

**Activist Sound:
Field Recording, Phonography,
and Soundscapes of Protest**

Christopher DeLaurenti

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degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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Declaration of authorship

I, Christopher DeLaurenti, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own, except when indicated and attributed otherwise. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

July 16, 2020

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Many texts in this thesis were presented at conferences, invited lectures, and artist residencies during the previous decade. I'm grateful to the respective organizers of those events, but also to fellow scholars, artists, and students who offered helpful observations and asked probing questions. The sources of the texts—a book chapter, journal articles, conference papers, invited lectures, artist talks, etc.—are inventoried in the Colophon.

Regarding the sound work discussed in this research, the version of *N30: Live at the WTO Protest November 30, 1999*¹ (2008) was made possible by Oliver Ressler, who invited me to reimagine *N30* for a 2008 Taipei Biennial showcase, "A World Where Many Worlds Fit," held at the Taipei Museum of Fine Arts from September 13, 2008 to January 4, 2009. This definitive version of *N30* premiered at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (February 28, 2008) at the invitation of Nicolas Collins and subsequently was presented in many venues, notably at Goldsmiths (October 16, 2014).

The initial versions of *N30* would not exist without all the brave souls who fought for the future on the streets of Seattle decades ago. I benefitted from equipment and funding from Richard Shorter of Shorter Software Solutions, The King County Arts Commission, and an Artist Fellowship from Artist Trust. I received indispensable technical advice and supplementary equipment from Ian Vollmer, Alex Keller, and Michael P. O'Connor IV.

Earlier, edited and/or incomplete versions of *N30* were performed live at the Center on Contemporary Art (June 3, 2000) and aired on numerous radio programs including *Sonarchy* produced by Doug Haire on KCMU 90.3 FM (June 3, 2000 and November 30, 2002); *Prisms* produced and hosted by Iain Edgewater on KBCS 91.3 FM (October 22, 2002); the *Outer Ear 04 Festival* curated by Lou Mallozzi simulcast on WLWU 88.7 FM and WNUR 89.3 FM (November 4, 7, 9, and 10, 2004); and *Soundproof* hosted by Miyuki Jokiranta on Australia's Radio National (September 5 and 7, 2014).

As detailed in the Introduction, the thesis chapter on *N30* stitches together multiple sources. I want to thank *The Tentacle: The Journal of Pacific Northwest Creative Music*, especially Dennis Rea, Mike Marlin, Carl Juarez, and Henry Hughes who published a two-issue special on the WTO protests in Seattle. I am also grateful to Nicolas Collins who commissioned "Making Activist Sound" for *Leonardo Music Journal* and to V.J. Manzo and Frederick Bianchi who included "Towards Activist Sound" in *Environmental Sound Artists*.

Producing and hosting *The Sonar Map*, a radio show devoted to adventurous sound and listening on KSER 90.7 FM (1998-2001) and later co-hosting *Flotation Device* on KBCS 91.3

¹ Throughout this dissertation *N30* will denote the protest against the 1999 WTO Ministerial Conference while *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* and its abbreviated form *N30* refers to the sound, performance, and installation works I fashioned from my recordings made at *N30*.

FM (2006-2009) was indispensable to my education, compelling me to confront multiple genres and strands of music and sonic art.

I owe a great debt to GD Stereo, a New York-based label which bravely released the compact discs of *Favorite Intermissions: Music Before and Between Beethoven-Stravinsky-Holst* (2008) and *To the Cooling Tower, Satsop* (2015). Without the support and guidance of Geoff Dugan, these works would have found a much smaller audience.

The sonic and theoretical explorations of the collective Ultra-red continue to be a source of inspiration; I am indebted to their concept of militant sound investigation.

Steve Barsotti, a superb sound artist, educator, and Seattle Phonographers Union (SPU) stalwart, has been a priceless source of technical knowledge, wisdom, sage advice, and timely assists with equipment. *To the Cooling Tower, Satsop* would not exist without him.

Although my work in freely-improvised sound, circuit-bending, data-bending, sonification, and cracked electronics precedes the chronological scope of this dissertation (2008-2018), the brilliant sound artist Alex Keller was a chief partner, teacher, and inspiration in our work as rebreather as well as within the SoniCabal and mimeomeme collectives.

I owe deep, impossible-to-detail debts to my teachers in Seattle, my late father Peter B. DeLaurenti, Jr. and Arthur A. Bloom. Ken Benshoof provided essential guidance to my youthful ambition in the early 1990s. I am fortunate to count two great composers, Noah Creshevsky and Annea Lockwood, as friends and mentors.

I happily thank my teachers at the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts at Bard College: David Behrman, Bob Bielecki, Margaret de Wys, Brenda Hutchinson, Ann Lauterbach, George E. Lewis, Miya Masaoka, Keith Sanborn, Laetitia Sonami, and especially Maryanne Amacher (1938-2009) and Richard Teitelbaum (1939-2020).

Overall, my work would not have been possible without those artists active in the utopian days of the phonography email listserv in the early 2000s. My colleagues in the SPU, which I co-founded in 2002 and continues as of this writing in 2020, continue to influence my thinking on sound, listening, and improvisation.

Lastly, I thank my parents for their occasionally mystified but always loving encouragement of me and my work. My closest and dearest friends (you know who you are) mean everything to me, and above all, my beloved wife Kathleen to whom this work is dedicated.

Despite my abundant debts, all errors of omission and commission remain mine and mine alone.

Christopher DeLaurenti

Abstract

Fusing practiced-based and scholarly research, this thesis examines and articulates the practice and products of field recording as a form of protest. Unlike studio recording, which transpires in sheltered and otherwise controlled environments, field recordings have historically been made in unstable, ad hoc, and unpredictable contexts often by un- and self-trained scholars, scientists, artists, and explorers. The contingent and elusive categorization of such recordings as ethnographic documents, environmental research, sound effects, nature recording, soundscape composition, sound art, music, and non-music not only can perturb or further unsettle the listener but offers an entryway into explicating ideologies of listening and recording. The practice-based component of this research emerges from phonography, a contemporary form of field recording characterized by critical approaches to subject matter, sonic fidelity, and the role of the recordist—mediated by the relatively recent availability of inexpensive portable recording devices. The written, scholarly component of this research is rooted in the soundscape model articulated by R. Murray Schafer and subsequently developed by theorists of and contiguous to sound studies, including Barry Truax and Hildegard Westerkamp. Research methodologies include historical investigation, paratextual analysis, participant observation, and artistic creation. Drawing from a representative selection of the author's unfolding practice over the last 10 years—*N30: Live at the WTO Protest November 30, 1999* (2008); *Favorite Intermissions* (2008); and *To the Cooling Tower, Satsop* (2015)—the case studies in this thesis resulted in a critical framework, “activist sound,” for identifying field recordings and field recording-based sound works as a form of protest.

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List of sound works on USB drive

N30: Live at the WTO Protest November 30, 1999 (DeLaurenti 2008b)

Four channel version (2008)

N30_Left front - Christopher DeLaurenti_2008.wav

N30_Left rear - Christopher DeLaurenti_2008.wav

N30_Right front - Christopher DeLaurenti_2008.wav

N30_Right rear - Christopher DeLaurenti_2008.wav

Format: 44.1 kHz 16-bit LPCM RIFF .wav

Dual stereo version (2009)

N30 front L and R - Christopher DeLaurenti_2008.wav

N30 rear L and R - Christopher DeLaurenti_2008.wav

Format: 44.1 kHz 16-bit LPCM RIFF .wav

Favorite Intermissions: Music Before and Between Beethoven-Stravinsky-Holst (DeLaurenti 2008c)

01_Holst, Hitherto - Christopher DeLaurenti_2008.wav

02_Before Petrushka - Christopher DeLaurenti_2008.wav

03_SF Variations - Christopher DeLaurenti_2008.wav

04_Holding out for Ein Helden - Christopher DeLaurenti_2008.wav

05_Awaiting AGON - Christopher DeLaurenti_2008.wav

06_After Beethoven - Christopher DeLaurenti_2008.wav

Format: 44.1 kHz 16-bit LPCM RIFF .wav

To the Cooling Tower, Satsop (DeLaurenti 2015b)

To the Cooling Tower, Satsop - Christopher DeLaurenti_2015.wav

Format: 44.1 kHz 16-bit LPCM RIFF .wav

Introduction: On (re)Writing

...in the economy of repetition a mold is used a great many times.
- Jacques Attali (2009 [1977], 40)

Repetition is a form of change.
- Brian Eno (Aikin 1981, 42)

This dissertation integrates my pertinent journal articles, refereed conference papers, invited lectures, artist talks, and a book chapter with exemplars of my sound work in composition, radiophonic production, performance, and phonography: *N30: Live at the WTO Protest November 30, 1999*² (2008); *Favorite Intermissions: Music Before and Between Beethoven-Stravinsky-Holst* (2008); and *To the Cooling Tower, Satsop* (2015).

I write to question, clarify, and specify my beliefs about performing, composing, and listening. Alas, regret—born of dispiriting deadlines, tardy inspiration, editorial interference, and sporadic bad luck—seeps into every writer's career. Yet I continued. During my parallel career as freelance arts journalist, I used the same mold a great many times. I caught myself recycling, refining, and, at times refuting words I had written (sometimes weeks) previously. Here, repetition becomes a form of change: Rather than just repeat the most useful, relevant, and readable of the approximately 500,000 words I have written, I critique and clarify the texts and ideas that molded my practice as a writer and artist.

² Throughout this dissertation N30 will denote the protest against the 1999 WTO Ministerial Conference while *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* and its abbreviated form *N30* refers to the sound, performance, and installation works I fashioned from my recordings made at N30.

My aim in this dissertation is to reveal and reshape these texts into what Roland Barthes characterized as “moderately plural” (2002 [1974], 6). To remain “attentive to the plural of a text (however limited it may be),” Barthes ventures, “we must renounce structuring this text in large masses” (Ibid, 11). Every chapter contains interpolated revisions, substantive clarifications, and obligatory corrections; accompanied by harrying footnotes, these critical additions and emendations place my work in a contemporary context.

This dissertation is segmented into three parts: Origins and Early Practice; Exploratory Phonography; and a reflective Conclusion.

Part One: Origins and Early Practice begins with a prologue examining the origins of and critical discourse enveloping the term “soundscape,” which was animated and developed by R. Murray Schafer in his book, *The Tuning of the World* (1977). As articulated by Schafer (1967; 1969; 1993) and thereafter developed and critiqued by theorists of and contiguous to sound studies, “soundscape,” along with three other key terms—“field recording,” “earwitness,” and “phonography”—anchor the critical frameworks in both the written and audio components of this dissertation.

Unlike studio recording, which transpires in sheltered and otherwise controlled environments, field recordings have historically been made in unstable, ad hoc, and unpredictable contexts often by un- and self-trained scholars, scientists, artists, and explorers. In the studio, it seldom rains. As Luc Ferrari, composer of the path-

breaking proto-soundscape composition *Presque Rien No. 1* (1967-1970) observes, “An outdoor sound is fugitive. One wonders, will it return?” (Robindoré 1998, 12).

Ferrari, an avid maker of field recordings, elaborates:

Take, for example, a donkey that brays, and you miss making a recording of it because you were not ready. You then have to seek out a place where a new bray could sound even better than what you first heard. But will it bray again? And at that moment, while waiting for the donkey, you discover other things—the cicadas, the brushing of the wind against the grass—until three hours later the donkey decides to bray again. So during this time a massive amount of things have taken place and given you the opportunity to creatively record them. (Ibid)

For ethnologists, ethnomusicologists, musicologists, and folklorists in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, field recording was an act of preservation, not an opportunity to welcome happenstance. Now classified as “salvage anthropology” (Jensen 2015b, 243), field recording served as a bulwark against the disappearance or disfigurement of traditional music (Brady 1999). “Now is the time to collect material before all is lost,” commanded pioneering ethnologist Jesse Walter Fewkes (1890b, 1097).

The act of field recording transforms those holding the microphone, too. When listening to his field recordings made during a trip to Siberia, composer and theorist Tim Hodgkinson “began to realize that a recording always gave you more than what you had asked for” (2016, 148).

Part One continues with “On Phonography: Earwitnessing and the Evidence of Experience,” which examines the concept of the “earwitness” and complicates my use

of earwitness testimonies that form the substrate of the written portion of this dissertation. I excavate the origin of earwitness, its revival by R. Murray Schafer (1969; 1970; 1973; 1974a; 1974b; 1977; 1992) and discuss how earwitnessing remains bound by and mediated through literacy. After a brief history of the term “phonography” and an account of its revival by the phonography email listserv in the early 2000s, I situate my practice of phonography in my earliest manifesto on field recording, “What is an aural safari?” (DeLaurenti 2001b) in tandem with field notes, slates, and memoirs so vital to my practice.

Part One concludes with the first of three case studies in this dissertation, “Towards Activist Sound: *N30 Live at the WTO Protest November 30, 1999*.” A watershed protest in United States, the so-called “Battle of Seattle” is described by activist historian L.A. Kauffman as “the moment when the mass direct-action model that activists had been developing and refining since Mayday 1971 worked most smoothly and brilliantly” (2017). Praising the confluence of multiple activist organizations gathered in Seattle to challenge the World Trade Organization, Kauffman declares that the “synergy” and cross-section of various mass movements “was on a different scale” (Ibid) compared to previous protests in the United States.

As I discuss in the chapter “Towards Activist Sound,” the soundscape of between 35,000 to 50,000 protesters was correspondingly varied, inspiring, and poetically cacophonous, so I have corrected, revised, and rewritten an earlier and until now long-unavailable article, “In the Field at the WTO: Field Recording in the Line of Fire,” published in *The Tentacle: The Journal of Pacific Northwest Creative Music*

(DeLaurenti 2000a and 2000b). The chief omission from the *Tentacle* article is a guide for the beginner to purchase equipment and software to make field recordings.

My recommendations such as

Surprisingly, worthwhile used computers are quite cheap. Do not succumb to the gadget pornography which commands consumers to purchase the latest and most expensive equipment. My audio workhorse, a hoary Pentium 133 MHz PC, is so old that similar systems sell for around \$150—monitor, mouse and keyboard included. (DeLaurenti 2000a, 6)

were almost immediately obsolete, though such exhortations continued the lineage

and, alas, at times the “customary marketing language” (Drever 2017, 77)

promulgated by Tony Schwartz in the liner notes to his LPs *Sounds of My City* (1956,

2) and *You’re Stepping on My Shadow* (1962, 3) as well as in his book *The*

Responsive Chord (1974).

I, like Schwartz, wanted everyone to make field recordings. Suffused with an overweening sense of techno-privilege, I assumed that everywhere in the English-reading world echoed the late 1990s economic boom of Seattle, where still-powerful computers were cheap and plentiful on Craigslist, at charity shops, and within the cavernous cornucopia of the Boeing Surplus warehouse. In those halcyon days, computers and recent software (including a CD-ROM of *Microsoft Office* which I have to this day) could be found on the street for free.

As Sales Manager for Seattle’s Convention and Visitors Bureau, Kathy Schwartz enjoyed a panoramic view of that era:

The atmosphere in Seattle was heady in the '90s, and we were cocky with success. The city was at the top of everyone's list—best place to live, best place to work, cool, cool, cool. Boeing was America's biggest exporter; a single plane made a significant difference in the trade deficit. Microsoft was cranking out millionaires, Nordstrom was everyone's customer-service guru, and Starbucks was reinventing the neighborhood hangout. *Frasier* and his view of the Space Needle were on TV³ every week. (Scigliano 2009)

Those heady times shielded me from the greatest enemy of the artist: Rent. And I was fortunate to benefit from what Bob Ostertag—activist, composer, and veteran improviser of New York's Downtown scene of the 1980s—identified as the “one crucial ingredient an insurgent cultural scene needs in order to flower: Cheap rent” (2009, 19). In Seattle, I could work two or three days a week as a writer, software company contractor, live sound (or recording) engineer, game sound designer, and then devote the rest of my time to what mattered to me most: Making field recordings, composing, writing, and hosting a radio show devoted to adventurous listening.

In “Towards Activist Sound” I begin answering the core question of this dissertation: How can field recordings and field recording-based sound works be identified as a form of protest? As a field recording of a protest, examining *N30* can establish a baseline for identifying how field recordings and field recording-based sound function as a form of protest, a critical framework I call “activist sound.” In this chapter I examine some of the sonic threads of *N30*, including polyvalent address, corporeal privilege, and entrainment. A brief analysis of the rear channels of *N30* unfolds a brief

³ An enduringly popular situation comedy which ran on American television from 1993 to 2004 (Brooks and Marsh 2007, 1693-1694).

history of police radio in the United States along with my examination of two concepts crucial to this component of *N30*, audio trouvaille and parallax polyphony.

Definitions of politics range from the clichéd “Politics is the art of the possible”—first uttered by German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck in 1867 during a newspaper interview (Ibid 1895, 248) and since repeated by countless American politicians on TV and political science teachers in the classroom—to a similarly concise yet rebellious aperçu from Bob Ostertag: “Politics is about restructuring the web in which we live” (2009, 12). In *The Political Force of Musical Beauty* Barry Shank proposes

A political community does not consist of those who agree on the matters at hand, but instead is made up of those who recognize each other as speaking with legitimate political voices. (2014, 3)

Yet where does this definition place those who *do not* recognize each other as “speaking with *legitimate* political voices” (Ibid, italics added), especially those who want to protest and otherwise effect change outside the cyclical calendar of elections? Or those who lack the funds to petition the usually-backlogged judiciary?

Despite the excessive alliteration, I prefer my own definition of politics as the construction, collaboration, and collision of personal and collective power. My definition of politics stems from two notions of power, one from Claude Lévi-Strauss, “Consent is at the origins, and at the same time at the furthest limit, of power” (1961 [1955], 308) and another from anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot: “The ultimate mark of power may be its invisibility; the ultimate challenge, the exposition of its roots” (Ibid 2015, xxiii). Hence I define power as the ability to recognize, accept, and

impose choices. Politics and power intersect when a demand—any demand by any individual or group—is effected, bypassed, or ignored by established protocols (politics) or resists and rebels against those protocols (protest). Mass protests remind us that political democracy does not necessarily reflect popular sovereignty. A protest can be an expression of political will, free of scheduled (and possibly rigged) elections and outside the preordained (and often tedious) process of electoral recall.

In the second half of “Towards Activist Sound” I propose three modes of activist sound in which *N30* can make the political audible, a fulcrum for political listening: The first mode, critical resistance material, outlines how activists have used *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* to further their activist goals. The second mode of activist sound, self-reflexive earwitnessing, undermines and thwarts the “relentless pursuit of naturalism” (Minh-Ha 1990, 80) prevalent in audio and film documentaries. For the third mode of activist sound, utopian listening, I draw upon an array of theorists including Erik Wallrup (2015), R. Murray Schafer (1977; 2003), Barry Truax (1977; 1984), Trinh T. Minh-Ha (1990; 1991), Hildegard Westerkamp (2000), David C. Jackson (2016), John Berger (1968), Luis A. Fernandez (2008), and Judith Butler (2015).

Part Two: Exploratory Phonography chronicles two additional contributions: The documentation of orchestral soundscapes in the compact disc of *Favorite Intermissions* (DeLaurenti 2008c); and my fusion of soundwalking and corporeal performance in *To the Cooling Tower, Satsop* (DeLaurenti 2015a).

Originally published in *Soundscape: The Journal of Acoustic Ecology*, “Intermissions with Orchestra” (DeLaurenti 2004) was revised in 2006 and then again for the 2008 compact disc reissue of *Favorite Intermissions* (DeLaurenti 2008c) by New York label GD Stereo. *Favorite Intermissions* had been withdrawn by GD Stereo due to legal action by Universal Music Group (UMG). Owned by the Paris-based media conglomerate Vivendi, UMG is one of the so-called “big three” labels along with Sony and Warner Music. As one of the corporate behemoths controlling “almost 80 percent of the music market or even more depending on the year” (McDonald 2019), UMG did not take kindly to the satirical sounds and images of *Favorite Intermissions*.

I then examine possible forerunners of *Favorite Intermissions*. Comparing *Favorite Intermissions* to the 1920 *Musique d’ameublement* (2010, [1920]) of Erik Satie (1866-1925), sound effects records, and soundscape composition opens an entryway into examining *Favorite Intermissions* as a protest of classical music, orchestra concerts, and the classical music industry.

The compact disc’s cover was singularly responsible for the commercial success of *Favorite Intermissions* as well as a protest against the classical music industry. To explicate this contention, I enlist Gérard Genette’s concept of the paratext (1997) and map this material discourse of published texts (Symes 2004, 125; Austin 2017, 8) onto the constituent elements of *Favorite Intermissions*, including my parody of the vaunted Deutsche Grammophon marquee. After a brief comparison to the legal travails of John Oswald and his ill-fated 1989 compact disc *plunderphonic* (Ibid), I conclude with a chronicle of my legal troubles resulting from the parody cover of

Favorite Intermissions by positing an ironic conclusion to the *Favorite Intermissions* project.

Part Two concludes with a conference paper-cum-essay, “A Length of Sound: Soundwalking in *To the Cooling Tower, Satsop*.” Originally written as liner notes for the compact disc of *To the Cooling Tower, Satsop* (DeLaurenti 2015a), I expanded this chapter for two conferences: “Sonic Contestations of Nuclear Power” at Princeton University in 2015 and the 2016 American Musicological Society Conference held in Vancouver, Canada. Locating and advancing notions of the ‘field’ in field recording, I meld a history of nuclear power in Washington State with my first-person account of corporeal improvisation in the tunnels beneath an aborted nuclear power station. This aspect of phonography is anchored in the practice of soundwalking as developed and articulated by Hildegard Westerkamp (1974; 2010) and Andra McCartney (2000; 2014).

In the Conclusion, I fuse together concerns and concepts from the previous chapters into a proposed critical framework, activist sound. The two other projects discussed in this dissertation—*Favorite Intermissions* (DeLaurenti 2008c); and *To the Cooling Tower, Satsop* (DeLaurenti 2015a)—expand as well as complicate the possibility of activist sound as a critical framework for identifying field recordings and field recording-based sound works as a form of protest.

Part One: Origins and Early Practice

Prologue: The Soundscape

This prologue examines the origins and some of the critical discourse surrounding the term “soundscape,” which was animated and developed by R. Murray Schafer in his foundational book, *The Tuning of the World* (1977).⁴ As articulated by Schafer and thereafter refined and critiqued by theorists of and contiguous to sound studies, “soundscape,” along with three other key terms—“field recording,” “earwitness,” and “phonography”—anchor the critical frameworks in both the written and audio components of this dissertation. I began reading the 1977 edition of *The Tuning of the World* two months before the 1999 World Trade Organization protest in Seattle—the signal event in the final chapter of Part One, “Towards Activist Sound.” *The Tuning of the World* and its principal concept of the soundscape became central to my early practice as a composer and phonographer.

Origins of “soundscape”

The word “soundscape” has innocuous origins, appearing extremely infrequently in the early twentieth century: First in a 1907 description of a painting (Picker 2019, 148); then in a 1911 travel article (Ibid); as real estate ad copy in a 1944 issue of *The Seattle Times* (Ibid, 149); in two reviews of radio dramas appearing in 1958 and 1961

⁴ Excerpts of *The Tuning of the World* appear in almost every early anthology devoted to establishing sound studies as an academic discipline, including *The Auditory Culture Reader* (Bull 2003), *Hearing History* (Smith 2004), *The Sound Studies Reader* (Sterne 2012), and the mammoth four volume *Sound Studies: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies* (Bull 2013).

Recent anthologies presume Schafer’s ubiquity. Schafer 1977 is cited but not included in *The Oxford Handbook of Sound Studies* (Pinch and Bijsterveld, 2012), *Music, Sound and Space* (Born 2013), *Keywords in Sound* (Novak and Sakakeeny 2015), *The Routledge Companion to Sounding Art* (Cobussen et al. 2017), and *The Routledge Companion to Sound Studies* (Bull 2019).

(Sterne 2013, 185); fleetingly in one 1964 concert review (Picker 2019, 150); and lurking in the *Music Educators' Journal* in “a Buckminster Fuller essay from 1966” (Daró 2012, 185 cited in Sterne 2013, 186). As more archives are digitized and search engines improved, conducting etymological archeology for “soundscape” will be easier; the list of “soundscape” appearances may grow longer, but the twinned rebirth of the word in 1967 will seem no less remarkable. “Soundscape” was deployed by geographer Michael Southworth throughout his Master’s Thesis (1967, i and *passim*) and in the same year by Schafer in a booklet aimed at music teachers, *Ear Cleaning: Notes for an Experimental Music Course* (1967).

Decades later, Schafer reflected on seeking a term in the mid-1960s to describe his newly-expanding sense of hearing; he recalled “the word soundscape occurred to me. I think I invented it, deriving it from landscape, but I may have borrowed it from somewhere” (1993, 104).⁵ Neither Southworth nor Schafer offer a formal definition of “soundscape” in their respective 1967 publications.

Evoking the apothegms that permeate *Silence* (1973 [1961]) by John Cage, Schafer professes “There is no ‘land’ in a soundscape” in Lecture Five of *Ear Cleaning* (1967, 13). Media theorist Jonathan Sterne connects Schafer’s other mentions of “soundscape” in Lecture Five as “still rooted in the compositional aesthetics and listening practices of western art music” (2015, 73) and assumes that Schafer’s statement—“Every piece of music is an elaborate soundscape which could be plotted

⁵ Schafer 1977 (132) mentions Southworth 1969 and reproduces a sound event diagram by Southworth (1969, 66) on page 265 of *The Tuning of the World*. Despite the presence of over three dozen proper names of lesser-known or obscure persons indexed only to one page in *Tuning*, Southworth does not have an entry in the Index.

in three-dimensional acoustic space” (1967, 13)—confirms that a soundscape refers exclusively to music (2015, 73). Sterne does not address Schafer’s statement on page 11 which explains why music is so deeply inscribed as *part* of the soundscape, at least as employed by Schafer in *Ear Cleaning*, whose “lecture notes printed here are, as will be seen, cursory—I hope not cryptic. They offered me work-points over which to extemporize...” (1967, 11). Schafer continues:

Throughout the course-notes I have drawn analogies between music and the other arts—the graphic arts in particular. I would not have insisted on this if I did not feel it was useful and realistic. Metaphors will always be helpful even if they may not always stand acid tests. (Ibid, 11)

While Schafer does connect the soundscape to “the compositional aesthetics and listening practices of western art music” (Sterne 2015, 73), cryptic pronouncements such as “There is no ‘land’ in a soundscape” (Schafer 1967, 13) leave “soundscape” open to analogous interpretation and its status as a cursory, not-quite defined metaphor. By contrast, Southworth, to refine his supervisor’s coinage “cityscape” in his thesis (1967), merely swapped “sound” for “city” (Sterne 2015, 70) with no explanation for the term.

The “soundscape” remains embryonic in Southworth’s and Schafer’s subsequent and respective 1969 publications, Southworth’s eponymous distillation of his Master’s Thesis, “The Sonic Environment of Cities” (1969), and Schafer’s “The New Soundscape” (1969). Southworth treats “soundscape” and “the sonic environment” (and in one instance “auditory space”) as interchangeable synonyms (1969, 49-52, 65) while Schafer offers gnomic tidbits such as “The composer can now journey

anywhere throughout the soundscape of the audible” (1969, 27) and “From sound events are soundscapes built” (Ibid, 51). Even if Schafer’s notion of the soundscape was solely rooted in music as Sterne contends (2015, 71-73), Schafer was already expanding the conceptual reach of the soundscape: “A soundscape is a collection of sounds heard in a given place” (Schafer 1970, 5). Writing in 1993, Schafer remembered that in 1970 his definition of the soundscape “was to be *understood* as the total acoustic environment, including all noises, music, natural, human, and technological sounds” (Schafer 1993, 104 italics added).

Nevertheless, by initially treating “soundscape” as a self-evident concept needing no formal definition, both writers seem to presume that the eyes will abet the shift in meaning by substituting “sound” for “city” or “land,” with the suffix “-scape”—as if anticipating Walter J. Ong’s notion that “a textual, visual representation of a word” can release “unheard-of potentials of the word” (2002 [1982], 73). It is ironic but not surprising that “soundscape,” so emblematic of orality, emerged from visuality; this will be explored in the following chapter on phonography and earwitnessing.

In his 2012 autobiography, Schafer acknowledges that his borrowing of “soundscape” from Southworth is “entirely possible; I read the article” and rightly adds “it was the research I was beginning to develop that defined the term and brought it to international attention” (2012, 120) with *The Tuning of the World* (Schafer 1977). Centering the hitherto obscure word “soundscape,” Schafer unveils his research with a grand pronouncement: “The Soundscape is any acoustic field of study” (1977, 7) and again defines the term in the book’s glossary as

The sonic environment. Technically, any portion of the sonic environment regarded as a field for study. The term may refer to actual environments, or to abstract constructions such as musical compositions and tape montages, particularly when considered as an environment. (Ibid, 274-275)

Schafer animated a rarely used yet vivid noun into the seed of a new academic discipline, what he called “soundscape studies” whose “home territory...will be the middle ground between science, society and the arts” (1977, 4) and has since become known in the English-speaking world as sound studies. Definitions and descriptions of sound studies by Sterne (2012, 3); Pinch and Bijsterveld (2012, 7); Bull (2013, 1; 2019, xvii-xviii); Johnson (2017, 8-9); and Braun (2017, 76-77) echo and elaborate upon Schafer’s original proposal of a wide-ranging interdisciplinary field that posits sound and listening as an entryway to examine, analyze, and assess culture and cultural phenomena.

Critiques of “soundscape”

Jonathan Sterne, author of *The Audible Past* (2003) and a central figure in sound studies, notes that the term “soundscape” can be found “everywhere in sound studies, and seems somehow central to everything” (2015, 65). Another pioneer of sound studies, John M. Picker, author of *Victorian Soundscapes* (2003), notes the near-universality of “soundscape” as “prevalent at this point in writings on sound and music, literature, art, history, media, identity, the environment, engineering, commerce, and travel” (2019, 147).

Historian Mark M. Smith, musicologist and editor of the anthology *Hearing History* (2004), deems Schafer's *The Tuning of the World* (1977) "somewhat dated" (Smith 2004, x) and notes the limits of Schafer's belief that earwitness accounts are "trustworthy only when writing about sounds directly experienced and intimately known" (1977, 8). Taking a historiographic tack, Smith points out that "printed descriptions of sounds never actually heard directly tell us a good deal about how people in the past *imagined* certain sounds and their meaning (204, xi italics added). Smith also suggests that Schafer's term "keynote" is "particularly useful" as it can "constitute the essence of a place" encompassing "geography flora, fauna, and people" (Ibid).

One of Schafer's most trenchant critics, Ari Y. Kelman, concedes that "The term's popularity rests precisely on its ability to evoke a whole complex set of ideas, preferences, practices, scientific properties, legal frameworks, social orders, and sounds" (2010, 228).

Sterne (2013, 2015) and Picker (2019) tally objections to Schafer and the soundscape concept lodged by Ingold (2007, 2011), Kelman (2010), and others. A concordance of objections to and critiques of the soundscape as a critical framework could fill an entire book. Here, I will summarize and address the objections most pertinent to the discussion in this dissertation.

In "Four Objections to the Concept of Soundscape" (Ingold 2011, 136-139) anthropologist Tim Ingold worries that those who study the aural aspects of culture

“might lose touch with sound” by continuing to rely on the concept of the soundscape which has “outlived its usefulness” (Ibid, 136).

As one of the better-known interventions against Schafer’s concept of the soundscape (Riedel 2020, 11), Ingold lodges four objections, summarized here and addressed below. His first objection is that the soundscape suggests a sensory division that has little to do with our physiology, the world, and our perception (Ingold 2011, 136). Ingold’s second objection is that “soundscape” suggests that the ears are organs of observation, not playback, as though the ears hear for the individual, permitting one to review the sound relayed to our consciousness (Ibid, 137). Thirdly, Ingold believes sound is not an object, but the medium of our perception—“it is what we hear *in*” (Ibid, 138 italics in original). Lastly, the failure of the concept of the soundscape to acknowledge sound as a medium places undue emphasis “on the surfaces of the world in which we live” (Ibid). Ingold proposes

Sound, like breath, is experienced as a movement of coming and going, inspiration and expiration. If that is so, then we should say of the body, as it sings, hums, whistles or speaks, that it is *ensounded*. (Ibid, 139)

When objecting to the term “soundscape,” Ingold’s missive does not engage with any theoretical writings by Schafer or any soundscape composers or sound studies scholars. Furthermore, Ingold does not develop “ensounded” in the essay; his main rhetorical strategy entails shifting common sense viewpoints with elegant language and believable examples. Below, I question his objections by marshalling scientific research rooted in auditory cognition along with a neutralizing morsel or two of my own common sense.

At the start of his essay, Ingold is correct to state that sensory pathways are not discrete:

the environment that we experience, know and move around in is not sliced up along the lines of the sensory pathways by which we enter into it. The world we perceive is the *same* world, whatever path we take, and in perceiving it, each of us acts as an undivided centre of movement and awareness. (Ibid, 136 italics in original)

Ingold continues, stating that our “sensory registers”—or, put simply, senses—“cooperate so closely, and with such overlap of function, that their respective contributions are impossible to tease apart” (Ibid, 136). Yet we tease and otherwise divide and allocate our senses in everyday life, voluntarily and involuntarily. We are not always ensounded. Who has not been overwhelmed by a flash of light, a captivating (or rank) odor, a savory bite of food, the soft yet rugged touch of a textile, or an arresting sound?

Cognitive scientists confirm this common sense view. In summarizing an exhaustive body of research on resource theories of attention, cognitive scientist Carryl L. Baldwin states “controversy still ensues over whether resources primarily stem from a single reserve or multiple pools” of cognitive and perceptual resources (2012, 73). “The most commonly held view” Baldwin continues, “is that of multiple reserves or pools of resources” (Ibid). These multiple “reserves or pools” also enable shifts in attention; Baldwin also notes that one sensory modality such as audition can deliberately preempt another sensory modality (Ibid). Recent research reviewing a

series of studies in this field affirms this view: Wahn and König conclude “generally, findings suggest that the attentional system flexibly allocates attentional resources depending on task demands” (2017, 83). To summarize, Ingold overlooks the possibility of sensory focus, of slicing up our perception of the environment we experience along the lines of the sensory pathways by which we enter into it: One can close their eyes or even stare blankly ahead while homing in on what the ears hear.

Strangely, Ingold’s essay makes no mention of any elements or principles of auditory perception such as sensory adaptation—the rapid subsuming of ambient sound to the periphery our attention and memory (Baldwin 2012, 36). In a familiar contemporary indoor environment for example, one’s ears can quickly ignore and forget HVAC sound, distant road noise, the hum of the refrigerator. Schafer suggests that such keynote sounds are often “not consciously perceived” but help characterize unique (and not-so-unique) soundscapes (1977, 272).

