About My Installations

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My sound installations are based on electro-magnetic sound transmission. A series of electric cables are installed in an indoor / outdoor situation. The cables can be fixed to walls, ceilings and floors or suspended in the air. They can follow the natural forms and architecture of the place (for example, cables can be wrapped around trees in a wooded area or strung around columns in an old monastery) or they can form an independent geometric structure throughout the space.

Sound transmission originates with an audio source (generally tape) that is amplified by a specially built amplifier from which the cables are sent and returned, forming a loop. One ‘pair’ of cable structures forms a stereo output (left and right channels). The public (listener) wears a wireless headphone with an adjustable dynamic range control. The listener can walk around freely, receiving the sounds via the built-in electro-magnets, which function like pickups. Through movement (or non-movement), the listener is able to choose between various sound sources and their combinations. The volume of the sound increases as the listener moves closer to the cables. Quick movements through the space cause the sounds to fade into one another, while slow movements cause sequences of sounds. The space between the cable fields produces silence.

The sounds can be electronic, natural or instrumental and are compiled, in advance, in my sound studio. The ‘composition’ for any given installation is related to the ‘sound-architecture’ of the cable structure.
Sounds

I generally work with ‘opposing’ sounds.

Natural sounds: recordings made in nature, animal sounds, water sounds, the sounds of different materials, the voice, primitive instruments like a sea-shell or an Australian didjeridoo.

I am particularly interested in these sounds because they are evocative and, when heard in a different space from the original, can take on a magical and mysterious quality. My intent is to create a landscape of sounds (soundscape) in which the public can move freely, exploring and individually changing the composition. It’s like walking in a jungle or along the seaside at different times of the day and on different paths.

Electronic sounds: I like to create sounds that are close to the character of the above mentioned sounds, interesting in their timbre and structure, and yet, not immediately identifiable with traditional instruments. The sounds are more articulated in their innate micro-structure than in melodic or harmonic patterns. Of special interest to me are rhythmic structures and their combinations. For example, a listener ‘caught’ between two cable-fields is apt to hear a polyrhythmic pattern. Natural and electronic sounds can be integrated into a kind of music that I call Ethno Electronics: music where electronic nature and natural electronics are so integrated that they form a new unity.
Afterword

The predominant means of acoustic communication today are radio, records, cassette tape and video. The technical media have radically altered the relationship existing between listener and music. Technology has bred a musical standard that is intended to be appreciated through loudspeaker systems and has very little to do with performance techniques used in the past.

As early as 1958 Karlheinz Stockhausen, a pioneer in the field of electronic music, wrote:

And what have record and radio producers done up-to-now? They have produced a music that was conceived and written for performance in concert halls and opera houses. Radio has strived to perfect technical reproduction to a standard that made it progressively more difficult for the listener to distinguish between original and copy. The illusion must be complete. The conscious deception perfect. All this leads towards a society that gains its spiritual sustenance from cans.

Canned music is able, through computer-controlled recording and reproduction techniques, to produce the sensation of 'being in the centre of the musical performance.' However, it is precisely this 'perfection' that discourages listeners from indulging in musical activities themselves. Creative musical experience need not, however, be limited to academic practice or to recorder recitals during 'musical afternoons' at home. The fear of electronics ignores the fact that each note is an electrically converted vibration and that live sound material can be produced 'naturally' by current, in the same way as traditional instruments.

Listening is, in itself, an activity that must be consciously learned and developed. In contrast to the conditions in concert halls, our ears, coupled with the other senses, perceive rotund, spherical and moving sound. Creative listening is the starting point for my sound installations and sound-zones in which the structure of the composition is combined with sequences of tone and movement. The audience is able to move freely between various acoustic fields distributed throughout the sound zone, enabling the listener to discover ever new and individual sound combinations. These sound-zones are often created in the open air: in woodland glades for instance, or in buildings that were not constructed to act as concert halls, such as deserted factories, shipyards and cellars.