

Original Essay from the *jgrzinich* CD 'Intimations' (2004)

Intimations

1. kinetic sense	12:42
2. sinking tides	15:50
3. sun in hand, stone in water	19:00
4. fluid itinerancy	8:32

Intimations of history

A distinct theme or subject will not be set on a table, only the threads that connect them. The exception is a single point; the composer. What lies in the work are stories. Many stories are behind projects, yet it is a rarity for them to be heard by the listener. What is heard are soundscapes, the outcome, with their various forms and movements woven into time. Who created what you hear and why may remain a mystery. Is it intentional? Is sound composed of life? Where are the parallels between life and the craft of composition? These are questions to be asked before or even after public release. Some answers have come through reflections in writing. The time and the space under which these pieces were recorded and produced varied. The music is not entirely rational or pure, nor were the circumstances of how it was produced. Some analogies to alchemical processes are embedded in the sounds. An attempt to find something buried within the psyche. A search for a 'ground' in places traveled. The stories and the work need to tell something about life, about the composer. The compositions find their own life in the minds of the listener. A step towards

telling these stories can be a statement. Is the art of storytelling endangered? Not tales or fables per se, but storytelling as an essential part of living history where oral traditions pass on meaningful traditions. Living history competes with recorded history. The media takes on the mediators. Electronic media has its mass hypnotic effects leading to distortions and sensory isolation. There are distinct separations between living and recorded history, but reality melts them together. If these two are to coexist can a reasonable relationship be established? The electronic part, embedded in our lives, can't exist without the other more meaningful substance. This dual force extends deeply into the intensified world of commodity where culture and memory are rationalized as public and private property. Is the release of another CD just a drop into the vast ocean of the mediasphere? It may seek its place in the character of the future listener, yet there is a need to elaborate on the stories. As this music diverges from more accepted or established cultural domains so might the ideas and methods that produce it. For what gets written here, meaning stems from tangential thoughts analyzing aspects of the creative process. It means developing a language for translating material objects into compositional structure. It means translating cultural values through a personal medium. It means allowing time to transcribe intimate reflections on geographic metaphors into a code for the listener. It means listening to intimations of a personal history, traces and destinations to come.

Intimations of substance

From the beginning to the end the source material ranges from electronic to acoustic recordings. A working interest in both types of sonic elements continues to develop an understanding of them and their relation to each other. Thoughts about the immaterial nature of electronic sounds vs. the material nature of acoustically produced sounds have come up before. Electronic sound emanates from within a device that lives from electricity, its essence resembles the spirit of a body - we run on electrical impulses. Wires connect devices as devices are wired within. When coupled with physical "translation" devices, the electrical language of signals becomes sound. A process emanates from an internal presence. The physical element of sound heard in the voices of objects. Water folds in on itself and rolls onto a shore of polished stones then retreats; a branch blows in the wind against a metal railing causing a delicate 'random' pattern of metallic reverberations. We hear this. An essential element 'air', the medium of sound, lies somewhere in the spectrum, between electronic and acoustic elements acting as a bond for the range of sources. Air is not only the prime means of how we hear but composes the breath. It is the atmosphere that surrounds, compressing our bodies under its weight and facilitates life between animal and vegetal worlds. Here 'air' quantifies a set of material elements to find the quality of how they relate. It frames a material sense for compositional structure. Significance is sensed in these

sounds, that is, the sounds are transformed from energy passing through air into the substance of thought through the process of listening. The states of mind - solid, liquid, gaseous, are affected by the im-materiality of their substance. From this, a title emerges, "Sensations -For the Human Body", an idea for a sound happening of the grandest scale. A massive interactive installation consists of a hyper-nerve network, of a single feedback system. Inside of a cathedral, five hundred manned stations are set up in a multi-tiered maze of scaffolding, equipment and wires. Each station has a 16-channel mixer connected to a closed micro-feedback system of a dozen signal processors and gates. From each mixer two auxiliary sends run to a station somewhere else in the system. Therefore the input sources are two sends from other stations elsewhere in the system. An individual at each station has a pair of headphones for monitoring the noise of their personal feedback system. The main outs from each mixer run to a pair of small amplified speakers placed somewhere on the structure of the cathedral. Each mixer tunes in, but to what? The players construct their score. The rationalists figure and re-configure, the hybrids listen, the madmen know. A symphonic noise sings through the infinitely complex neuronal network of electrical impulses. The system either burns out, the cathedral collapses or a metastasis will be reached after months or even years of intensive mixing/listening work. The essence of the system is the collective, or metabolic understanding between the participants and their control

of the technical system. An odor of stone, sweat and spark arises from the conductive mass.

Intimations of location

Friday, July 26, 2002 1:33 PM "...as the person living inside this journey I am not sure how to communicate the rhyme or reason for what I do. The world is a relative place for me. Constantly jumping between people, cultures and places must allow me to see certain things that others might not get a chance to experience. Yet if I think about how to describe this feeling to someone I have to say, -its not any different than when I lived in Kansas and tried to best explain life there to my friends in New York. As much as I tried there was a certain impossibility of overcoming that distance. Of course some things can't be communicated. It may only appear in the way in which a place affects you, how it sinks in and changes your being. I mainly sense this through contact with people, how the place where they live shows in their language and behavior. They are my reflection. As I write this I have to ask myself why I need such a diverse and challenging method for personal reflection? The answer is probably somewhere in the work I create..." -an email to an old friend whom contact had been lost for some years. She knew not of my precise location or what I was up to as few do. With constant movement between people and places it is difficult to paint a complete picture of parallel activities and investigations. A more concrete (yet still somewhat