Indeed, Ingold’s aforementioned “*same*” world is not so much the same to everyone, even those within the same culture: Children and older adults have widely varying ranges and responses to audible frequencies (Baldwin 2012, 203-208), to say nothing of people with so-called hearing impairments and other neuro- and aurally diverse abilities as well as those wearing headphones. Ingold hints at this possible influence of altered and alternate perception—“the vast psychological literature on optical

illusions is unmatched by anything on the deceptions of the ear”—however his data-deficient assertion conflates quantity with quality.⁶

Ingold’s second objection and chief mistake is to assert that the “ears, just like the eyes, are organs of observation, not instruments of playback” (Ibid, 137), yet those “organs of observation” abet aural memory and reach deep into the brain where it is possible to remember and replay sound of varying durations (Baldwin 2012, 61-68). Soundscape composer and communications scholar Barry Truax reminds us

there are not separate parts of the brain either for memories, or for the processing of specific types of sound, although the brain’s so-called language centers seem to be particularly well developed for that purpose. What seems most remarkable is the ability of sound and music to trigger memories of complete contexts, whether through a memory walk, documentary recording or even audio advertising. (2017, 176)

Ingold’s nonetheless mechanistic view of the senses rooted in a perpetual present—and the body as an “undivided centre of movement and awareness” (2011, 136)—omits the possibility that we not only hear what is happening but that other sonic memories may also be evoked, remembered, and heard simultaneously (Snyder 2001, 69-79). This transtemporal approach is welcomed by Schafer in his broad definition of “soundscape” and as articulated above by Truax (2017, 176). Ingold’s attempt to

⁶ Ingold buttresses this claim in his book’s previous essay (2011, 128) by relying on a reference from 1999 (Ibid). Yet time-delimited search of the U.S. National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health database of papers and books published before the date of the first appearance of Ingold’s essay in 2007 yields 550 results for “optical illusion” and 750 results for “auditory illusion.” Searches of other databases yield similar outcomes that can hardly be described as “unmatched.” See <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/search/all/?term=%22auditory+illusion%22> and <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/search/all/?term=%22optical+illusion%22> Accessed October 6, 2019.

equate auditory and visual perception contradicts research which has established that humans remember what is heard much longer than what is seen:

The human auditory processing system has evolved in such a way that the auditory sensory store (referred to as echoic memory) is of much longer duration, relative to the visual sensory store (or iconic memory). (Baldwin 2012, 9).

Ingold's third objection—that sound is not the object but the medium of our perception—fails to account for the auditory perception of figure and ground. “When we look around on a fine day, we see a landscape bathed in sunlight, not a lightscape” (Ibid, 138), avers Ingold. But Baldwin reminds us “as with all sensory experiences, there is a limit to how many sounds the human can process at any given time” (2012, 51). One might see those aspects and elements of Ingold's proposed landscape in tandem with light; however just as some objects are larger than other objects and may command greater attention, louder, transient sounds—especially when unexpected—focus attention immediately (Ibid).

Ingold's assertion that “we do not hear rain, but hear in it” omits the possibility of hearing a rain shower at a short distance from within a well-roofed dwelling or further away, at a higher elevation when the rain soaks a valley. By contrast, Schafer in *The Tuning of the World* enfolds many concepts rooted in auditory perception as evidenced by his mentions, allusions, and discussion of ambient noise (1977, 86, 124-125); figure and ground (Ibid, 9, 98, 127, 151-152); and masking (Ibid, 95-96; 223-224) as well as his attempts, under the rubric of “Notation” to chart auditory perception of the soundscape (Ibid, 264-270).

Musicologist Friedlind Riedel contends that Ingold's "assertions about the materiality of sound and body are deceptive with regard to their universal applicability" (Riedel 2020, 27). History and culture seem to be excluded from Ingold's third objection, Riedel suggests, and instead "invoke both sound and ear in their phenomenal materiality as transhistorical and transcultural facts" (Ibid). The danger is that one kind of listening becomes the only or preferred kind of listening, such as what Sterne named "audile technique" (2003, 90).

Constructed as a "discrete activity" (Ibid, 93) audile technique in Western culture "articulated listening and the ear to logic, analytic thought, industry, professionalism, capitalism, individualism, and mastery" (Ibid, 95) in the medical and other professions. Ingold overlooks what Steven Feld defines as acoustemology, "all-species way to talk about the emplaced copresence and co-relations of multiple sounds and sources" across cultures (Feld 2012, xxvii). Feld coined and employed acoustemology as a

way to talk about how, within a few seconds, and often in the absence of coordinated visual cues, Bosavi people know quite precisely so many features of the rain forest world, like the time of day, the season, the weather history. (Ibid)

Feld reminds us that the tendency to essentialize listening—or in Sterne's parlance construct audile technique—is not exclusive to the West:

Kaluli culture rationalizes nature's sound as its own, then "turns it over" to project it in the form of what is "natural" and what is "human nature." (Feld 2012, 268)

Ingold's fourth objection is that the soundscape, "modelled on the concept of the landscape" (2011, 138) fails to acknowledge sound as a medium and thus places undue emphasis "on the surfaces of the world in which we live" (Ibid). This objection is belied by a steady stream of sound studies articles and monographs that entangle sound and the soundscape with other sensory, cultural, and material aspects of the world.⁷

In his article "Rethinking the Soundscape," Kelman (2010) offers two notable objections. "Schafer's soundscape is not a neutral field of aural investigation at all," he contends

his soundscape is lined with ideological and ecological messages about which sounds 'matter' and which do not; it is suffused with instructions about how people ought to listen.... (Ibid, 244)

⁷ The following is drawn from my list of Works Cited and is by no means an exhaustive survey: Birdsall 2012 examines life under Nazi Germany through aspects of the soundscape, earwitnessing, and imagery. Bull 2003 examines "the spaces we inhabit through the automobile" (357) via the soundscape of radio, playback systems, and singing. Casadei 2019 analyzes the historical role of a field recording of a political protest as judicial evidence and a perturbation of musical history. Corbin 1994 focuses on village bells as a locus of territorial, political, and cultural activity. Feld 2012 chronicles the central role of sound and listening in the life of the Kaluli people of Papua New Guinea. Hempton 2009 employs the intersection of sound and territory as the basis for sonic preservation and activism. Kun 2005 posits the concept of the audiotopia where "music functions like a possible utopia for the listener" (2005, 2) and delineates cultural space. Jackson 2015 examines how the field recordings of Ultra-red document the dispossession of working class inhabitants due to gentrification. Krause 2008 deploys soundscape recording as evidence for the destruction of ecosystems. Manabe 2019 charts the interplay between U.S. policing and protest chants in the first half of 2017. Mondelli 2016 coins the term "songscape" and probes the roles of songs during the French Revolution. Ochoa Gautier 2014 exhumes archival documents to assess the role of listening in shaping the understanding of nature and culture in 19th century Columbia. Picker 2003 examines "the close relationship between Victorian sciences and technologies of sound, on the one hand, and literary and cultural representations of sound, voice, and hearing, on the other" (6). Rath 2003 connects "how people heard their worlds in early America" (3) to surviving in the wilderness, relations with indigenous peoples, and church acoustics. Schmidt 2000 traces the rise of 18th and 19th century American religious practices through voices of God and angels, hymns, and earwitness accounts of malign spirits. Schwartz 2011 is a magisterial atlas tracing the influence of sound and listening in Western culture. Sterne 2003 investigates the mutual influence of sound-related technology (stethoscope, phonograph, telephone, etc.) and resulting practices of listening. Thompson 2002 chronicles and critiques "the attempts to measure, define, alter, and disseminate sound in twentieth-century public environments" such as concert halls, auditoriums, motion picture soundstages in the United States (Hilmes 2005, 255).

The Tuning of the World is indeed “lined with ideological and ecological messages” because, as Schafer points out (1977, 75-76), and contemporary research continues to confirm, that loud sounds, especially “flat-line” and “muscle sounds” in Schafer’s terminology, inflict physiological damage to the human body and overall well-being. In summarizing a clutch of recent research in his article “Is Noise Pollution the Next Big Public-Health Crisis?” David Owen states “hearing damage and other problems caused by excessively loud sound are increasingly common worldwide” (2019).⁸

For all of the decibel charts, tables, and prescriptions that permeate *The Tuning of the World*, Schafer, in my view, does not devote enough time to the empirically proven physiological dangers of loud sounds. Research had been well underway on this question in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Bragdon 1979, 1-47); for example, *Physiological Effects of Noise* (Welch and Welch, 1970)—a massive 363-page tome of conference proceedings of “an international symposium on the Extra-Auditory Physiological Effects of Audible Sound” held in Boston the previous year (Ibid, iii)—teems with research documenting the various ways sound can injure the cardiovascular, endocrine, nervous, and reproductive systems. While Schafer was director of the World Soundscape Project (WSP), the organization did publish a 20-page white paper, “A Survey of Community Noise By-Laws in Canada,” which outlines the physiological dangers of sound (1972, 3-5), however *The Tuning of the World*, as Kelman notes, focuses mainly on prescriptive solutions not descriptive facts (2010, 244).

⁸ For a detailed survey, see *Noise and the Brain* (Eggermont 2013).

Kelman exaggerates somewhat when he claims that *The Tuning of the World* is “suffused with instructions about how people ought to listen” (2010, 244). According to Schafer, the ability to focus on the soundscape may be taught and consciously acquired through what he calls “ear-cleaning” (1977, 208). This “systematic program for training the ears to listen more discriminately to sounds” (Ibid, 272) appears piecemeal—and hardly “suffused”—in *Ear Cleaning* (1967) and *The Tuning of the World* (1977). Schafer systematized ear-cleaning much later in *A Sound Education*, subtitled *100 Exercises in Listening and Sound-Making* (1992).

Kelman’s chiding use of “instructions” should be greeted with caution: Schafer’s directions are open-ended and welcome unexpected results. Inspired by the Basic Course at the Bauhaus, Schafer’s ear-cleaning exercises “allowed for as many solutions as there were participants” (Schafer 1993, 106). The best-known “ear-cleaning” exercise is soundwalking, defined by composer and theorist of soundscape composition Hildegard Westerkamp as “any excursion whose main purpose is listening to the environment” and “meant to be an intense introduction into the experience of uncompromised listening” whose “main purpose is to rediscover and reactivate our sense of hearing” (1974, 18). Her colleague Barry Truax states “the best way, in fact, to engage with [the] acoustic complexity [of the soundscape] is soundwalking” (Truax 2010, 3’17”). My soundwalking practice will be discussed in the chapter “A Length of Sound.”

Schafer's definition of "soundscape" in *The Tuning of the World* as "any acoustic field of study" (1977, 7), "a field of interactions, even when particularized into its component sound events" (131), and "the sonic environment" (274)⁹ remains, in Kelman's lamenting opinion, flexible enough to prompt several authors of sound studies monographs to "redefine or reframe it for its own purposes. In this way, they each benefit from the evocative term" (2010, 223). This viewpoint coincides with Schafer's reflective statement that "I used it as a neutral word to imply all or any acoustic environment that one might temporarily frame for study" (1993, 104).

Contemporary scholars employ Schafer's "frame" in many ways, depending on their academic discipline. Architects specializing in acoustics (Aletta and Astolfi, 2018; Kang and Schulte-Fortkamp 2016; Lindborg 2016; Aletta et al. 2016) generally follow Schafer and formulate nearly congruent definitions of the soundscape such as "[the] acoustic environment as perceived or experienced and/or understood by a person or people, in context" (Aletta and Astolfi, 2018, 195) and

the human perceptual construct of the acoustic environment of any place, and on the planning, management, manipulation, or design of the acoustic environment of a place to change human response to it. (Brown et al, 2016, 8)

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) enshrined Schafer's definition in ISO 12913-1:2014. "Reviewed and confirmed" in 2020 by the ISO, the entry for ISO 12913-1:2014

⁹ McCartney 2003 adds another definition of the soundscape from the book jacket of Schafer 1977, "the ever-present array of noises, pleasant and unpleasant, loud and soft, heard or ignored, that we all live with," however jacket copy is almost never written by the author in American publishing. This definition should not be attributed to Schafer.

provides a definition and a conceptual framework of soundscape. It explains factors relevant for measurement and reporting in soundscape studies, as well as for planning, design and management of soundscape. (ISO 2020).

In their scholarly glossary *Keywords in Sound*, ethnomusicologists David Novak and Matt Sakakeeny do not include an entry for “soundscape” among a list which includes two lesser-known neologisms, “acoustemology” and “phonography,” amid entries for “echo,” “listening,” “music,” “synthesis,” etc. Novak and Sakakeeny claim that Schafer did not “explicitly recognize the constitutive differences that participate in the ‘soundscape’ as a multivalent field of sounds with divergent social identities, individual creativities and affordances, biodiversities and differing abilities” (Ibid 2015, 7).

Nonetheless, architectural researchers have employed the soundscape to examine “constitutive differences” (Ibid) in the soundscape’s role in “individuals with severe or profound intellectual disabilities;” elders living in nursing homes; and comprehension “between native and non-native listeners” (Aletta and Astolfi, 2018, 196-197).

Indeed, musicologists, ethnomusicologists and others influenced by critical theory employ the term “soundscape” as a conceptual entryway to examine “the role sound plays in formations of social difference” (Novak and Sakakeeny 2015, 7). In *Black Soundscapes White Stages*, Edwin C. Hill Jr. observes that the “soundscape’s inscription constitutes a critical and epistemological gesture of inclusion and

exclusion, marking the valued from the valueless, meaningful from meaningless” (Ibid 2013, 14). Hill mistakenly adds that “Schafer, and even Kelman, insist that the term soundscape designates sounds of the natural environment and not human sounds” (Ibid), an erroneous assertion refuted by entire chapters in *The Tuning of the World* (Schafer 1977, 43-99). Later in *Black Soundscapes White Stages*, Hill reverts, perhaps unwittingly, to Schafer’s definition of the soundscape when describing the “broader soundscape” of the 1935 film *Princesse Tam Tam* as

full of multiple languages, accents, and broken speech, hurled insults and slaps to the face, clapping hands, slammed and knocked on doors, flashing bulbs and ringing phones, car crashes and other beatings (Ibid, 79)

Ethnomusicologist Ana Marià Ochoa Gautier and her colleagues David W. Samuels, Louise Meintjes, and Thomas Porcello in their 2012 article, “Towards a Sounded Anthropology,” declare that Schafer’s concept of the soundscape “has advantages for anthropologists” (Samuels et al. 2010, 330). The soundscape is

a publicly circulating entity that is a produced effect of social practices, politics, and ideologies while also being implicated in the shaping of those practices, politics, and ideologies. Soundscape opens possibilities for anthropologists to think about the enculturated nature of sound, the techniques available for collecting and thinking about sound, and the material spaces of performance and ceremony that are used or constructed for the purpose of propagating sound. (Ibid)

Curiously, Ochoa Gautier’s 2014 monograph, *Aurality: Listening and Knowledge in Nineteenth Century Colombia* (2014), neither employs the term “soundscape” nor any discussion of Schafer. Instead his name is misspelled as “Schaffer” (Ochoa Gautier 2014, 77); Schafer only appears as an uncited epigraph to the book’s second chapter

(Ibid): “History is a songbook for anyone who would listen to it” (Schafer 2003, 15). Ochoa Gautier’s entry for “silence” in *Keywords in Sound* asserts that “R. Murray Schafer’s evolutionary notion of the soundscape” is “where the sounds and silences of nature are gradually polluted through the noisy rise of industrial civilization” (Ochoa Gautier 2015, 187). This baffling eliding of the Edenic to the Industrial Revolution overlooks Schafer’s chapter “The Rural Soundscape” (1977, 43-52) in *The Tuning of the World* particularly the section “Sounds of the Farm” (Ibid, 48-49).

Recent texts such as *Remapping Sound Studies in the Global South* (Steingo and Sykes 2019) and Jérôme Camal’s *Creolized Aurality* (2019) consign Schafer to the background. The anthologized authors of *Remapping Sound Studies in the Global South* employ “soundscape” casually and sporadically without critique (Steingo and Sykes 2019, 49, 137, 234, 238, 238); Camal does so too (2019, 37, 152, 155, 175) and states “the term here encompasses both ‘natural’ and human-made sounds” (2019, 37).

Progeny of “soundscape”

Another byproduct of Schafer’s open definition is the beneficent profusion of terms that detail, distill, or clarify “soundscape” and inhabit Schafer’s proposed “middle ground between science, society and the arts” (1977, 4). Here are just a few: The “sonoric landscape” devised by Richard Leppert to examine the role of music-making and class in 18th and 19th century paintings (1993, 18); Josh Kun’s concept of the “audiotopia” where “music functions like a possible utopia for the listener” (2005, 2); the “songscape” coined by Peter Mondelli to assess the role of anthems and other songs during the French Revolution (2016, 144); Bernie Krause’s and Stuart Gage’s

classification system of subsets of the soundscape: biophony, geophony, and anthrophony (Krause 2008, 73-75); the “voicescapes” of radio artists Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean characterized as “multidimensional and multidirectional projections of the voice into space” with “their own kinds of cultural geographies” (2003, 113); and the sonosphere, developed by Pauline Oliveros who defined it as “the sonorous or sonic envelope of the earth” (2006, 481).

Kelman may be frustrated by “soundscape” noting “even for the writers who critically engage with Schafer’s term, the term itself proves elusive” (2010, 226) and “fraught and inconsistent” (228), however the profusion of soundscape-like terms is congruent with Schafer’s own practice of offering multiple definitions not only in *The Tuning of the World* at the start and end of the book (1977, 7, 131, and 274-275) but in later writings, too.

In *A Sound Education* (1992) Schafer reframes the soundscape as a collective experience in an echo of his notion of the “acoustic community” in *The Tuning of the World* (1977, 215): “I call the acoustic environment the soundscape, by which I mean the total field of sounds wherever we are” (Schafer 1992, 8). Media theorist Sabine Breitsameter quotes Schafer in a 1990s radio interview: “To see the landscape with one’s ears” (Breitsameter 2013, 24), an echo of Schafer’s rallying cry “There is no ‘land’ in a soundscape” (1967, 13) while shifting away from the visual towards the aural. Emphasizing the temporal aspect of the soundscape, Schafer remarked:

We have to think that in certain societies there will be a larger vocabulary to describe sounds. But there may not be a word to describe everything that you hear during

your entire lifetime. That's the soundscape. (De Caro and Daró 2008, 26).

Vexed by the absence of the political, Kelman complains that “Schafer’s vast and slippery explanation of the soundscape offers little or no workable model for studying the social life of sound” (2010, 228). Schafer attempts to rebut such long-standing criticisms:

To have arranged things in a more linear progression, to have given them a methodology, would have been to surrender to the visually dominant culture and its love of systems that stands in opposition to the uncontrollable world of sounds. (Schafer 1993, 8)

Yet a close reading of *The Tuning of the World* shows Schafer serving up multiple and eclectic methodologies, workable models which include objectively measurable and detailed research such as isobel maps, sound event diagrams, and tables of opinion surveys (1977, 264-269) albeit with the proviso “no silent projection of a soundscape can ever be adequate” (Ibid, 132). Conjoined to Schafer’s conception of the soundscape, these methods have since “found a fertile home...in urban studies” (Samuels et al. 2010, 331).

At least one method has proven prophetic: Under Schafer’s direction, the World Soundscape Project in the mid-1970s created a computer database of earwitness accounts and “sound references in literature” which “allows data retrieval and also analysis of trends among specific sounds or types of sounds in any time and geographical region” (Truax 1977, 5). Although primitive by today’s standards, this computer-correlated corpus is a forerunner of Google’s Ngram Viewer, a searchable

database of approximately 189 billion words (Davies 2011), and helpful forensic tool in the next chapter's excavation of "earwitness."

Politics, power and the soundscape

Schafer's "vast and slippery explanation of the soundscape" (Kelman 2010, 228) includes a crucial political insight: Listening not only connects us to living things through the acoustic community, but careful ears can locate relationships of power. In his seminal text *Noise*, Jacques Attali offers a rigorous argument of his succinct formulation, "Nothing essential happens in the absence of noise" (Attali 2009 [1977], 3).

By comparison, the vast and scattershot nature of *The Tuning of the World*, later described by Schafer as "a digest of research" (1993, 8) makes it easy to overlook this insight: "The soundscape is no accidental byproduct of society" cautions Schafer, "rather it is a deliberate construction by its creators" (1977, 237). This view is rooted in acoustic ecology, defined by Schafer as "the study of the effects of the acoustic environment or soundscape on the physical responses or behavioral characteristics of creatures living within it" (1977, 271).

Under the rubric "Noise Equals Power" Schafer is again explicit: "The association of Noise and power has never really been broken in the human imagination... Wherever Noise is granted immunity from human intervention, there will be found a seat of power" (Ibid, 76). This contention emerged from Schafer's political activism in the 1960s; he recalls "giving anti-noise workshops in the Vancouver area, because I was a

member of the Citizens Committee against noise” (De Caro and Daró 2008, 26).

Schafer also suggests the soundscape harbors a soft-border solution, one which may prove useful at a time when national, religious, and ethnic borders continue to be politically and militarily contested.

The definition of space by acoustic means is much more ancient than the establishment of property lines and fences; and as private property becomes increasingly threatened in the modern world, it may be that principles regulating the complex network of overlapping and interpenetrating acoustic spaces as observed by birds and animals will again have greater significance for the human community. (1977, 34)

According to Schafer, the soundscape proffers a fulcrum for political listening by asking and answering “Who is heard?” “What are they listening to?” and “What are they ignoring or refusing to listen to?” (2003, 14).

Peter Cusack is a London-based sound artist, researcher, and improviser, who asks Schafer’s questions implicitly and explicitly in projects such as *Your Favourite London Sounds* (2001) and *Sounds from Dangerous Places* (2012). Cusack describes his work as “sonic journalism” (2013), notably in several projects in which locals are asked to discuss their “favourite sounds” of the soundscape (Ibid). These questions and the resulting recordings can have political implications, as Cusack recalls

Several people mentioned that hearing the national anthem played in the morning in Tiananmen Square was something that they can relate to in Beijing, and that became a very important sound to them. And so the Chinese national anthem was mentioned quite often as a favourite sound by Chinese people. I don’t think that anyone in the UK has ever mentioned the national anthem as a favourite sound, and certainly nobody in Berlin and nobody in Prague. (Prikrylova, 2013)

Cusack adds, “you learn a lot about the city by asking about its sound. And you learn different things about it than if you’re asking questions about how it looks, its visual impact” (Prikrylova, 2013). The political is audible: In *A Sound Education* Schafer asks “Are some sounds discriminated against culturally so that they are not heard at all? (An African once said, ‘Apartheid is a sound!’)” (1992, 7). Sabine Breitsameter, the German translator of *The Tuning of the World*, encapsulates the political critique inherent in Schafer’s concept of the soundscape: “Any soundscape’s manifestation points to the natural, cultural, technical, and social conditions of a society and refers back, then to the latter’s priorities, deficits and power structures” (Breitsameter 2013, 26).

Despite the recent and impressive etymological archaeology of the term “soundscape” by Sterne (2013; 2015) and Picker (2019) as well as the pointed and useful critiques of Ingold (2011) and Kelman (2010), an observation by the pioneering field recordist Bernie Krause still stands: Schafer’s research and open, flexible constellation of terms and ideas “left open the advancement of new language to describe acoustic occurrences as yet unexplained in our limited sonic vocabularies” (Krause 2008, 73). Sound artist and scholar Brandon LaBelle states that Schafer added “a refined vocabulary for enhancing and understanding of the materiality of sound and its impact” (2015, 201).

Michael Bull, editor of *The Auditory Culture Reader* (2003) and *The Routledge Companion to Sound Studies* (Bull 2019), remains adamant about the significance of Schafer's contribution:

[R.] Murray Schafer produced an innovative toolkit for the study of sound enabling scholars to listen and hear the world in fresh, innovative and useful ways. The articulation of concepts such as soundscape, signal, soundmark, keynote sounds and flat line sounds enabled researchers to place sounds within time and space like never before. (2019, xxii).

Schafer's open approach to the soundscape and the other concepts in *The Tuning of the World* remains rooted in orality, a refusal "to surrender to the visually dominant culture and its love of systems" (Schafer 1993, 8) which I discuss in the next chapter vis à vis Schafer's concept of the earwitness.

My use of soundscape throughout this dissertation will hew to Schafer's flexible notion of the sonic environment, not only, according to Peter Cusack "to judge how far we are from the events and to ask how we might feel and react in the circumstances" (2013) but also to find Schafer's proverbial "seat of power" (1977, 76). In addition, the soundscape's "uncontrollable world of sounds" (Schafer 1993, 8) will serve as a lever when I challenge and protest some of the "priorities, deficits and power structures" of society in the sonic as well as written portions of this dissertation.

On Phonography: Earwitnessing and the Evidence of Experience

This chapter begins by excavating the historical usage of “earwitness,” examining its revival by R. Murray Schafer in his foundational book, *The Tuning of the World* (1977). Next, I explore how earwitnessing remains bound by and mediated through what Walter J. Ong calls “secondary orality,” a form of orality “based permanently on the use of writing and print” (2002 [1982], 133). I dissect Schafer’s use of earwitness by drawing upon critiques by Carolyn Birdsall (2012) along with close readings of texts by Schafer (1967; 1969; 1970; 1973; 1974a; 1974b; 1977; 1992; 1993; 2003; 2012) and his colleague Barry Truax (1974; 1977; 1984; 2013). I relate earwitnessing to my practice through secondary orality, as my field notes, slates, and memoirs¹⁰ form the substrate of the written portion of this dissertation. I then probe how my earwitness testimonies—particularly my earliest manifesto on field recording—contest an additional ideological system central to my work in the audio portion of this dissertation: The contemporary practice of field recording known as “phonography.”

Phonography is the chief concept through which I theorize my work. In this chapter, I trace and examine my practice of phonography through four paths: Various historical usages and contemporary meanings of the term “phonography;” an examination of the discourse surrounding phonography in an online community devoted to field recording and central to my formation as an artist—the phonography email listserv—in the early 2000s; a comparison of phonography to soundscape composition as

¹⁰ “Memoirs” not only mean written documents but mainly refer to transcribed recordings of conference paper presentations from which I extemporize with an outline or skeletal script. These paper presentations are listed in the Colophon.

defined and articulated by Hildegard Westerkamp (2000; 2002), Andra McCartney (2002), and Barry Truax (1984; 2000); and finally, in critiquing extracts from my first manifesto on field recording, “What is an aural safari?” (DeLaurenti 2001b), I position my practice of phonography as a form of earwitnessing.

Origins of “earwitness”

“Eyewitness” and “earwitness” not only emerged in written English at the same time in 1539, but appeared in the same publication, and on the same page.¹¹ Chiefly remembered for translating and publishing an edition of The Bible, Richard Taverner (1505-1575) enshrined the two terms in his translation of Latin proverbs by the scholar and humanist Erasmus, *Proverbes or adagies with newe addicions gathered out of the Chiliades of Erasmus* (Erasmus 1539).

Taverner’s translations have long been suspected for using what Early Modern English specialist Olive B. White diplomatically deems “a medley of methods” (1944, 942). She notes that Taverner “the disciple sometimes outstrips the calm pace of the teacher” in this case, Erasmus (Ibid, 940). Yet Taverner renders the sense of Erasmus’

¹¹ “ear-witness, n.” *OED Online*. June 2019. Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com.proxy.wm.edu/view/Entry/59071?result=1&rskey=cklCvQ&> Accessed August 15, 2019.

“eyewitness, n.” *OED Online*. June 2019. Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com.proxy.wm.edu/view/Entry/67357?rskey=iDcDvu&result=1&isAdvanced=false>
 Accessed August 15, 2019.

The OED cites the page of this edition as folio iii^v (i.e. the verso of folio iii). I chose instead to cite the printed foliation in the upper right corner of the page, the verso of folio 43, i.e., folio xliii^v.

According to *Working with Foliation and Signatures* by the Bodleian Library at the University of Oxford, numbers and letters for folios and other pagination in incunabula “were often skipped or repeated, and very often the gatherings weren’t signed or numbered at all,” (2013) hence the citation of the actual page number.

original adage, “Pluris est oculatus testis unus quam auriti decem,” (Erasmus 1539, folio xliii^v)¹² faithfully. Taverner then appends an explanation, distinguishing between “eyewitness” and the putatively less reliable “earwitness.”

One eyewitness is of more value than ten earwitnesses; that is to say, far more credit is to be given to such as reported the thing they saw with their eyes, than to such as spoken but by hearsay. (Ibid)

In the few extant examples from Taverner’s time, the meaning of “hearsay” ranges from directly hearing to secondhand knowledge; the uncertain and variable use of the term may have heralded or merely marked a long-term shift towards favoring the visible. But it is possible to ascertain definitively that “eyewitness” has become far more prevalent than “earwitness” since 1800. This radical divergence is potently illustrated by the Ngram Viewer, a searchable database of Google’s corpus of approximately 189 billion words (Davies 2011) and 5 million books in English. In the year 2000, “eyewitness,” “earwitness,” and their orthographic variants appear in approximately .0002% and .000001% of Google’s corpus respectively, a ratio of 200 to 1 in favor of “eyewitness.”

The disparate vertical scaling of each graph (see figures 1 and 2 below) emphasizes the dramatic difference in the prevalence of “eyewitness” and “earwitness” since 1800. These graphs were created with a “smoothing factor” of 3; smoothing averages results for a more readable graph across longer spans of time. I present the graphs separately: Combining the results of “earwitness (All)” and “eyewitness (All)” yields

¹² The original in Early Modern English: “One eye wytnesse, is of more value, then tenne eare wytnesses, yt is to saye, farre more credite is to be gyven to suche as reaporte the thyng they sawe wyth theyr eyes, tha to such as speake but by hear saye.”

a graph so illegible that the results for “*earwitness (All)*” become extremely difficult to read due to the comparably minuscule usage of “*earwitness.*”¹³



Figure 1 “*eye-witness*” was replaced with “*eye – witness*” to match how Google processes the book texts; accessed April 10, 2019.



Figure 2. “*ear-witness*” was replaced with “*ear – witness*” to match how Google processes the book texts; accessed April 10, 2019.

A few caveats: Google’s corpus of 5 million scanned books does not comprise what has been estimated by Google and other researchers to be 134 million distinctly-titled books in all languages published worldwide since Gutenberg (Panganiban 2016). A 3.7% sample size of a total population might appear to be inadequate in the age of Big

¹³ Another corpus, “Early English Books Online” which “contains 755 million words in 25,368 texts from the 1470s to the 1690s,” misses Taverner’s use entirely. <https://www.english-corpora.org/eebo/> Accessed June 5, 2019.

Data, but countless studies have been conducted, reviewed, accepted, and cited in the humanities and sciences with far tinier proportional sample sizes. Following standard statistical equations (Smith 2014), the ideal sample size of 134 million distinctly-titled books in all languages published worldwide since Gutenberg with 99% confidence level and a 1% margin of error is 16,575. Thus 5 million is a more than adequate, if not redundant, sample size. Given that the United States publishes 40% of the world's printed material (Panganiban 2016), the actual sample size percentage is likely somewhat higher.

Determining an exact number of documents in the Google corpus containing “earwitness” and its variants is impossible due to repetitions of any search term(s) within individual texts and very infrequent yet possible OCR errors (Zhang 2015). Significantly, it must be noted that despite weeding out duplicates, Google's algorithm neither tracks the total number of copies in circulation (Panganiban 2016) nor accounts for the social interchange between all texts (books, newspapers, letters, etc.) and oral language.

Earwitnessing and orality

Nonetheless, the above graphs potently illustrate one example of the drastic divergence between “eyewitness” and “earwitness,” buttressing arguments by historians of Western culture such as Martin Jay, who believes “the dawn of the modern era was accompanied by the vigorous privileging of vision” (1993, 69) and Walter J. Ong, who formulated the notion of “secondary orality” a form of orality “based permanently on the use of writing and print” (2002 [1982], 133). Ong emphasizes

that to this day no concepts have been formed for effectively, let alone gracefully, conceiving of oral art as such without reference, conscious or unconscious, to writing. (Ibid, 10)

In *How Early America Sounded*, Richard Cullen Rath reiterates Ong's idea elegantly.

“Orality is itself the product of literate minds. So-called oral cultures would have no need for the term” (2003, 3). Summarizing Ong as well as Ong's mentor Marshall McLuhan, historian Leigh Eric Schmidt quantifies the elongated transition from orality to literacy which

gradually transformed people from engaged speakers and listeners into silent scanners of written words, isolated readers in the linear world of texts. The print revolution of the early modern period sharply accelerated this bending toward visuality, this hearing loss, as books, newspapers, tracts, broadsides, charts, and Bibles flooded the cultural marketplace. Words became printed objects more than breathed speech, things to be seen rather than voices to be heard. (2000, 16)

Yet throughout Western culture, orality still plays a decisive role in literacy. “Natural writing” theorizes Jacques Derrida, “is immediately united to voice and breath” and close “to the voice one hears upon retreating into oneself” (1976, 17). Georgina Kleege, a legally blind scholar and pioneer of disability studies who reads books through recordings (1997, 1), suggests that when children are read to, they “start to internalize the sounds and rhythms of spoken language” (Ibid, 3); this is one example of Ong's contention that words on a “page are not real words but coded symbols whereby a properly informed human being can evoke in his or her consciousness real words, in actual or imagined sound” (2002 [1982], 73). Recent research confirms that

most children soon “learn to read out loud and then gradually subvocalize until they are reading completely silently” (Ferneyhough 2016).

Audio recording and playback, arguably the dominant medium of oral art today, requires writing to be created, identified, shared, (e.g. to press “Play” or ►), and then heard. In their survey of “early tape recorders on the American market,” musicologists Andrea F. Bohlman and Peter McMurray discovered

that the precise history of buttons was not a historical given but rather a development that brought together manufacturing, design, language, and iconography in early tape recorders. (2017, 15)¹⁴

This form of secondary orality, “based permanently on the use of writing and print,” observes Ong, remains “essential for the manufacture and operation of the equipment and for its use as well” (2002 [1982], 133). Making or playing a recording requires literacy, even if you never read the manual. Similarly, discussing the earwitness and any kind of earwitness testimony binds us to—and remains mediated by—writing.

Earwitnessing: revival and research

In the following section, I examine R. Murray Schafer’s revival and definition of “earwitness.” Distinguishing between history and historiography, I dissect Schafer’s

¹⁴ Plates 1 and 2 in Ahlers 1965 show inconsistent text and iconography among tape recorder buttons made in the early and mid-1960s by the same manufacturer, Norelco.

Although buttons and their icons have since become standardized on digital audio recorders by Sony, Zoom, Tascam et al., changing any settings entails entering multi-level menu screens whose features and access route varies by manufacturer and from model to model. Reading the manual is inescapable.

use of the term by drawing upon critiques by media theorist Carolyn Birdsall along with close readings of texts by Schafer and his colleague Barry Truax.

In *The Tuning of the World*, R. Murray Schafer revived “earwitness,” either in tandem with, or decisively spurring, the minuscule resurgence depicted at the end of the 1970s in figure 2, above. Schafer defines an earwitness as “one who testifies or can testify to what he or she has heard” (1977, 272). Such a writer, declares Schafer, “is trustworthy only when writing about sounds directly experienced and intimately known” (Ibid, 8). Mediated by literacy, earwitnesses are heard then recorded with writing or audio recording.

Schafer’s insistence that an earwitness testifies or can testify only to what he or she has heard excludes a vital aspect of historiography, specifically how and why second-hand or otherwise indirect earwitnesses imagined and described sounds and soundscapes (Smith 2004, xi). “Writing about other places and times usually results in counterfeit descriptions,” claims Schafer (1977, 8), forgetting or possibly regretting that the first 13 pages of *The Vancouver Soundscape* (Schafer 1973) teem with such indirect, time-travelling, trans-historical earwitness testimonies.

How and *when* something is remembered can be just as important as *what* is remembered, especially when the latter is temporally irretrievable. In her assessment of *Proverbes*—the book in which the words “eyewitness” and “earwitness” first appeared—Olive B. White avers that Taverner’s inconsistent translation of Erasmus mainly records “significant evidence for the history of ideas in 16th-century England”

(1944, 943). As a historiographer, White concludes that Taverner's translation of Erasmus remains much more historically important than what "a faithful translation could offer" (Ibid).

Parsing the nature of history is beyond the scope of this dissertation, however distinguished historian E. H. Carr aptly encapsulates the subjective nature of history and historiography:

When we attempt to answer the question 'What is history?' our answer, consciously or unconsciously, reflects our own position in time, and forms part of our answer to the broader question, what view we take of the society in which we live. (1987, 8)

Earwitnesses preserve historical—what was chronicled—as well as historiographical—"the writings of historians" (Jenkins 2004 [1991], 7)—evidence. Examining the latter requires additional careful attention. Media theorist Carolyn Birdsall, who interviewed earwitnesses decades after the fall of the Third Reich for her book *Nazi Soundscapes*, cautions "Schafer's conception of the earwitness seems to sustain a fantasy of unmediated access to past sounds" (2012, 12). Ironically, Schafer becomes a mediating earwitness within his own text, directing and teaching the reader how to listen to Hesiod (Schafer 1977, 21-22) and his other assembled earwitnesses, ancient and contemporary.

