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**Psychogeography and Psycho-sonic Cartography:
The creation of Ephemeral Place through Electroacoustic Music**

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The Ephemeral City

[...] I am collecting the ashes of the other possible cities that vanish to make room for it, cities that can never be rebuilt or remembered.¹

As forces like gentrification and globalization affect the fabric of city life, it can grow difficult for a single individual to identify their own story, history or place, or shape any part of the cities where they live as unique from any other. How can music, and particularly electroacoustic music, be a way to map new psychogeographies? Can such music empower others to tell their own stories, beyond their material means? And are there terms to describe these activities beyond those such as “psychogeography” or “*flâneur*”, which imply a fairly specified and small segment of a city’s population?



Figure 1: Drottninggatan, Klara neighborhood, Stockholm
(Photo: Katt Hernandez)

In this article I will focus on two terms, or ideas, to address these questions. The first is the idea of the *ephemeral city*. The conscious re-imagining of the cityscape, from elements ranging from the historic to the fantastical, can effect an individual’s sense of place as much as the physical structures that comprise it. These imagined – or ephemeral – cities can be a way of coming to grips with an urban environment changing in rapid and disempowering ways. We all create multiple, ephemeral cities, in the maps we envision of the places we live – some real, some imagined. These form a myriad of place identities, histories and possible futures, criss-crossing the landscape of more agreed-upon realities, forming ephemeral cities that give back their creators their own stories.

¹ Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, New York, Harcourt, 1974, p. 60.

The second is the term *psycho-sonic cartography*. This is an idea I have developed as a possible way to cover both a wider swath of the population than psychogeography, and a more specific set of activities related to sound and, even more specifically, electro-acoustic music. Spatialized sound, which is an indispensable parameter of a large body of electroacoustic music, is built from ephemeral components. It offers, among other things, an alternative way to conjure one place inside of another, or change the sonic landscape of a place, by virtue of its permeability.

Since my own most recent research and practice in music focuses mainly on the city of Stockholm, this article also carries many references and examples from that particular city.

Psychogeography

Saul Steinberg's drawing *View of the World from 9th Avenue* was on the cover of the New Yorker in 1976. The drawing depicts a sunny, detailed image of 9th and 10th Avenues at an amalgamated and typical New York intersection, receding into a distant Hudson River. Beyond the river is a rectangular desert, complete with cactuses, and the names of a small handful of places like Las Vegas, Chicago and Utah written in vague places. Three mountains, called China, Russia and Japan, rise behind an empty space representing the Pacific Ocean, which is almost the same size as the Hudson. Although tongue-in-cheek, it deftly illustrates the power of the imaginer to suspend disbelief and shape the world. This power is exactly what psychogeographers seek to harness. And it is precisely what electroacoustic music, with its decoupling and re-imagining of sound from its sources, affords a listener the possibility of.

The term psychogeography was first coined by Guy Debord in 1955, where he defined it as "the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals"². It came in time to describe practices including algorithmic walking, alternative mapping and experimental writing that sought to see past, and thus break, the banal. Even though the term was invented in the context of the politically radical and aesthetically avant-garde Situationist movement, the definition has expanded to include a wide range of practices in various writing sub-genres and other artistic disciplines, urban political activism and even works which predate the creation of the term. Today, psychogeography is a collection of ways to transform or re-conjure one's own stories, parallel to, in counterpoint with or in refutation of the predominant narrative of a given place.

Walter Benjamin's writing pre-dates the invention of the term by decades, but he is considered one of its greatest practitioners. Benjamin's writings about his daily trek down a single street in 1920s Weimar, and later through the soon-to-be torn down arcades of Paris, give us an itinerant world of tiny wonders against a backdrop of impending, vast transformation. At the same time, his psychogeographical work has much to offer us decades later, as our current vantage point in time begs questions about vast transformations of urban landscapes, and gives us the opportunity to take heart in both the former arcades and the later avenues of the city he wrote about. Other authors who are loosely grouped in the realm of the psychogeographical, like Will Self, J.G. Ballard and Rebecca Solnit, wander in more dystopic

² Guy Debord, "Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography", in *Les lèvres nues*, 6, 1953, reedited in *Library of Nothingness*, <http://library.nothingness.org/articles/SI/en/display/2> (last accessed 12/17).

worlds, from post-industrial wastelands to pristine deserts, cutting three dimensional chess boards out of the checker-plain landscapes they traverse.



