



Encounters

Presented by: Lise Olsen and Alistair Rennie

Sunday 29th October 2023, 5.30pm

King's Pavilion, University of Aberdeen

Programme

Alejandro Brianza	<i>Kowloon</i>
Ewa Trebacz	<i>Tower of Broken Mirrors</i>
Jonty Harrison	<i>Postcards from Azet</i>
Barry Truax	<i>Rainforest Raven</i>
Berk Yagli	<i>Hypnagogic Hallucination Machinery</i>
<i>Interval</i>	
Leah Reid	<i>Reverie</i>
Juan Carlos	<i>Vasquez Channel Zero</i>
Gordon Delap	<i>Proteus</i>
Shawn Pinchbeck	<i>Where the Bees Buzz</i>
Pete Stollery	<i>Bosque</i>

In association with SERG, The University of Aberdeen, and Techfest



Programme notes

Alejandro Brianza *Kowloon*

Located in Hong Kong and also known as "the city of darkness", Kowloon was the most densely populated settlement in history. Although its inhabitants maintained an organization based on a harmonious state of anarchy, certain problems related to gangs, drugs and other illegalities led to Kowloon's demolition in 1994. The memory of Kowloon today is a cyberpunk postcard, swinging between tranquillity and chaos. Hildegard Westerkamp award / Canadian Electroacoustic Community 2022.

Ewa Trębacz *The Tower of Broken Mirrors*

The Tower of Broken Mirrors is an Ambisonic soundscape based on an improvised performance in an abandoned nuclear plant. It is derived from the encounter of three artistic personalities within an unusual acoustic space: the abandoned nuclear plant in Satsop (Washington State, USA) and its monumental cooling tower. The most striking feature of that space is a maze of acoustic shadows and myriads of echoes

and delays, contributing to the distorted perception of one's presence in that acoustic space. The participating musicians - flutist Leanna Keith, horn player Josiah Boothby and the composer Ewa Trębacz (on the violin) - experienced the distortion of audible reality directly through their bodies, and their collective hallucinations became the driving force of their interactions. Besides the direct interactions with the physical spaces, the participants were also responding to some pre-composed, electronic sound material, which was played-back with a small 360- degree speaker. The physical space became the body of an extended virtual instrument. The sound material was simultaneously recorded with Soundfield St-35 and CoreSound TetraMic microphones, which already in this initial phase resulted in the creation of two different sound images. Later the recorded material was further processed by Ewa Trębacz, and enriched by adding consecutive electronic layers, with the goal of preserving the basic character of the space and creating an illusory continuum between various snapshots of the captured and manipulated sonic time-space.

Jonty Harrison *Postcards from Azet*

Postcards from Azet (2023) 9:57:

1. *Openings* 1:49
2. *Bells* 2:49
3. *Fountain* 2:13
4. *Valley* 3:06

Four aural snapshots based on recordings made in and around the village of Azet in the French Pyrenees. The work was composed for *Aure sonore: festival de paysage sonore*, 2-6 August 2023.

Barry Truax *Rainforest Raven*

This soundscape composition takes you on a journey through a West Coast rainforest, starting with water dripping down the rock ledges at the edge of the forest. As guided by a raven, the overall emotional trajectory for the listener goes from joyful to very sombre, and finally we re-emerge (as hopefully we all will from this dark time we're going through) into a brighter day. *Rainforest Raven* is available on sonus.ca. Original material was taken from the composer's cellphone recordings on Galiano Island, British Columbia. Sound processing realized with Soundhack convolution and Chris Rolfe's MacPod software, with spatialization created by Harmonic Functions' TiMax2 matrix mixer, marketed by Outboard Inc (UK).

Berk Yagli *Hypnagogic Hallucination Machinery*

Hypnagogic Hallucination Machinery is about the 21st-century condition. Living in a hyper-consumer-based world, where everyone happily becomes a commodity to take part in society, the concepts of individuality, freedom, privacy, and humanity once again become crucial to be questioned and discussed. Amid the sea of endless escapism, simultaneously fractured among monotonous people and ideas, we are now a part of the systematic hallucination machine more than ever. This piece aims to reflect these topics in an auditory way.