Schafer "hears" earwitnesses through the lens of literacy. He passes over the possibility that such earwitness testimonies might be a form of schizophrenic, which he originally christened as "the cutting free of sound from its natural origins" (1969,

46) and later modified to denote the separation of “an original sound and its electroacoustic reproduction” (1977, 273). In any case, we thus read these testimonies away from their community of origin and quite probably, apart from our own community.

Sensitive to the perils of schizophonia, historian Hillel Schwartz, author of *Making Noise: From Babel to the Big Bang and Beyond*, requests that his book be read aloud (2011, 6), perhaps an echo of Schafer’s exhortation in ... *When Words Sing* to “perform this book with your voice” (1970, i). Performing *Making Noise* transforms a magisterial atlas into earwitnessing sound poetry; “for listening to spoken words forms hearers into a group, a true audience,” a community rooted in a collective experience of sound (Ong 2002 [1982], 133), which Schafer calls “the acoustic community” (1977, 215).

“Earwitness,” unlike other Schaferian terms such as “schizophonia,” “acoustic design,” “clairaudience,” “ear cleaning,” “hi-fi” and “lo-fi soundscape,” “keynote,” and “sacred noise,” does not appear in the index of the 1977 American edition of *The Tuning of the World*, nor in its 1994 reprint.¹⁵ Schafer does include “earwitness” in his “Glossary of Soundscape Terms” in *The Tuning of the World*. This glossary logs “only neologisms or acoustic terms” for which Schafer has “adapted and given special meanings” (1977, 271). Schafer was unaware of the seemingly coeval origin of “eyewitness” and “earwitness.” In a 2007 interview, Schafer asserts “Ear witness

¹⁵ The usage of “earwitness” by contemporary scholars ranges from the misconstrued such as “Earwitnessing is an active concept that entails engaging the ear in the pursuit of truth and carefully adjudicating ambiguous information” (Botelho 2009, 2) to a single syllable variant of eyewitness (Garfield 1996, 100).

[sic], for example, comes from eyewitness” (De Caro and Daró 2008, 27) and continues:

Everybody up until that time had been gathering eyewitness information, but no one had ever tried asking people about the sounds they heard: how sounds had changed during their lifetime, what they thought about them and so forth. (Ibid)

The absence of “earwitness” from the index suggests that it is an editorial oversight or so obvious enough as to make indexing futile, comparable to indexing “music” in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Regardless, this omission exemplifies the mediating and blurring, if not obfuscatory, lens of literacy: The extensive presence of earwitnessing throughout *The Tuning of the World* suggests that Schafer finds the term to be self-evident; thus the conspicuous substitution of near-countless examples for any detailed investigation of the origins and nature of earwitnessing.¹⁶

Heard as a peerless raconteur of sound and listening, Schafer himself is the most prevalent earwitness in *The Tuning of the World*. Schafer subsequently described *Tuning* as “a digest of research” (1993, 8), an accurate assay of the panoply of earwitnesses ranging from ancient Greek poets (1977, 16) to students in his classroom (Ibid, 23).¹⁷ Regardless of accuracy, eye- and earwitnesses provide historians with significant, potentially primary source material, ranging from quotes and accounts to

¹⁶ In the flagship journal of acoustic ecology, *Soundscape: The Journal of Acoustic Ecology*, various forms of “earwitness” only appear in six of twenty-one issues published from 2000 to 2017—despite the presence of earwitness testimonies in every issue. Due to the rotating editorship of *Soundscape*, “earwitness” is rendered as “ear witness” as well as “earwitness,” contingent on the author and practice of the editor.

¹⁷ In *The New Soundscape* (Schafer 1969) Schafer engages his students in earwitnessing, transcribing their responses throughout the 65-page text on pages 12-13, 24-25, 31-37 and 39-47.

distillable, germane data—but an articulated critical framework is essential to connecting to and re-hearing earwitnesses.

Schafer’s colleague, Barry Truax, was a core member of the World Soundscape Project (WSP), founded in 1969 (Truax 1974, 38).¹⁸ Upon joining the WSP in 1973 (Truax 2013, 58), Truax worked directly with earwitnesses while serving as one of four research assistants on *The Vancouver Soundscape* (Schafer 1973, 1). Recalling the collection and analysis of earwitness testimonies for the WSP’s *Vancouver Soundscape* project, Truax states

frequently the memories of older people about the sounds of the past are amazingly vivid even after decades. The way in which sounds are stored in memory, not separately, but in association with their original context, betrays a fundamental aspect of the listening process. (1984, 17)

Rather than perpetuate Schafer’s idyllic fantasy of unmediated access to the past, Truax examines earwitness accounts not only as history but also as historiographical texts in an analytic, close reading of the remembered soundscape in *Acoustic Communication* (1984, 17-19). He utilizes the accounts of how Vancouver sounded (Schafer 1973; Truax 1984) as case studies that “exemplify three modes of listening in the traditional soundscape” (Truax 1984, 71). Truax concludes that such earwitness accounts “produced essentially an ‘acoustic map’ of the early city” (Ibid, 76). Truax groups his earwitnesses within a geographic and cultural context, grounding them as

¹⁸ *Handbook for Acoustic Ecology* states “The project came into existence in 1971” (Truax 1978, 152). Replying to my query about the correct date of the WSP founding, Truax recalled that “it was a gradual emergence, not a specific date” noting that “1971 marks the moving into the studio with a growing team of researchers, and 1972 the first publication (Compendium of Noise Bylaws) and 1973 the Vancouver Soundscape publication” (Truax 2018).

an acoustic community with a collective and proximate—in other words, local—history.

Truax's model of close-reading and contextualizing earwitness testimony has been followed by all of the currently canonical authors of noted monographs in the field of sound studies: Alain Corbin's *Les cloches de la terre* (1994);¹⁹ *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* by James H. Johnson (1995); *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900-1933* by Emily Thompson (2002); Richard Cullen Rath's *How Early America Sounded* (2003); and *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* by Jonathan Sterne (2003).²⁰ In rare instances, Schafer insists, written earwitnessed evidence is attractive enough to be read as literature and can "constitute the best guide available" to reconstruct soundscapes of the past (1977, 9). But most scholars in sound studies, perhaps reflexively wary of letting an earwitness dilute or derail a scholarly argument, quote such testimonies sparingly.

¹⁹ Published in 1998 by Columbia University Press as *Sound and Meaning in the Village Bells*.

²⁰ A chief indicator of canon formation is the number of anthologies which include excerpts by these authors. Corbin 1998 and Sterne 2003 are included in *The Auditory Culture Reader* (Bull 2003); Corbin 1998, Johnson 1995, Rath 2003, Sterne 2003, and Thompson 2002 constitute part of *Hearing History* (Smith 2004); Rath 2003 and Thompson 2002 appear in *The Sound Studies Reader*; Corbin 1998, Rath 2003, and Thompson 2002 reappear in the four-volume *Sound Studies* (Bull 2013). Tausig (2014, 164) identifies Bull 2003, as well as Thompson 2002 and Sterne 2003 as "among the key volumes in sound studies published since 2000."

Echoing the tradition of the literature review in doctoral studies, the first paragraph of Bull 2013 brims with 28 citations whose range confirms "an auditory turn in the social sciences and humanities over the last ten years" (1). Schafer's ideas spread slowly after the publication of *The Tuning of the World* in 1977. For example, German media theorist Sabine Breitsameter reports "Schafer's ideas did not spread to any degree in the German-speaking world until the beginning of the 1990s" (2017, 20).

Monographs such as Edwin C. Hill Jr.'s *Black Soundscapes White Stages* (2013), *Aurality: Listening and Knowledge in Nineteenth Century Colombia* (2014) by Ana María Ochoa Gautier, and Jérôme Camal's *Creolized Aurality* (2019) along with edited volumes such as *Media, Sound & Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean* (2012) and *Remapping Sound Studies in the Global South* (2019) have begun to remedy the largely Anglo-American perspective of the field.

Earwitnessing and the evidence of experience

In the next section I enlist historian Joan Wallach Scott's explication of "evidence as experience" to open an entryway into examining the underlying ideology of my writing on field recording and attempt to define phonography.

Almost every word you have read so far and will read in this document was first spoken aloud by the author into an audio recording device. As I trim and hone these words, I read my revisions aloud again. Anchored in oral practice, this immense amount of talking to myself revises and refines my writing. Most edits are spoken then written and typed. I recite while typing on my laptop, or dictate into a recording device or, when feasible, use voice recognition software. All of my writing about what I have heard and recorded—my earwitness testimonies—originates in orality, ranging from extemporizing while giving an artist talk or paper presentation to table talk with friends to making stray comments while slating a recording.

Slating is the act of orally identifying what is being recorded before making a recording (Alten 2013, 567; Rose 2015, 242). Sound and film production professionals hired for commercial projects invariably log "headslates" (White and Louie 2005, 355), which are slates made before recording commences in order to identify the scene and take (Rose 2015, 242). Most of my slates are "tailslates" (White and Louie 2005, 355) made after I have recorded so I don't talk over what I want to record. Tailslates allow me to earwitness, making reflective comments and extemporizing on what I have heard. These earwitnessed manifestos, field notes, and memoirs form the substrate of this dissertation. As "no concepts have been formed for effectively, let alone gracefully, conceiving of oral art" (Ong 2002 [1982], 10)

including earwitness testimony, this dissertation is, admittedly, a mapping of my experience onto what Ong calls “the oral-aural world to a world of visualized pages” (Ibid, 72).

Earwitnessing not only shapes but in some cases recontextualizes my sound work. Dictating and then writing “In the Field at the WTO: Field Recording in the Line of Fire” (DeLaurenti 2000a and DeLaurenti 2000b) in late 1999 and early 2000 eliminated the temptation to add voice-over narration to *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* or resort to organizing the narrative with delimited categories of events. As discussed in chapter three, after I reviewed my field notes and slates while writing “Intermissions with the Orchestra” (DeLaurenti 2004), I recognized *Favorite Intermissions* (2003-2010)²¹ as an earwitness protest against Western concert life. Yet these written distillations of my aural experience—earwitnessing preserved in print—cannot be tallied automatically as valid evidence or significant research simply because it appears on a printed page.

Feminist historian Joan Wallach Scott offers monitory guidance that pertains to the value of earwitness testimony. Writing in 1991, Scott observed that the “evidence of experience” (777) “has also occasioned a crisis for orthodox history by multiplying not only stories but subjects” (776) outside traditional “categories of representation” such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, and class (778).²² Compounding this “crisis,”

²¹ This range spans the time from when I began recording orchestra intermissions to working on a sequel to the *Favorite Intermissions* compact disc, provisionally titled *Favorite Opera Intermissions*. *Favorite Intermissions* is examined in the chapter “Intermissions with the Orchestra.”

²² Scott was writing before the delineation of disability studies and the concept of neurodiversity.

continued Scott, is the insistence by some authors and scholars “that histories are written from fundamentally different—indeed irreconcilable—perspectives or standpoints, none of which is complete or completely ‘true’” (776). Obviously, the advent of the internet, the web, and its concomitant avalanche of public, private, and semi-private social media (blogs, tweets, etc.) has multiplied the number of stories and subjects exponentially (Wagner 2019). History is no longer a line but a vortex.

Although rooted in autobiography, my written earwitness testimonies do not merely present experience as evidence. The process of presenting my experience in this dissertation—in Scott’s terms “the project of making experience visible” (778) as typed words—must not preclude critical examination of the ideological systems undergirding my writing and resulting sound work. “To put it another way,” Scott explains,

the evidence of experience, whether conceived through a metaphor of visibility or in any other way that takes meaning as transparent, *reproduces rather than contests* given ideological systems—those that assume that the facts of history speak for themselves...” (Ibid, italics added)

“Ideology,” according to Louis Althusser “represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence,” (1971, 162) and is defined by celebrated Marx scholar Leszek Kolakowski as

a false consciousness or an obfuscated mental process in which men [sic] do not understand the forces that actually guide their thinking but imagine it to be wholly governed by logic and intellectual influences” (2008, 126-7)

Film theorist Trinh T. Minh-Ha offers a broadly systemic perspective: “The function of any ideology in power is to represent the world positively unified” (1991, 2).

I have been a voluble earwitness (DeLaurenti 2000a, 2000b, 2001b, 2004, 2005b, 2006, 2008a, 2015a, 2016) in order to understand the real conditions and forces that guide me as a listener and human being. Anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot states “The ultimate mark of power may be its invisibility; the ultimate challenge, the exposition of its roots” (Ibid 2015, xxiii). Although mediated through the lens of literacy, my earwitness texts often restate, and at times contradict one another. Unlike research underpinned by historical scholarship, disciplinary boundaries, editorial concordance, and a presumed (or overtly acknowledged) canon, I earwitnessed through my aural experience, what Steven Feld posited as acoustemology, “one’s sonic way of knowing and being in the world” (Feld and Brenneis 2004, 462): What I heard, how I listened, what I remembered, and what I wanted the reader to hear.

“Listening is never natural,” admonishes the radical activist art collective Ultra-red. “It requires and generates literacy” (2012, 4). Whereas Schafer views the contemporary soundscape as a built environment, “a deliberate construction by its creators” (1977, 237), Feld’s concept of acoustemology frames the soundscape as a learned environment.²³ As Schafer acknowledges (1977, 207), our knowledge of the soundscape remains bound not only by the physiological limits of human hearing

²³ Contrasted against Feld’s concept of acoustemology or the learned technical listening of Sterne’s “audile technique,” Schafer’s notion of sonological competence remains much less developed perhaps because “the term has been borrowed from Otto Laske” (1977, 274) and mainly due to its absence from the sound studies literature, except for Truax 1984 which postulates “soundscape competence” (50).

(Baldwin 2012, 32-33) but by our environment, history, and culture. Schafer emphasizes:

The soundscape is not a neutral thing that we all experience, the soundscape needs to be interpreted by the listener. (De Caro and Daró 2008, 28)

In the lineage of Athusser's notion that ideology "has no history" (2001, 160) and is deceptively "omnipresent, trans-historical and therefore immutable in form" (Ibid, 161), Jennifer Stoever-Ackerman reminds us that "sounds from the past come to us already listened to; they are mediated through and by raced, gendered, and historicized" (2010, 64) earwitnesses.

My manifestos, field notes, and memoirs contest an additional ideological system, one which remains central to my role as an earwitness: The contemporary technological practice of field recording known as "phonography," the chief concept through which I theorize my work. In the second half of this chapter I trace and examine my practice of phonography through four paths: Various historical usages and contemporary meanings of the term "phonography;" an examination of the discourse surrounding phonography in an online community devoted to field recording and central to my formation as an artist—the phonography email listserv—in the early 2000s; a comparison of phonography to soundscape composition as defined and articulated by Barry Truax, Hildegard Westerkamp, and Andra McCartney; and finally, by critiquing extracts from my first manifesto on field recording, "What is an aural safari?" (DeLaurenti 2001b), I position my practice of phonography as a form of earwitnessing.

Origins and iterations of “phonography”

In 1701 John Jones, MD published a work entitled *Practical Phonography*, “which was designed to assist persons to read and spell the ordinary longhand [writing]” (Baker 1908, 46-47). As one of countless quixotic plans to correct the centuries-old inconsistent visual orthography of the English language through oral spoken language, *Practical Phonography* and its author have remained obscure. In the mid-19th century, phonography became known as a means for transcribing oral dictation into writing. Sir Isaac Pitman, inventor of the most widespread version of phonography, deemed his system of stenography or “writing by sound” (1840, 1) “phonography” in 1837 (Chenoweth 2019, 137) “because he claimed that his was the first shorthand based explicitly on the phonetics of English, rather than on its spelling” (Gitelman 1999, 24).

Pitman had many rivals. Pitman’s chief American competitor and former disciple, Andrew Jackson Graham, “even used the term *phonograph* in 1858” (Ibid, 24 italics in original). Another rival, V.D. De Stains, published *Phonography*, a manual of “the art of writing the sounds both of speech and music” (1842, 9) in 1842. Pitman, Graham, and De Stains were by no means outliers; their respective methods of phonography were among many such “idiosyncratic systems of squiggles, lines, and dots” (Mackenzie 2017, 122) some of which, including De Stains’ *Phonography*, encompassed musical transcription (Ibid, 146-150).

Early phonography was another example of the shift from orality to visuality. Although devised fifteen years before Édouard-Léon Scott de Martinville's "earliest surviving phonoautogram" made in 1857 (Feaster 2011, 179) and decades before Edison's tinfoil phonograph, the various systems of handwritten phonographic inscription match Jonathan Sterne's contention that "recording did not simply capture reality as it was; it aimed to capture a reality suitable for reproduction" (2003, 236). Douglas Kahn, echoing scholars of orality Walter J. Ong and Martin Jay, suggests the advent of phonography in the 19th century signaled "a dramatic shift in ideas regarding sound, aurality and reality" (1999, 70). Media historian Lisa Gitelman argues that "phonetic shorthand emphasized the oral character of language at the same time that it sought to perfect a technology for linguistic representation," (1999, 24) however early phonography was designed to exactly capture and enshrine oral communication into the written word. Engendering "the separation of the word from the living present" (Ong 2002 [1982], 80), speech transcribed with phonography made the aural disposable, forgettable, and available only as writing in permanent form.

Media scholars continue to connect phonography—a portmanteau of "the Greek *phonē* (sound, voice) with *graphē* (writing) or the related *gramma* (something written)" (Feaster 2015, 139)—in various ways: To 19th century modes of inscription (Gitelman 1999, Kahn 1999), specifically to systems of writing designed to transcribe the spoken word through writing (Mackenzie 2017) as outlined in the previous paragraphs. Phonography has also been employed broadly to track the artistic impact of consumer-oriented recording and playback devices (Campbell 2002; Hagood 2019, 142) and to "define a period in our relation to music, a period marked by a distinct set of attitudes, practices, and institutions made possible by a particular technology"

(Rothenbuhler and Peters 1997, 242). More generally, phonography has been mapped to “the art of recorded music” (Eisenberg 1988, 105) as well as to every technique for recording and “actualizing” sound in general (Feaster 2011, 164). Other scholars specifically employ phonography to denote a practice pertaining to the use of the wax cylinder phonograph and turntable gramophone in the late 19th and early 20th century (Grajeda 2012, 140), or to turntablism in the late 20th century (Van Veen 2003; Attias 2013; Fisher 2013). Sprawling, inconsistent usages of “phonography” leave the term ill-defined, flexible, and open.

The next section examines the discourse surrounding phonography in an online community devoted to field recording—the phonography email listserv—in the early 2000s. After a brief account of the listserv’s origins, I survey listserv member responses and discourse in defining phonography, concluding with a critique of the definition of phonography enshrined on the phonography.org site.

Phonography online

I heard “phonography” before I saw the word. I had never seen “phonography” in print nor heard anyone say it until Dale Lloyd, a sound artist and owner of the Seattle record label and/OAR (Keller 2005, 13), told me about the phonography listserv in late 2000. After joining on April 25, 2001, the listserv’s daily flurry of emails became central to my formation as a phonographer.

Although I have been grouped with Lloyd and other initial members of the phonography listserv (McGinley et al. 2004), online discussions among artists about

field recording had already been underway before I joined. So many discussions had been transpiring on other email lists (such as the lowercase listserv) that composer and sound artist Marcelo Radulovich set up the phonography listserv on August 16, 2000²⁴ to discuss the making and creative use of field recordings (McGinley et al. 2004). Almost a year later, in an email with the subject line “fieldrecording.org or phonography.org,” Radulovich wrote:

The word PHONOGRAPHY was brought up by Joel Smith (who is in this list) in an email exchange we had about field recordings. I mentioned to him that those words: “field recording” did not accurately describe what it is that we do when we’re recording/capturing sounds. I mentioned how *National Geographic* always pops up in my head when I say or write the words “field recording.” (Radulovich 2001, all caps in original)

Radulovich recalled that the list’s “initial discussions related mostly to straight-up recordings, meaning, unprocessed/unaltered. Apart from minor edits and basic EQing we were going for the IT. This was the focus” (McGinley et al. 2004). But “IT”—presumably some kind of aesthetic transcendence—was never specified, never discussed on the phonography listserv. Some list members just wanted to make good field recordings. But that too was unspecified; rather than address or question the literacy required to operate microphones, recording decks and other equipment, discussion focused on brands and models to try or to avoid. As for “phonography,” based on my longtime participation on the phonography listserv,²⁵ the term was discussed haphazardly, which I summarize below.

²⁴ I derived this date from the yahoogroups page for the phonography list, however it should be noted that the phonography list began at another, now-defunct host, egroups.com. Because only “the moderator can view the list of previous posts” (Radulovich 2000) the first three messages to the group, presumably including the welcome message, are no longer available. <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/phonography/info> Accessed July 16, 2019.

²⁵ I continue to be a member as of this writing.

Most phonographers I met in person or online in the late 1990s and early 2000s credited composer David Dunn for applying the term “phonography” to sound work created with field recordings in his book and compact disc set *Why do Whales and Children Sing?*

The similarity of recorded sound to photography has been considered but “phonography” has yet to be taken seriously as a discipline beyond its commercial or scientific applications. (1999, 11)

In an earlier version of his essay under the subheading “Hybrid Soundscape Compositions” (2009 [1997], 103), Dunn connects his work to Schafer and the World Soundscape Project; after summarizing a phonography-based project he laments, “My job was to pretend that I was not present in the situation in order to create a false representation of the reality...” (Ibid, 104). But such skeptical realizations were infrequent in the early days of the phonography listserv.

The first lengthy discussion about phonography on the listserv took place in mid-June 2001 just as the CD-R²⁶ compilation *phonography.org 1*—which included my short work, “Riding the 44 Back to Ballard” (DeLaurenti 2001a)—was about to be released by and/OAR, a label that eventually released eight more phonography.org compilation albums (Keller 2005, 13). The posts ranged widely from citing or constructing

²⁶ An acronym for “compact disc recordable” CD-Rs substitute a sealed reflective dye layer for the embossed polycarbonate and sputtered aluminum of the standard (“Red Book”) audio compact disc (Pohlmann 2011, 224-225). Purchased on spindles of 25, 50, or 100 discs, CD-Rs of average quality cost between 10 to 25 cents each in the early 2000s. For a concurrent comparison, the per unit cost for a standard replicated audio compact disc of *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* was \$1.05 per disc.

dictionary definitions to mentioning (or more often alluding to) assorted well-known or at least cultishly revered pioneers such as Alan Lomax, Bernie Krause, and Irv Teibel, the instigator of the *Environments* series of LPs.

Some of the discussion opened possibilities for historical exploration, Yannick Dauby mentioned “Charles Cros, inventor of the Phonograph (before Edison!), who popularized the word ‘Phonographie’ in France” (Dauby 2001). Dauby also alluded (Ibid) to François-Bernard Mâche, whose 1992 book *Music, Myth and Nature* offered an unexpected point of origin: “The art of phonography was born with the film *Week-end* by W[alter] Ruttmann in 1930” (1992, 191, cited in Drever 2017, 75). A few days later Marc McNulty contributed a dictionary definition of phonography which included “a system of phonetic shorthand invented by Isaac Pitman in 1837 and so named by him in 1840” (McNulty 2001).

McNulty supplemented his post (Ibid) with a link to a 3500-word paper written by Lee B. Brown, a philosophy professor at The Ohio State University: “Documentation and Fabrication in Phonography,” (Brown 2000). Brown’s definition, “sound-constructs created by the use of recording machinery” (Ibid, 361), was likely too vague to prompt any discussion on the phonography listserv.²⁷ Other definitions were discussed in person as some of the phonographers on the list such as John Bain, Steve Barsotti, Yitzchak Dumiel, Mark Griswold, Doug Haire, Alex Keller, Dale Lloyd,

²⁷ This definition could easily include “reproducing” rolls (Dolan 2009, 45-47) made for player pianos. Reproducing rolls “enabled the piano itself to recreate the dynamics, tempo, and other features of the way it was performed by the person who recorded it” (Ibid, xviii). Consumers could also purchase a relatively inexpensive Leabarjan Perforator which allowed one to create piano rolls (Ibid, 95-96) without having to own a reproducing piano (Bartles and Dodge 1919).

Perri Lynch, Rob Millis, Toby Paddock, Jon Tulchin, and Jonathan Way lived in (or close to) Seattle as I did. Along with discussing our own definitions of phonography, in pairs and groups we debated usages by Edison and several scholars as well as definitions by Dunn, Kahn, and listserv member Joel Smith.

In one late night discussion, Yitzchak Dumiel pointed out that in “The Phonograph and Its Future” (Edison 1878), Thomas Edison, who patented his invention as a “Phonograph or Speaking Machine” (Reed and Welch 1959, 7), skirted umbrella terms such as “phonography” altogether. In Edison’s essay the only variant, “phonographic,” refers to books, clocks, and advertisements (Edison 1878, 534). Written a decade later, the successor to Edison’s landmark article, “The Perfected Phonograph” (1888), contains two variants of phonograph, “phonogram” (Ibid, 646, 647, 649) and “phonographic” (Ibid, 645, 647, 649), both of which refer to an object—not a process—of recording.

On the recommendations of Alex Keller and Steve Barsotti, I read Douglas Kahn’s definition of phonography in the media studies classic *Noise Water Meat* but “the ability to hold any one sound in time and keep all sounds in mind” (1999, 5) read as a misfired metaphor, grandly misattributing consciousness to the recording process.

Kahn’s contention

Because phonography did not just hear voices—it heard everything—sounds accumulated across a discursive diapason of one sound and all sound, from isolation to totalization. (Ibid, 9)

felt false due to the limited frequency response of early recording apparatus—even though Kahn clarified that the hearing of “everything” was a promise, echoing the utopian marketing language of Edison who promised “the faultless fidelity of an instantaneous photograph” (1888, 648), if not an aura of the potential of recording (Ibid).²⁸ Kahn’s brilliantly enumerated “ideas of phonography,” specifically

all mechanical, optical, electrical, digital, genetic, psychotechnic, mnemonic and conceptual means of sound recording as both technological means, empirical fact, and metaphorical incorporation including 19th century machines prior to the invention of the phonograph (Ibid, 17)

was too encyclopedic—as well as more historical than actual and contemporary—for myself and others phonographers I knew to be useful, at least in the early years of the listserv.²⁹

Phonography listserv member Joel Smith had the last word:

The word “phonography” speaks to me precisely because, like “photography,” it is agnostic; I mean it’s factual rather than semantically loaded like “music” or “art”—words that signal worthy ambitions and hierarchies that may, or may not, help you hear (or see) fresh. “Phonography” (translated literally) says nothing but: soundwriting. (Smith 2001)

Enshrined on the phonography.org site, Smith’s definition was ahistorical, favored no single aesthetic approach, as well as remained uncritical and “factual,” presuming the

²⁸ Theorizing inductively, Kahn is supported by Morton 2000, Milner 2009, and others.

²⁹ Between 2002 to 2009 list members Catherine Clover, Andy Ditzler, Yitzchak Dumiel, Eric Leonardson, Mark Ragsdale, James Reynolds, and Bill Thompson mentioned, cited, or recommended Kahn 1999, however Kahn’s ideas were never discussed in depth beyond the initial poster’s comments.

fidelity of the microphone as well as of the phonographer. This apparently self-evident notion of phonography remained agnostic towards recording equipment and strategies while implying undefined listening subjects, as if everyone listens *a priori* in the same way from the same perspective. This ideological, brief, and circumscribed definition was open-ended enough to welcome multiple approaches and interests as well as members whose English might not be able to navigate the theoretical language of Kahn et al.

Despite the welcoming camaraderie of the listserv and subsequently occasional debates on the nature of phonography, I felt that those of us who were making field recordings must do more to scrounge, cobble together, and (re)construct our history. Although many listserv members listed and connected noted theorists, musicians, sound artists, and soundscape composers such as Luc Ferrari, Bernie Krause, and Hildegard Westerkamp to phonography, neither these artists nor their work were discussed in depth.

Mentioned only once in the group's early discussions (Dauby 2001), Luc Ferrari is the most direct forerunner of phonography as practiced by those on the phonography listserv. Dauby correctly informed the listserv members that Ferrari was

a composer of musique concrète who was one of the first in France (he was in [the] GRM) to use only unprocessed field recordings to make tape music (he began in the 60's). His most famous work is called *Presque Rien*. (Ibid)

Variouly translated as “Daybreak on the Beach” (Ferrari 1970), “Almost nothing, or daybreak at the seashore” (Drott 2009, 145), and “Almost nothing No. 1 or Sunrise on the seafront” (Ferrari 2018), *Presque Rien No. 1 Le lever du jour au bord de la mer* (1967-1970), according to Ferrari, “tells the story of the break of day” (Caux 2012, 149). This pioneering piece, “composed by means of the most undetectable interventions possible” (Ferrari 2018, 4), was released on LP in 1970 by Deutsche Grammophon in their “avant garde” series (Ferrari 1970) and “presents an apparently unretouched recording of morning in a fishing village” (Drott 2009, 145) made in 1967 on the coast of Croatia³⁰ (Ferrari 2018, 4). To make his “most radical tape piece” (Robindoré 1998, 13), *Presque Rien No. 1*, Ferrari recalls “I left the microphone on the windowsill, and, every night from 4 am to 6 am, I recorded” (Ferrari 2018, 4).

Ferrari, alone among the theorists and artists deployed in this dissertation, foresaw and articulated central concerns of phonographers like myself and those on the listserv: The influence of inexpensive recording equipment and framing as essential to composing with field recordings.

According to musicologist Eric Drott, Ferrari in *Presque Rien No. 1* envisioned

a model for a new kind of amateur artistic activity, one
that would draw upon the ease and affordability of the

³⁰ *Presque Rien No. 1* attracts errata: Drott 2009 locates the recording as made “by the Black Sea” (145) but names the correct location a few pages later (153); Sutherland 1994 claims the work portrays “daybreak on a beach in Algeria” but probably conflates *Presque Rien No. 1* with the 1978 *Promenade Symphonique* (51); and Geyer 2019 confuses the name of island, Korčula, with the village where Ferrari stayed and recorded, Vela Luka. Misrenderings of the work’s date and title dapple popular and scholarly discussions of this work.

portable tape recorder in order to open up the domain of experimental music to nonspecialists. (Drott 2009, 146)

In an interview published in 1971, Ferrari hoped that those who heard *Presque Rien No. 1* “will not be paralyzed with respect and adoration, but should rather say to themselves: I too can do this” (quoted in Drott 2009, 158).

Given that the price of a new Nagra IV-S, a top-tier reel-to-reel recorder “sold for \$1,700, nearly the price of a new economy car” in the early 1970s (Guttenberg 2012), making recordings of comparable quality was out of reach for most people. The 1973 Radio Shack catalog lists portable cassette recorders (with an included microphone) priced from \$27.95 to \$89.95 (1973, 8-11), however I own and have owned many Radio Shack cassette recorders (including their \$89.95 “Finest Portable Cassette Tape Recorder” listed in the 1973 catalog); my childhood recordings foreshadowed my own work in phonography: lo-fi, lots of rumble, and diminished frequency response with dollops of wow and flutter. Ferrari’s optimism for others making “electroacoustic nature photographs” (Drott 2009, 153) of similar quality was not realistic, but proved prophetic with the advent of the MiniDisc as discussed in the next section.

Ferrari also prophesied the importance of the frame:

Why cut, mix, and assemble electronic sounds into the same kinds of gestures one finds instrumental music? This seemed absurd to me. It is in this way that I realized that the act of recording—that is, the way in which you capture a sound—was a creative gesture in and of itself. (Robindoré 1998, 12)

In an interview with Jacqueline Caux, he elaborated:

I was on location, holding my microphone, turning the tape recorder on when I judged it to be right. I was collecting passing sounds whenever I decided. It was my choice, my snapshot of life recorded on my equipment. In other words, in case the last sentence wasn't clear, this gesture was compositional in terms of the recognition of sound, however uncertain. (Caux 2012, 134)

As discussed in the next two sections, the consideration of the frame and framing was a significant consideration on the phonography listserv and vital to my own practice as a phonographer.

Given the scarcity, rarity and poor distribution of non-mainstream CDs—and lack of instantaneous access through YouTube and other music streaming services which did not yet exist—it is not surprising that the discussion of noted theorists, musicians, sound artists, and soundscape composers remained rooted in general admiration and recommendations. Thus, the listserv's general consensus of phonography remained ahistorical and factual.

Phonography vs. soundscape composition

In the next section I review the roots of my impetus towards my attempt to define phonography and propose three traits that help define contemporary phonography: Inexpensive recording equipment; a community of knowledge rooted in the phonography listserv, limited edition releases on CD and CD-R as well as streaming audio and the superb resources of MiniDisc.org; and the “easy fidelity” made possible by portable and lightweight Digital Audio Tape and MiniDisc recorders. I also probe

the intersection of soundscape composition with phonography. After reviewing definitions of soundscape composition by Barry Truax, Hildegard Westerkamp, and Andra McCartney, I contrast phonography with soundscape composition, noting that phonographers—as heard on the seven phonography.org compilation albums—hewed to a fixed frame, eschewed digital signal processing, and presented soundscapes singly instead of marshalling multiple soundscapes, locations, and vantage points.

This friendly consensus on the listserv regarding phonography did not describe my practice; it did not resemble the field recording-based work I was discovering while producing a weekly radio show devoted to adventurous listening. These absences spurred my determination to articulate phonography as an artistic practice. I wondered: What made it possible for anyone to make field recordings now? How much did it cost and how might that price determine what was recorded? How was gear selected? I also wondered about other artists composing with field recordings. What might constitute the “great works” or at least instructive creations of phonography? Was there a canon? Was a counter-canon possible? Were those of us on the list just making another variety of (or simply rehashing) soundscape composition?

Barry Truax and Hildegard Westerkamp were the first to outline the nature of soundscape composition and compose pioneering works in the genre.³¹ Truax states that soundscape compositions focus on “the environmental context that is preserved,

³¹ Other composers active in the early years of the World Soundscape Project—Howard Broomfield, Bruce Davis, and Peter Huse (Truax 1974, 38)—have discographies of one or two hard-to-find solo works or releases and did not write extensively about composing.

enhanced and exploited by the composer,” (1984, 207) and later expanded “principles of the soundscape composition as derived from its evolved practice” into “a well-developed model for the musical use of environmental sound” (Truax 2000):

(a) listener recognizability of the source material is maintained, even if it subsequently undergoes transformation;

(b) the listener’s knowledge of the environmental and psychological context of the soundscape material is invoked and encouraged to complete the network of meanings ascribed to the music;

(c) the composer’s knowledge of the environmental and psychological context of the soundscape material is allowed to influence the shape of the composition at every level, and ultimately the composition is inseparable from some or all of those aspects of reality; and ideally,

(d) the work enhances our understanding of the world, and its influence carries over into everyday perceptual habits. ... Thus the real goal of the soundscape composition is the re-integration of the listener with the environment in a balanced ecological relationship. (Ibid, 2000)

Westerkamp offers a shorter definition affirming

that its essence is the artistic, sonic transmission of meanings about place, time, environment and listening perception. In my experience, the term eludes any further definition. (2002, 52)

Andra McCartney, another indispensable theorist of soundwalking and soundscape composition, elaborates on Westerkamp’s open definition:

Soundscape composers can act as interpreters of the various languages of places, based on their knowledge

of these places which is honed through the processes of listening, recording and composing. (2002, 1)

But many of us on the phonography listserv were up to something else in the early 2000s. Inexpensive recording equipment and the phonography listserv changed *who* could record as well as *how* recordings were made. The advent of the listserv's community meant that knowledge—in tandem with tips and encouragement—was shared through online discussion, limited edition releases on CD and CD-R, and via streaming audio. Affordable, almost-high fidelity technology meant that “meanings about place, time, environment and listening perception” (Westerkamp 2000) could be placed in flux. Portable recording equipment, mainly the MiniDisc recorder (“MD”), meant that new environmental contexts could be discovered, framed, and challenged as well as “preserved, enhanced, and exploited” (Truax 1984, 207).