Figure 2: Lithograph of 1800s Stockholm (Strindberg)
(Photo: Katt Hernandez)

Stockholm does not have a strong history of psychogeography like cities such as Paris, London or New York. But, there are earlier writers who represented the role of the “*flâneur*” in the city, such as August Strindberg and Hjalmar Söderberg. Psychogeographical elements are important in several of Strindberg’s works, but most prominent in the novella *Ensam* (“Alone”). *Ensam* features a protagonist clearly echoing Strindberg, himself, walking the streets of Stockholm, yearning to a house on the horizon and mapping his reflections and states onto different places in the city. Hjalmar Söderberg is better known as a “*flâneur* author”, especially in his works *Doktor Glass* (*Doctor Glass*) and *Förvilleser* (*Comedy of Errors*), where the traversal of the city by the novels’ characters is a driving feature of the work.



Figure 3: Former Klara neighborhood near Sergelstorg in 1959 and 1953
(Photos: Lennart af Petersens, Creative Commons)

Perhaps the most prominent and well-known depiction of a once real but now-imagined version of Stockholm is Lennart af Petersens’ photography and film work of Klara – central Stockholm neighborhood that was entirely demolished for modernization in the 1950s and 60s. Petersens’ work informs generations of Stockholmers’ “memories” of a city they never inhabited. His work has a markedly *flâneur* – like quality to it, as it is taken walking the streets, shops and homes of Klara’s last inhabitants, joining the informal conversation and

activity of their days. One can regard these periods simultaneously, both that of Klara and that of the City Center, thus dwelling beyond the predominant features of the current street-advertising and international franchises. The present-day streetscape also provides counterpoint for those who identify with the environs that replaced Klara.

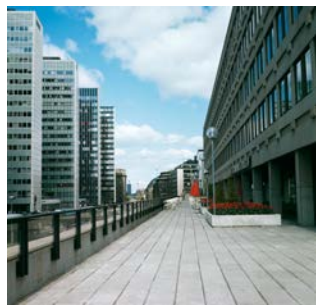


Figure 4: The five modernist office towers, or "Five Sisters", built in part of the former Klara neighborhood, 1968 (Photo: Ingemar Gram, Creative Commons)



Figure 5: Sergelstorg, Stockholm, built in the 1960s to replace the former Klara neighborhood, 2003 (Photo: Ingrid Johansson, Creative Commons)

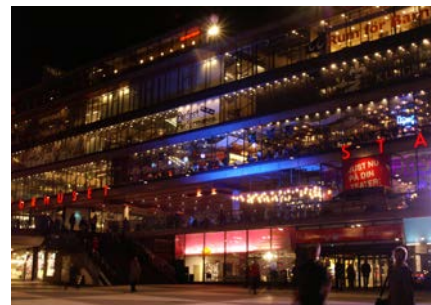


Figure 6: Stockholm Culture House, Sergelstorg, 2006 (Photo: Sandra Sporrenstrand, Creative Commons)

These are classic authors and artists in Sweden, known by every high school student. But the range of psychogeographical writing about the city tapers off sharply in the 20th century. One can wonder if the ideals and aesthetics expressed in the mid-century, modernist buildings rendered these earlier forms of psychogeography difficult or impossible – or if they gave inhabitants of the city new ways to map their own versions of Stockholm, more timely than those former methods.

While interviewing Stockholmers for a multi-channel sound-text work I was composing, one participant, Bo Leth, described a nostalgia for the Culture House (at the former center of Klara) in the 1990s, as well as for the near-by modernistic idealism of the "Five Sisters" or "Bugle Calls", brutalist office buildings dominating a portion of Stockholm's skyline. He went on to express a complete lack of nostalgia for the former Klara neighborhood³. Meanwhile, a group of composers born in the 1980s held an series called "Distro" at Fylkingen in 2015, harkening back to another meet-up of cassette labels, record enthusiasts and talks with DJs which had been held in the youth center of the Culture House many years before⁴. This vast change in the cityscape, and the societal ideals and daily usages expressed in the architectures of both former and later centers of Stockholm, have informed generations of intense debate about the identity and soul of the city through nostalgia, modernism and the aesthetics of both and all between. Klara is an entirely ephemeral but strong presence in the psychology of the city. And the structures from the 1950s and 60s era of modernization, driven by the ideals of social democracy, also speak of a time which has passed, as the current era sees more international business concerns coming to dominate the cityscape.