ephemeral) answer to the question above might come out as a composition reflecting a type of circumstantial listening. About the time of the letter, an inspired session of recordings came together to form 'Kinetic Sense'. During a month of relative isolation on an island off the coast of Croatia I came to know the natural elements that composed the atmosphere of that ancient and beautiful place. Although the intention was not to set out and compose a piece about that location, there are inherent characteristics of a sense of place found in what you hear, even beyond the lapping of the sea and buzzing of cicadas. Contact with a deep and pervasive quietude of life devoid of man-made noise happened on that occasion. No traffic, machinery, radio or television media or traces of modern human intervention could be heard for the majority of the day. The effect is profound. It is as if the threshold of noise tolerance is lifted to a setting you were not even aware of or an internal compressor setting was switched to bypass. The silent sky has a presence as a sphere for grounding one to the earth. The wind is a voice expressing a lazy 'sigh' in the mid-day heat or an omen of an approaching tempest in the closing eye of the setting sun. Passing swallows exchanging calls with local nightingales sound like tales of weary travelers returning from adventures at sea. Hints at a rising third quarter moon emanate from the complex patterns of cricket sounds from the eastern aspect of the hill above. These are intimations of a different kind; as if listening was no longer about finding references in a mediated culture but

is about sensing the coordinates of ones position through a set of precise signals present in the environment. Your personal program is no longer set to override but switches to a source of low level internal sensation.

Intimations of immateriality

Recording sound sources is like finding raw materials with which to construct something. Synthesized or taken from the earth, sea or air, these elements can then be touched up, refined, processed, transformed into something new or left in their raw state. Yet to allude to a 'product' as the end result, is misleading. The conclusion of the process, much like the sources, is far less material. It is sound, the audible presence of resonant forces in the universe. It is an intimate relationship to sound and how one works with it. Through its pulsing wave-forms, sound induces reactions and ideas into the mind of the listener. The energy of sound never ends. It is sensed, becomes thought, turns into language or embeds itself into material bodies waiting for a moment to be released again. Dreams of a different kind confirm this, where the entirety of a surrounding reality is made of sound. With adept skill the pitch of time could be shifted, reverberation added to specific objects and equalization could change the color spectrum of light. Movements in time and space distorted according to different densities in the states of matter. All was sensed through hearing. In this sonic reality there is no boundary between internal sensation and external manifestation. Traces of

objectivity evaporate in a mist of white noise pierced by tone clusters of mossy meadows. Above, clouds of distorted drones form as the dim light of the ego slowly dissolves. In the encroaching storm the volume slowly increases until it becomes a deafening blast and in an instant what's left of 'being' floats formless and unattached to anything in the depths of an infinite black silence. This form of mental feedback comes from a developed range of perceptive filters; a certain cerebral agenda enhanced by prolonged sensitivity to sound. A source for this sensitivity comes with an experience of "absolute"(F. Lopez) listening. What started innocently with tuning into late night radio transmissions, slowly developed into a meditative science that grew into a quest for a redefined sense of existence. Lying in complete darkness with the locus of a stereo sound field positioned in the direct center of the head, the music sinks in deeply to saturate the senses. In time the body settles into a stasis somewhere between being awake and asleep. Hearing takes over in its totality as touch, taste smell and sight manifest through a complete "listening" body. A conscious being, immobilized in a quantum reality, is left without doubt as to the singular inseparable relation of time and space.

Intimations of a season

The earliest of the source recordings derive from sometime in March of 2001, to a secular chapel on the campus of a private school. We are equipped with

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Interpretation can occur without having to compose themselves out of rational elements. Either it 'sounds like' this or was 'made for' that. But is that what you hear? *"Late-evening sounds settle in our tired minds and fill the quiet with subtle suggestions of surrounding natural processes. Conversely, the rhythm and pace of urban patterns determine daily moods and interactions. Often a set or a range of perceptions can be rationalized into their component parts, into articulate definitions. Any and every perceptual input participates in the flow of associations that make up the conscious state of awareness. Any and every perceptual input stirs the associations that make up non-conscious states. The way balance is constructed between these states is the way in which we engage with ourselves. The interpretations we give to our perceptions and our experiences form a basis for our interpretations and interactions with the world. These sound compositions operate on the listener at/as the boundary between perception and interpretation—at their composite limit. In composing the textures of intimacy, the artist assembles the conditions for a mode of interpretation that does not rely on the linguistic. Composed sound from this view, plays with the perspective of the listener, providing an accompaniment to self-reflection and self-interpretation while it engages the listener in the interpretation of what is immediate—a perceptual engagement with the world. As the non-linguistic elements of the composition make their way into the mind of the listener, the conscious flow*

of linguistic associations is interrupted yet enhanced by the non-linguistic element. An interpretive framework composed entirely of sound is a temporary excursion from the linguistic but it nevertheless permits the transmission of meaning – it provides a temporary medium for the flow of signification – it is a mode of play with duration. Although this duration is for each composition fixed, the associations set into play actualize potentially infinite trajectories, whose subsequent reinterpretation into linguistic elements sets into play further such trajectories..."(*EA) From here we move north, from interpretation to closure. Solitude comes home and finds its place in listening to large spaces and small objects. With less heat the impulses run more efficiently, but in the cold you slow down and hear more in the darkness.

...in continuum

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