Compared to previous decades, recording equipment, especially the MD, was inexpensive—on average from \$100 to \$300, cheaper used³²—portable, and easily researched for free online. Field recording was no longer restricted to professionals who could deduct equipment purchases on their taxes, moneyed hobbyists, or scholars fortunate enough to win funding for research such as John A. Lomax, who reported that his “recording machine, including storage battery” was purchased for \$500 by the Library of Congress (1937, 59). The “who” of phonography expanded widely due to lower prices and a broad marketplace connected by the internet.

³² For a price survey of the major makers of MD namely Sony, Sharp, Panasonic, and Aiwa see: http://minidisc.org/part_Recorders_Sony.html http://minidisc.org/part_Recorders_Sharp.html http://minidisc.org/part_Recorders_Panasonic.html and http://minidisc.org/part_Recorders_Aiwa.html All accessed September 4, 2019.

Online, eBay facilitated the thriving auction market for used portable MD recorders in the late 1990s and early 2000s. For example, I won an auction for a used Aiwa AM-F70 MD on eBay July 14, 2002 with a bid of \$58.01. In 1997, my then-employer purchased for my use a Tascam DA-P1 portable DAT³³ deck which had a list price³⁴ of \$1,899 (Harris Broadcast Division 1997, 74) for about \$1,200, a differential price ratio of 20 to 1.

For historical perspective: The Nagra IV-S, a top-tier reel-to-reel recorder used by World Soundscape Project researchers Bruce Davis and Peter Huse in 1973, “sold for \$1,700, nearly the price of a new economy car” at that time (Guttenberg 2012). When Davis and Huse detected “funny clicks” in their Nagra tape recorder (1974, 37), they “zoomed back a hundred miles an hour” (Ibid) to get the machine repaired by technicians of the Canadian Broadcast Company.

MiniDisc recorders could be repaired, but only at great expense, starting at \$50 an hour, often with a two to three hour minimum; this was the average quote when I investigated repair services across the United States by phone and email in 2003. It was cheaper to buy another one.

³³ Introduced in 1987, Digital Audio Tape is a fragile and obsolete format for making high-fidelity digital recordings onto a thin magnetic tape (Baert et al. 1992, 20, 23) housed in a VHS-like cassette (Watkinson 2002, 302-306). For a comprehensive review of DAT decks and portable recorders of that era see Robair 1999.

³⁴ Known in the UK as RRP (“recommended retail price”) and in recent decades in the USA as MSRP (“manufacturer’s suggested retail price”), list price is a fictive price point high enough for a retailer to discount without an actual loss of profit, and thus grant the consumer the sense they are getting a discount.

MiniDisc recorders had fewer attendant costs too: Before the late 1990s, field recording equipment required extensive accessories. A 1974 dealer's list of accessories for the Nagra IV-S such as cables, microphones, and outboard units contain prices (Nagra Magnetic Recorders 1973, 2-3) that are uniformly more expensive than prices for equivalent equipment in 2000 as well as in 2019. Blank MiniDiscs were also cheap; I paid from one to four dollars each depending on the manufacturer. Every phonographer I knew in person or corresponded with intimately on the list in the early 2000s told me that the substantially lower cost of recording equipment made their work as phonographers possible.

In addition, the astoundingly compendious site MiniDisc.org provided lucidly impartial, detailed information and technical specifications for every model of MD.³⁵ Reviews of decks and accessories as well as links to vendors, a free archive of user manuals, tutorials, and FAQs constituted an easily circumnavigated body of knowledge that was comprehensive, yet welcoming. MiniDisc.org surpassed what I was told at clueless consumer electronics (so-called "big box") chain stores, namely Best Buy or the now-defunct Good Guys. Boutique vendors such as Bradley Broadcast and B&H Photo Video, who catered to industry professionals, ignored my numerous queries or treated my questions as trivial. Other phonographers I knew reported the same treatment.

³⁵ As of this writing, <http://minidisc.org/> suffers from link rot to vendors and suppliers, however the core information—manuals, prices, and equipment summaries—remains accessible. Accessed October 15, 2019.

Conversely, members on the phonography listserv responded to individual queries with kind recommendations. A search for “advice,” “advise,” and “recommend” in the listserv archives confirms that in the first five years of the phonography listserv, a majority of posts on the listserv requested, offered, and discussed recommendations for microphones and MDs.³⁶ And while email address aliases and artist *nom de plumes* make a gender-oriented, race-conscious census nearly impossible, I can safely surmise, based on subsequent personal meetings, gossip, and the gendered tenor of the conversation, that the list was overwhelmingly male and white, albeit internationally so. In any case, the listserv was a community that fostered self-taught artists with absolutely none of the misogyny or other nastiness that infests today’s online discourse.³⁷

Race was never mentioned or addressed, which, as a core trait of whiteness (Stoever-Ackerman 2010, 66; Gorski 2011), defined the listserv as an implicitly white space, at least to me.³⁸ Debate was generally well-reasoned. Fellow artists, especially those not on the list, were praised, never criticized. Serious disagreements—usually about equipment, occasionally about technique—were papered over with humour, amicably resolved, “agreeing to disagree,” ignored, or ascribed to linguistic misunderstanding.

³⁶ <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/phonography/search/messages?query=advice> and <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/phonography/search/messages?query=advise> and <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/phonography/search/messages?query=recommend> Accessed October 2, 2019.

³⁷ This contention is based on re-reading the first 1000 messages of the phonography listserv. Scholars wanting to analyze the welcoming of women on the listserv should interview the female-identified phonographers on the list during that era including Betsey Biggs, Robbin Gheesling, Perri Lynch, and Michelle Nagai.

³⁸ Confirming my reading of the phonography listserv, a text-search from the first public message on the list on August 26, 2000 to May 23, 2003 yields no results for “race” or “racial.”

A few list members posted advice on their personal web sites, notably Aaron Ximm. Under the moniker “Quiet American,” Ximm offered the most straightforward and significant advice in his “Thoughts on Field Recording” (2000). Along with detailing his approach to recording (“record everything and anything”) Ximm’s thoughts elaborated upon a six-point list, “Why Minidisc is the Perfect Format for Travellers” which begins with “bullet zero,” audio fidelity:

Contemporary minidisc compression is not an issue unless you are very rich, very sensitive, or doing professional work. (2000)

How were “meanings about place, time, environment and listening perception” (Westerkamp 2000) in flux? The “how” of field recording separated phonographers from those working in soundscape composition in the 1970s and 1980s. For the phonographers of the mid- and late 1990s, fidelity, especially high- or close to high-fidelity was easier. Recording on MD seemed to peel away a discouraging layer of hiss heard on portable cassette recorders. Unlike magnetic tape (or nettlesome Start, Skip, and End IDs on DAT), the MD’s indexing made it easy for anyone to mark, retrieve, and frame any sound almost instantly without rewinding.

In my experience, relatively low-cost microphones³⁹ connected to a portable MD recorder slightly thicker than a modern cell phone yielded a vivid presence and wider dynamic range audibly superior to cassette and comparable to DAT. MiniDiscs are

³⁹ I purchased a “stereo tie pin” lavalier microphone model 33-3028 at Radio Shack on August 31, 2002 for \$32.63. Sony E55B lavalier microphones “cost about \$410 each” (Krause 2002, 77), a differential price ratio of 25 to 1.

hardier than cassette and DAT due to recording onto a sturdy magneto-optical disk instead of thin, fragile magnetic tape. But the MD did not and could not ensure pristine high fidelity. Unlike cassette or DAT, MD uses various versions of ATRAC (“Adaptive Transform Acoustic Coding”), what Ximm called “contemporary minidisc compression” (2000). ATRAC is a data compression algorithm (Pohlmann 2005, 488) which can add “spurious data during the recording process” (Budney and Grotke 1997, 154), though much of it is undetectable by the human ear: Depending on what is recorded, ATRAC can “take advantage of psychoacoustic effects such as masking” and “change the recorded signal according to the ear’s dynamic sensitivity” (Pohlmann 2005, 500).

Nonetheless, recording with an MD or a portable DAT deck was easier, less prone to conventional notions of failure. Stick a windscreen on your mic, hit the low-rumble hi-pass filter switch, point the microphone in the desired direction, and adjust the recording level: With a steady hand on the microphone (or boom, or grip), a decent recording was the probable result, “free of technical flaws such as glitchy audio, a rustling microphone boom, and the thumping crackle of onrushing wind” (DeLaurenti 2001b).

As can be heard on the seven full-length (at least 65 minutes) phonography.org CD-R compilations released between 2001 and 2005 by Seattle label and/OAR⁴⁰ not only was fidelity easier, but the frame was fixed. Phonographers were not creating montages but “straight-up recordings, meaning, unprocessed/unaltered” (McGinley et

⁴⁰ See <https://www.discogs.com/label/38571-phonographyorg> for a complete list. Accessed October 5, 2019.

al. 2004) sonic snapshots of soundscapes tempered by the type, placement, and distance of the microphone in tandem with the duration—actual or culled—of the recording, “apart from minor edits and basic EQing” (Ibid).

Westerkamp’s proposed “meanings about place, time, environment and listening perception” (2000) were rooted by most phonographers on the phonography.org CD-R compilations to a single location, resulting in a fixed frame. Rather than “create a strong oppositional place of *conscious* listening” which Westerkamp proposes for soundscape composition (2000, italics in original), this static immersion serves as an invitation to focus on the details of one place, not many as in *Kits Beach Soundwalk* (Westerkamp 1996). The lack of contrasting soundscapes within in a single location enables the listener to perceive, delve into, and focus on a single place. The result is a stillness in listening, a kind of person-to-person, relational meeting, a recorded earwitnessing of a single time and place. Heard over the course of a CD-R audio disc moving from one location to another, the panorama shifts from listserv member to listserv member, not within a single phonographer’s work. To repurpose a line describing one outcome of “audile technique” asserted by Sterne, “The space of the auditory field became a form of private property, *a space* for the individual to inhabit alone” (2003 160 italics added).

This singular space, an aural form of private property, harkens back to the fixed frame nature of early recording, not only the one-take nature of early audio production in the studio (Bell 2018, 8-11) but of field recording as well (Morton 2000, 147). In the early days of recording in the field with a wax cylinder phonograph, the frame was

also delimited by time, three to four minutes (Brady 1999, 22). The microphone—in this case the recording horn—did not move (Ibid, 7), fixing the frame: “Those making recordings had to be placed close to the recording horn ... and instructed not to move” (Morton 2000, 147). Though it was possible to manipulate recorded audio before the advent of magnetic tape (Feaster 2011), ethnographers did not practice what Feaster calls “phonomanipulation” (Ibid). Sound was captured and framed in one take.

Recording with the wider dynamic range and frequency response of MiniDisc or DAT tightens the frame further: Anyone will discover that pressing then releasing the Pause button on a cassette, DAT, MD or hard disk recorder out in the field will almost always result in an audible discontinuity. This preference for the single location and fixed frame also connects phonography to ethnographic field recordings whose purpose was and remains “translating their findings into condensed, itinerant forms” (Drever 2002, 24) which can be transcribed and otherwise analyzed.

Phonographers recorded soundscapes singly for the phonography.org compilations. By contrast, soundscape composers marshalled recordings from multiple sources, locations, and vantage points, acting “interpreters of places, based on their knowledge of these places which is honed through the processes of listening, recording, and composing” (McCartney 2002, 1). Barry Truax cannily notes that Ferrari’s cycle of *Presque Rien* pieces offered a possible normative model for “structural approaches to soundscape composition” (Truax 2002, 7). The fixed frame perspective of *Presque Rien No. 1* (1967-1970) foreshadowed the phonography.org compilations which began appearing 30 years later.

Aside from a fixed frame, phonographers whose work was heard on the phonography.org compilations—the main way to hear the work of listserv members—also eschewed transformational digital processing such as overly resonant reverberation or granular synthesis, techniques that respectively permeate two quintessential soundscape compositions, Barry Truax’s 1986 *Rivverrun* and *Beneath the Forest Floor* composed by Hildegard Westerkamp (1996) in 1992. Such processing can enrich “our aural perception of the soundscape and our experience of it” (Westerkamp 2002, 53), however after much discussion in early 2001 about the content and scope of the first phonography.org compilation, phonography listserv founder Marcelo Radulovich announced:

My vote is to keep the PHONOGRAPHY SERIES title for untreated stuff [...] it seems we would have a sharper focus if our releases as a group, concentrate on raw, unaltered recordings. Phonographies, just the sounds....photographies, as opposed to images enhanced/altered/distorted through Photoshop. (2001a)

The following year, Dale Lloyd curated two CD-R phonography.org compilation albums of “Compositions Using Field Recordings,” which, despite welcoming any and all forms of editing and digital processing, did not garner as much interest among listserv members. The remaining five full-length phonography.org compilations heeded Lloyd’s request: “Please do not send composed, ‘post-capture processed,’ or overly manipulated recordings. Minor editing, EQ, and fades are OK” (2003).

Listening retrospectively to the phonography.org compilations suggests that those pieces share a great deal in common with the three out of the four tenets of

soundscape composition as outlined by Truax while being generally congruent with the viewpoints of Westerkamp and McCartney: The source material remains recognizable; the “listener’s knowledge of the environmental and psychological context of the soundscape material is invoked” and “the work enhances,” or at least attempts to enhance, “our understanding of the world...” (Truax 2000). And though phonographers did not use their knowledge of the soundscape “to influence the shape of the composition at every level” (Ibid) instead hewing to a fixed frame, each phonographer, to my ears, also strived to present an “artistic sonic transmission of meanings about place, time, environment and listening perception” (Westerkamp 2002, 52) while honing their work through “processes of listening, recording, and composing” (McCartney 2002, 1).

What also set phonographers apart was their community—one open to anyone who subscribed to the listserv—inexpensive recording equipment, and easy fidelity, all in tandem with a collective effort to share field recordings confined within a fixed frame with only “minor editing, EQ, and fades” (Lloyd 2003).

During many experiences recording with easy fidelity and within a fixed frame from 1997 to 2001, concurrently I had begun rebelling against what Jonathan Sterne later named “audile technique” (2003, 90), which, in Western culture “articulated listening and the ear to logic, analytic thought, industry, professionalism, capitalism, individualism, and mastery” (Ibid, 95). In the next section I outline my revolt against such mastery, drawing upon my first manifesto of field recording, “What is an aural safari?” (DeLaurenti 2001b). I twist and connect my “evidence of experience” (Scott

1991, 777) embedded within the manifesto: I outline my challenge to prevailing practices of field recording as well as position my practice of phonography as a form of earwitnessing.

Defining phonography: a manifesto and revolt

My first manifesto on field recording, “What is an aural safari?” (DeLaurenti 2001b) attempted to enshrine a new direction for my practice, the phonography listserv, and field recording. When “What is an aural safari?” (DeLaurenti 2001b) appeared on the phonography.org website in late 2001, I summarized an approach to recording fidelity that had appeared in my work since 1997.

Inspired by Hildegard Westerkamp’s 1989 work, *Kits Beach Soundwalk* (1996), I wanted to capture not only what I heard but the act of recording itself. I hoped to attain what David Kolber describes in his analysis of *Kits Beach Soundwalk* as “the space to exist however she wants, and to use that space to express, to compose to make music” (Kolber 2002, 41). Staking out a technological practice, I announced “I treasure the rare happenstance and compelling circumstantial polyphony of raw audio” (DeLaurenti 2001b) and explained:

I try to incorporate—and when appropriate, affirm—the inevitable influence and presence of the recordist and recording gear both in the field and back in the studio. Aggressive editing (abrupt stops, dead silence, frenetic intercutting, obviously artificial polyphony, antiphonal spatialization, the traditional transparent crossfade) and audibly risky tactics (quizzing street hustlers, sidling up to riot police, bobbing through mobs), as well as the varying and variable fidelities of microphones, tape hiss, technical flaws (wind noise, boom rustling and even the off-mike intrusions of voices and incongruent

sounds), and the deck itself all help relay the struggle, frustration, and (occasional) triumph of the hunt. (Ibid)

I affirmed my “inevitable influence and presence” in two ways: The inclusion of my off-mike and sometimes stuttering voice in my sound works and “aggressive editing,” with the aforementioned litany of techniques (DeLaurenti 2001b). Musicologist and soundscape composer Iain Findlay-Walsh notes that

As with *Kits Beach Soundwalk*, DeLaurenti’s pieces frequently include the recordist’s voice, however these vocal interjections are usually real-time responses, comments captured in reaction to changing environments and situations. (2017, 123)

My “real-time responses” emerged, if not erupted, from the havoc of recording on city streets (e.g. “quizzing street hustlers” (DeLaurenti 2001b) in *cocaine* (DeLaurenti 2000c), tracking revelers during Mardi Gras in New Orleans, and holding fast against police charges in *N30*) in tandem with near-random, mapless wandering. I also was coping with dying batteries and other technical issues born of rapid movement and improvised recording made amidst what documentary filmmakers Bruce Jackson and Diane Christian ruefully descry as “an inverted funnel of declining possibility” where “every decision forecloses others and the possibilities become ever narrower” (1994, 62).

As surprising possibilities unfold in *Kits Beach Soundwalk*, Westerkamp is masterly. She exerts complete control of the studio, employing “such products as ‘bandpass filters and equalizers’ that those tiny voices and sounds may be heard again” (Kolber 2002, 42). By including an extract of *Concret P-H* composed by Iannis Xenakis in

1958, Westerkamp imparts sagacious knowledge and an untrammled access to the past. “In contrast to Westerkamp’s authorly reflections in *Kits Beach Soundwalk*,” continues Findlay-Walsh, “specific allusions to his role as recordist through the inclusion of direct spoken references ... foreground DeLaurenti’s changing agency in a variety of everyday situations” (2017, 123).

Affirming the presence of the recordist smashes through what phonographer Mark Peter Wright has condemned as “a contemporary wall of self-silence” and “overt or implied, self-dissolution” (2015, 35). Wright’s proposed turn towards a “self-reflexive guise” (Ibid, 37) echoes Dunn’s lament (2009 [1997], 104) and Westerkamp’s call for soundscape composition to “create a meaningful place for listener and composer” (2000).

I too wanted to create such “a meaningful place” and I did so through “aggressive editing (abrupt stops, dead silence, frenetic intercutting, obviously artificial polyphony, antiphonal spatialization, the traditional transparent crossfade)” (DeLaurenti 2001b). With these audibly exaggerated techniques, I attempted to extend the mobile acoustic mapping of place heard in *Kit Beach Soundwalk* and other soundscape compositions. Westerkamp’s brilliant response to Schafer’s discomfort with schizophonic sound was to suggest that soundscape compositions

can and should perhaps create a strong oppositional place of *conscious* listening. Rather than lulling us into false comfort, it can make use of the schizophonic medium to awaken our curiosity and to create a desire for deeper knowledge and information... (2000)

My edits should jolt the listener. In many of my sound works, especially *cocaine* (DeLaurenti 2000), *Your 3 minute Mardi Gras* (DeLaurenti 2003), and *N30: Live at the WTO Protest, November 30, 1999* (DeLaurenti 2000 and 2008b), I sought not only to establish “a strong oppositional place of *conscious* listening” (Westerkamp 2000) but to stake out an oppositional soundscape, one that welcomed multiple perspectives by deploying “episodic and disjointed forms” (Findlay-Walsh 2017, 123) which

can be understood as analogous to the perpetually shifting subject-positions of a person engaged in the sense-making processes common to everyday (auditory) perception and experience. (Ibid)

In my work, phonography meant inverting “meanings about place, time, environment and listening perception” (Westerkamp 2002). The “place” was two-fold: The soundscape as captured by my microphones along with the incongruous soundscape of hearing a recording with occasional interjections of my voice, recording flaws, and edits. Translated to a visual metaphor, it is akin to seeing a photograph whose image includes the photographer’s finger partially obtruding the lens. The presence and position within the frame of this supposed “error” becomes as important as (if not more than) the ostensible subjects within the frame. The result, “perpetually shifting subject-positions,” was my attempt to shift the frame in real time to perturbate the listener’s perception and dislodge the single position of an objective (or at least passive) listener.

I intended my aggressive edits to be congruent with the “audibly risky tactics” (DeLaurenti 2001b), which in essence entailed taking my microphones to where they are not supposed to be such as abandoned tunnels (heard in *To the Cooling Tower*,

Satsop) violent political protests (*N30: Live at the WTO Protest, November 30, 1999*), and orchestra concerts (*Favorite Intermissions*). The riskiest tactic of all may be my embrace of “varying and variable fidelities of microphones, tape hiss, and technical flaws” (DeLaurenti 2001b).

Imperfect sound forever

Two kinds of invisibility permeate field recording: the transparency of the technology and the concomitant absence of the phonographer. Martin Spinelli contends that the “history of digital audio has been almost exclusively about silencing technology” (2007, 103) with the promise of high-fidelity, true-to-life reproduction. Furthermore:

While analog media presented us with silence of a sort, at least when compared to the sound quality of electromechanical media, digital silence made obvious all of the noise that we had previously ignored. (Brøvig-Hanssen and Danielsen 2016, 61)

The remarkable hiss-free signal-to-noise ratios of DAT, MD and other digital recording decks are measurably more sonically transparent and less prone to deterioration and noise than analog systems (Pohlmann 2005, 19).⁴¹ Digital formats such as the MD, compact discs, and CD-Rs also silence the impermanence of technology: Eternal durability is enshrined by an immutable stream of decoded ones and zeros that putatively embody the first advertising slogan of the compact disc, “perfect sound forever” (Milner 2009, 218)—an echo of the utopian marketing

⁴¹ Pohlmann refers to short-term deterioration in the signal path, not the archival endurance of media.

language of Edison who promised “the faultless fidelity of an instantaneous photograph” (1888, 648) almost a century earlier.⁴²

Transparent technology also requires an invisible operator to abet the illusion of perfect sound. Heeding the observational, third-person perspective inherent in high-fidelity audio, paid professionals offering advice about making field recordings recommend assiduously avoiding (or subsequently editing out) off-mike (i.e. suddenly distant and muted) sounds (Rose 2015, 178 and 384) and the smothering rumble (Patton 2010, 149) or white noise-like hiss (Dorritie 2003, 53) of wind. The corporeal body must also be mute (Ibid, 77); in his liner notes to Ruth Happel’s compact disc *Loons of Echo Pond* (1998), Bernie Krause wrote admiringly “Ruth switched on her recorder and just lay quietly, unmoving on the ground for hours at a time” (Krause 1991). Hands should firmly remain still to avoid imparting handling noise via the mic or boom pole (Patton 2010, 79 and 262).

Gordon Hempton, another renowned and pioneering nature recordist, reminds us that out in the field, the entire body must be silent—even when “a football field away” (2009, 193)—from shallow, silent breathing (Ibid, 99) and surface-caressing footfalls (Ibid, 24, 36; Dorritie 2003, 64) to quiet, plain-textured clothing (Hempton 2009, 99) and, in my own experience, a well-considered diet, lest bodily creaks and borborygms dapple the recording. The resulting audio recording should have no incongruous shifts

⁴² The famed cases of disc rot aka “bronzing” from PDO discs made in the UK from 1988 to 1993 (Bishop 2004), along with difficulties in digital data migration due to technological obsolescence (Niehof et al. 2018), varying lifespans of CD-R and DVD-R dyes (Iraci 2017; Iraci 2011), and models of accelerated aging tests sanctioned by the ISO (OSTA 2003, 32) make this embodiment unproven, probably fictive, undeniably commercial, and purely ideological.

where “the stereo image swings around unrealistically as the mic moves” (Rose 2015, 161). Ideally, the stereo imaging should be “dramatic, and that insects, birds and mammals appear to move naturally through the aural space” (Krause 1996, 85).

The three works discussed in this dissertation embrace the “varying and variable fidelities of microphones, tape hiss, and technical flaws” (DeLaurenti 2001b). The opening minutes of *N30* are rife with handling noise, off-mike sounds, wind distortion, and bursts of hiss due to clumsy level adjustments. Microphones clearly crunch during several police assaults in *N30* and distortion remains audible throughout several segments of street drumming. *Favorite Intermissions* teems with the sound of my footsteps in tandem with rubbing clothes; depending on how I positioned my shoulder-mounted microphones—at times aimed off-center or away from the musicians—frequency response was inconsistent. *To the Cooling Tower*, *Satsop* contains the fewest audible “flaws” but foregrounds my presence: breathing, footsteps, and tapping, all signals of my sightless navigation through the tunnel. In all of the aforementioned works, I composed with these flaws. Findlay-Walsh cannily points out that microphone handling noises “occur frequently, marking beginnings or key transitions in his compositions” (2017, 123). I employ shifts in fidelity to emphasize particular sounds, favor or filter individual voices, and shape listener attention.

As a manifesto, “What is an Aural Safari?” failed as a public document. While the desperation and moodiness of “What is an aural safari?” can be traced historically to the *flâneur*, who “serves as a focal device for organizing the wealth of the city’s sights

and sounds into a panorama that presents the attractions in an orderly narrative” (Boutin 2015, 11), I had hoped to inspire myself, my fellow phonographers, and indeed anyone bringing microphones out into the world.

But the disparate farrago of my proposed counter-canon⁴³ and call to embrace multiple fidelities (DeLaurenti 2001b) failed to sway the phonography listserv and field recording as a discipline. There was never any discussion of “What is an aural safari?” on the phonography listserv. In 2004, I did reiterate my views on phonography in a scholarly journal (DeLaurenti 2005b), but to no avail: *Soundscape: The Journal of Acoustic Ecology*, was then as now, obscure. I had not yet charted the hierarchy of peer-reviewed journals in the various fields germane to phonography.⁴⁴

Earwitnessing and phonography

“What is an aural safari?” did succeed in enshrining a new direction for my practice, albeit without an articulated critical framework. In hindsight, I believe that my use of varying and variable fidelities, indeed my practice of phonography, is also a form of earwitnessing.

To repurpose a phrase from Schafer, phonography is “the best guide available” (1977, 9) to earwitness through recording. Although affirming the presence of the recordist does not preclude creating what Dunn lamented as “a false representation of the

⁴³ The works I listed included Glenn Gould’s *Solitude Trilogy* (1992); Annea Lockwood’s “Delta Run” from her CD *Breaking the Surface* (1999); Claude Matthews’ self-released *DogPoundFoundSound*, (1996); Rachel McInturff’s “By Heart” (1997); and Charles Amirkhanian’s *Pas De Voix* (1988) (DeLaurenti 2001b) which intersected artists across eras, genres, gender, and age.

⁴⁴ Braun proposes *Journal of Sonic Studies, Interference*, and *Sound Effects* (2017, 76).

reality” (1999, 104) in a recording; such affirmation at least enfolds the phonographer into the acoustic community of sound-makers and listeners in the soundscape.

Continually dislodging the frame by welcoming multiple fidelities, embracing errors, audible edits, and the presence of the recordist, phonography makes the evidence of experience audible, overtly preserving a historiography of sound while attempting to create “a strong oppositional place of *conscious* listening” (Westerkamp 2000).

Although no recording can heal “the separation of the word from the living present” (Ong 2002 [1982], 80), phonography can challenge the literacy of making and hearing field recordings: Akin to those earwitness testimonies framed on the page by quotation marks, phonography is a form of historiography. To appropriate a line from historian Eric H. Carr, phonography overtly (not “consciously or unconsciously”) “reflects our own position in time, and forms part of our answer to the broader question, what view we take of the society in which we live” (1987, 8). Rather than “represent the world positively unified” (Minh-Ha 1991, 2), my practice of phonography rebels: I attempt to offer an alternative to the dominant ideology of field recording by making technological practice and personal intervention audible—and politically critical, a fulcrum for political listening. I explore this facet of phonography by proposing three modes of activist sound in the next chapter, “Towards Activist Sound.”

Towards Activist Sound:

N30: Live at the WTO Protest November 30, 1999

The purpose of this chapter is to begin answering the core question of this dissertation: How can field recordings and field recording-based sound works be identified as a form of protest? Invoking Walter J. Ong’s notion that “a textual, visual representation of a word” can release “unheard-of potentials of the word” (2002 [1982], 73), I employ “activist sound” as a rubric under which to examine how field recordings and field recording-based sound works can make the political audible.

Beginning with *N30: Live at the WTO Protest November 30, 1999*⁴⁵—a field recording-based sound work of a massed gathering of 40,000 people (Seattle Police Department 2000, 41)⁴⁶ against the World Trade Organization Ministerial Meeting in Seattle from November 29 to December 3, 1999—is a logical point of departure. As a field recording of a protest, examining *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* can establish a baseline for identifying how field recordings and field recording-based sound work functions as a form of protest; the seemingly obvious self-evidence of the subject

⁴⁵ Throughout this dissertation N30 will denote the protest against the 1999 WTO Ministerial Conference while *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* and its abbreviated form *N30* refers to the sound, performance, and installation works I fashioned from my recordings made at N30.

⁴⁶ There were likely more than 40,000, the figure cited by this document as the number of people participating in the AFL-CIO march. I also witnessed what photographer Dan Halligan reported as “10-15,000 people were already downtown taking direct action or showing support for the cause before the labor march arrived” (2000, 83). By contrast, Verhovek 2000 refers to an “estimated 35,000 demonstrators” while Sellers 2012 witnessed “50,000 lefties” (289).

For comparison, the population of Seattle in 1999 was approximately 537,000 according to United States census data:

https://www.google.com/publicdata/explore?ds=kf7tgg1uo9ude_&met_y=population&idim=sub_county:5363000:0667000&hl=en&dl=en Accessed September 15, 2019.

matter will also propel deeper examination of the limits and potential of *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* and similar work.

After a brief history of N30, I preface my first-person eye- and earwitness account of recording on November 30, 1999 by addressing five self-critical questions posed by composer Tullis Rennie “when creating art from re-appropriated sound sources” (2014, 119). This chapter then proposes three modes of activist sound in which *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* can function as a protest and make the political—defined in the Introduction as the construction, collaboration, and collision of personal and collective power—audible.

The first mode, critical resistance material, outlines how activists have used *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* to further their activist goals, deploying the work for training protesters as well as sonic camouflage. The second mode of activist sound, self-reflexive earwitnessing, undermines and thwarts the “relentless pursuit of naturalism” (Minh-Ha 1990, 80) that may arise while documenting and memorializing N30, “the moment when the mass direct-action model that activists had been developing and refining since Mayday 1971 worked most smoothly and brilliantly” (Kauffman 2017). For the third mode of activist sound, utopian listening, I speculate how three elements of *N30: Live at the WTO Protest*—sensory focus, my practice of phonography, and the soundscape of protest—might clarify and expand utopian listening from a practice that “enables the listening subject to find new possibilities” (Wallrup 2015, 178) to activist practices, namely the “one-on-one” (Schutz 2010, 170) or “relational meeting” (Chambers 2003, 44). In addition to Erik Wallrup (2015), I draw upon an

array of theorists including R. Murray Schafer (1977; 2003), Barry Truax (1977; 1984), Trinh T. Minh-Ha (1990; 1991), Hildegard Westerkamp (2000), David C. Jackson (2016), John Berger (1968), Luis A. Fernandez (2008), and Judith Butler (2015).

N30: An acronym and a protest

Colloquially known as N30, this contraction of “November” and the day of the month, “30” denotes the gathering of at least 40,000 demonstrators against the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Meeting held in Seattle from November 29 to December 3, 1999. Founded in 1995 (Narlikar 2015, 22), the WTO is a transnational governmental body convened to streamline trade agreements, labor standards, and enable multinational corporations to do business across international borders with as little fuss as possible (Rosenberg 2002). “Trading into the Future,” included in the CD-ROM press kit of the Seattle WTO Ministerial Meeting phrases it officially:

Although negotiated and signed by governments, the goal is to help producers of goods and services, exporters, and importers conduct their business. The system’s overriding purpose is to help trade flow as freely as possible..... (WTO Secretariat 1998, 2)

Of the many standards adopted by the WTO from the 1990s to the early 2010s, not one has had anything to do with a transnational, universal living wage, or uniform, immediately enforceable environmental protection (Narlikar 2015). Since 1996, the WTO has “rejected the use of labour standards for protectionist purposes” (WTO Secretariat 2015, 71) preferring instead to support the International Labour Organization (ILO) “to set and deal with internationally recognized core labour standards” (Ibid). As a United Nations organization, the ILO was feckless and

impotent in the late 1990s and early 2000s: Unlike the WTO whose member nations can employ “trade retaliation” and impose other sanctions (Narlikar 2015, 97), “the greatest drawback of the ILO is its lack of enforcement capacity” (Mansoor 2004, 4).

Planned as “a protest against corporate attacks on human rights and the environment” (Kauffman 2018, 82), the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Seattle “represented a potent symbolic target for anyone challenging the juggernaut of undemocratic global corporate power” (Sellers 2012, 286). N30 became a convenient acronym for publicity, recruitment, and planning: The initial calls to activists employed the moniker (November 30 Global Day of Action Collective 1999); and the chief organizers, Direct Action Network (“DAN”) also employed the term “N30.” The majority of the paper ephemera I collected in the months before, during, and after the protest, including posters, newspapers, and handbills, incorporated “N30,” often emblazoned in the biggest, boldest type possible.

The core direct action of N30—blockading the streets and entry points for WTO delegates “to put the bodies on the line and actually physically disrupt the damn bastards” (Solnit 2000)—was organized by DAN, “a coalition of such groups as the Rainforest Action Network, Art & Revolution, and the Ruckus Society” (de Armond 2001, 203). Other Seattle-based affinity groups and performance ensembles as well as anarchist “black bloc” members planned their own protest actions independently, autonomously, in loose affiliation with, or in general ignorance of DAN’s planning (Solnit 2000).

Most groups “coordinated nonviolent protest training, communications, and collective strategy and tactics through a decentralized process of consultation/consensus decision making” with DAN (de Armond 2001, 203). Although the WTO was still able to conduct and resolve some business on its agenda, the protest was a success, exceeding organizers’ expectations (Solnit 2000) and “however briefly, actually brought the WTO meeting to a halt” (Kaufmann 2017). In hindsight, the WTO acknowledged the N30 protests “severely disrupted the ministerial proceedings and came as a shock to both the organization and its supporters” (WTO Secretariat 2015, 79).

N30 exerted a powerful influence: The WTO Protest “got the evening news to talk about stuff like world trade and sweatshops” (Sullivan 2000, 57) and inspired a generation of activists and activist-organized protests:

The idea that militant mass action could stop corporate globalization in its tracks became not only thinkable, but popular. Every major summit between Seattle and 9/11 was met with mass protest. (Sellers 2012, 289)

Recording the political: five questions

While pondering the act of recording political protests in his carefully-considered survey of “ethical considerations when creating art from re-appropriated sound sources,” composer Tullis Rennie poses five self-critical questions rooted in the model of participant-observation (2014, 119) pioneered by anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942) and other ethnographers. Writing immediately after the protest in late 1999 and early 2000, I imagined similar questions, albeit quite

differently and with less sophistication; Rennie’s questions prompted a detailed, self-critical reflection absent from my written account.