Where the *flâneurs* of Strindberg's, Petersen's and Söderberg's times fell away, there have come forth new kinds of actors and works that possess psychogeographical qualities. Björn

³ Bo Leth, *Personal interview*, 9th of September, 2016.

⁴ Maria Horn (producer) et al., *Distro*, live music series, Stockholm, Fylkingen, 29th of March through 22nd of June, 2015.

Hellström, an architect whose work reaches into sound art and electroacoustic music, has built several sound installations in Stockholm. His book *Noise Design*, in addition to featuring a number of analytical chapters on sound in space, Schaefferian modes of listening and the architecture of sound and sound installations, includes writing about and a CD with the works *t.i.k.s.* (*Transparent Information of the Klara Systems*) and *t.i.g.e.r.* (*Tourist Information Guide for the Environmental Resonance*), both built from Stockholm field recording. They are collaborative works with Sten Sandell and Arlid Lagerkvist, and feature the kind of re-working of urban landscapes many psychogeographical authors create in their written work. (Hellström) Between 2006 and 2010, Catharina Dyrssen, along with Anders Hultkvist, Staffan Mossenmark, Per Sjösten and others, initiated the USIT (Urban Sound Institute) project, which conducted artistic research in sound installation, intervention and music composition in works that reached “[...] across borders between music, sound art, acoustics, architecture, design and city planning.”⁵ Their multiple installation projects, which treated sound and space as interchangeable and co-efficient, unfolded in a number of urban, public spaces to pose many of the same sorts of questions earlier psychogeographical writing does.

These psychogeographically tinged sound installation projects reside in a wider context in Stockholm. There is the work of artist and film-maker Mats Eriksson Dunér, who shows us the city from the unorthodox viewpoints of invisible inhabitants and seldom-discussed histories. And there is his film *Det var en tid då allt tycktes möjligt – All makt åt fantasin!* (*Everything seemed possible then – All Power to the Imagination!*) about the counter-cultural Allaktivitetshuset Gamla Bro (The All Activity House on Gamla Bro Street). The All Activity House opened in one of the few remaining older buildings from Klara as a youth center in 1970, to combat the growing, unforeseen problems of youth loitering and drugs in nearby Sergelstorg. It was an experiment, where the youths themselves were in charge of running the space with music, film, free meals, art and doors open to all. All Activity House played host to a thriving Stockholm countercultural scene, until it was shut down by the authorities in 1972. The showing of these films in the Culture House in 2016 acted as a physical reshaping of space by virtue of the history of the area. It is an interesting contrast to Dunér’s other Stockholm film, *Kontoret (The Office)*, about a tent and trailer encampment of copper thieves who lived in loose community on wasteland in the rapidly gentrifying suburb and shopping center of Skärholmen in the early 2000s, imagining the theft of the wires comprising the entirety of the former Swedish telephone system.

Occasionally there are artists who manage to more physically project psychogeographical images onto space through concrete means. Graffiti and street art are examples of this, but in Stockholm there was the 2011 flamboyant guerilla sculpture, *The Stockholm Hyenas*.

⁵ Catharina Dyrssen et al., *Ljud och Andra Rum/Sound and Other Spaces*, Gothenburg, Bo Ejeby Förlag, 2014, p. 9.



Figure 7: Stockholm Hyenas, 2011
(Photo: I99pema, Creative Commons)

These were life-size, concrete hyenas with red glass eyes and real fur tails which were illegally (and quite professionally) installed by an artist who goes by the moniker “Olabo” into the sidewalk near Stureplan, a central Stockholm square currently known as a party spot for well-to-do Friday night revelers in search of exclusive nightclubs, high fashion or designer drugs. The hyenas were a parody of this particular breed of Stockholmers, as explained on a plaque, which sported Saint Erik, the patron saint of Stockholm, with a pirate’s eye patch.

In spatialized electro-acoustic music and sound installations that utilize its techniques – both in top-class multi-channel facilities and in home-made arrays placed in parks, on streets or in local venues – one can go beyond the realms of both physical reclamation and observational depiction, re-creating or entirely rebuilding the “image” of places and time periods with impossible simultaneity, reconfiguration and motion, thus dwelling beyond the predominant features of the current era’s hyper-capitalized and ultra-gentrified streets of many cities.

