Sulg-Leelo Moor, Liina Lepik-Riin Kivisild, Kelli Somelar-Piret Karrol, Seth Nehil-John Grzinich.



Track 10
07:35

jgrzinich – manual fracture

Sound composition made from recordings collected in 2005 in Mooste and during a residency in Loviisa Finland with Hitoshi Kojo and Seth Nehil.



Track 11
04:30

..murmer. – Field recordings from Mooste

A mix of 3 recordings made by Patrick McGinley during his residency at MoKS in Spring 2006

Patrick McGinley



Track 12
15:06

suviFLUX - remix

Four sound artists took part in suviFLUX, a 6 hour sound performance at the Sõmerpalu mansion in south Estonia in June of 2005: mnortham, Loren Chasse, Hitoshi Kojo and jgrzinich. This is a 15 minute remix by Hitoshi Kojo made from a recording of the full event.



Derek Holzer
(US/Europa – PostsovkhoZ 4, PTM)

One experience stays with me the most: the Sound+Vision concert at Sadamateater in Tartu. I invited the audience to come down from the colosseum-style seating above the theater stage and take a closer look at what we were doing. It seemed as if they had been waiting all night for someone to invite them down, because almost the entire audience crowded around us while we performed. Sara wasn't ready for that at all, and had a hard time keeping focus on the visuals she was projecting. But for Max and I it worked very well, and demystified in some small way the practice of computer-based music for the people who came to investigate what we were actually doing.

In Estonia I was engaged in the collection of sounds from the environment, with the environment being defined as any natural, social or physical situation surrounding me. I sampled the resonances of old oil tanks, recorded traditional Seto folk songs, playing with branches and leaves in the forest, took microphones for walks in the rain and improvised with broken accordions and farm equipment in the middle of the night. Each of these acts constituted a sonic investigation of my surroundings whose aim was to extract "microphonic" resonances of place, and from these small sounds reconstruct the location in the context of previous investigations I have made in Latvia, Brasil and several other locations.

Antonio Della Marina
(Italy, MoKS AIR, PTM)

Well, for me it was a real turning point. I took part in Heli+Visioon during which I met and got to know other international sound artists. After Two years now I am very happy to be still in touch with some of them, organizing events, coordinating contacts, sharing information, resources and links between us. The most direct consequence of this small network is the second and the third edition of the symposium which will take place during fall 2006 in Portugal and then here in Italy. Also during my residency at MoKS I had the opportunity to learn about Estonian culture, traditions, and recent developments where I could see the influences of the globalization over a rural-based land... I remember some very good discussions focused on those subjects.

Again the main influence has to do with the people I met there, to know different methodologies, tools, possibilities, existing projects in a worldwide scale. All this enriched my way of working considerably. When you work with sound, I mean sound as a matter, you need to know how to process it, how to shape it, how to use it to achieve certain effects. But you also need to feel the direction that the sound itself follows in our culture. There is a strong active movement in sound art nowadays. I could say that it is due to sound itself - or the use we make of the sound - that sometimes carries us somewhere new. So to me it is very important to talk about it and listen to it in a collaborative way. During the symposium the use of talking about our own work helped me (and still helps me) to better understand and follow my process in making music.



Derek Holzer and Maxims Shentelevs at PostsovkhoZ 4

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