Rennie’s first two questions, “How do I achieve validity, transparency and a sense of balanced representation when using these materials for artistic purposes?” and

How much am I looking to document the event with this piece of music, or rather document my personal reading, my own experience of the event? Can these be separated? (Rennie 2014, 119)

were, for me, inextricably entwined. The question of transparency and balance suggest that such balance is achievable by one person. Today, with YouTube and other crowd-sourced media (tweets, embedded videos, old-school torrents, unprotected data dumps on web servers, etc.) available online,⁴⁷ it is possible to collate and wrangle multiple videos from different perspectives shot at the same time in the same location. This is my current composing methodology: I have supplemented my own field recordings with such recordings found online to make *Live at Occupy Wall Street N15 M1 S17* (2012-14), *Fit The Description* (Ferguson, 9-13 August 2014) (2014-15), *Live in Baltimore at the March for Freddie Gray April 25, 2015* (2015-16) and more recent pieces.

By contrast in 1999, I was one person and could not separate my “personal reading” (Rennie 2014, 119) from my recording. At N30, the heralded presence of media organizations from around the world—in tandem with a streetside office of

⁴⁷ At least ephemerally: I estimate that over half of the crowd-sourced media I used in pieces from *Live at Occupy Wall Street N15 M1 S17* (2012-14) to the present day are no longer online.

IndyMedia and its own phalanx of volunteer reporters—implicitly settled the first and second questions. As one person, I could neither convey “balanced representation” comparable to a well-staffed news bureau nor function as a paid, experienced reporter with an expense account and a roster of contacts, fixers, and inside informants. Understandably, the activists I knew fed me useful generalities and strategies, not detailed tactical planning. As a phonographer, all I could do was embrace and enfold my limitations and first-person presence in my recording; the only documentary impulse to balance was the proportion of my experience, my earwitnessing.

Given recent and radical formulations of indigeneity, notably Tuck and Yang’s article “Decolonization is not a metaphor” (2012), Rennie’s third question is especially salient: “Did I adopt a ‘native’ perspective during my reception of the experience?” (2014, 119). Tuck and Yang formulate indigeneity as omnipresent, regardless of geography or territory or temporal limits (2012, 2 and 7)—unwittingly mapping a sense of expansiveness rooted in capitalism onto cultures that never possessed such practices. Myself, I map indigeneity through an ineffable sense of ancestrally belonging to a place. Despite my dislike of the influx of Californians pushing up housing prices and clogging traffic, being a grouchy Seattle native was impossible for me amid protesters from around the world who sacrificed time and money and possible police repression to rally against the WTO, a transnational organization. The flood of protesters were not invaders but liberators.

At the protest, my remaining option was to be myself unobtrusively. I did my best to participate in what Malinowski suggested as “the arrangements for the day’s work”

(2002 [1922], 6) and “acquire ‘the feeling’ for good and bad manners.” (Ibid). This inevitably meant that I “committed breaches of etiquette” (Ibid), not only against law enforcement but against protesters as well; for example I disregarded an order by a DAN organizer: “media people get the fuck outta the way!” (DeLaurenti 2008b, 39’37”) in order to get a close-up recording of pepper spray (Ibid, 39’43”).

Continuing to connect field recordings of protest to the political, Rennie asks

How do I balance the political ‘hot potato’—reacting to something current—alongside the need or desire to create a long-lasting work—something more considered and objective? (2014, 119)

Rennie also wonders: “How does my identity (here, my ‘compositional voice’) ring out in a piece that has so much emotional information from others already loaded into the raw sound materials?” (2014, 119). As a young man of 29, I had not yet realized that one reason I make field recordings is to retrieve and renew my compositional voice. Recording *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* shaped my compositional voice, giving me the confidence to explore unusual locations and situations, two of which are discussed later in this dissertation: orchestra intermissions and abandoned tunnels.

Uncertain, inchoate elements of my compositional practice—phonography, expansive forms, guillotine cuts (i.e. digitally truncated endings), and silence—converged in *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* for the first time. The silences framing the front two channels of *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* (DeLaurenti 2008b) present the clearest example of my emerging compositional voice: 7 seconds at 06” and 3’26”; 4 seconds at 9’20”; 2 seconds at 9’36” and 9’45”; 7 seconds at 49’31”; 13 seconds at 50’33”; 3

seconds at 52'02"; and 4 seconds at 59'25" (Ibid). Functioning as compositional punctuation, these audible gaps build tension from one part to the next shifting the listener's attention among aspects of the soundscape such as location, fidelity, and emotional viewpoint.

As for making a "long-lasting work" (Rennie 2014, 119), I felt then that making a good piece constituted sufficient balance; what was "long-lasting" anyway, especially in a throwaway consumer culture where last week's news might feel as if it happened last year? My glib sentiment did not change until fifteen years later when I read:

"If an art work is thought of as in any way alive it should be allowed to die when its time comes, and, if necessary, to be mourned." (Small 1980, 92)

Christopher Small's cogent sentence spurred me to ponder the choice between a ruined world with masterpieces or something better. About *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* and the bulk of my work, I wrote in response: "I hope a just, radical transformation of society renders these works obsolete, leaving quaint, bygone documents for thesis-hungry scholars" (DeLaurenti 2015b, 94).

"Who needs it?"

The questions I asked myself in 1999 were much more self-centered: First, what did I want from the act of recording? Second, what did I plan to do with the material? And third, to paraphrase Stravinsky who, when twitching at a concert listening to music he felt was wasting his time, would ask *sotto voce*, "who needs it?" (Craft 1994, 230).

What did I want from the act of recording the WTO protest? A well-connected activist friend told me “this is gonna be big.” Should I do a documentary and interview people? I had no interest in resorting to that technique. As a phonographer, I wanted an experience that would test my limits and help me grow as a composer. As a listener, and knowing that drummers and other unruly noisemakers would be present, I suspected that the huge crowd would serve up a sonic feast. Knowing that the protest would be a newsworthy event crawling with reporters, I resolved to remain aloof, not speak to anyone unless spoken to, and simply record; in 1997, I realized that “‘Style’ means sensing what everyone else is doing and knowing why you do it differently” (Wright 2013).

At the protest, I saw dozens of videographers, but by operating independently without anyone’s consent or alliance, I supplemented “a strong oppositional place of *conscious* listening” (Westerkamp 2000) rooted in phonography. Seeing where videographers were going (usually towards or away from a cluster of protesters and police), invited me to consciously choose to listen instead and frame the soundscape, not an image.

What did I plan to do with the material? A few artists have composed pieces that include the sounds of protest as a significant element of the work such as Nono’s *Non Consumiamo Marx* (1969), *All the Rage* by Bob Ostertag (1992), and *The White City*, a radiophonic work composed in 1998 by Arsenije Jovanovic. Yet I did not know of anyone who had fashioned a work where recordings of a protest were the essence—the sole source material—of the work. LPs released in the 1960s and 1970s by I

Dischi del Sole (MacPhee 2017, 18) such as the very obscure and haphazardly distributed *I fatti di Milano* recorded in November 1969 during protests in Milan by members (Gianni Bosio and Silvio Ruggeri) of the neofolk collective Nuovo Canzoniere Italiano (Casadei 2019, 30) were unknown to me. Although composed in 1969, Tony Conrad's *Bryant Park Moratorium Rally* was not released until 2003.

With an ear for a possible public presentation, I pondered: "Who needs it?" I imagined that presenting the resulting composition at a concert without any visuals could be stirring and evocative. Diffusing through four, eight, or more speakers might be an aurally ravishing and transformative experience. Heeding Schafer's notion that "wherever Noise is granted immunity from human intervention, there will be found a seat of power" (1977, 76), careful ears might locate seldom-heard sources of power in massed chants and individual protester statements in the soundscape of N30. Eventually, I made multiple pieces from my N30 recordings, from releases on compact disc (DeLaurenti 2000c; DeLaurenti 2002b) to versions for radio and live performance (discussed in "Back Channel Sources and Versions," below); I settled on a four channel version of *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* for the 2008 Taipei Biennial (DeLaurenti 2008b).

I also believed historians might need my N30 recordings. My hunch was that while videographers would be out in force, few would focus on recording sound. I had not been impressed with the onboard microphones grafted onto video cameras, and when forced to choose between sweeping the camera like a brush for panoramic sound or keeping the camera still for a stable image (and a fixed frame of sound), most camera

operators will opt for the stable image. Furthermore, most camera microphones capture monaural, not stereo sound. While in the streets of Seattle, a reporter for WDR Köln was shocked when I asked “Are you recording in stereo?” He looked at me as if I was insane. And that was before I asked, naïvely, if he had met Stockhausen. As a baseline documentary activity, my recording equipment might yield some worthwhile audio for someone else in the future—a possibility I discuss in the section below, “Three modes of activist sound in *N30: Live at the WTO Protest*.”

Preparations

In this section, I will discuss how I prepared to record at N30 along with a brief assessment of the shortcomings in my preparations. In early 2000 I wrote “In the Field at the WTO: Field Recording in the Line of Fire” for *The Tentacle: The Journal of Pacific Northwest Creative Music*, a free, bi-monthly magazine that circulated 5,000 copies in the Seattle-Tacoma-Olympia-Portland corridor:

On November 29, 1999 I fired up my desktop computer and found many web pages detailing what to expect and what to bring in case of violence.⁴⁸ I read of possible police brutality, tear gas, and the deadly undertow of surging crowds. Those who wished to participate in civil disobedience, “CD,” were exhorted to leave their ID at home and instructed in jail solidarity.⁴⁹ I also checked the weather. As a [Seattle] native, I can smell oncoming rain and discerned that it would rain tomorrow.

Later that night, I dressed for a trial run. Dressing in layers, I strapped my portable DAT recorder, a battery-powered Tascam DA-P1, over one shoulder and my

⁴⁸ The sites I looked at in 1999 are all off-line, though one of them, agitprop.org/artandrevolution, was preserved by the Wayback Machine though not until January 18, 2000. https://web.archive.org/web/20000101000000*/www.agitprop.org/artandrevolution/ Accessed November 7, 2019.

⁴⁹ Of those arrested at the protest, “more than 100, using aliases such as ‘John’ or ‘Jane WTO,’ were still unidentified two weeks after the Conference” (Seattle Police Department 2000, 48).

battery case across my other shoulder. Alongside the batteries, I inserted a spare notepad, several pens and pencils, and an empty DAT cassette case. I also donned a backpack containing a liter of bottled water (an antidote for thirst and pepper spray⁵⁰) and plenty of food: stomach-stuffing bagels and cream cheese as well as small energy-giving mandarin oranges and a tin of sardines...

Over my equipment and backpack, I draped a thick, heavy-hooded green-and-black coat. Endowed with capacious pockets, I stuffed my coat with the essentials: A roll of blue tack-down tape: half-inch Scotch #2090, which can secure microphones, cover surfaces, and plug leaks. Additionally, I brought wool gloves with finger holes, which afford the digital dexterity needed to press buttons. I also packed extra DAT tapes, headphones, and a piece of thin black foam to drape over my microphones as protection against the rain.

Packing my pockets created extra insulation for my DAT deck, which I covered with a washcloth to absorb any rain. A friend had offered his early 1990s Gulf War-era Army helmet but I refused, thinking it might annoy and provoke demonstrators and police.⁵¹ I did accept some Burning Man-tested goggles and taped up the air holes.

Swathed in equipment—most of it hidden under my coat—I resembled a professional American football player... I decided that my steel-toed brown leather Red Wing boots would be the best footwear for the expedition. I stepped outside and tested my load. I could still run, but sprinting would be impossible. (DeLaurenti 2000a, 7, 20)

⁵⁰ Milk was the most common antidote to pepper spray at the WTO Protest in Seattle, but protesters have learned much since then. The Occupy Oakland Collective 2012 pamphlet “Tear Gas and Pepperspray 101” recommends “law,” a 50% mix of liquid antacid such as Maalox (avoid mint flavoring, it burns) with water.

⁵¹ I began seeing protesters wear helmets, kneepads, shin guards and other informal body armor at the Occupy protests in the United States in 2011.

In retrospect, my preparations might seem thorough, but I had no idea what I was doing. Comparing the previous account to the worksheet I currently hand out at my field recording workshops—a list made with two decades of additional experience—reveals much that is missing: Extra cables, a back-up recording deck, a battery charger, low denomination currency, a flashlight, Handi Wipes, earplugs, and a map. I also neglected to insert a laminated card with my name and contact information in my kit and place a “good conscience” slate the first recording on my deck.⁵² My most egregious error was that I told only one person about my plans and did not establish a check-in time. In case of arrest, I should have written contact numbers for family and protester advocacy organizations on my arm and stomach.

Unknown forerunners

My haphazard preparation in 1999 highlights a significant historical fact: Helpful field recording tutorials or first-person testimonies from those with experience taking recording devices into the field—even from blunt, effusive Americans like me—were scarce in the first century of field recording in the United States. In this section, I survey advice offered by pioneering ethnologists, ethnomusicologists, anthropologists, and ornithologists including Jesse Walter Fewkes, Benjamin Ives Gilman, Frances Densmore, Hugh Tracey, and Laura Boulton along with two notable figures outside of academia, Ludwig Koch and Tony Schwartz.

⁵² The first recording or first sound file on all of my recording media has a slate which is based approximately on the following text: “Hi! This is Chris and you’ve found my deck. Yes, there is a reward. Please email or call me. Here is my contact information....”

Tracing this lineage is not easy; pioneering recordists were seldom helpful in print. In her landmark history, *A Spiral Way: How the Phonograph Changed Ethnography*, Erika Brady discovered that amidst all of articles in the *Journal of American Folklore* from 1890 to 1935, only twelve mention the phonograph, despite the fact that “external evidence demonstrates that members of the society were using it regularly” (1999, 60-61). Guidance, or mere hints were few and far between, as if the process was self-evident. I have found no evidence that researchers did not want to help rivals or possible competitors, though this remains a possibility.

Morsels of advice were offered by Jesse Walter Fewkes (1850-1930), whose field recordings “represent the first efforts to collect [recorded] music for scientific analysis” (American Folklife Center 1985, 3).⁵³ In 1890, at the dawn of field recording, Fewkes published (1890a, 268) what a subsequent pioneer, Frances Densmore, believed was the first article on the use of the phonograph for ethnological field work (Densmore 1942, 528). Fewkes’ pathbreaking efforts with wax cylinder recording which was, according to Fewkes “in a state of perfection” (1890a, 267) resulted in only one suggestion, one which phonographers the world over unknowingly follow to this day, which is to record a verbal slate:

These records were always accompanied by a statement on the cylinder of the subject, time and place, name of the Indian giving the testimony and that of the observer. This safeguard seemed necessary for future identification, as their labels might be displaced or lost, and by that means their value be impaired. (Ibid, 268)

⁵³ Feaster (2001, 3-4) chronicles other scholars who, antedating Fewkes, “envisioned using the phonograph for anthropology” (Ibid, 3) in the field but did not succeed, including Eugén Zintgraff and Felix von Luschan.

A few months later Fewkes usefully noted “difficulties in the transportation of the phonograph from the railroad to Zuñi” (1890b, 1094), adding

I found it convenient, however, to take with me the treadle machine, which is more practical for this kind of work than that furnished with the storage battery. The former is, moreover, more bulky, and on that account more difficult to carry over rough roads. (Ibid)

Fewkes was a true polymath. After publishing the results of his youthful experiments with electricity, Fewkes augmented his training and career as a marine zoologist with research into botany, ethnology, and archaeology (Nichols 1919). But aside from an article in 1910 that admitted to a failed recording, Fewkes offered no further written guidance for those making field recordings.

The most thorough advice was offered by the philosopher and ethnologist Benjamin Ives Gilman (1852-1933) in his monograph *Hopi Songs* (1908). In the first part of the second chapter, “Phonographic Method,” Gilman details his use of the phonograph by analyzing the variations in rotations of the wax cylinder⁵⁴ and intonation⁵⁵ in tandem with tracking battery consumption and his progress in transcribing, notating, and understanding the songs he recorded (Ibid, 25-53). So detailed are Gilman’s notes that nearly a century later ethnomusicologist Helen Myers showcased Gilman as a still-relevant exemplar in her chapter “Field Technology” (1992, 84) for the standard

⁵⁴ “The counting of revolutions of the cylinder is conveniently effected by holding the finder lightly against the screw-head that projects from about the middle of the axis” (Gilman 1908, 47).

⁵⁵ “...the rate of the instrument either remained or was kept by adjustment of the electrical supply constant to within a ratio equivalent to an interval of about a tenth of a tone [10 cents] during the whole examination of each song” (Gilman 1908, 46).

textbook, *Ethnomusicology: An Introduction* (Myers 1992). As a source of instruction and guidance, Gilman was an outlier among those making recordings in the field.

Another pioneering field recordist, Frances Densmore (1867-1957) offered few hints and guidance to make field recordings in her determined, precise, and voluminous texts. As a woman in a male-dominated field, Densmore had to compete and succeed decisively in order to receive ongoing funding and other renewable institutional support (Jensen and Wick 2015, 1, 6, 9; Jensen 2015a, 175). Musicologist Rachel Mundy reminds us that female scientists and song collectors including Densmore “who collected specimens were in a position of power in their relationships with plants, animals, and artifacts; but in their professional relationships, they were often on uncertain footing” (Mundy 2018, 75).

At the end of her career, Densmore was more forthright and generous. Writing in 1940 to a university-employed anthropology professor planning to record members of the Gros Ventres tribe, she included a page-long appendix encapsulating her three decades of recording experience (American Folklife Center 1990, 386). In “The Study of Indian Music,” Densmore also offers her instructive recollections to ethnomusicologists planning to record Native Americans (1942, 532-537). In addition, she details her visionary update of Fewkes’ suggestion of slating, which is to record a tuning fork to imprint the Western standard concert pitch onto the phonograph cylinder (Densmore 1942, 542; Gray 2015, 366). Densmore’s suggestion to slate a test tone enabled the correlation of performer pitch with the cylinder’s (initial) speed of rotation. Although she did not employ the tuning fork test tone

consistently (Gray 2015, 374), Densmore foreshadowed the use of test tones for magnetic tape recording and playback. In 1948, audio engineers at Ampex recorded brief tones at specific amplitudes on tape (Lindsay 1978, 41) to calibrate the alignment and speed (and thus retain consistently accurate pitch and tempo) of magnetic tape decks (Camras 1988, 275-276; White and Louie 2005, 396).

Guidance for making field recordings appeared sporadically in journals of anthropology and ornithology. The renowned ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl wrote a page-and-a-half directed “to the anthropological field worker for increasing the value of his [sic] music recordings” tucked away in the “Technical Notes” section of *American Anthropologist* (1954, 1101-1102). Nettl advises “holding the microphone close” (Ibid, 1101) but offers no specific technical advice. By contrast, Alan P. Merriam in the comparatively obscure *The Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers*⁵⁶ details the kinds of magnetic tape as well as extra equipment to consider (1954, 8) along with specific recommendations about tape speed (Ibid, 6), tape length (Ibid, 8), and electrical power (Ibid, 7).

Ornithologists dreamed of taking the phonograph into the field, too, though they were similarly circumspect. In 1897, The Reverend P.B. Peabody hoped that one day it would be possible to “phonographically, retinize the songs of birds” (1897, 139). In 1929, after teaming up with “a crew from a motion-picture corporation whose

⁵⁶ Founded in 1888, the journal *American Anthropologist* is a standard bearer in its field, professionally typeset, and well-distributed throughout the mid- and latter 20th century. Hand-typed, photocopied, and edited by a graduate student, mid-century issues of *The Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers* were dedicated to publishing articles that were “difficult, for various reasons, to publish elsewhere” and “particularly anxious to publish student research papers of high quality” (Broadbent 1954, iii).

assignment was to record the singing of wild birds synchronized with motion picture” in Ithaca, New York, Arthur A. Allen and Paul Kellogg began investigating techniques and equipment to record bird song (Pettingill 1968, 198). The two Cornell professors found a patron and collaborator in Albert Brand, a retired stockbroker and fellow ornithologist (Ibid). Together, by 1932 they developed a quasi-portable recording apparatus “housed in a small closed Ford truck” (Brand 1932, 436). After a lengthy technical description, Brand does caution that

there are a number of factors that enter into bird sound recording that make it much more complicated than the brief description just given would suggest (Ibid, 438).

Brand then continues to dispense general advice about the weather and intrusion of nearby sounds (Ibid, 438-39), but as a scientist, he remains indirect, cautious, and prudently understated: “It would seem that a new field for the student of bird life has presented itself” (Ibid, 439).

Unfortunately, the great nature recordist, broadcaster, and advocate Ludwig Koch (1881-1974) was and remains unknown in the United States. As a child, Koch recorded an Indian song-bird, the Common or White-rumped Shama, in 1889 (Burton 2012, 19); this field recording is considered to be the first known nature recording to survive (Simms 1979, 2). Koch crisscrossed the UK on numerous expeditions to record birds and other wildlife (Burton 2012, 21; Simms 1979, 6; Koch 1955). He had the gift of communicating his work to a general audience on the radio and in print. Koch dispensed hard-won wisdom in his *Memoirs* such as “the conditions needed by the microphone are quite different from those governing human hearing,” (Ibid 1955, 44) and affirmed the importance of the recording context, “that for call and song you

must watch your bird in its natural surroundings” (Ibid, 26). Although Koch also made urban field recordings in Cologne and Leipzig (Ibid, 27) before exiling himself from Nazi Germany, he remains primarily known in the UK as an avuncular naturalist who “brought the sounds of wildlife to the masses through his work with the BBC and became a household name to listeners in the 1940s and 50s” (Tipp 2014).

Two famed researchers offered guidance that would be controversial today: Hugh Tracey (1903-1977), an ethnomusicologist who collected songs throughout Central and Southern Africa, is worth quoting at length. Disturbingly, Tracey refers only to “Africans” in the article and never identifies a specific language group, nation, ethnicity, region, tribe, clan, village, band, family or other identifying geographic or social unit.

On the other hand sudden shouts, yodels and ululations can shake you with dismay, as over-modulation on the tape is inevitable. African dancers have a mean habit of producing a tin whistle out of thin air like a conjuror and blasting all one’s hopes of a good recording. Whistlers have a strange belief that full blown signals on their infernal pipes are more than half the battle. They look like whipped spaniels when they are asked to blow discreetly, and I always hate asking them. One day a recording machine will be invented to cope with whistles at any distance, but that day has not yet arrived

It is often worthwhile, I find, to record the activity which normally goes with a particular song or tune. If it is a dance, then I like to hold aside some of the dancers to do the singing while the others dance, in order to make sure the item does not flag for lack of active movement. (1955, 10)

Tracey not only adjusted the frame in making his field recordings but commanded the proceedings, an example of Jonathan Sterne’s subsequent contention that “recording

did not simply capture reality as it was; it aimed to capture a reality suitable for reproduction” (2003, 236).

Laura Boulton (1899-1980) was a buccaneering ornithologist and ethnomusicologist who brashly trumpeted “I created my career” (Boulton 1963, 13). Her 503-page autobiography, *The Music Hunter* (1969), catalogues “thirty-five years of determined and dedicated effort to secure the tapes and records of the music or peoples on all five continents” (Boulton 1969, xiii). Hoping to ingratiate herself with unspecified “tribes” who “were at first very distrustful of me and my recording machine” (Ibid, 3), Boulton describes recording and “performing a gay French folk song” and then playing it back. “Nothing I could have done would have established me more firmly, more rapidly as a friend” (Ibid). Although ostensibly specific, Boulton did not locate her technique geographically or chronologically. Such anecdotal imprecision was typical. Writing in 1999, Erika Brady stated “even in recent years when ethnographic conventions concerning presentation of text have become more stringent, the actual process by which such texts are acquired often remains obscure” (Brady 1999, 64).

By the late 1960s, a parallel condition arose in anthropology:

The ethnomusicological literature had grown and its mastery left anthropology students little time for technical training; the intellectual complexity of new theory—linguistics, phenomenology, information theory, cybernetics and semiotics—undermined interest in recording techniques, now taken for granted. (Myers 1992, 85)

Recordists outside of academia offered guidance for field recording albeit spottily.

Inexpensive paperbacks such as Arvel Ahlers’ *Family Fun in Tape Recording* (Ahlers 1965) catered to the home recording hobbyist but had little to say about taking

microphones outdoors. The most prominent advisor was Tony Schwartz, who “lived with a pronounced agoraphobia that prevented him from traveling beyond a small section of Manhattan, specifically the area known for much of his life as Postal Zone 19” (Arton et al. 2012, 6), which is

bounded on the North by 60th Street, on the South by the Times Square area, on the West by the Hudson River, and on the East by Fifth Avenue with the exception of Radio City. (Schwartz 1954, 3)

Yet beyond the confines of a small chunk of metropolitan New York, Schwartz first found fame on the radio. In 1946 he began a 26-year stint on the New York City airwaves, contributing to a morning show, “Around New York” (Suisman 2012), and then hosting the “sound magazine” “Adventures in Sound,” on WYNC and later on WBAI (Arton et al. 2012, 6). Schwartz also established his own person-to-person mail-exchange network to distribute and trade his home-made recordings (Schwartz 1974, xii).⁵⁷

In 1952, Schwartz began creating albums for Folkways Records (Carlin 2008, 239)⁵⁸ at the invitation of founder and president Moses Asch (Schwartz 1974, xiii). An advocate for amateur recording, Schwartz made sure that his Folkways LPs contained multi-page booklets that offered an expanded definition of folklore that included “the non-commercial musical expression of people now living and working in New York 19” (Schwartz 1954, 3). He also detailed his work procedures along with a photo of

⁵⁷ Schwartz 1974, xii gives 1946 as the start of this exchange network, however Schwartz 1954, 3 states “Since 1947 when I first purchased a magnetic tape recorder, I have been exchanging recordings with people all over the world.”

⁵⁸ Olmsted 2003, 73 gives the date as 1952.

his surreptitious recording apparatus (Schwartz 1956, 6-8). Much of his advice is still useful, for example: “To get around background noise in the street, get closer to your subject and lower the volume” (Ibid, 7). In response to the wider availability of portable tape recorders, Schwartz’s last LP for Folkways included an advisory price list of recorders titled “For the guidance of the inspired” (Schwartz 1962, 3).⁵⁹ These price lists and procedures perhaps make Schwartz the first to offer field recording advice—though only applicable to the city—to a mainstream audience.

Where’s the manual?

Nonetheless, guidance to prepare for an expedition to record a potentially volatile political protest was hard to find in 1999. Thorough bibliographies in commercially available books—such as Eric Simms’ *Wildlife Sounds and their Recording* (1979, 135-138)—cited journals that were inaccessible (or only accessible at significant cost) to anyone outside of academia. The aforementioned writings by Fewkes, Gilman, Densmore, Boulton, and others were out of print as well as unknown to me and the phonographers I knew. Schwartz’s Folkways Records LPs were impossible to find because they were never reissued on compact disc in the 1980s and 1990s. As an inveterate reader who weekly patrolled over a dozen bookstores, charity shops, and used record stores in North Seattle from the late 1980s to the early 2000s, I never once saw a book or LP by any of the authors mentioned in the preceding section “Unknown forerunners.”

⁵⁹ To record his 1961 Folkways LP *Sounds of London*, Samuel B. Charters mentions hiding his tape recorder “under a shapeless English duffle coat. The microphone was strapped to the left wrist inside the coat sleeve. Although there was some loss of fidelity[,] this made it possible to record everywhere in the city” (Charters 1961, 4). Unlike Schwartz, Charters did not include a photo or any advice.

Alas, mass-market trade paperbacks for beginners such as Bernie Krause's exemplary *Wild Soundscapes: Discovering the Voice of the Natural World* (2002) and Frank Dorritie's *The Handbook of Field Recording* (2003) had not yet been published. Advice was much more accessible after 2000, not only in print but on the phonography listserv as discussed in Part One of this dissertation. Guidance and recommendations could also be found occasionally in *Soundscape: the Journal of Acoustic Ecology* (which began publishing in 2000). Comparatively, *Field Notes* (three issues from 2008 to 2012) and more recently *Reflections on Process in Sound* (five issues from 2012 to 2017) proffer a trove of advice, suggestions, and wisdom. All three issues of *Field Notes* contain at least one article that discusses recording in the field. Similarly, every issue of *Reflections on Process in Sound* fulfills its title; artists reflect on technique, subject matter, and of course, struggle. All of these journals are free and easily downloaded.

In 1999, I found my main guidance in Bernie Krause's book and CD *Notes from the Wild* (1996), which alas did not discuss recording a potentially volatile protest. Nonetheless Krause's mix of anecdote, tales, technical advice, and theoretical speculation rooted in his three decades in the field resonated with me, particularly his contention that

Because the material is already changed by the process of field recording itself, and because the recorded sound is a mere fragment of the source material...the raw material must be edited, mixed and remixed to recreate the illusion of reality. (1996, 87)

But whose reality? Peter Cusack has identified *N30* as an example of "sonic journalism" in which "attentive listening on location can reveal sonic threads running

through the narratives and issues under examination” (2013). The threads in *N30* are not always sewn tightly together and many are left loose as discussed in the following section. Instinctively, I decided the answer must be my own. As a result the form of *N30* closely follows my travels during that day.

The form of *N30: Live at the WTO Protest November 30, 1999*

In this section I will examine the seven parts of *N30* through the sonic threads of polyvalent address, corporeal privilege, and entrainment as well as by discussing notable aspects of the *N30* soundscape that serve as structural indices of the work.

The survey of these seven sections is based on a text from early 2000, I wrote “In the Field at the WTO: Field Recording in the Line of Fire” for *The Tentacle: The Journal of Pacific Northwest Creative Music* (DeLaurenti 2000a and DeLaurenti 2000b). I rely on this text as a skeleton to interleave additional commentary, time indexes from DeLaurenti 2008b, and descriptive analysis. The source text is not cited because this entire section has been rewritten here to correct my faulty memory, errant geography, and outdated technical terminology in the original article.

“Form,” declared Ken Benshoof while pouring me a generous glass of wine in 1992, “is rhythm on a grand scale.” In the late 1990s, my teacher Arthur Bloom told me

in music, form answers the question, ‘What should happen next?’ but never forget that form requires preparation. You must first answer the question, what is your plan, where is your map?

With these two apothegms in mind, *N30* was organized and composed in the following sections:

1. Phonography Intro	0'00" to 3'35"
2. Parade	3'35" to 9'22"
3. Fragments of Defiance	9'22" to 22'43"
4. Confrontation	22'43" to 30'49"
5. Drumming and Defiance	30'49" to 52'58"
6. Funeral Rite	52'58" to 59'25"
7. coda	59'25" to 61'28"

1. Phonography Intro – 0'00" to 3'35" On November 30, I stepped off the bus at First Avenue⁶⁰ into light rain and strode down Virginia Street towards the quilt of people swarming atop the grassy mounds of Victor Steinbrueck Park. I pressed Record, closed my eyes, and cranked up the volume in my headphones. Following a massive burst of wind I recorded buzzing voices, blaring announcements, and scattershot drums (DeLaurenti 2008b, 0'00" to 3'26"). Rain, a bane of all field recordists, sometimes soaked through and gently popped and ticked against my foam-tipped mikes. A professional would have shielded a microphone with an expensive wind sock-covered zeppelin,⁶¹ but my remedy was ill-informed: I draped a thin slice of black foam on top of the mikes, which muffled and at times absorbed the rain and abated the popping.

While protecting my microphones might appear to contradict my practice as a phonographer, water or mere excess moisture could have also short-circuited my microphones or recording deck. Powered by phantom power—low-voltage electricity from my recording deck—a short-circuit could deliver a small electrical shock to me

⁶⁰ In Downtown Seattle, numbered streets are “Avenues” while named streets are “Streets” or “Ways.”

⁶¹ A zeppelin, sometimes called a sealed blimp sheathed by a windsock (aka a “dead cat”) would have been the preferred technique (Rose 2015, 159 and 199), however the quasi-ORTF configuration of my microphones made a blimp impractical—not that I could have afforded to buy or rent one.

as well. My embrace of multiple fidelities and flaws while recording in the field does not include technological self-sabotage. That might be a possibly fruitful avenue for someone else's practice analogous to the prepared piano, but not for me. Then as now, I struggle enough.

Under a nearby eave some police glumly stood together, agape at the size and exuberance of the gathering. As I pointed my mikes at the conversing cops, one shouted through a bullhorn, "What the hell are you doing?" (DeLaurenti 2008b, 02" and 1'17") In defiance, and to test my own courage, I slowly swiveled my boom toward the crowd and back to the cluster of police. I was left alone and felt free to push further boundaries. I had, in the terms of John Berger's essay "The Nature of Mass Demonstrations," found "a temporary stage" on which to dramatize a power I "still lacked" (1968, 755) as an inexperienced phonographer in this situation.

The amplified voice, "What the hell are you doing?," is one of many instances of polyvalent address in *N30*. The question implicitly addresses me ("What the hell am I doing here recording in the rain at a massive protest where I or my gear might get damaged?"); the protesters (which the police likely assumed I was part of); and the listener ("What the hell are you doing listening to this recording?"). The absence of ordinary street sounds in this passage might imply that the voice embodies the attitude of passersby too. The questioning voice ("What the hell are you doing?") certainly presages the uncertainty amid the marchers and the dismissive, mocking (and later hectoring) tone of law enforcement heard later in the piece throughout sections 3, 4,

and 5. These forms of polyvalent address appear throughout the work, notably again in section 6 Funeral Rite.

My microphones captured rustling colorful costumes, roaming drummers, impassioned announcements, and countless conversations, including stray bits of speech such as “shed that oil-based clothing” (DeLaurenti 2008b, 2’10”).

Remembering my answer to the first question, “What do I want from the act of recording?,” I resolved not to ask questions of anyone or conduct interviews. A few reporters were doing that already, so I made a mental note to try to capture the act of interviewing, which I did later (DeLaurenti 2008b, 15’50”). If I interviewed anyone, I would have to talk to the police also, which might engender suspicion. Although I did not make this strategy explicit, I hope that by not meeting, naming, or otherwise socializing with the voices I captured, listeners might, in the words of Jennifer Stoeberl Ackerman, “become aware of how much they use sound to determine a speaker’s identity and how much cultural baggage accents are freighted with” (Ibid 2010, 75). I further discuss my eschewing of proper names in the section “Three Modes of Activist Sound.”

2. Parade – 3’35" to 9’22" As the marchers spilled out of the park (DeLaurenti 2008b, 3’44”), I positioned myself under a shelter and kept recording. Looking in vain for fellow recordists, all I saw were photographers and a few videographers with poor and mediocre on-board camera microphones. As people marched through the Pike Place Market up Pike Street, the drums grew louder and the chants more confident.

Amidst the palpable excitement and bustle, no one, not even a strolling security guard, gave me a second look. The heterogeneous crowd of young and old of many races and ethnicities, some costumed and others plainly dressed, made the question of a “native perspective” (Rennie 2014, 119) moot. In order to obtain a variety of aural perspectives I lingered, then kept a constant pace for awhile, capturing two pass-bys of some shambolic drumming (DeLaurenti 2008b, 4’00” to 5’12”) and some house music played through a distorting PA system (Ibid, 7’03 to 8’05”). “With all the celebratory art and solidarity,” remembers co-organizer John Sellers “we looked beautiful and human doing it. Our theme was ‘Another World Is Possible’ and we were living it out” (2012, 287). Hearing these contradictory musics—one homemade, acoustic, freeform and sprawling, the other dimly reminiscent of what one might hear in clubs anywhere in the Western world—presented a utopian soundscape, one where mass-marketed music shares the soundscape with the homemade and experimental. I savored this alternative soundscape which I still hear today as functioning in direct opposition to what Luc Ferrari identified as “where the noise of the media is so invasive that one can barely hear the noises of life” Caux 2012, 76). This was my first inkling of “a strong oppositional place of *conscious* listening” (Westerkamp 2000) where dominant power is perceptible, “appreciable,” and vulnerable.