Psycho-Sonic Cartography

Psycho-sonic cartography is a term I propose to talk about this usage of sound and music in psychogeographical ways. The term describes both the action of those interacting with sonic environments, and that of musicians, sound artists and those who engage in activities like sound walks with more attenuated practices of listening to and understanding sound not just as components of the environment, but as materials. While the leap from modes of listening to composing is a multifaceted one, the simple act of traveling through such modes can, in and of itself, be an integral act of psycho-sonic cartography as well. By creating a new term, decoupling but not dis-including these activities from the context of the Situationists, it is also possible to address a wider swath of the varied populations of larger urban areas can be included than the artists, activists and self-proclaimed outsiders who most often use the term “psychogeography”.

Electroacoustic music that utilizes real-world materials can simultaneously specify, and leave much to the listener to complete – just as the afore-mentioned psychogeographical works yield new ways to comprehend the cityscape that include the receiver in their creation. Composers who work with spatialization share qualities with the very field many psychogeographers seek to subvert or circumvent: architecture. Musicians and sound artists working with spatialization are already in the business of creating ephemeral places.

Spatialized sound is a convincing way to ephemerally *build* a place that is and is not present, compelling a listener to vacillate along spectrums between the spatial, architectural and musical. Here I will discuss some examples of music to further clarify the term.



Figure 8: Tony Schwartz recording children
(Photo: Ken Heyman, used with kind permission from Aaron Schwartz)

Pioneer field recordist Tony Schwartz had a particularly psycho-sonic cartographical angle to a particular area of his work. Schwartz worked extensively in broadcast media contexts, using his recordings to create both advertisements and public service messages. His spots, both the famous “Daisy” ad decrying the dangers of nuclear war and his anti-smoking campaign PSAs are important to the history of American media, and he held several industry and academic positions and awards over his career. His best-known psycho-sonic cartographical work, however, is more local. Using his trademark portable tape recorder, he “mapped” his New York neighborhood from the 1940s on, recording its workers, machines, children, shopkeepers and a host of other sounds. The total collection of his field recordings is housed at the Smithsonian, and is over 20,000 strong. Smithsonian Folkways released several LPs of some of Schwartz’s New York recordings – for example, the 1954 release “New York 19”, named after the local zip code where recordings were taken.

Sound example 1: *New York 19*, excerpts (Schwartz)

Back in the realm of more “classic” electroacoustic music, we also find such mappings, albeit framed in musical rather than archival terms. One of the better known classic EAM works that embodies the idea of psycho-sonic cartography is Luc Ferrari’s 1977 piece, *Presque Rien*. It evokes place out of “almost nothing”, in ephemeral, everyday sounds. The island depicted vacillates from familiar to dream-like, as do the synthesis materials which punctuate the second movements’ thunderstorm, placing it’s “psychoanalysis” of the composer’s “nightscape”⁶ in a less definable time than at its making. Another classic EAM work, Luigi Nono’s 1964 piece *La fabbrica illuminata*, “inhabits” a factory with a singer, warping and reshaping that environment with her voice, and her voice with machinery. A new, surreal factory emerges- one transformed by its electro-acoustic depiction, transformed from an icon to a nightmarish criticism. The two pieces illustrate different ways of drawing places, each both imaginary and evocative. The imagined place also contains impossibilities – simultaneous non-concurrent histories, places that move around stationary living things, ghosts, and imagined futures.

⁶ Luc Ferrari, “Liner notes”, in *Presque rien*, LP, INA-GRM, 1980.

Sound example 2: *Presque Rien*, First Movement (Ferrari)

Sound example 3: *Presque Rien*, Second Movement (Ferrari)

Sound example 4: *La Fabricca Illuminata*, Excerpts (Nono)

Then there are sound works that dwell in-between the electroacoustic realm and other artistic or aesthetic practices, which also fit squarely into the realm of psycho-sonic cartography. David Prescott Steed's practice straddles urban exploration, field recording and writing. In his 2014 work *Walking through a Stormwater Drain while playing the Violin (1380 returning steps)*, Steed has created a literal work psycho-sonic cartography. Taking a cheap violin into a system of tunnels, he has made a practice of trespassing through under the city of Melbourne, the work is a recording of Steed sawing away on the open strings while walking for 27 minutes. This creates a spectral-sonic map of the tunnels, indicating their shape, height and distance in spectral information as he passes their changing contours. An ephemeral map of the tunnels has been flung forth and taken trace of as a recorded sound piece, altering the imagined map of Melbourne for all who traverse this non-place in headphones.