Leigh Read *Reverie*

Reverie is an acousmatic composition that leads the listener through an immersive fantasy centred around deconstructed music boxes. The work comprises eight

sections that alternate between explorations of the music boxes' gears and chimes. In the work, the music boxes' sounds are pulled apart, exaggerated, expanded, and combined with other sounds whose timbres and textures are reminiscent of the original. As the piece unfolds, the timbres increase in spectral and textural density, and the associations become more and more fantastical. Gears are transformed into zippers, coins, chainsaws, motorcycles, and fireworks, and the chimes morph into rainstorms, all sizes of bells, pianos, and more. Reid composed the work during residencies at the Ucross Foundation and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. The work is available in stereo and 8 channel versions. *Reverie* won first prize in the 8th KLANG! International Electroacoustic Composition Competition, Musicworks' Electronic Music Composition Contest, Sound of the Year's Composed with Sound Award, and Second Prizes in both the Xenakis International Electronic Music Competition and the XIII° International Destellos Competition.

Juan Carlos Vasquez *Channel Zero*

Channel Zero is one of the ways Jean Baudrillard refers to life in the suburbs of the United States in his book "America", with a special emphasis on our increasing relationship with technology. This fixed-media piece was made in 2021 using the SOMA Ether, a device that perceives and records the surprisingly diverse electromagnetic landscape produced by electronic components in a regular American house. Throughout the piece, the electromagnetic fields occasionally blend with field recordings, portraying a small window into the real world.

Dr Gordon Delap *Proteus*

The title comes from the name of the ancient prophetic sea god in Greek Mythology. Proteus has the ability to foretell the future. He is a shape-shifter with the formless quality of water. He shape-shifts to avoid giving an account of the future, and will only render prophecies to those capable of capturing him. Alongside environmental sounds, the composition uses outcomes from physical modeling synthesis developed by the NeSS team at the University of Edinburgh. The original version of *Proteus* was developed for the 3D dome at *SCRIME*, Bordeaux. I'm grateful for the help from the teams at Edinburgh and Bordeaux, and I'd like to particularly acknowledge Thibaud Keller and Stefan Bilbao for their advice and encouragement.

Shawn Pinchbeck *Where the Bees Buzz*

Where the Bees Buzz is the second piece of a series exploring Ambisonic field recordings made in the Peace Region of northwestern Alberta, Canada. This piece takes inspiration from the expansive soundscapes and ambiances of this region, creating an electroacoustic composition to accompany the soundscapes.

Pete Stollery *Bosque*

After listening for many hours to sounds recorded in the Parque Urbano El Bosque in Valdivia, Chile, recorded over the period of one year, I decided to create a piece which mixed sounds from different times of the day and different seasons of the year to create a hyper-real soundscape of the area. Certain sounds within the real soundscape are enlarged (car engines), placed in different locations (birds) and stretched (sirens), whilst the shape of the piece is created by the gradual accumulation of sonic activity in the new manufactured soundscape. Many thanks to Felipe Otondo and his team for allowing me access to these wonderful recordings.

Biographies

Lise Olsen is a Scottish-based artist who works in-between a sphere of space and the sonic. She aspires to uncover traces of what's hidden, using stories, sounds, and images. Her art practice facilitates community projects, soundwalking events, and creating immersive sound compositions. Lise is also doing a practice-based PhD in Sonic Arts at the University of Aberdeen, and her research is exploring the in-between experience happening within immersive soundscapes. She aims to create a platform to encourage people to think about our connection to place, nature, and society.

Alistair Rennie is a PhD student in sonic arts at the University of Aberdeen whose research explores the weird and the eerie in soundscape practices. He was initially an undergraduate student at Aberdeen University in the 1990s and graduated with a degree in English Literature in 1996. He then studied for a PhD in Literature at the University of Edinburgh, focusing on the work of Robert Louis Stevenson in the context of structuralist and poststructuralist theories of narrative. Ali has published works of weird horror and fantasy fiction, including a novel (BleakWarrior) and short stories in a variety of anthologies and magazines, including Weird Tales magazine and the New Weird anthology. He is also known for his dark ambient music project, Ruptured World, and has released several albums with the renowned dark ambient record label, Cryo Chamber. In his other guises, Ali is a time-served painter and decorator and once worked as a web editor and copywriter for Ducati Motorcycles in Bologna, Italy, where he lived for ten years.

*This year's **sound** festival is dedicated to the memory of Angela Michael and of Ian Spink. We very much valued each of their contributions to **sound**, and they will be greatly missed.*

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