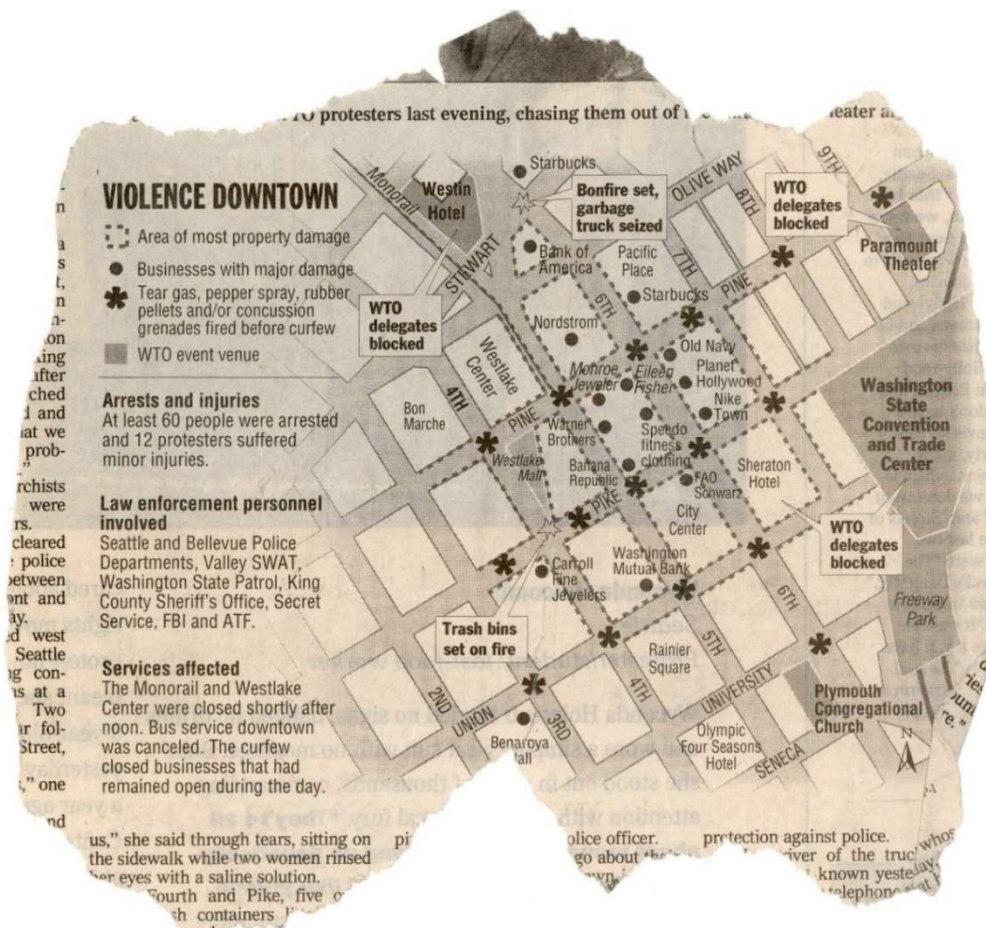


Figure 3 Map of downtown Seattle accompanying Sunde 1999; torn by the author from The Seattle Post-Intelligencer, a local Seattle newspaper, on December 1, 1999. Fair Use / Fair Dealing.

3. Fragments of Defiance – 9'22" to 22'43" As the parade unfurled up Pike, chants of “There’s ain’t no power like the power of the people ‘cause the power of the people won’t stop” (DeLaurenti 2008b, 5’50” and 11’43”) and “Hey hey ho ho WTO’s got to go” (DeLaurenti 2008b, 8’14”) rippled through the crowd. The unpredictable ebb and flow of the chants conveyed the immense presence and scale of the gathering. Drums in the vanguard collided with the distant, echoing drums between the walls of downtown Seattle’s cavernous buildings. Amidst the chanting and drumming I experienced entrainment, defined as “the process through which two physical or biological systems become synchronized by virtue of interacting with each other” (Trost et al. 2017, 96); I felt myself becoming attuned to the movements and rhythms

of the crowd, an experience which I deliberately fragmented and forestalled in this section in order to anchor section 5 of *N30*.

I followed the march up Olive Street to the Camlin Hotel on Ninth Avenue. A truck horn bellowed in the distance (DeLaurenti 2008b, 10'17"). Like Roland's horn Oliphant exhorting the troops at Roncesvalles, the sound was thrilling, primal, and uplifting. Rounding the corner on Pine Street, the truck horn blasted again and the marchers responded with hearty cheers (DeLaurenti 2008b, 11'31"). This was the first of three wind-instrument injections in *N30* which signal the entry of subsections; the didjeridu midway through this section (Ibid, 16'29") prepares a long crossfade over the next 15 seconds (Ibid, 16'54" to 17'09"). Later, the trombone smears in the "Funeral Rite" section 6 of *N30* (DeLaurenti 2008b 55'05") introduces the subsection of clanking cowbells.

As the horn receded behind me, a megaphone barked an announcement offering the choice to follow the parade down Pine or stick around for "CD"—civil disobedience (DeLaurenti 2008b, 12'06"). Although I had heeded the organizers' online suggestions and left my ID at home, I had no intention of deliberately getting arrested. Entailing search and detention, arrest would mean the confiscation and possible destruction of my recordings and equipment.⁶² I decided to capture the action come what may.

⁶² The post-arrest destruction, damage, and erasure of cameras reported to me anecdotally in the days after *N30* accounts for how I justify avoiding arrest (or when needed, escaping from detention) at every protest I have recorded.

Here and in sections 4, 5 and 6 of *N30*, I was able to exercise what I later called “corporeal privilege.” After reading Paul Gorski’s analysis of white privilege (2011), discovering Catherine Hakim’s concept of erotic capital (2011), and witnessing arrests of short and slender people at various Occupy Wall Street protests in 2011 and 2012, I realized that the very size of my body—then an aerobically fit 6’4” and muscular 210 pounds—granted me abilities, privileges, and priorities when recording in the field.

My corporeal privilege means that I am a less-than-desirable target of American law enforcement, whose preference for what police sociologist Luis A. Fernandez calls “hard-line social control” (Ibid 2008, 9) includes swift and decisive arrest. I am less likely to be arrested⁶³ because I am larger than most police officers I have seen and, based on what police officers have told me, my imposing frame would require more than one officer to safely subdue. Corporeal privilege also confers the ability to enter crowds and other situations that might give someone smaller or weaker pause; to see and hear over massive crowds; to set or shove aside barriers in order to create avenues of escape; and to protect others.

4. Confrontation – 22’43” to 30’49” Protesters ringed the Sheraton Hotel at Sixth and Pike so I used my corporeal privilege to worm my way into the crowd. Someone shouted, “Delegates! Delegates!” (DeLaurenti 2008b, 21’15”) and protesters scurried to reinforce the human blockade. Microphone boom in hand, I made full use of my corporeal privilege, plunging into the mob coalescing in front of the main steps. The

⁶³ This is borne out by having been “detained” but never arrested at the many protests I have attended.

line held fast; no delegates got through. As I bobbed through a sea of screaming, I miraculously captured one woman's polite reply: "Sorry we've got, we've got to block everyone. We can't let you in either" (DeLaurenti 2008b, 21'19"). Immediately, I noticed my DAT tape reaching the end, so I cursed my false feeling of luck and hoped for a longer-than-normal tape.

In my experience, most commercial DAT tapes, regardless of length, contain more tape than stated on the package. Most failures, such as breakage or severe data loss, occur within the first or last two minutes of any given DAT tape. Because those areas of the tape endure the greatest tension while rewinding and fast-forwarding, beginning with two minutes of digital black remains *de rigueur* for those recording onto DAT. This under-prepared phonographer got lucky. Ampex 94-minute DATs can run as long as 96 minutes, and my tape stopped at 95'30" during a lull; I didn't miss much. I had previously "unpacked"—fast-forwarding and then rewinding to shake off any excess particles on the tape surface (Dorritie 2003, 41-42)—my tapes the night before, so I pressed Record with confidence.

Soon thereafter, the police broke through a line of demonstrators on the west side of Sixth and Union. Again, I made full use of my corporeal privilege, rushing forward to record the melee and jamming my mikes under cops' visors and against bellowing protesters. Sometimes I had to spear my boom into the air to avoid getting it smashed. Against an undertow of police repeating "Why," impassioned protesters screamed, banged drums, and shouted "Don't tread on me!" (DeLaurenti 2008b, 23'48") and, fleetingly, "I saw you hit that girl!" (DeLaurenti 2008b, 24'49"). The protesters, heard

through Berger's theoretical filter, had "become corporately aware that it is they or those whom they represent who have built the city and who maintain it" (Ibid, 755). Perhaps realizing that no law-enforcement authority had made a public announcement to disperse, the police withdrew.

This, the distinctly loudest and densest section of *N30*, suggests another aspect of phonography which does not appear anywhere else in my work: Formal subversion. Rather than follow the Classical and Romantic tradition in which symphonies, operas, and other long works place the most vivid, captivating, and urgent material at (or near) the end, here it occurs one-third of the way through the piece. Formally, I believe this section functions as an extended burst of noise in *N30*. The composer Darren Copeland contends

Noise is more than just unwanted sound. Noise is also the total occupation of one's consciousness from an unexpected, and certainly uninvited, external sound source. (2000, 24)

A review of my notes and drafts made while composing *N30* yields no insight into this mysterious decision. It may have been an intuitive revolt against my ongoing listening to symphonies by Beethoven, Brahms, Bruckner et al.

5. Drumming and Defiance – 30'49" to 52'58" I was surprised by the drumming of the Infernal Noise Brigade, whose martial tattoos and driving polyrhythms evoked a high-school pep band⁶⁴ jamming with the Burundi drummers (DeLaurenti 2008b,

⁶⁴ In the United States and Canada, pep bands blare rowdy, popular brass band music to entertain the crowd at high school and college sporting events, especially American football. For a history of the Infernal Noise Brigade see Fulbright 2004 and Whitney 2020.

passim). At times mercilessly precise or sloppily slipshod, I was again transfixed by the surging undertow of constant pounding percussion. In this section of *N30 I* deployed a long soundscape of up close, lo-fi drumming (DeLaurenti 2008b, 30'49" to 36'39") with the hope of inducing entrainment in the listener. In addition to the "motor entrainment" which many have experienced as tapping a finger or foot to a periodic beat (Trost et al. 2017, 101) I also hoped to foster what Trost et al. describe in their impressive sweeping study of entrainment as

more complex affective experiences, including musical emotions such as peacefulness, but also power and joyful activation (2017, 104)

akin to the joyous "carnival-protest" described by N30 co-organizer John Sellers as "a giant dance party...complete with marching bands, dancers, theater troupes, giant puppets, radical cheerleaders, a phalanx of 300 turtles and even Christmas carolers" (2012, 287).

The drumming segment is followed by another segment (DeLaurenti 2008b, 37'35" to 49'29") which functions, to borrow a line from Attali's influential book *Noise*, as "a channelizer of violence, a creator of differences, a sublimation of noise, an attribute of power" (Attali 2009 [1977], 23). Scattered drumming, protester interjections and police hard-line control deployments of rubber bullets, pepper spray, and tear gas create a hi-fi soundscape. Though both segments are polyphonic, differences emerge by contrasting the joy of rhythmic polyphony rooted in drumming with the timbral, pointillistic polyphony of struggle, battle, and war.

Still dazed from the drumming, I saw the still-immobile police on the east side behind the line of protesters and espied a cop loading a rifle. Moments later the police started shooting (DeLaurenti 2008b, 38'29"). Ten feet away, I stood still and aimed my boom at the police as shots pealed everywhere. The standard tactic with rubber bullets⁶⁵ is to fire at the ground so the ricocheting projectiles sting and confuse the target (Hogg 1985, 67). The police chose to aim and fire directly at people.

I was struck three times. The first bullet hit me on the ankle, which I didn't discover until later that night while yanking my Red Wing work boots off. When the second shot landed on my thigh 3 inches to the right of my groin, I only saw exploded salmon-colored powder. Although the second shot gave me pause, I held my ground. A third shot struck squarely on my left arm, but my instincts kicked in and—at least according to the tape—I did not flinch. Pumped full of adrenaline, the rubber bullets still hurt. Even with jeans, a thick shirt, and light coat, I had welts and bruises from projectiles and police batons. Without my corporeal privilege, I would have fared far worse.

I had another chance to use my corporeal privilege when the police started shoving people backwards. When a charging cop shouted "Move back!" and started to swing his baton, I tried, but instantly discovered that I couldn't move. A very small woman overcome by the pepper spray had wrapped herself around my leg, clutching for dear life. Rather than wrench my leg away, hurt her, and possibly lose my balance, I stood my ground. Fortunately, some volunteer first-aid medics unwrapped her (DeLaurenti

⁶⁵ Sunde 1999 describes them as "pellets," which accurately describes their shape and makes them seem harmless without connoting the pain and injury of "bullets."

2008b, 43'55") and carried her behind the lines.⁶⁶ By then two cops were on me and about to shove my carcass to the ground or into a waiting Metro bus with other prisoners. Somehow, I slipped away, perhaps a reward for using my corporeal privilege to protect someone else.

6. Funeral Rite – 52'58" to 59'25" This section contains the other significant instance of polyvalent address; a young man slithering into a pompous BBC announcer's accent to deliver a mocking eulogy for *N30* (DeLaurenti 2008b, 57'35" and 58'22") while an evangelizing nasal voice quotes the Book of Matthew and invokes James Joyce, "Let the dead bury the dead" (DeLaurenti 2008b, 58'07" to 58'09"). Midway through this section at 56'34" (Ibid) the rear speakers of *N30* conclude, leaving the listener to hear a tolling cowbell (DeLaurenti 2008b, 57'10 to 58'03") while, I hope, pondering the literal and metaphorical meaning of "the package" discussed in the "Back Channels" section below.

7. coda – 59'25" to 61'28" In the coda of *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* we hear a jubilant response to a hoarse cry of "Are we still here?" (Ibid, 60'01"). A young man whose voice announces to my ears what Berger identified in protests as "a symbolic capturing of a city or capital" (1968, 755) rants and bellows: "I would rather *be here now* than in my fucking job!" (Ibid, 60'21" to 60'25"). For him and the chanters that follow, the streets have become transformed into a place of utopian possibility. *N30* concludes with a chant of "The people have the power! The people have the power!"

⁶⁶ Volunteer medics have been a fixture at marches and protests for decades in the United States because putative "first responders" such as firemen and lesser-paid EMTs are not reliably present due to the policy determined by the local Fire Department or governing municipality. In the United States, many "first responders" are not public employees, so such decisions are made by company executives.

(DeLaurenti 2008b, 61'07 to 61'28"). Augmented by drums—and a prominent cowbell which establishes a slender connection to the previous Funeral Rite section—this chant is heard thirteen times, one fewer than the tolling cowbell strikes in the Funeral Rite (Ibid, 57'10 to 58'03"). To conclude *N30* I ended the chant with a guillotine cut, a precise ending only possible with digital audio editing. It was my aim to draw a distinct, startling boundary between the soundscape of *N30* and the soundscape of the listener so that “digital silence made obvious all of the noise that we had previously ignored” (Brøvig-Hanssen and Danielsen 2016, 61).

Back Channels: *Who guards the Guardians?*

The other half of *N30* heard in the rear channels—hereafter referred to as *Who guards the Guardians?*—follows the same sectional form as the front pair of channels. Yet unlike the front-line field recordings discussed earlier in this chapter, I composed *Who guards the Guardians?* from police radio traffic broadcast on November 30, 1999. The title dually alludes to *The Republic*, in which Plato called for elite guardians to rule his ideal state (Jowett 1888, 108) while appropriating a line from Juvenal’s Sixth Satire, “*Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*” (2014, 69), translated as “who guards the guardians?” or “who watches the watchmen?”

After a brief introduction to police radio and scanning police radio transmissions, the following section discusses the background, multiple versions, and compositional features of this element of *N30*. Two terms I coined as rubrics for specific, crucial aspects of *Who guards the Guardians?*—“audio trouvaille” and “parallax polyphony”—elaborate upon and substitute for some of the techniques of

phonography heard in the front right and left channels of *N30*, previously encapsulated as

the inevitable influence and presence of the recordist and recording gear both in the field and back in the studio. Aggressive editing (abrupt stops, dead silence, frenetic intercutting, obviously artificial polyphony, antiphonal spatialization, the traditional transparent crossfade) and audibly risky tactics (quizzing street hustlers, sidling up to riot police, bobbing through mobs), as well as the varying and variable fidelities of microphones, tape hiss, technical flaws (wind noise, boom rustling and even the off-mike intrusions of voices and incongruent sounds)... (DeLaurenti 2001b)

Generally recognized as “an essential police tool” (Maghan et al. 2002, 25), networked radio communications among patrol cars and a central dispatcher became prevalent in the early 20th century throughout the United States. “By the mid-1930s most police departments were installing two-way radios” (Coe 1996, 128) in patrol cars. Law enforcement agencies continued to adopt radio rapidly. “By 1937, there were two thousand police agencies—including both local and state—utilizing radio” (Poli 1942, 194) to dispatch police to pursue, apprehend, and transport criminal suspects. This technology “revolutionized police communication systems” (Ibid, 195), which formerly had ranged from beating batons on sidewalks to “sirens, lights, bells, and horns” (Ibid). Media historian Kathleen Battles observes that during this era

police radio symbolized excitement, speed, efficiency, centralized command of geographic space, the promise of inevitable apprehension, two-way communication, masculine prowess and modernity itself. (Ibid 2010, 1)

Civilian monitoring of police transmissions has “always been a controversial subject” (Coe 1996, 130). Yet until the steady implementation of digitally encrypted radio

(Stroud 2013; McCoy 2018) shortly after September 11, 2001, those living in the United States who could afford a police scanner “have always had free access to the airwaves” (Coe 1996, 131). Since the 1960s such scanners—as either desktop or handheld models—have continued to be increasingly affordable,⁶⁷ and since 1976, programmable (Poulsen 2005). Listeners, commonly called “scanner heads” (Donnell 2003, 22) or “radio monitors” (Poulsen 2005) or simply “monitors” (McCoy 2018),⁶⁸ can press a button to automatically scan and find active radio traffic (Coe 1996, 130-131) in HF, VHF, and UHF bands. Spanning 3 MHz to 3,000 MHz, these frequency bands are allocated to police and fire departments as well as to air traffic controllers, trains, maritime vessels, and the military (Federal Communications Commission 2020, 5-38). Some police departments record and archive these transmissions to preserve evidence and aid investigations, notably in the Warren Commission’s inquest into assassination of President Kennedy in 1963 (Maher 2018, 3, 35, 51).

Buying a scanner is not enough; such devices require one element of traditional “masculine prowess,” the technical literacy to set-up and program the scanner with the correct set of frequencies. Specialized publications such as long-running but since discontinued *Police Call*—an annual gazetteer of frequencies (Poulsen 2005)—and locally produced guidebooks (McCoy 2018) as well as hobbyist magazines including *National Communications*, the now-defunct *Scanner USA*, and radio-scanner-

⁶⁷ For example, the handheld Radio Shack PRO-6 scanner retailed for \$119.95 in 1976 (Radio Shack 1976, 150). Published in 2002, Radio Shack’s last catalogue to itemize prices shows the PRO-79 at \$99.99, a scanner with a wider range of frequencies and more memory (Radio Shack 2002, 100). The most expensive scanner in the 2002 catalog is \$249.99; adjusted for inflation calculated with the U.S. Consumer Price Index, the PRO-6 price of \$119.95 in 2002 dollars is \$379.24.

⁶⁸ Monitors can be further subdivided into “sports fans, airplane buffs and off-duty emergency workers” (Poulsen 2005) in addition to “railway aficionados” (Ibid), police volunteers (McCoy 2018), and journalists (Stroud 2013).

guide.com remain integral to the hobby. These and similar publications update lists of frequencies, offer scanner programming tips, and explain otherwise abstruse concepts such as Motorola vs. EDACS trunking, CTCSS decoding, and Advanced Multi-Band Excitation. The acme of “masculine prowess” (Battles 2010, 1) for the scanner head is “modding;” scanners can be modified to pick up restricted frequency ranges used by cell- and wireless telephones (Parnass 1996).

A correctly programmed police scanner is not only efficient, but can also instill a sense of what Battles identifies as a “centralized command of geographic space” (Ibid 2010, 1). Bob Parnass, who wrote “Scanner Equipment,” a monthly column for *Monitoring Times* magazine, bundles several examples of this command in his article, “Introduction to Scanning” (Ibid 1996):

Hostage dramas, bank robberies, car crashes, chemical spills, neighbor and domestic disputes, tornado sightings are all fair game. In a single afternoon, you can hear a high speed police chase, Drug Enforcement agents on a sting operation, and undercover FBI agents as they stakeout a suspect.

How about listening to a presidential candidate discuss strategy with his advisor from a 415 MHz radiophone in Air Force 1, or a team of G-men protect him while transmitting in the 167 MHz range?

Baby monitor intercoms are actually transmitters and you can hear them between 49.67 and 49.99 MHz.

Stay ahead of road conditions by listening to highway road crews, snow plows, and traffic helicopter pilots. Many midwesterners monitor the state police and county sheriff to learn of approaching tornados long before warnings are broadcast on TV and commercial radio. (Ibid)

Back Channel Sources and Versions

Despite my abiding interest in shortwave radio (DeLaurenti 2005), I had no idea it was possible to monitor—and with a recording deck, record—police radio transmissions until early 2000, when I was offered recordings of police traffic captured during N30 from two sources.

The first invitation came from members of a City of Seattle-sponsored inquest who had read my article “In the Field at the WTO: Field Recording in the Line of Fire” (DeLaurenti 2000a and 2000b). Obtained through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, the transmissions were part of an ongoing civil inquest, so the recordings could not leave the evidence repository. Instead, I had to make multiple visits to a small room in the Seattle Municipal Tower to dub Seattle Police Department-labelled cassettes onto DAT. All of these tapes were audibly time-stamped with a dour, baritone embodiment of Received Pronunciation. Every time index, e.g. “Zero seven hours zero three minutes,” is followed by four pulses of a 1kHz tone softened by harmonics at 2kHz and 3kHz. This inexorable narration can be heard most audibly in *Who guards the Guardians?* from 2’18” to 3’07” (DeLaurenti 2008b).

The second source of N30 police radio transmissions arrived few months later as a jumble of uncased cassettes in a multicolored hippie hemp bag. Handed to me by a group of activists, this set of recordings documents radio traffic from other law enforcement “command posts” not documented in the first set of N30 transmissions. The activists knew I hosted a radio show, “the sonic stratosphere” on KSER 90.7 FM, and encouraged me to “do something with the tapes.”

Who guards the Guardians? exists in four versions. First as an early, unnamed, inchoate live performance version performed by myself and Alex Keller on variable-speed cassette decks on June 3, 2000 at the Center on Contemporary Art in Seattle. The second and third distinct, yet coeval versions, both titled *N30: Who guards the Guardians?* were fixed in a tangible form: A compact disc released the week of November 24-30, 2002 by *Eat the State!* (DeLaurenti 2002b), a free left-wing newspaper. Inaugurating my first UAD, the CD was affixed to the paper's back page with blue painter's tape and distributed throughout Seattle.⁶⁹ I also burned a different mix of *N30: Who guards the Guardians?* onto CD-R at the request of Doug Haire, producer of *Sonarchy*, a weekly radio program heard on Seattle's most popular college radio station, KEXP 90.3 FM. I reduced the dynamic range to compensate for the compression inherent in FM broadcasting and re-composed the middle section, adding a break at the half-hour mark for the *de rigueur* Federal Communications Commission-mandated station ID. In tandem with a stereo presentation of the CD in Seattle at Polestar Music Gallery, *N30: Who guards the Guardians?* aired on *Sonarchy* November 30, 2002.

I revised the fourth and final version of *Who guards the Guardians?* for the four channel version of *N30* (DeLaurenti 2008b). This version restored the “varying and variable fidelities of microphones, tape hiss, and technical flaws” (DeLaurenti 2001b) as well as the dynamic range of the original cassette dubs which I had smoothed out to

⁶⁹ UAD or “Uterior Audio Discs” were compact discs I created and designed to appear unexpectedly in free or inexpensive print publications. Spanning four releases from 2002 to 2007, UAD became irrelevant with the rise of streaming audio in the late-2000s. See Campbell 2005 for an account of my most widely distributed UAD, *Live in New York at the Republican National Convention Protest, September 2-August 28, 2004*.

produce the radio broadcast and CD (DeLaurenti 2002b). I also emphasized what I call “audio trouvaille” and “parallax polyphony”—two terms I coined as rubrics for specific, crucial aspects of *Who guards the Guardians?*

Audio Trouvaille and Parallax Polyphony

As used in English, “trouvaille” denotes a “lucky find” or unusual discovery; in French *trouvaille* has a much broader meaning and refers to a “find” or “result.”⁷⁰ Referred to in my earlier writing as “wild card audio” (DeLaurenti 2006),⁷¹ the term “audio trouvaille” denotes a discovery of audio recorded by someone else that instigates a powerful, perhaps revelatory connection to a work-in-progress. Audio trouvaille opens up what documentary filmmakers Bruce Jackson and Diane Christian ruefully identify as “an inverted funnel of declining possibility” where “every decision forecloses others and the possibilities become ever narrower” (1994, 62). Audio trouvaille upends or capsizes the trajectory of the work, which is why I eschew the seemingly apposite yet impersonally neutral and vague “found sound.”⁷² The latter term has been variously ascribed to sound made from everyday objects (Chadabe 1997, 23); sampling (Negativland 1995, *passim*; Théberge 2003, 94); field recordings

⁷⁰ “trouvaille, n.” *OED Online*. January 2020. Oxford University Press. <https://www-oed-com.proxy.wm.edu/view/Entry/206809> Accessed January 31, 2020. To francophone speakers, the English definition of “trouvaille” is what linguists call a “false friend,” words in different languages or dialects that appear or sound identical but have different meanings or shades of meaning.

⁷¹ I abandoned this term in 2009 as few grasped the connection to gaming and gambling, and more importantly because wild cards are dealt at a fixed location, not discovered while exploring.

⁷² As a translation of the Surrealist idea of the *objet trouvé*, “found object” is not applicable here, and according to Susanne Müller, this English rendering “leads to an impoverishment and a decontextualization that, again, entails the risk of a falsification” (Müller 2017). Equating *objet trouvé* to audio trouvaille carries a similar, though lesser risk. André Breton, in his 1934 essay “L’équation de l’objet trouvé” notes “the finding of the object fulfills here rigorously the same function as the dream, in the sense that it frees the individual from paralyzing affective scruples, comforts him and makes him understand that the obstacle he might have thought insurmountable is cleared” (Ibid). Audio trouvaille, while opening possibilities, does not necessarily instill comfort; nor is the individual freed but instead can imagine additional options and possibly, but not assuredly, clear insurmountable obstacles.

(Matthews 1996; Truax 2002; LaBelle 2015, 204; Marontate, Robertson and Clarkson 2016, 526); and incidental sound arising from a context (LaBelle 2015, *passim*).

Audio *trouvaille* augments one of the core traits of my practice as a phonographer, the “inevitable influence and presence” through the inclusion of my off-mike and sometimes hesitant voice (DeLaurenti 2001b). Here, audio *trouvaille* indicates a different kind of “influence and presence,” an irresistible connection between the composer and a recording made by someone else: One more qualities of the recording compels its inclusion in my in-progress work, in this case the “varying and variable fidelities of microphones, tape hiss, and technical flaws” (DeLaurenti 2001b) of the cassettes containing N30 police radio transmissions. Tactile contact with the recording media deepens the consideration of, if not the connection to, the recording.

For me the “influence and presence of the recordist” (Ibid) became tactile. My feeling of audio *trouvaille* towards *N30: Who guards the Guardians?* arose from handling the cassettes of police radio traffic with my hands, eyes, and ears: gently re-spooling over-wound tape hubs by hand; re-aligning tape pressure pads with toothpicks; nursing or splicing ruffled cassette tape; cleaning oxide-covered guide-holes in the cassette case; calibrating the correct level for the dub; and logging the recording.

Many of these tasks required delicate hand-eye coordination, yet my ears were the final arbiter of a correct repair. Audio archivists complete these routine tasks to restore and make a recording accessible to others (Copeland 2008, 163-186 and 329).

Due to my lack of habitual practice, I performed these tasks much more slowly; this additional time and attendant wonder (What could be on these tapes? What might be

on the other side?, etc.) helped me become a better listener to a specific set of recordings.

In *N30: Who guards the Guardians?* the police transmissions' inherent character as preserved on cassette tape inspired another sense of the audio trouvaille: The transmissions' intermittent, sporadic presence of voices also embodies much of the rest of my practice as a phonographer. The natural interruption of police chatter inherently parallels what I do deliberately back in the studio: "Aggressive editing (abrupt stops, dead silence, frenetic intercutting, obviously artificial polyphony, antiphonal spatialization, the traditional transparent crossfade)" (DeLaurenti 2001b). Due to the nature of their work on the streets, police are already enmeshed in what I described as "audibly risky tactics" (Ibid) throughout *N30* (DeLaurenti 2008b, *passim*). The third element of my practice of a phonographer, welcoming "the varying and variable fidelities of microphones, tape hiss, technical flaws" of recordings (DeLaurenti 2001b) is not only audible but palpable in the rear channels of *N30*.

These "varying and variable fidelities" (Ibid) of the recordings are heard primarily as tape hiss. Because the police transmissions are at least second- or third-generation tape dubs—from a master source (likely a low-ips⁷³ open reel or cassette) to a cassette for distribution to my own dub made either on cassette or DAT—there are multiple layers of hiss. Three types of hiss recur throughout the rear channels of *N30*: Hiss added to hiss (DeLaurenti 2008b, 24" to 31"); increased level of tape hiss with line

⁷³ Inches per second (ips) denotes how much tape has traversed the tape head in one second. Faster tape speed enables better frequency response, signal-to-noise ratio, and dynamic range as well as less wow and flutter. See Camras 1988 (39, 50-51, 86, and 279) and Copeland 2008 (86, 173, 196, 301, and 329).

hum (Ibid, 2'05"); reduction of hum and more hiss (Ibid, 7'05"); pulsing him (Ibid, 14'10"); and overly loud hum (Ibid, 30'20"). These sprays, swaths, and inexplicable injections of hiss pervade the rear channels unpredictably and, after their initial appearance noted above, in *passim*. These varying and variable fidelities create a stark contrast in the front channels of *N30* which begin with mediocre fidelity and the audible microphone handling noise heard with "What the hell are you doing?" (DeLaurenti 2008b, 02" and 1'17") to the increasing sonic transparency from the middle of section 5 (DeLaurenti 2008b, 37'35") to the end of the piece.

As mentioned previously, revisions for the final four channel version of *N30* (DeLaurenti 2008b) also entailed restoring the dynamic range heard in the original cassette dubs which I had smoothed out to produce the radio broadcast and CD. In 2008 I also decided to determine an appropriate start point at which to synchronize the pairs of front and rear channels. These revisions embody what I call "parallax polyphony."

Noted astronomer Thomas Hockey defines parallax as "the apparent shift in location of an object, with respect to a distant background when viewed from two different places" (Ibid 2011, 135) When a person with typical eyesight is in motion and observing two stationary objects at different distances—especially one much closer and the other far away—each object will shift or seem to move at different rates of speed: An object close to you will appear to move more rapidly than an object in the background. In Western music, polyphony is traditionally known as music in which two or more notes sound simultaneously or in close conjunction related to a common

pulse. As a form of “obviously artificial polyphony” (DeLaurenti 2001) in my practice as a phonographer, I define parallax polyphony as two or more polyphonic groups whose respective internal polyphony remains stable but shifts temporally, timbrally, spatially and/or in volume relative to another polyphonic group. As a different system, each group remains discernibly separate and discretely polyphonic.

Just as visual “parallax provides us with our depth perception,” (Hockey 2011, 135), parallax polyphony in the rear speakers of *N30* has several sonic characteristics that establish and maintain a soundscape distinct from the front right and left speakers: audible varieties of hiss (already discussed above); an audible time stamp of Received Pronunciation; radio anomalies; and the presence of voices that observe and describe the protest.

Intoned by a dour, baritone embodiment of Received Pronunciation, the time stamp plainly telescopes time throughout the rear channels of *N30*; from 2’18” to 3’07” the time index announces the time—with no other audible voices—as 7:03 am, 7:04 am, and 7:05 am. At 40’03” in *N30* the time has contracted so much that the listener hears an announcement of “one-two hours and three-one minutes,” 12:31 pm (DeLaurenti 2008b). This “aggressive editing” is a staple of my phonographic practice (DeLaurenti 2001), audibly informing the listener of a deliberate construction. Recalling Trinh T. Minh-Ha’s notion that “the function of any ideology in power is to represent the world positively unified” (Ibid 1991, 2), time itself in *N30* is fractured into fragments.

The radio anomalies in the rear channels of *N30* function analogously to microphone handling noise; composer Iain Findlay-Walsh cannily points out that these disruptions “occur frequently, marking beginnings or key transitions in his compositions” (2017, 123). These anomalies, mainly faux dead-channel glitch panning to the right channel (DeLaurenti 2008b, 10’48”), rising feedback (Ibid, 15’18”); radio feedback (Ibid, 38’24”), keypad entry (Ibid, 41’39” and 51’57”), and radio bursts (Ibid, 54’24” to 54’33”), all mark structural transitions from one section to another.

Aside from a mysterious 70-second section (DeLaurenti 2008b, 25’47” to 26’57”) of vivid protest audio,⁷⁴ the voices heard in the rear speakers of *N30* observe and describe the protest. The “masculine prowess” symbolizing the reach and power of police radio described by media historian Kathleen Battles (2010, 1) as:

excitement, speed, efficiency, centralized command of geographic space, the promise of inevitable apprehension, two-way communication, masculine prowess and modernity itself. (Ibid)

seem helpless—and sometimes hapless—before the onslaught of protest heard in the front channels of *N30* until the end when a radioed voice announces “the package has arrived” (DeLaurenti 2008b, 53’58”). “The package” connotes a hitherto unmentioned objective which may or may not have bearing on what the listener has heard so far.

Positioned among ever-lengthening stretches of silence, this placement of a mysterious (and thus for me metaphorical) phrase is my attempt to reaffirm in

⁷⁴ This additional example of audio *trouvaille* interrupted the police transmissions of one of the cassettes I dubbed. I included it for contrast and to potentially startle the listener.

Westerkamp's formulation, "a strong oppositional place of *conscious* listening" (Ibid 2000).

Three modes of activist sound in *N30: Live at the WTO Protest*

In the second half of this chapter I propose three modes of activist sound in which *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* can function as a protest and as a fulcrum for political listening, making the political audible. In the first mode, critical resistance material, I recount how activists have used *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* to further their activist goals, deploying the work for training protesters as well as sonic camouflage. I describe and examine how the second mode, self-reflexive earwitnessing, undermines and thwarts the "relentless pursuit of naturalism" (Minh-Ha 1990, 80) that may arise "documenting an occasion of genuine world-historical import" (Watson 2001, 60) such as *N30*; self-reflexive earwitnessing transpires in three ways: dislodging the frame through my practice of phonography; eschewing proper names; and generic, semantically depleted titles. For the third mode, utopian listening, I speculate how three elements of *N30: Live at the WTO Protest*—sensory focus, my practice of phonography, and the soundscape of protest—might clarify and expand utopian listening from a practice that "enables the listening subject to find new possibilities" (Wallrup 2015, 178) to activist practices, namely the "one-on-one" (Schutz 2010, 170) or "relational meeting" (Chambers 2003, 44).

Mode 1: critical resistance material

Critical resistance material is one element of what activists and scholars since the 1960s have variously called "nonviolence training" (Trojan Decommission Alliance 1978, 4; Feigenbaum et al. 2013, 27), "NVA [nonviolent action] training" (Bloch

2016, 6 and *passim*), “nonviolent protest training” (de Armond, 2001, 203), “direct action training” (Boyd and Mitchell 2012, 15 and 183), and “passive resistance training” (Moore 2009, 5).