Sound example 5: *Walking through a Stormwater Drain while playing the Violin (1380 returning steps)* (Steed)

An example of an electro-acoustic piece which takes aim at a place for its banality is Negativland's 1983 release *A Big 10-8 Place*. Negativland are an underground experimental electronics group working entirely with tape-based media. They are known for publicity pranks and several works challenging copyright conventions. This piece draws an absurd counter-map through field recordings, stolen referential music and narration, interspersed with mocking songs about stupidity, shoplifting and local AM radio. *A Big 10-8 Place* slaps an impossible story onto an utterly mundane suburban block in California called Contra Costa County, re-mapping it across the imaginations of all who hear it. The music bears some resemblance in composition technique and materials to the works of electroacoustic music produced in national or academic studios of the same time in its construction, utilizing careful work with tape and razors, and referencing the broadcast media world of its time. But the album was created in studios nothing like the well-known electronic music centers where much of the canon of electroacoustic music has been created, and released as an LP on an underground indie label. Thus its use of and reference to radiophonics – referencing local AM and HAM radio stations, and pirate signal jamming – is another way of sonically re-mapping the physical territory shaped by broadcast transmission.

Sound example 6: *A Big 10-8 Place*, Excerpt (Negativland)



Figure 9: Music Pavilion/Gazebo, Vitabergsparken
(Photo: Jopparn, 2012, Creative Commons)

In 2011, the Swedish composers Daniel M Karlsson, Mattias Petersson and Jonatan Liljedahl took eight cheap, tiny speakers, a soundcard and a supercollider-equipped laptop to a gazebo in Vitabergsparken – a city park in Stockholm. There they played a concert in the middle of the public space, drawing sounds indicative of the locale from computer synthesis. The audience lay on the floor of the public pavilion, the music reaching through its open walls to re-depicted the trees in the park. The concert was spontaneous and secret, announced only by word of mouth and SMS a few days before, and there was certainly no documentation. But it was a spectacular example of spontaneous psycho-sonic cartography, utilizing spatialized electroacoustic music.



Figure 10: Rönnells antikvariat, 2014 (Photo: Katt Hernandez)

When a beloved bookstore and performance room in central Stockholm, Rönnells antikvariat, was under threat of losing their space in 2014 due to rising rents in the area, Dan Fröberg came to town. Fröberg makes electronic music, and lives in Gothenburg. His work fits both squarely and not at all into the aesthetic world of electronic and electroacoustic music in Sweden. There is something in it reminiscent of Sun City Girls' field recording concern, Sublime Frequencies, but with an aesthetic of the mystic or otherworldly. Fröberg did a performance entitled "An Exorcism and Teleportation of Rönnells antikvariat into life eternal". As if on cue, immediate threats of eviction stopped not long after the performance and installation. The live recording was released on limited edition vinyl and sold at Rönnells afterwards. Thus we have not only a cartographical occurrence, but a magical one: electroacoustic music as invocation to re-imagine space back into reality. And just so – psycho-sonic cartography imagines sounds, in or of a place, and re-fashions them to

illuminate aspects of that place obscured by lost histories, the powers that be or alternative futures not come to pass.

Text-Sound Composition and Interviews

The range of electro-acoustic works from text-sound composition to radiophonic works based on interviews and speech crosses boundaries between documentary, story-telling and sonic art. Stockholm has a unique and notable history of what was named *text-sound composition* by Lars Gunnar Bodin⁷, and there are other good examples of pieces from other places utilizing these techniques, which are also good examples of psycho-sonic cartography.

Trevor Wishart's 2010 piece, *Encounters in the Republic of Heaven*, is a piece I would use this term to describe. He writes:

The 8-channel sound-surround experience begins with the sound of the wind, formed from tens of thousands of human voices, and gradually unfolds the stories of fishermen, farmers and city-dwellers in the North East of England, accompanied by imaginary musical instruments derived directly from the speaking voices we hear.⁸

When played in a multi-channel room, the *place* these stories unfold in is also created, as literal *places* or as those depicted in stories told by the work's voices, as the sea, wind or some landscape into which the voices, at points, recede.

Sound example 7: *Encounters in the Republic of Heaven*, Excerpt (Wishart)

Psycho-sonic cartography can reach into realms far beyond everyday urban exploration or acoustic ecology. Stockholm composer and EMS director Mats Lindström's work about the murder of Prime Minister Olaf Palme, *Rekviem av svensk medborgare med anledning av mordet på Olof Palme*, contains many psycho-sonic cartographical aspects. The materials in this short clip of the 30 minute work include the dispatch of the police and ambulance for Stockholm city the night of the assassination, as well as Palme's own words and the words of children about their memories and impressions that night. These particular children live in a far away suburb of Stockholm mostly inhabited by immigrants – but their “voices” are read by a number of well known Stockholmers at the center of the city's cultural life, including the actress who is the voice of the city's subway system. Segments of Chopin's second nocturne are played by Fylkingen stalwart and internationally known contemporary music pianist Kristine Scholz. Thus the “requiem” stretches out over all the city, in the places and voices from which its materials originate.

Sound example 8: *Rekviem av svensk medborgare med anledning av mordet på Olof Palme* (Lindström)

Sol Andersson's 2013 work *Monolog: In Memoriam* “reconstructs a fathers haunted elusive thoughts and memories about having a child and how to survive the death of your own child. It is based on an interview made early in 2013 by Sol Andersson”⁹. Originally mixed in B-

⁷ See William Brunson, “Text-Sound Composition – The Second Generation”, in *Proceedings of the Electroacoustic Music Studies Network Conference (EMS09) Conference*, Buenos Aires (Argentina), 2009, <http://www.ems-network.org/ems09/papers/brunson.pdf> (last accessed 12/17).

⁸ Trevor Wishart, “*Encounters in the Republic of Heaven*”, in *soundohm*, <https://www.soundohm.com/product/encounters-in-the-republic-of-heaven/pid/22927/> (last accessed 12/17).

⁹ Sol Andersson, *Monolog: in Memoriam*, multichannel composition, 2013.

format and played in 17.4 speakers + 1 mono speaker, the multi-channel array gives the extremely subtle form of a room, where low frequency gestures punctuate the space, transformed from a listening salon to a room lacking all such character. The voice of the father comes solely from the single mono speaker – a wooden, 1970s home stereo cabinet. As the room becomes the visage of another place, so the old speaker becomes the presence of the man.

Sound example 9: *Monolog: In Memoriam* (Andersson)



Figure 11: The Djurgårdens ferry in 1966
(Photo: Gunnar Hillbo, Creative Commons)

Most of the best known composers from the earlier era of Swedish electronic music did not make pieces that fit into these psycho-geographical or psycho-sonic cartographical categories—although it could also be argued that composers like Lars-Gunnar Bodin, Sten Hanson, Bengt Emil Johnson and others, inform the psycho-sonic cartography of the city for anyone even vaguely involved in its long, rich history of electronic music and experimental arts. But there is Åke Hodell’s 1972 work, *Djurgårdsfärjan över styx* (*The Djurgården Ferry over the River Styx*). Stockholm is laid out on 14 islands, one of which is called Djurgården. The Djurgården ferry has been in operation for decades, and is a regular feature of the part of the city it serves. The piece opens with the dark, familiar foghorn of the ferry, with Hodell chanting in Swedish¹⁰:

The Djurgården Ferry Over the River Styx

The heavens darken

caw, caw

A blue exhaust of crows

caw, caw

crows of death,

caw, caw

Charon’s crows

caw, caw

crows of forgetting,

crows of sleep,

crows of death,

crows of hell

¹⁰ Translation by Katt Hernandez.

Sound example 10: *Djurgården Ferry over the River Styx* (Hodell)

Soundwalks and Acoustic Ecology in Cities

Sound walks have most famously been extolled as a way to tune in to the environment by Raymond Murray Schafer¹¹. They are both a capture method, and way to illuminate a place through listening, yielding materials and insights. But, although Schafer's work is seminal and deeply important to this and related fields, his view on most urban or industrial sounds can be disheartening if it is a city where one listens. In city sound-walking, what composer Toru Takemitsu described as “a beautiful noise emerging from the apparatus of an obstacle”¹² is often the richest source of stories, subtlety, beauty, intensity or a unique sense of place.

Bill Fontana's *Metropolis Stockholm!* is a good example of an earlier work somewhere between a sound walk and electro-acoustic music, where simultaneous recordings were made throughout the city, brought together and mixed at City Hall, then broadcast on the Swedish radio. In 1986, this “stationary sound walk” of subways and church bells in the same sonic space on one of the few radio stations available may well have been striking. But listening today, one hears a collage of cues without further comment or information, leaving little to be built or recreated in the end.