Historically in the United States, this training has been multifarious (Bloch 2014, 3), spanning Citizenship Schools established by Septima Clark in the 1950s (Branch 1988, 263-264) and their successor, the Freedom Schools set up by a coalition of organizers in the Civil Rights Movement in the United States in the 1960s (King 1988, 414) to annual camps where activists learn and rehearse choreographed roles for mass protest (Lewis 2000; Riccardi 2000; Feigenbaum et al. 2013). In addition, activists have published thoroughly detailed manuals for specific protests such as the *Trojan Decommission Alliance Occupation Handbook* for “Civil Disobedience at the Trojan Nuclear Power Plant August 6-9, 1978” (Trojan Decommission Alliance 1978). Training has also encompassed meetings and teach-ins (Gillham and Marx 2000, 216) as well as instructive posters, signs, and handbills (Siegler 2018).

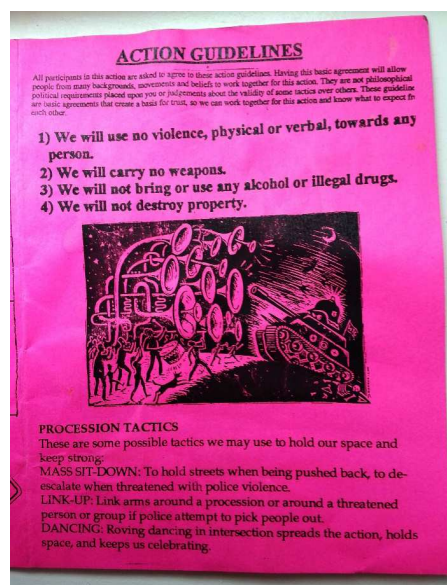


Figure 4 One page of an “Action Guidelines” handbill collected in Seattle November 30, 1999.

In writing about *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* and the first mode of activist sound, critical resistance material, I must explain why I must briefly depart from scholarly convention and confine the next two paragraphs to generalities. What follows are remembered from face-to-face conversations, second (or third)-hand personal messages, discarded letters, and long-deleted emails, most of them written before the advent of PRISM, a program implemented by the United States' National Security Agency (NSA), which collected and archived every email sent and received by everyone in the United States (Bump 2013). As many activists who communicate with me directly or by proxy remain active in various parts of the world, I will not name people, places, or protests.

As critical resistance material, *N30: Live at The WTO Protest* has been employed by activists for two purposes: nonviolence training and sonic camouflage. In the first few years of the 21st century, protest organizers told me that sections of *N30: Live at The WTO Protest* have helped acclimate and train novice protesters. Blasted through PA systems at training sessions, *N30: Live at The WTO Protest* orients and inures participants to a soundscape of violence, protester distress, and police attack while rehearsing duties as marshals, chant leaders, medics, arrestables, legal observers, and other roles.⁷⁵ “It’s not music,” said one, “it’s a training manual” (DeLaurenti 2014).

Louder sections of *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* have been blared, usually at night, by mobile loudspeakers in order to confuse law enforcement in multiple mass protests

⁷⁵ For a comprehensive list of such roles, duties, and “street smarts” see “Afinity [sic] Groups Action Roles” at <http://nonviolence.rutgers.edu/s/digital/document/IIP425F09> Accessed November 7, 2019.

around the world. This use as sonic camouflage harkens back to the U.S Army's Twenty-third Headquarters Special Troops, nicknamed "Ghost Army," whose

aims were to trick the enemy into reacting against the presence of a nonexistent phantom army using the sounds of troops, tanks, and landing craft, allowing the actual troops to maneuver elsewhere. (Goodman 2010, 41)

As critical resistance material, *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* answers the Stravinsky question I pondered before recording at N30, "who needs it?" (Craft 1994, 230):

Activists who use *N30* as a direct action training tool. Yet using *N30* as a training tool might have additional, unintended effects: After I mentioned these uses of *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* in an article for *The Wire* (DeLaurenti 2014), visual studies researcher Mitchell Akiyama noted

DeLaurenti [sic] seems to expect that his field recordings could only ever be useful to his side in the conflict, but it hardly seems unreasonable that a government agency could not just as easily exploit such vivid representations to similarly inure police to the sound and affect of insurrection or to reconstruct the anatomy of a demonstration in order to better manage its outcome. (2014, 278)

While it is possible that a government agency or other organized opposition might find—or have found—*N30: Live at The WTO Protest* to be useful for training (or surveillance⁷⁶), Akiyama only seems to grudgingly admit the possibility of an unexpected personal transformation from encountering the work:

⁷⁶ Although Akiyama does not mention the possibility of harvesting my work for state-surveillance, I feel obligated to mention I have never shot video or photos of people's faces at any mass protest due to the promise of ever-increasing accuracy of facial recognition technology since the mid-1990s. Popularized in the film *2001*, automated "voice print identification" is still viewed as unreliable by audio forensics experts (Maher 2018, 36).

Yet none of this is to say that the event or object that a photograph or any other form of recording represents is fully neutral; it is the conjunction of a particular political *a priori* and something piercing and vital lurking within the work...that holds the potential to make things happen. (Ibid, 279)

Akiyama does not analyze *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* in any detail. Instead, he deploys it briefly to pivot towards an in-depth discussion of the work of Ultra-red, which might explain why he neglects the possibility that an encounter with *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* “holds the potential to make things happen” (Ibid). Rather than “inure police” (Ibid, 278) and other anti-protest forces, *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* has the potential to transform, or at least nudge, opposing viewpoints. Summarizing Herbert Marcuse’s *The Aesthetic Dimension*, philosopher Rainer Winter is more concise: “The experience of art can transform the subjectivity of recipients by liberating it from social constraints and norms” (2017, 82). But this transformation is unwitting, unpredictable, and subversive.

Anchored in the sound of dissent—even if somewhat fragmented, re-edited, and anonymized—*N30: Live at the WTO Protest* or any other similarly vivid protest audio can still pose the binary choice of protest: Join or avoid, engage or evade.

But as the interrogator in John Le Carré’s spy novel *The Little Drummer Girl* (1983, 125) says, “The ear selects, you see, dear. Machines don’t.” Regarding human-based software-assisted voice identification, SpeechPro, makers of voice recognition software used by law enforcement, claim that the research on voiceprint identification “demonstrates the validity and reliability of the process when performed by a trained and certified examiner using established, standardized procedures” (Speech Technology Center 2013, 2).

Identifying individuals by voiceprint remains unreliable in urban environments due to the Lombard effect. Also known as “Lombard speech,” speakers raise and alter fundamental characteristics of their voices in loud and/or noisy environments (Lau 2008). According to recent research, “plain speech mixed with noise is significantly degraded when tested on noisy Lombard speech” (Ma et al. 2019, 1) in audio-only speech recognition. Few researchers “have investigated the effect of the Lombard reflex on visual and audio-visual speech recognition and the results are not conclusive” (Ibid).

Mode 2: self-reflexive earwitnessing

The second mode of activist sound, self-reflexive earwitnessing, undermines and thwarts the “relentless pursuit of naturalism” (Minh-Ha 1990, 80) prevalent in audio and film documentaries. Writing in 1999 and 2000 about *N30: Live at the WTO Protest*, I mused “as a purely documentary activity, my recording equipment might yield some worthwhile audio for someone in the future” (DeLaurenti 2000a, 7). An observation by Luc Ferrari would have provided much assurance:

Creators don’t live outside society. Their history unfolds in the thick of the most brutal, terrible but also joyful events. ... We acted as a barometer for the spirit of the time. (Caux 2012, 47).

Ferrari notwithstanding, *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* has at least token historical value; a compact disc of this work (DeLaurenti 2000c) is held by the University of Washington Libraries Special Collections “World Trade Organization 1999 Seattle Ministerial Conference Protest collection, 1993-2011.”⁷⁷ But categorizing *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* as a documentary—what is sometimes labelled as “a dramatization of facts”—is another matter.

In “Documentary Is/Not a Name,” film theorist Trinh T. Minh-Ha foregrounds the “extensive and relentless pursuit of naturalism” (1990, 80) pervasive in film documentaries. Minh-Ha contends that such relentless naturalism—seen and heard in *verité* elements of audio and film documentary including seemingly unscripted

⁷⁷ The compact disc resides in in box/folder 1/7, accession number 5177-013 according to <http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv08728/op=fstyle.aspx?t=k&q=WAUWTO1999SeattleProtest5177.xml> Accessed November 7, 2019.

interviews, location sound, “natural” light, site-specific B-roll, etc.—has limiting consequences: “What is presented as evidence remains evidence,” Minh-Ha continues (Ibid, 83), but

A documentary aware of its own artifice is one that remains sensitive to the flow between fact and fiction. It does not work to conceal or exclude what is normalized as “non-factual” (Ibid, 89).

To Minh-Ha, documentaries rooted in relentless naturalism are a pernicious form of ideology whose “power is to represent the world positively unified” (1991, 2).

Audibly “aware of its own artifice” (Minh-Ha 1990, 89), *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* undermines and thwarts the “relentless pursuit of naturalism” (Minh-Ha 1990, 80) in three ways: dislodging the frame through my practice of phonography; eschewing proper names; and generic, semantically depleted titles.

Continually dislodging the frame by welcoming multiple fidelities, embracing errors, audible edits, and the presence of the recordist, *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* makes the evidence of experience audible, what Iain Findlay-Walsh calls “self-reflexive” (2017, 123). Focused “on the personal listening practice and culture of the recordist” (Ibid), self-reflexive earwitnessing overtly preserves a historiography of sound in tandem with what I heard—and what I hoped listeners would hear—at N30.

Reminding listeners that “listening is never natural” (Ultra-red 2012, 4), the first section of the front right and left channels of *N30: Live at the WTO Protest*,

Phonography Intro, is rife with handling noise, off-mike sounds, wind distortion, and bursts of hiss due to clumsy level adjustments (DeLaurenti 2008b 0'00" to 3'35"). To reiterate a line from Minh-Ha: these unnatural, usually unwelcome aspects of field recording do "not work to conceal or exclude what is normalized as 'non-factual'" (Ibid 1990, 89). Microphones unmistakably crunch during several police assaults in *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* notably in section 4, Confrontation (DeLaurenti 2008b, 22'43" to 30'49"), and distortion remains audible throughout several sections of street drumming, especially at the start of section 5, Drumming and Defiance (DeLaurenti 2008b, 30'49"). The work concludes with a guillotine ending, a chant truncated and audibly incomplete. Amidst "the uncontrollable world of sounds" (Schafer 1993, 8) made by the protesters in the soundscape of *N30: Live at the WTO Protest*, there is no "world positively unified" (Minh-Ha 1991, 2) due to my practice of phonography. I detail how this practice also opens an entryway into utopian listening in the next section.

There are no names in *N30: Live at the WTO Protest*. This absence inverts the ideology of documentary which names interviewees and other subjects in order to correlate them to a voice, expertise, and testimony. Naming people wields power, nourishing the artifice we "know" them, when all we "know" are faces and what their voices say. Freighted with assumptions and bias,⁷⁸ names almost never appear in my work, except in litanies of the dead. No "experts" appear by name because I believe the truth of the voice should be judged by what we hear, not by who is named,

⁷⁸ Quick, who has a PhD: Brian or B'Hazul? Gerdeman 2017 examines recent research on name bias.

compelling the listeners to be “sensitive to the flow between fact and fiction” (Minh-Ha 1990, 89).

Complicating the “chants, code words, language as honed and finessed as any high level diplomatic note” in *N30: Live at the WTO Protest*, composer and theorist Keith Eisenbrey discerns this flow between fact and fiction, emphasizing that “‘fair trade not free trade fair trade not free trade’ requires the context of a specific social, historical, and political discourse” (2007, 118). Unable to map names to speech, the listener lacks a crucial, unifying component to judge a proposed fact—is “fair trade” different than “free trade”?—and thus is confronted with semantic content to consider or ignore.

Deliberately long and generic titles are central to the self-reflexive earwitnessing in my work. Semantically depleted by generic geography, dates, and the argot of activist acronyms—e.g. *N30: Live at the WTO Protest November 30, 1999*; *Live at Occupy Wall Street N15 M1 S17* (2012-14); and *Live in Baltimore at the March for Freddie Gray April 25, 2015* (2015-16)—these titles accommodate and welcome parallel pieces outside the dumb aura of exclusive competition. Several artists and collectives have made N30 works, notably Ultra-red’s EP *N30* (2000) and *Five Days Over Seattle - An Audio Document Of Free Radio Station Y2WTKO* by the Cascadia Media Collective (2000). The No WTO Combo, a supergroup comprised of noted punk and grunge musicians, recorded *Live from the Battle in Seattle* (2000). Others pieces include *W.T.O. Disco* by Dana Lyons (2000) and “Inb@n30” by The Infernal Noise Brigade (2001).

N30: Live at the WTO Protest is of limited value as a documentary or dramatization of facts. Analyzed as research data, *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* could be pooled with the other N30 audio works mentioned in the previous paragraph and the archive of Infernal Noise Brigade recordings by Kurt Delaney alongside the countless filmed documentaries about N30.

Regardless of content or merit, making a work such as *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* constitutes a protest. Writing in *The Village Voice*, a pioneering alt-weekly in the United States and haven for almost every element of the left-wing counterculture from 1955 to 2010, composer and music critic Kyle Gann raged in a 1995 column:

In America making any art, no matter how “apolitical,” is already a protest. Putting endless time and work into a disciplined, unremunerative activity for the potential benefit of audiences unknown constitutes sufficient defiance of capitalist imperatives. (2006, 99)

I tried to exceed “sufficient defiance.” In a general encapsulation of my work, media theorist David C. Jackson postulates “DeLaurenti engages in acts of cultural sabotage that use the materials found in the clamorous contradictions of capitalism, struggles, protests, and actions” (2016, 80). It might be tempting to classify *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* as tactical media, defined by theorist Rita Raley as

the intervention and disruption of a dominant semiotic regime, the temporary creation of a situation in which signs, messages, and narratives are set into play and critical thinking becomes possible. (2005, 6)

But unlike tactical media which is “not oriented toward the grand, sweeping revolutionary event” (Raley 2005, 1), my “intervention” (Ibid) and “cultural sabotage” (Jackson 2016, 80) is more than temporary and extends outside of field recording and phonography.

Making a work with overt political content announced by its title and corraling funds to release it on compact disc while insisting it is music—as I did by registering *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* (and subsequent political works) as music with BMI,⁷⁹ submitting for the Pulitzer Prize,⁸⁰ and advertising it as music as a “protest symphony” on my website—is also a protest against received notions of music as performed by visible labor; comprised of definitive pitches; at best indirectly connected to the political programmatically; seeking to be part of the clichéd universal language of music; and following expected routes of origination and dissemination through institutions such as academia and tony performing arts organizations.

I offered a model for other artists working in sound who want to compose with the materials of protest, the pertinent sonic materials of social change. Protests have consequences: I can also attest that *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* and my other overtly politically-titled works have cost me opportunities for teaching positions, job promotions, and funding for my work. One arts funding panelist confided to me many

⁷⁹ Broadcast Music Incorporated (BMI) and ASCAP are the two largest performing rights organizations (PRO) in the USA, respectively representing about 500,000 and 565,000 US composers, songwriters, lyricists and music publishers. (Brae 2018, 25-26).

⁸⁰ My check for the entry fee was returned along with a gracious note stating my work was not music.

years after I was awarded a brief artist residency, “The panel loved your work! We discussed giving you a bigger prize, but worried that you would turn down the pile of money.”

I believe my protest, however small, inherent in making *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* and ushering it into the world is a necessary challenge to the existing order. In *When the Moon Waxes Red*, Trinh T. Minh-Ha explains:

To challenge the regimes of representation that govern a society is to conceive of how a politics can transform reality rather than merely ideologize it. As the struggle moves onward and assumes new, different forms, it is bound to recompose subjectivity and praxis while displacing the way diverse cultural strategies relate to one another in the constitution of social and political life. (1991, 2)

Mode 3: utopian listening

N30: Live at the WTO Protest not only challenges “regimes of representation” (Ibid) that govern what music is supposed to be and do, but “focuses on a future sonicity that will overturn the repetitions that valorize capital, wealth, and greed, and that disenfranchise and exclude millions. It is an explicitly utopian gesture” (Jackson 2016, 82). Utopian listening is the third mode of activist sound. By serving as a fulcrum for political listening and making the political audible, *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* fosters utopian listening in three ways—sensory focus, my practice of phonography, and the soundscape of protest.

What is utopian listening? The first ten Google search results for “utopian listening” list or refer to a 2016 conference of the same name subtitled “The Late

Electroacoustic Music of Luigi Nono” (Auner and Shreffler 2016),⁸¹ Despite the moves towards and mentions of “utopia” in the writings of Luigi Nono (1924-1990), the phrase is absent from every English-language translation of this noted postwar avant-garde composer’s writings. Usually referring to Nono’s quest for new or infinite possibilities, “utopian” is frequently employed by musicologists writing about Nono’s post-1976 music. Scholars such as Michael Gorodecki observe “Nono continued to follow a Utopian path, actively seeking to engage and change people” (1992, 16).

Defining utopia as “something that does not exist but could possibly exist,” Erik Wallrup, another Nono scholar, mentions “utopian listening” and specifies it (2015, 177).⁸² Summarizing as yet untranslated “interviews and discussions with Nono from the 1980s” (Ibid, 178fn), Wallrup states that utopian listening is

sensible and sensitive, [and] enables the listening subject to find new possibilities. It takes part in societal change; it is open to the unknown and the foreign; it is always concerned with relations between individuals. The consciousness must be open to combinations of feelings and not only one state of mind at a time. Yet, this kind of listening has to be developed, since dominating cognitive patterns make open listening impossible, and the act of listening is too often dominated by sight and ideology. To listen is to be open. (Ibid, 178)

⁸¹ <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-1-d&q=utopian+listening> Accessed October 5, 2019. I presented a paper, “The Haunted Electroacoustics of *Fragmente-Stille, an Diotima*,” at this conference.

⁸² Similarly, Silva 2018 posits “utopian hearing” as “an imperative to challenge complacent perception” (83) as well as a way for listeners to challenge “their received listening categories” (86) in the music of Georg Friedrich Haas, however Silva does not address the oft-made distinction between hearing as a passive, receptive process and the active, investigatory and possibly disruptive act of listening.

Where might this open, utopian listening take place with *N30: Live at the WTO Protest*? I cannot catalogue every possible listening context for my sound works, however I can account for my intended listening context, one which is rooted in my earliest encounters with transformative, perhaps utopian, experiences with sound: I seek to connect with the lone listener. I have long wanted pieces including *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* to function akin to what activists call a “one-on-one” (Schutz 2010, 170) or “relational meeting” (Chambers 2003, 44). Described by community organizer Jesse Myerson as “an organizer’s primary tool of the trade,” (2019, 18) and enshrined by pioneer activists such as Saul Alinsky (1946, 96-111), the one-on-one is in essence “one organized spirit going after another person’s spirit for connection, confrontation, and an exchange” (Chambers 2003, 44).

This one-on-one exchange is not a face-to-face meeting between me and a listener. In his classic text *Acoustic Communication*, Barry Truax observes “much has been made of the social role of music, that often it is forgotten that it is also a private activity of long tradition” (Ibid 1984, 32). Rooted in orality, the one-on-one exchange circulates *from the listener through the experience of utopian listening and back to the listener*, creating what Truax postulates as “a form of external communication with the self that expresses what cannot be put into words” (Ibid). This is made possible by the unusual nature of *N30*—a soundscape of protest shaped as music—amidst a sea of songs, symphonies, and other comparatively common sonic commodities.

This “external communication with the self” (Ibid) can “create a strong oppositional place of *conscious* listening” (Westerkamp 2000) which can enable the listener to

“find new possibilities” and an invitation to take part in “societal change” while remaining open to more than “one state of mind at a time” (Wallrup 2015, 178).

Where specifically might this open, one-on-one meeting of utopian listening take place not only with, but within *N30: Live at the WTO Protest*? By serving as a fulcrum for political listening and making the political audible, *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* opens three entryways into utopian listening—sensory focus, my practice of phonography, and the soundscape of protest.

Sensory Focus

The first entryway into utopian listening is through the ears. “The act of listening is too often dominated by sight” contends Wallrup (2015, 178). As an audio work, *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* prompts and elicits a sensory focus on sound; shifting the listener away from a world dominated by visuality, you can close your eyes, lose visual focus, or even stare blankly ahead while homing in on what your ears hear. Looking itself is deceptive; the gestalt psychologists proved in the early 20th century that we tend to group elements in the visible world by proximity, which makes untangling visually established relationships difficult (Rock and Palmer 1990, 85-86, 90). Claude Lévi-Strauss avers that “broad daylight is the enemy of perspective” (1961 [1955], 69) and “every landscape offers an immense disorder” to be sorted, analyzed and categorized according to a chosen agenda (Ibid, 59-60). Furthermore, viewing mechanically reproduced and distributed images reinforces a bias towards the visual. Revered photographer and documentary filmmaker Allan Sekula cautions

Vision, itself unimplicated in the world it encounters, is subjected to a mechanical idealization. Paradoxically,

the camera serves to ideologically naturalize the eye of the observer. Photography, according to this belief, reproduces the visible world: the camera is an engine of fact... (1978, 862)

Listening without looking collapses distance and rearranges our sense of perspective and perhaps memory of the entire visible world. As Albert Bregman explains in his pioneering text *Auditory Scene Analysis*, "...sounds go around corners. Low-frequency sound bends around an obstruction while higher frequency sound bounces around it" (1994, 37). Bregman adds that when listening, unlike reflected light which loses its shape, we can "discover the time and frequency pattern of the source, not its spatial shape, and much of this information is retained even when it bends or bounces around the corner" (Ibid). This perception of proximity is determined by frequency and amplitude, enabling the listener to remap presences and relationships.

Listening can dematerialize the material and connect the disconnected. Amidst visual obstacles, Bregman locates a powerful perspective gained through listening:

The auditory world is like the visual world would be if all objects were very, very transparent and glowed in sputters and starts by their own light, as well as reflecting the light of their neighbors. (1994, 37).

Bregman's vision of the auditory world is implicitly political; a return or restoration of the visible implicates "the world it encounters" (Sekula 1978, 862), potentially spurring the listener towards Schafer's questions for locating the political audible: "Who is heard?" "What are they listening to?" and "What are they ignoring or refusing to listen to?" (2003, 14). Salomé Voegelin writes in *The Political Possibility of Sound*:

Sound generates a possible reality that does not represent a singular actuality but renders the real a mobile and unseen complexity. It makes the how of the dominant appreciable and sounds the minor, the suppressed, the hidden and the ignored. (2019, 31)

Phonography and protest

N30: Live at the WTO Protest “renders the real a mobile and unseen complexity”

(Ibid) through my practice of phonography. This “possible reality” (Ibid) and second entryway into utopian listening is created by welcoming the voices of “the suppressed, the hidden and the ignored” (Ibid) heard in the protest of N30.

Throughout *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* we hear snippets of voices observing, commenting, and agitating about various topics central and peripheral to the protest.

My practice of phonography and the polyphonic soundscape of *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* ensures that there is no single “engine of fact” such as names or expert testimony or didactically narrated facts to “ideologically naturalize the eye [or ear] of the observer” (Sekula 1978, 862).

Instead the listener grapples with a plural, and at times parallel, sonic perspective.

This continual dislodging of the frame attempts to create “a strong oppositional place of *conscious* listening” (Westerkamp 2000) where dominant power is perceptible, “appreciable,” and vulnerable. This revision of technological protocols in my work undermines social power hierarchies (Yoganathan 2015, 18): Multiple fidelities, audible errors, jarring edits, and the ungainly, sprawling hour-plus length of *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* makes it sonically congruent with eruptive qualities of rebellion and unlikely to be mistaken as a commercial product.

Silence plays a significant role in establishing and maintaining this plural, at times parallel perspective. The aforementioned audible gaps and silences heard throughout in *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* not only signify shifts in time and/or locale but also “sounds the minor, the suppressed, the hidden and the ignored” (Voegelin 2019, 31). David C. Jackson astutely identifies these gaps of silence, what I later called “windows” in *Wallingford Food Bank* (2008d), as “opportunities to identify with the sounds and to insert our own experience imaginatively within the ‘reality’ of the recording” (2016, 107).

The soundscape of dissent heard in *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* commingles with the soundscape of the listener; the listener can then, even unwittingly, “recompose subjectivity and praxis while displacing the way diverse cultural strategies relate to one another in the constitution of social and political life” (Minh-Ha 1991, 2). In other words, these windows gently welcome the listener to question and perhaps co-compose the soundscape while hearing *N30: Live at the WTO Protest*. The gaps and silences open a space for emotional resonance; other sonic memories may also be evoked, remembered, and heard simultaneously.

Through this transtemporal approach, the listener can reflect or focus on their own soundscape, listening for powerful contrasts and perhaps detecting unsettling disparities. These openings are yet another way to continually reanimate the one-on-one circuit of utopian listening looping from the listener, through the recording, and back to the listener.

The soundscape of protest

The third and final entryway opened by *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* into utopian listening is the soundscape of protest. The sound of mass protest can at once terrify and electrify the listener. Unruly voices, portable musical instruments, and raw noise rebound against walls and windows while other strophic chants, delayed by distance, fuse into canonic chorales of anger and discontent. Yet according to longtime protest organizer L.A. Kauffman, mass protests are “less about wielding power than gathering it” (2018, 84). And in these gatherings we hear “a possible reality that does not represent a singular actuality but renders the real a mobile and unseen complexity” (Voegelin 2019, 31). This mobile actuality challenges notions of property, enunciates new forms of public and personal unity, and models a defiance of the existing order. When audible, recordings such as *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* pry open a route to utopian listening.

Sanctioned or not, every march, every protest commandeers and commingles public and private property. In his classic essay “The Nature of Mass Demonstrations,” John Berger observes

The demonstrators interrupt the regular life of the streets they march through or of the open spaces they fill. They cut off these areas, and, not yet having the power to occupy them permanently, they transform them into a temporary stage on which they dramatize the power they still lack. (1968, 755)

When protesters organize and gather, they “challenge the regimes of representation that govern a society” (Minh-Ha 1991, 2). Protesters can then potentially “conceive of

how a politics can transform reality rather than merely ideologize it.” (Ibid). Berger argues that such a gathering transforms the protesters’ view of the city (1968, 755). Protests are one of the few occasions when a city feels lived in, not just inhabited; protests contravene what we’re supposed to do: working, spending, and remaining fragmented, separated, and scared of each other, not talking to strangers and moving at someone else’s schedule to work or even to play. According to Berger, protesters “become corporately aware that it is they or those whom they represent who have built the city and who maintain it” (Ibid, 755)—not in the sense of washing windows or sweeping the streets but maintaining the city by conforming to its “constitution of social and political life” (Minh-Ha 1991, 2).

In *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* this conflict of ownership—who constitutes and controls who inhabits the streets—is overtly audible in contests of territory throughout the work (DeLaurenti 2008b, *passim*), especially in cries of “hold the line” by protesters (Ibid, 39’31”) and police orders to disperse (Ibid, 49’39” and 50’48”). In every section of *N30*, music, chanting, and drumming (DeLaurenti 2008b, *passim*) establish and reclaim the city streets as a place of celebration.

In the coda of *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* we hear a jubilant response to a hoarse cry of “Are we still here?” (Ibid, 60’01”). A young man for whom the streets have become transformed into another place entirely rants and bellows: “I would rather *be here now* than in my fucking job!” (Ibid, 60’21” to 60’25”). Berger suggests that protesters see the city “through different eyes. They see it as their product, confirming their potential” (1968, 755). Overlooked, ignored, and stereotyped individuals, small

groups, and communities can gather to reclaim and redefine the city through sound.

N30: Live at the WTO Protest enables us to hear the transformation of a city into a site of struggle.

Collective chants also sonify the city as a site of struggle while nourishing “utopian aspirations” (Drott 2011, 25). Unlike the regimented cheers or songs heard at sporting events, every echoing group of protesting voices chants for people, not for someone else’s corporation or logo. Individual voices chime in too, creating a polyphony in which the lone and local blends with massed voices.

Chants serve as beacons, altering the listener to like-minded people nearby while generating and sustaining positive and friendly energy—“an indefinitely expandable basis for social cohesion” (McNeill 1995, 2)—in what for most is an unusual activity, protesting. As a form of voluntary participation and consensus, chants build trust and foster unity through collective activity (Manabe 2019, 2 and 5). Chants also signal mood and motivation, from steely determination to uncertain trepidation and fear. A failed or failing chant does not necessarily connote fear; mutually laughing at a rhythmically bungled or verbally mangled chant can bond a group of strangers, too, which I have heard countless times at protests in the United States.

Uninterrupted chants gather and accrue personal and collective power, becoming “a political expression of the emotional force of muscular bonding” (McNeill 1995, 4); as Schafer notes “wherever Noise is granted immunity from human intervention, there

will be found a seat of power” (1977, 76). Furthermore, when a chant has fanned out to protesters several city blocks away, massed chants correlate a sense of distance and collective, territorial power. When a chant suddenly stops or changes, a police action or some territorial change may be at hand.

Alluding to and inspired by protest movements of the past, chants link past and present struggles (Drott 2011, 27): “There ain’t no power like the power of the people ‘cause the power of the people won’t stop!” (DeLaurenti 2008b, 11’45”) is just one of many chants that evoke the activist movements of the 1960s. Chants can also communicate anger, such as the women in *N30* chanting “Get out of the street! Get out of the street!” (Ibid, 24’50” to 24’57”). At once mocking, denouncing, and drowning out police orders, those feral voices become weaponized, signaling defiance and resistance. As “a channelizer of violence, a creator of differences, a sublimation of noise, an attribute of power” (Attali 2009 [1977], 23), chants—akin to the beating of a drum—symbolically re-channel the instinctive response of self-defense or violent impulses away from arms and legs (Ibid, 25 and 28; McNeill 1995, 155-156)—and directly to the voice.

In *The Tuning of the World*, Schafer states “the definition of space by acoustic means is much more ancient than the establishment of property lines and fences” (1977, 34). Deterritorializing streets from sidewalks, gutters from crosswalks, chants mark and remap territory, “a symbolic capturing of a city or capital” (Berger 1968, 755). An aural form of collective property, this metonymic “metaphor is for the benefit of the participants” (Ibid) also marks a demand “to be recognized, to be valued” (Butler

2015, 26) and issues a warning to law enforcement. And if it is indeed “possible to judge the strength of political power by its legislation on noise and the effectiveness of its control over it” (Attali 2009 [1977], 122), then collective chants radiate direct defiance. The commandeering of public and private property and resulting unity built through chanting support the core mission of mass protest: Defiance of the State. Berger suggests that “demonstrations are meant to reveal the strength of popular opinion or feeling: theoretically they are an appeal to the democratic conscience of the State” (1968, 754) but more significantly, “mass demonstrations are rehearsals for revolution: not strategic or even tactical ones, but rehearsals of revolutionary awareness” (Ibid, 754-755).

Suggesting the capture of “a potent symbolic target for anyone challenging the juggernaut” of the WTO (Sellers 2012, 286), *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* concludes with “The people have the power” (DeLaurenti 2008b, 61’07 to 61’28”) audibly chanted thirteen times. Eisenbrey observes that this “shouted chant, a formula of power” is the sound of “us confronting ourselves with a challenge of and to our own power, blunt and accusing” (2007, 119). This accusation points to those who hear the chant as well as reminds us, according to political scientist Judith Butler that any chant including “the people”

is always missing some group of people it claims to represent. Some people fail to show up or are constrained from doing so; many live on the margins of the metropole,⁸³ some are congregated on the border in refugee camps waiting for documentation, transfer, and shelter, and yet others are in prison or detained in camps. (Butler 2015, 165)

⁸³ Butler means the city and its suburban environs.

Butler contends “this means that ‘the people’ never really arrive as a collective presence that speaks as a verbal chorus” (Ibid), however this chant recorded at N30 (DeLaurenti 2008b, 61’07 to 61’28”) and any chant invoking “the people” also carries a utopian metonymic power, not only announcing the presence of a massed gathering but a threatening, warlike summons that more may join.

In tandem with chants, mass protests proffer the soundscape of war. The soundscape of *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* includes barked commands such as orders to disperse or surrender (DeLaurenti 2008b, *passim* but notably at 49’40” and 50’47”), pepper spray (Ibid, 39’43” and *passim*), rubber bullets (Ibid, 38’29” and *passim*), and tear gas grenades (Ibid, 39’13” and *passim*). This soundscape helps constitute the “rehearsals for revolution” of a massed gathering (Berger 1968, 755) at N30.

Protesters eye- and earwitness what police sociologist Luis A. Fernandez calls “textures of control” (Ibid 2008, 9). The first texture, “hard-line social control” is comprised of tactics which “directly undermine and abolish movements” (Ibid) such as arresting people on the street and using live ammunition and explosives while its complement “soft-line social control”

includes more indirect forms of oppression, such as the control of dissent through legal regulation, negotiation of protest, and self-monitoring. (Ibid)

Berger believes when “demonstrators present themselves as a target to the so-called forces of law and order ... the larger the target they present, the stronger they feel”

(1968, 755). The massed protest presents a contradiction, and by its mere presence “demonstrates the weakness of authority” (Ibid). In a satisfactory (or satisfactorily-controlled) State, protestors should not have needed (or been able) to gather. Quelling a protest with either hard-line or soft-line social control displays the State’s weakness or reliance on authoritarianism. Berger adds

by attacking the demonstration authority ensures that the symbolic event becomes an historical one: an event to be remembered, to be learnt from, to be avenged.
(Ibid)

Veteran protesters, like soldiers, soon forget their fear of violence. They become inured to tactics of hard-line or soft-line social control not only through what they see but also by a new, heightened attention of listening to a soundscape whose “deliberate construction by its creators” (Schafer 1977, 237), in this case the police and protesters, rips apart a “regime of representation” (Minh-Ha 1991, 2)—of State-imposed order and of satisfaction with the State.

As the central element of the soundscape that distinguishes a protest from a battlefield, a simple, collective chant such as those heard in *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* (DeLaurenti 2008b) can help “conceive of how a politics can transform reality” (Ibid) by fostering collective unity and invoking a regime of defiance through sounding together. Continuing the one-on-one circuit of utopian listening, the chant—the fulcrum for political listening at protests—loops back to the listener; increasing intensity poses a binary choice: Join or avoid, engage or evade.

Conclusion

This chapter has employed *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* as an avenue to propose three modes of activist sound: critical resistance material; self-reflexive earwitnessing; and utopian listening. Yet activist sound is not just constituted by field recordings and field recording-based works of activists and protest.

DeRay McKesson, a veteran of the 2014-2015 protests in Ferguson, Missouri, declared “Protest is confrontation. Protest is disruption. Protest is the end of silence. It is not the solution, it creates space for the solution” (2015). Forty years earlier in a paper delivered in 1975, Barry Truax proposed one such space for a solution: Soundscape compositions could “create new, and in a sense model environments in the form of compositions based on material recorded in existing locations” (1977, 5).

In the next two chapters I explore making field recordings of other soundscapes politically audible as “model environments” and activist sound. “Intermissions with the Orchestra” and “A Length of the Sound” serve as case studies for the Conclusion where I will further articulate my proposed typology of “activist sound.”