Offering an incomplete narrative in a musical work is a method of striding the boundary between presenting finished environments and offering materials for listeners to complete the picture. But recorded soundwalks presented as complete compositions, lacking any narrative beyond the recording itself, restrict the listener's own agency to co-create or sometimes even make sense of the work. Examples of incomplete narrative in the realm of soundwalks which *do* accomplish this feat can be found in Janet Cardiff's *Walk book*, as well as her video walks, or Christina Kubisc's Electrical Walks, which are evocative enough to offer the listener a meeting point in the ephemeral, parallel world her machines psycho-sonically map.



Figure 12: Fragmentarium Club Soundwalk, Stockholm 2016
(Photo: Katt Hernandez)

In Stockholm, psychogeographer Jacek Smolecki has founded the “Fragmentarium Club”, which he describes as

¹¹ See Raymond Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*, Rochester, Vermont, Inner Traditions, 1993.

¹² Matthew Gandy and Benny Nilsen (eds), *The Acoustic City*, Book and CD, Berlin, Jovis, 2014, p. 31.

part of a wider initiative postulating and inspiring alternative aesthetics and forms of documenting everyday life. To some degree it is also an attempt to reenact the idea of a recording club, an initiative gathering enthusiasts of visual or sonic documentation of the life in the city to explore soundwalks and related practices [...].¹³

The organization held its first soundwalk in Stockholm in July of 2017.

Building the Imaginary City

To engage in psycho-sonic cartographical music through electroacoustic music is to engage in a constant interplay where the seemingly immutable can melt and transform in the blink of an eye – or at least a shorter span of time, and with a lighter burden of materials, than architectural upheavals and flights of fancy take. Electro-acoustic music is built from sounds de-coupled from their sources. We can look to other psycho-sonic cartographies to see this practice echoed in the conjuring of place.



Figure 13: The “Sacred Heart” across the Huron River, made by Micheal
(Photo: Chris Machielse, Creative Commons)

In Ann Arbor, Michigan there lives a Catholic mystic called Micheal. He walks in the city’s Arboretum most days, observing the animals and making installations from the materials he finds there as a part of his contemplation of the divine. Upon finding a quartz crystal heart outlined in a stone one morning, he decided to build a sacred heart of stones at the heart of the Arboretum, across the narrow, shallow Huron river. When he had built the heart, he spray painted the word “pray” on the railroad bridge there to encourage people to meditate there. Every two weeks he dons fishing boots, walks into the river, bends an ear to the water, and listens, tuning each and every stone. He calls it “A Whitewater Symphony of Peace to the Glory of the Virgin Mary and her Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ.”. Even with only stones and water, the sounds of the world can be de-coupled from their sources, ephemerally re-shaped, and returned in new form in the eyes of each and every maker.

In 1980, Derek Bailey and Min Tanaka did a live performance at La Forge in Paris, which they issued a recording of in 1996¹⁴. The recording is an unusual artifact – less a pure recording of a piece of music, than the imprint of a place, the trace of activity outlining its form. Bailey plays a sparse, acoustic guitar, while the space in which the collaboration

¹³ Jacek Smolecki, “Fragmentarium Club”, in *Fragmentarium Club*, Stockholm, 2016, <http://fragmentarium.club> (last accessed 12/17)

¹⁴ Derek Bailey and Min Tanaka, *Music and Dance*, LP, Revenant, 1980

unfolds is sonically outlined by the sound of Min Tanaka's equally sparse movements, and rain pelting a rickety-sounding structure. Psycho-sonic cartography- an evocative picture of a charged moment in time and place, long gone but brought to immediacy by its nature as music. The CD brings the ghost of that transformed place to a listener with all the viscerality of the rain.

So music and sound art can be used to (re)create new maps, versions and stories of places, giving listeners the opportunity to meet and join in that creation. By virtue of the ephemeral nature of their materials, music, sound art and related practices can empower the illumination of alternative stories and realities in places where there might have seemed no other possibility. And electroacoustic music, with its unique techniques around concrete sounds and spatilization, and its basic nature of decoupling sounds from their sources, is a particularly apt method for these activities. Just as these re-imagined places are illuminated and brought to life, so we live in as many cities as there are inhabitants, each disappearing into a myriad more new cities which form with every new memory, to be brought forth and understood anew in psycho-sonic cartographies the real world can only begin to imagine.

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