Part Two: Exploratory Phonography

Intermissions with the Orchestra

Overture

In his epochal treatise *On the Sensations of Tone*,⁸⁴ Hermann Helmholtz likened the complexity of ocean waves to what contemporary listeners might recognize as a familiar soundscape:

We have to imagine a perfectly similar spectacle proceeding in the interior of a ball-room, for instance. Here we have a number of musical instruments in action, speaking men and women, rustling garments, gliding feet, clinking glasses, and so on. All these causes give rise to systems of waves, which dart through the mass of air in the room, are reflected from its walls, return, strike the opposite wall, are again reflected, and so on till they die out. We have to imagine that from the mouths of men and from the deeper musical instruments there proceed waves of from 8 to 12 feet in length (c to F), from the lips of the women waves of 2 to 4 feet in length (c" to c'), from the rustling of the dresses a fine small crumple of wave[s], and so on; in short, a tumbled entanglement of the most different kinds of motion, complicated beyond conception. (Helmholtz 1895, 26)

The recording project and resulting album discussed here—*Favorite Intermissions: Music Before and Between Beethoven-Stravinsky-Holst*—contains six unedited, continuous recordings of similar tumbled entanglements made between 2003 and 2006: Symphony orchestra musicians warming up between the two halves of a classical music concert amid musical instruments in action, speaking men and women, rustling garments, gliding (or more often padding and shuffling) feet,

⁸⁴ *On the Sensations of Tone as a Physiological Basis for the Theory of Music* was first published in Germany in 1863 and republished and translated in multiple revised editions. Hiebert 2014 (47-51) clarifies the tangled publication history and dissemination of this influential text.

clinking glasses, and so on—the intermission.⁸⁵ Along with offering a concrete example of how phonography can interrogate an ideological framework of listening, *Favorite Intermissions* embeds a sonic protest within a graphic parody of a Deutsche Grammophon album cover (see Figure 7, below). In addition, the *Favorite Intermissions* compact disc (DeLaurenti 2008c) documents an unusual form of performance, a soundscape contingent on multiple modes of attention and autonomy: Excerpts from orchestral scores, favorite warm-up routines, unique musical tics (scales, melodic cells) fuse into unusual and startling music.

The first section of this chapter, “Furniture Music at Intermission,” examines possible forerunners of *Favorite Intermissions*. Comparing *Favorite Intermissions* to the 1920 *Musique d’ameublement* (2010, [1920])⁸⁶ of Erik Satie (1866-1925), sound effects records, and soundscape composition opens an entryway into examining *Favorite Intermissions* as a protest of classical music, orchestra concerts, and the classical music industry.

Continuing my method of writing polemics and manifestos as a form of investigation, the next section, “Intermissions with the Orchestra,” presents an earwitness account

⁸⁵ Venerable and authoritative dictionaries such as Collins, American Heritage, MacMillan, Merriam-Webster, and Oxford Dictionaries ascribe the use of “interval” for “intermission” to British English. Only the Cambridge Dictionary recognizes “intermission” and “interval” as equivalent usages in the US and UK.

The album and project are called *Favorite Intermissions*, hence my use of “intermission” and avoidance of “interval,” which also denotes the distance between two musical notes as well as a dyadic pitch collection.

⁸⁶ Chiefly known in English as “Furniture Music.” In 1917, Satie composed two short pieces grouped as *Musique d’ameublement* (Orledge 2013, 303). These were not performed publicly with the pieces composed by Satie in 1920 and lack the subtitle “(Sons industriels).”

first published in *Soundscape: The Journal of Acoustic Ecology* (DeLaurenti 2004) and ultimately finished for the compact disc release of *Favorite Intermissions* (DeLaurenti 2008c).

In the central section of this chapter, “Allegro con moto: From field recording to *Favorite Intermissions*,” I describe how *Favorite Intermissions* was conceived and released. Due to my parody of the typical Deutsche Grammophon (henceforth “DG”)⁸⁷ album cover, *Favorite Intermissions* garnered significant attention from over 100 newspapers, blogs, podcasts and magazines, most notably on *The New York Times* website (see Figure 10, below). I analyze the cover by compounding Gérard Genette’s concept of the paratext—elements such as album covers and liner notes—with Pauline Oliveros’ distillation of two archetypal modes of attention: focal and global. I then map the nexus of these critical frameworks by ascribing modes of attention to the performers of the recorded intermissions as well as to the viewers and listeners of the *Favorite Intermissions* compact disc.

In the “Postlude,” I chronicle of my legal travails—along with a brief comparison to John Oswald’s *plunderphonic* CD—resulting from the parody cover of *Favorite Intermissions* by positing an ironic conclusion to the *Favorite Intermissions* project.

Furniture Music at Intermission

⁸⁷ Founded in 1898 as “Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft,” DGG became “Polydor International” in 1972 (Freise 1973, DGG-3), though “Deutsche Grammophon” and its acronym “DG” remain in use as of 2020.

Placing Satie's *Musique d'ameublement* (2010, [1920]) under the rubric of "Musical Irresolution," art historian Hervé Vanel ventures "that it may be difficult to take some of Satie's music entirely seriously" (2013, 10), considering the composer's predilection for hermetic titles (e.g. *Trois Morceaux en forme de poire*⁸⁸), enigmatic or whimsical performance directions,⁸⁹ and tart, memorable pronouncements such as:

To claim there is a Truth in Art seems to me as strange,
as astounding, as if I heard someone declare that there
is a Locomotive Truth, a House Truth, an Aeroplane
Truth, and Emperor Truth, a Beggar Truth, and so on...
(Volta 1989, 143)

The legend surrounding *Musique d'ameublement*—two pieces scored for piano duet,⁹⁰ three clarinets, and a trombone (Orledge 2013, 308)—taints Satie's work as a miserable failure (Vanel 2013, 17; Satie 2010 [1920], 1) and "a joke" (Myers 1968, 60; Templier 1969, 45), which helps explain "the relative oblivion into which they have fallen after Satie's death" (Vanel 2013, 13). This "relative oblivion" is sonic, not scholarly.

Film sound theorist Anahid Kassabian reminds us that *Musique d'ameublement* has been situated repeatedly as an inaugural work in a "counterhistory" of ambient music

⁸⁸ In English: "Pieces in the Shape of a Pear." Davis 2007 informs us that "poire" was also slang for fathead or fool (71), which adds another layer to the joke.

⁸⁹ In surveys of Satie's scores, Myers 1968 and Templier 1969 teem with examples. Potter 2016, which coins the apt rubric "texted piano works" states that "Très sincèrement silencieux" ("Very sincere silence") appears not over a pause, but over a notated section of the 1894 "Prélude à la Porte héroïque du ciel" (Ibid, 98).

⁹⁰ Also known as "piano four hands," "piano duet" denotes music for two pianists at a single piano. "Piano duo" refers to music for two pianos.

(2013, 7).⁹¹ Yet compared to Satie's piano music, this pioneering work remains chiefly known as a legend,⁹² whose lore began March 8, 1920 at the premiere held at the Galerie Barbazanges. The Parisian audience heard this pre-performance announcement by actor and singer Pierre Bertin, who also organized the entire event (Orledge 2013, 308):

Also for the first time, thanks to Erik Satie and Darius Milhaud and conducted by M. Delgrange,⁹³ we present to you furniture music during the intervals of the play.

We specifically wish to ask you not to give it any attention and to act during the interval as if it did not exist. This music, specially written for Max Jacob's play, claims to be part of life in the same sense as a private conversation, a painting in the gallery, or the chair on which one is sitting. Try it for yourself.

Messrs Erik Satie and Darius Milhaud are available to answer any questions and discuss commissions. (Potter 2016, 162)

The audience listened anyway. According to Darius Milhaud who performed at the 1920 premiere, Satie ran around the lobby urging and exhorting patrons who "began to stream back to their seats" (Vanel 2013, 17) to "walk around, eat, drink" (Davis 2007, 128), and "Talk! Walk around! Don't listen!" (Potter 2016, 168), instead of listening to the music. A concert was also part of the event (Vanel 2013, 140).⁹⁴

⁹¹ Kassabian prods the reader "For versions of this story, see any of the scores of ambient websites, and especially Mark Prendergast's *The Ambient Century...*" (2013, 7).

⁹² Of a list of 474 recordings of Satie's music, discogs.com lists a half-dozen albums of *Musique d'Ameublement*. <https://www.discogs.com/artist/95539-Erik-Satie?query=Musique%20D%27Ameublement> Accessed July 2, 2019.

⁹³ "M." abbreviates "Maître" not "Monsieur." Félix Delgrange was "an enthusiastic cellist and conductor" (Orledge 1987, 30) and champion of contemporary music in Paris (Orledge 1995, 27).

⁹⁴ Pieces on the program included works by members of *Les Six*, including Honegger, Poulenc, Milhaud, Tailleferre, and Auric along with songs by Stravinsky (Vanel 2013, 140).

Musique d'ameublement premiered between the acts of a play by Satie's friend Max Jacob "in a gallery while people were looking at the pictures" (Myers 1968, 60).

Unlike a customary concert where the audience and performers sit separately, the musicians were dispersed throughout the theatre; in 1952 Milhaud recalled:

In order that the music might seem to come from all sides at once, we posted the clarinets in three different corners of the theatre, the pianist in the fourth, and the trombone in a box on the first floor. (Davis 2007, 127)

Why did the audience "stream back to their seats" (Vanel 2013, 17)? It might be hard to imagine anyone heeding unseen music as a beckoning to sit down. Today "on a daily basis," all of us are "targets of ubiquitous musics" (Boschi et al. 2013, 1) which Anahid Kassabian classifies as "the kind of music that we listen to as part of our environment" (Kassabian 2013, 4).⁹⁵ Those who heard the *Musique d'ameublement* in 1920 were not yet inundated with omnipresent music piped-in through wired speakers via radio broadcasts, at least in France where radio broadcasting began in 1922 (Lommers 2012, 47).

Satie surmised that the lack visual focus of assembled musicians in the *Musique d'ameublement* would help diffuse or de-focus audience attention (Shaw-Miller 2013, 112). This ambiguous visual focus, with only sound to hear—and perhaps a lone musician or two to be seen amid a standing, scattered audience—was not enough to distract or defer the audience from listening. The presence of conductor Félix

⁹⁵ Although Kassabian's model draws upon distributed computing (2013, xxv), her formulation of ubiquitous music should not be conflated with the well-circulated manifesto by Pimenta et al: "Ubiquitous Music is thus a new area of research that encompasses ubiquitous computing, computer music and human-computer interaction" (2014, xi).

Delgrange (Vanel 2013, 16), no matter how discreet, may have also nudged listeners back to their seats.

In addition, the music was probably familiar (Potter 2016, 165), which signaled that it was time to sit and listen. Satie had trimmed “popular refrains from *Mignon* and the *Danse Macabre*” (Myers 1968, 60) by Ambroise Thomas and Camille Saint-Saëns respectively into “isolated phrases repeated over and over again, like the pattern of wallpaper” (Ibid). Reminiscing in 1952, Milhaud averred that Satie had not counted on the charm of the *Musique d’ameublement* (Potter 2016, 168fn). The cross-section of art forms—a concert bundled into a play performed in an art gallery exhibiting children’s paintings (Shattuck 1968, 168)—may have confused the audience initially. Nonetheless, upon hearing music they liked and seeing elements of a musical performance, the audience for Satie’s “furniture music” reverted to customary concert behavior. The *Musique d’ameublement* may have resembled a soundmark heard at performances of plays and music: A temporal summons to return to the concert.⁹⁶

Favorite Intermissions and the *Musique d’ameublement* each proffer a satirical protest against the classical concert and its beneficiaries through destabilizing, subversive content that recontextualizes a central segment of the concert, the intermission, via three elements: Commercial aspiration; program notes rooted in the concise,

⁹⁶ Audiences attending a faithful staging of Wagner’s *Ring* cycle will hear brief snippets of upcoming leitmotifs just a few measures long during intermission, especially at Bayreuth and until recently at Seattle Opera. Those composed fanfares serve mainly as timekeepers, indicating how much time before the next act begins (Tommasini 2006).

customary marketing language of advertisements; and the re-framing of existing music.

Although created more than 80 years apart, *Favorite Intermissions* and the *Musique d'ameublement* harbored hopeless commercial aspirations by composers living on the cultural and economic margins: *Favorite Intermissions* appeared as a compact disc (DeLaurenti 2008c) released on a tiny record label devoted to unusual field recordings and performance; I detail the origins and commercial travails of this project below in the “Allegro con moto” section. My own poverty was such that I obtained clothing by redeeming cigarette coupons—including the leather vest used for recording *Favorite Intermissions*⁹⁷—and shopping at thrift stores and charity shops.

Satie’s life of poverty and economic uncertainty is well-documented (Myers 1968; Templier 1969; Davis 2007; Potter 2016). The *Musique d'ameublement* composed for the 1920 premiere was performed once during Satie’s lifetime. It remained unpublished until 1998 (Orledge 2013, 308) and became widely available in 2010 (Satie 2010 [1920]), in spite of Satie envisioning an immediate, commercial use for the music as stated in pre-performance announcement-cum-advertisement informing

⁹⁷ I obtained a sleeveless leather vest along with many fine button-down shirts by redeeming sheaves and wads of “Camel Cash” from Camel Cigarettes. I never smoked, but nevertheless doggedly collected the candy bar wrapper-sized certificates in bars, pubs, and on the street to save money on buying clothes.

Olstad and James 2009 briefly outline the history of cigarette advertising in the United States (14) while Davis 1995 summarizes and critiques Camel Cash along with other cigarette coupon redemption schemes of the early 1990s (210). Unbeknownst to me, the vest itself cost an astonishing \$675 worth of Camel cigarettes (Richards et al. 1995, 258): “One would have to purchase 2.5 packs of Camels per day (9000 cigarettes) during the six month promotion period to earn enough C-notes to purchase the jacket” (Ibid). Camel Cash, “designed to parody U.S. Currency” (Richards et al. 1995, 258), made the parody of *Favorite Intermissions* possible.

attendees: “Erik Satie and Darius Milhaud are available to answer any questions and discuss commissions” (Potter 2016, 162).

This announcement was just part of a stream of acerbic, jokey, and satirical fake advertisements created by Satie (Potter 2016, 145). These seemingly innocuous bits of paper ephemera not only contribute to our view of Satie as a whimsical eccentric affectionately nicknamed the “Velvet Gentleman” (Myers 1968, 37), but helped Satie shape a sense of himself, articulating his opposition to artists and ideas he opposed and in some cases detested (Potter 2016, 145). These advertisements also affirm Satie’s own plans, eliciting a concise, memorable distillation of his ideas. Satie penned ad copy for the first two pieces of furniture music,⁹⁸ in March 1918:

Furnishing music replaces “waltzes” and “operatic fantasies” etc. Don’t be confused! *It’s something else!!!*
No more “false music” Furnishing music completes one’s property; it’s *new*; it doesn’t upset customs; it isn’t tiring; it’s French; it won’t wear out; it *isn’t boring* (Orledge 2013, 308, italics in the original).

By imputing his “furnishing music” as an essential commodity, what today would be designated a “lifestyle brand,” Satie’s strategy was to diminish and thus recast the music into a pure product. In *Sonic Modernity*, Sam Halliday cogently defines a commodity as “subjecting every human product to a single calculus of monetary value, regardless of its intrinsic worth and specificity” (2013, 6). Satie attempted to commodify the intermission, offering it for sale, just as *Favorite Intermissions* did 80 years later. And just as Satie defined his *Musique d’ameublement* with what today’s

⁹⁸ See footnote 86, above.

marketer would call “an elevator pitch”—so named after the brief amount of time in an elevator (or in the UK, a lift) ride one has to convince an investor or other gatekeeper—the sleeve notes to *Favorite Intermissions* fused marketing with a manifesto which I explore further in the section “Allegro con moto.”

In a review of the premiere, *Vogue* magazine quoted Satie, who said of the *Musique d'ameublement*,

it is useless to listen to them: one lives in their
ambiance without paying any attention. It's up to you to
find a way to hear this *musique d'ameublement* and to
devise an opinion on the topic. (Davis 2007, 128).

Here the *Musique d'ameublement* and *Favorite Intermissions* diverge. Both projects attempt to thwart the ideological framework of listening to a central segment of the concert—the intermission—and interrogates the customs, indeed the literacy, of the classical concert: When to listen, what to listen for, and what music is. By attempting to shift attention away from listening, “We specifically wish to ask you not to give it any attention and to act during the interval as if it did not exist” (Potter 2016, 162): Satie sought to vacate the intermission with music whose satirical repetition and lack of audience attention becomes “music that questions its identity as music” (Shaw-Miller 2013, 112).

Favorite Intermissions, by contrast, does not question “its identity as music,” instead proposing that “even more music” (DeLaurenti 2008c) awaits the avid listener in its program notes and by existing as a commercial recording. What was formerly the overlooked or ignored segment of a concert—the intermission—can be heard as

music itself. Although not labelled as a sound effects record, *Favorite Intermissions* does resemble and was influenced by the a lineage of Folkways LPs which were cross-marketed to buyers of educational records (Olmsted 2003, 73) or the hobbyist seeking sound effects for home movies and slide shows (Jacobs 1958, 35; Endres 1971, 61). A brief comparison of sound effects records to *Favorite Intermissions* reveals significant differences of form and intent.

Even after perusing decades of the “Supplementary Record Guide” of Schwann catalogues, massive atlases which purported to “list all the LPs, compact discs, and tapes that were in general distribution” (Burkat and Ferrington 2011), it is impossible to assert that *Favorite Intermissions* is the first (or second or third or....) album to present orchestra intermissions and tunings.

The history of 78 rpm and LP sound effects records remains difficult to trace. In a letter to *High Fidelity*, Francis T. Valentino claims that “Gennett Records was the first in the industry to produce sound effects on [78 rpm] records...in 1931” (1971, 12 and 14). Writing in *Audio* magazine, “amateur sound collector” A.R. Jourdan concurs (1974, 32) with Valentino, albeit with a different date, 1932 (33). A scholarly history of sound effects recordings has yet to be written due to their marginal nature and, mainly, the continued inaccessibility, rarity, and anonymity of the recordings. Early sound effect records were manufactured for and sold to radio stations and movie studios, not for home use (Jourdan 1974, 33). Much like production music or stock music made by the same companies who created and sold sets of sound effect records, these sounds were intended to be “stored, reprogrammed, shortened, extended, cross-

referenced, and rearranged according to market demands,” (Lanza 1995, 63), which explains why commercial sound effects—from 78 rpm records to LPs to digital downloads—often remain devoid of temporal, geographical, and artistic connotations.⁹⁹

The earliest credited recording of an orchestra tuning up is “Musicians Tuning-up” on *Sound Patterns* (Folkways, 1953 FPX 130, re-released later as FX 6130) recorded by Peter Bartók¹⁰⁰ “in Kingsway Hall, London, August 1950, employing three RCA ribbon microphones and an Altec [microphone]. Tuning is to note “A”—in a violin concerto by Mozart” (author unknown 1953, 3). Prior to 1953, the sound of an orchestra tuning up can be heard on a handful of uncredited and undated 78 rpm sound effects record tracks such as “Tuning Up Orchestra” on Major Records #5044,¹⁰¹ and “Orchestra Tuning Up (No Talking)” recorded in England (Jourdan 1974, 34) and released in the United States on Columbia Records YB-27 (CA16687).

When I was asked by *The New York Times* why no orchestras were credited in *Favorite Intermissions*, the reporter collapsed my answer into a third-person summary:

⁹⁹ Exceptions to this lack of specificity include several iterations of the BBC Sound Effects Library released throughout the 1960s and 1970s and subsequently on compact disc in 1991. Specific sound effects collections began appearing in the 1990s on compact disc, such as the libraries devoted to vehicles released by LucasFilm Ltd. in 1990 and the 1999 multi-volume *Wheels 5000 2nd Gear* series released by Sound Ideas.

¹⁰⁰ Peter Bartók (1924-) is the son of Béla Bartók (1881-1945).

¹⁰¹ Undated, likely issued in the early to mid-1950s and reissued on LP as part of *Sound Effects* volume 9, #1024.

He has not identified the orchestras in the recordings, he added, to avoid problems but also to maintain a more universal character in the works. (Wakin 2007)

I had no interest in any “universal character” of the works. Simply, I did not want to get caught or barred from attending concerts by any orchestra or concert venue. My hope was, and continues to be, that the disparate forms and durations of each track on the compact disc *Favorite Intermissions* refutes any notion of a “universal character” of orchestra intermissions. Whereas most sound effect cues range from a few seconds to a minute or two, selections on *Favorite Intermissions* last, on average, eight minutes long, ranging from 4’31” to 17’07” (DeLaurenti 2008c). Each track is framed by my entrance or the first few notes of intermission and bookended by the end of intermission (and pre-concert tuning up), or the expiration of my batteries or running out of time on my MiniDisc recorder.

Although the sleeve notes to *Favorite Intermissions* were first published in *Soundscape: The Journal of Acoustic Ecology* (DeLaurenti 2004), the entire project has several traits that diverge from soundscape composition whose essence is “the artistic, sonic transmission of meanings about place, time, environment and listening perception” (Westerkamp 2000). I detail these divergences later in this chapter: An inextricable connection to the project’s commercial visual elements; unorthodox and resourceful scavenging of recording equipment; audibly mobile movement; technical flaws originating in the varying fidelities of my microphones; the act of surreptitious recording; and corporate legal action against the work being withdrawn in 2007, then revised and reissued in 2008.

Intermissions with the Orchestra

The next section reproduces the liner notes to the compact disc of *Favorite*

Intermissions (DeLaurenti 2008c) in full as originally published. Writing about the role of liner notes (also called “sleeve notes”) on LPs and compact discs, Colin Symes contends

these notes are hearing aids that display a distinctive narrative architecture designed to enlist the attention of the listener along the lines, quite literally, specified on the sleeve. (2004, 125)

Along with furnishing an earwitness account of my intentions and methods, the liner notes to *Favorite Intermissions* provide a template for examination and analysis for the remainder of this chapter.

“Then, I grant you, the composer-conductor lives on a plane of existence unknown to the virtuoso. With what ecstasy he abandons himself to the delight of ‘playing’ the orchestra! How he hugs and clasps and sways this immense and fiery instrument! Once more he is all vigilance. His eyes are everywhere.”

—HECTOR BERLIOZ, *The Memoirs of Hector Berlioz*, edited and translated by David Cairns

INTERMISSIONS WITH THE ORCHESTRA

I HAVE SPENT THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS at orchestra concerts and ballet performances on my own singular plane of existence. Furtive, vigilant, with my eyes everywhere (for I might get caught!) and my ears carefully attuned to “playing” the orchestra, I’m on a secret mission: to surreptitiously record intermissions.

At concert halls across the country, symphony musicians often return to the stage during intermission, sometimes mere moments after the entire orchestra has officially exited. Individually or collectively, clarinetists, trumpeters, timpanists, and others warm up and work through difficult passages that await on the remainder of the program. This soundscape is not limited to American orchestras, though in my experience, visiting European orchestras, after the program’s first half, usually remain backstage until the second half of the concert begins.

Why record intermissions? One duty of the composer is to expose the unexpected, overlooked, and hidden skeins of music woven in the world around us. Culling sounds from the world as a composition subverts long-standing, essentialist notions of music as comprised of notes, melody, traditional instruments (violin, guitar, drums, piano, etc.) and so forth as well as flouts contemporary expectations of abstractly agglomerated, musique concrète-ized sound.

Throughout history, the definition of music has remained a moving target. I hope recording and presenting these intermissions in some small way abets and accelerates the ongoing re-definition of music in our culture towards moving, meaningful, coherent listening.

Making such recordings is illegal, a result of rules negotiated by the Musicians Union and various venues, yet I believe the importance of documenting these intermissions trumps antiquated copyright laws and misguided prohibitions.

There’s little money to be made – I doubt Deutsche Grammophon has plans to release a compilation such as *Favorite Intermissions* any time soon – and these recordings seem unlikely to damage anyone’s reputation, though it might tweak a conductor’s ego to find out that the best “new” music is heard between two halves of his or her meticulously planned concert program.

Recording these intermissions preserves a soundscape that could be blithely abolished by the arrival of a new music director – who might forbid on-stage warm-ups during intermission – or rendered extinct by the eventual implementation of noise cancellation technology that silences a room and hermetically seals conversations, confining any chatter to the person next to us.

I hope this album offers a new entryway to orchestral music; stagehands dragging chairs, instrumentalists leafing through music and trilling a few notes, close-by conversations, and the distracted ambiance of the crowd combine to flatten and inscribe the aural surface. As a phonographer, I too am present, improvising corporeally as I angle my body-mounted microphones to capture the right mix of everything I hear. My voice, the flaws of my surreptitious recording system, and faults (and in *Awaiting AGON*, the incipient failure) of my equipment are all part of the music. Today’s glitch is tomorrow’s melody.

I adore listening. At the last possible moment – or when the ushers begin to eye me suspiciously – I rush back to my seat to hear even more music.

—Christopher DeLaurenti

Figure 5 Notes included with the compact disc of *Favorite Intermissions*. Courtesy GD Stereo.

Allegro con moto: From field recording to *Favorite Intermissions*

In 2006, two years after “Intermissions with the Orchestra,” appeared in *Soundscape: The Journal of Acoustic Ecology*, Geoff Dugan, proprietor of the New York-based label GD Stereo, emailed me

to inquire about a work that you composed or compiled of the sound of orchestras warming up before a concert. These are often the best moments of their performances. What is it called? How can I obtain a copy?
(Dugan 2006)

I replied that my collection of orchestra intermissions and tunings, provisionally titled *Favorite Intermissions* or *Intermissions with the Orchestra* had not yet been released.

I sent along a link to a short intermission titled “Boston Bolshoi”¹⁰² and added

I haven’t even really looked for a label that might be interested. I remember you mentioning that GD Stereo is no longer active—perhaps you might have some suggestions for a title and/or label? I also plan to create a color collage with the various paper ephemera (ticket stubs, program notes, various scrawls) I’ve collected in the course of my recordings.

Dugan replied that he could foresee releasing a collection of them as a compact disc (2006). As an artist himself, Dugan did what only an artist who also runs a label devoted to adventurous listening can do, which is to offer advice from the remote and sparsely populated nexus of creation and money-losing commerce:

Presentation and the offering of such recordings would have to be done with care. Typically the restrictions on recording at performances are prohibited but the intention is to prevent the resale or representation of the performance without the authorization of the artists, management, composer, etc. Your recordings capture

¹⁰² Created for the long-defunct site sonicsupper.org which employed “the telephone to share sound with a large and broad audience. Yes it is that simple: call the number to listen to a few minutes of music” (Longina 2005).

the unintended. I suppose if management catches on they would sell it too. So until ownership of these intermissions is proclaimed then I see your recordings as found sound, like the sound of the city.

They are comprised of improvisation, patterns of behavior, performers, audience, ushers, the space, the place and yourself.

I believe these intermission recordings to be compositions of the incidental. They would not exist without your interest, vision and effort. (Ibid)

Dugan's email spurred my efforts. As a phonographer and curator of the influential CD compilations *Psychogeographical Dip* (1997) and *The Architecture of the Incidental* (1999), Dugan's opinion bolstered my confidence. In June and July 2006, I worked on a cover design, a graphic design guerrilla action aimed at mocking the Deutsche Grammophon (DG) logo and look of their albums. I had just begun first year of graduate school at Bard College, so I used the photo lab's high-resolution scanner and asked for suggestions from my teachers and fellow students.

One of my teachers at Bard, Bob Bielecki, who was formerly Laurie Anderson's technical guru, urged me to explore various EQ curves to tease out the frequencies sometimes muffled by the microphones mounted in my leather vest (see Figures 8 and 9, below), a typically expensive piece of clothing. Most other faculty were supportive except for one who exploded in near-apoplectic rage, blurting "That sounds like [the racist Southern anthem] 'Dixie'! Are you playing 'Dixie' for me?"

It wasn't. The track, "SF Variations," consisted of polyphonic, swirling flute variations on Stephen Foster's "Oh! Susanna." This clumsy misidentification is explained by Yitzchak Dumiel, who was a central figure in the history of phonography in Seattle.¹⁰³

...you offer the listener a context that isn't there. This is interesting because the listener can then use a memory of another sound to hear each intermission, and use the intermission to re-approach each piece. When you give the listener the information that certain sounds were bookended (if you will) by Holst's *Planets* (for example), you have invoked a collective memory to redefine a collective activity. The listener now has to choose what to do with this memory, and disregarding it is as fraught with implications as any other strategy. (2007)

In his droll gazetteer of conceptually provocative albums indexed in chapter 8 of *No Medium*, Craig Dworkin proffers a synopsis of *Favorite Intermissions*: "Illegal, undercover surveillance as musical composition" (2013, 162). But the context of *Favorite Intermissions* "that isn't there" unfolds not only from the CD's visibly nebulous legality but from a perceptual dance, in Dumiel's terms "bookended"—or a framed—at the nexus of paratexts and modes of attention.

G rard Genette, the literary theorist who first identified and classified paratexts, contends that a "text is rarely presented in an unadorned state," and is accompanied and reinforced by paratexts, defined as "a certain number of verbal or other productions, such as an author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations" (1997, 1).

¹⁰³ Yitzchak Dumiel aka Du Yisa, *ne* Isaac Sterling (1970-2013), instigated the first Phonographers Union performance in 2002 and wrote the group's manifesto. He also organized Seattle performances by Francisco L pez, mnortham, and other adventurous artists of the era. See Sterling 2013 for a biography and explication of his polynoms.

These paratexts are also subordinate to a central text (Ibid, 12) which is referred to explicitly and connected contiguously, e.g., an afterword discussing the preceding chapters; an epigraph beneath a chapter heading; or a cover's exclamatory blurb touting honors and other critical praise. Genette also muses, albeit tangentially, that "even simply the information provided on record jackets or CD cases, are a mine of paratextual information" (Ibid, 370).

Cultural historians have adopted and refined Genette's idea.¹⁰⁴ In in *Setting the Record Straight: A Material History of Classical Recording*, Symes devotes an entire chapter, "Off the Record: Some Notes on the Sleeve" (2004, 124-151), to liner notes, stating that "the pre-text regions of the record are, like those of the book, subdivided into distinct zones and geographies" (134). Jon Austin explicitly identifies "elements such as the title of the album, the performers' or artists' name, the imagery or artwork, fonts used, lyric sheets, etc." as paratexts (2017, 8). Austin argues that these paratexts "all work in certain ways to prepare the listener (in multiple ways) for the actual text—the music—itsself (Ibid, 8-9).¹⁰⁵ Symes goes further, holding that "these texts are central to the discourse universe associated with the recording industry, which lends meaning to records and their listening habits" (2004, 126) and thus remain central to the literacy needed to play back and listen to recordings (Ibid, 125).

¹⁰⁴ Cultural historians who have recently employed paratexts as a critical framework in book-length surveys include Janet Borgerson and Jonathan Schroeder, editors of *Designed for Hi-Fi Living: The Vinyl LP in Midcentury America* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2017); Jon Austin, editor of *Spinning Popular Culture as Public Pedagogy: Critical Reflections and Transformative Possibilities* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2017); and Asbjørn Grønstad and Øyvind Vågnes, editors of *Coverscaping: Discovering Album Aesthetics* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2010).

¹⁰⁵ Music theorists also analyze how chord sequences function as "preparations" in motion to the dominant.

With the advent of streaming audio, paratexts have been slowly losing their metaphorical anchor, the central text—without which the paratext would revert to a text. Noting the increasing instances of paratexts without a central text in contemporary literature, Dworkin, a poet and literary theorist, suggests that in some cases, paratexts can simultaneously “supplement, support, and displace the body of the text” (2013, 59). Astutely ascertaining the dissimilarities between the archetypal album and the book, musicologist Jan Butler states that because music “can be heard without any visual framing devices” via a playlist, on the radio, or wafting into the soundscape, “album covers could act as either entryway or *in medias res* paratexts” (2014, 181).

Visually, the paratexts of *Favorite Intermissions* (Figures 6 and 7) brazenly stake out the territory of the esteemed, if not venerated, classical music LP.¹⁰⁶ Seen through back of the CD case, the tray card contains the brief foregoing essay “Intermissions with the Orchestra.” Mimicking the exalted placement of classical LP liner notes, my essay echoed an era when DG and other record companies all but imbricated the back of classical records with aggrandizing yet minuscule, meticulously typeset liner notes. The paratextual message: *You are holding something [that resembles something] important. This is Art. You should buy it.*

¹⁰⁶ The graphic designer who assembled, packaged, and pre-flighted the *Favorite Intermissions* CD’s paratexts (essay, cover photo, cover graphic, UPC code, etc.) for printing preferred to remain anonymous.

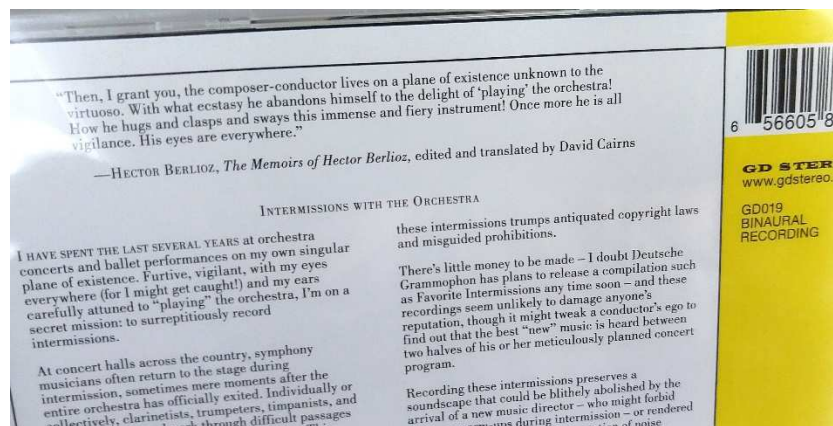


Figure 6 Back cover of the Favorite Intermissions CD.

Shadowing the usual didactic path of classical LP liner notes, I wanted to imitate, mirror, mock, shift, and satirize. Philosopher Justin E.H. Smith catalogues satire as

a species of humor that works through impersonation: taking on the voices of others, saying the sort of things they would say, using one's own voice while not speaking in one's own name. (2019)

At once a manifesto and an advertisement, “Intermissions with the Orchestra” stays grounded in empirical description, allowing an adventure story-cum-manifesto to impersonate the expected, *de rigueur* biography. There is no overt “customary marketing language” (Drever 2017, 77) as promulgated by the pioneering phonographer Tony Schwartz in the liner notes to his LPs *Sounds of My City* (1956, 2) and *You're Stepping on My Shadow* (1962, 3). Hewing to the erudite tone of classical LP liner notes, theoretical speculation in the essay is largely absent, aside from two blink-and-you'll miss it mentions of “soundscape” and two jabbing verbs aimed at slumbering media theorists (“flatten” and “inscribe”). Any marketing language is implied not only by the graphic placement and size of the text, but by the tone of text

and its content, an anecdote intermingled with gnomic, at times hermetically-sealed statements.

Within the liner notes to *Favorite Intermissions*, I don the guise of a post-World War II Western European avant-garde composer,¹⁰⁷ fuming at “long-standing, essentialist notions of music as comprised of notes, melody, traditional instruments” (DeLaurenti 2008c) and offering the inviting, idealistic hope of “a new entryway into orchestral music” (Ibid). Suggesting “stagehands dragging chairs” as one possible sonic resource (Ibid), I refrained from citing La Monte Young’s 1960 Fluxus piece *Poem for Chairs, Tables, Benches, Etc. (Or Other Sound Sources)* or invoking the puckish tactics of Mauricio Kagel heard in *Match* (1964), *Staatstheater* (1970) and other works (Griffiths 2010, 198 and 201). If the task of the liner notes is to “accurately reflect the contents of the record and provide some appropriate account of its nature” (Symes 2004, 126-127), then ignoring or vacating the presence of other composers matches the self-promotion and brash *dicta* of the tight Darmstadt circle of post-World War II avant-garde composers, especially Stockhausen (Cott 1974; Maconie 1991; and Kurtz 1994)¹⁰⁸ and Boulez (Griffiths 2010, 4-6, 11-12 90, and 175; Nichols 2016). Then, just before a quick, huckster’s platitude, “I adore listening” (DeLaurenti 2008c)—really who doesn’t?—the essay clamps shut with a pithy, axiomatic pronouncement

¹⁰⁷ As a teenager and young adult I devoured general audience books (Stuckenschmidt 1969; Smith Brindle 1987; Sutherland 1994, 64-99) that exalt the still-familiar roster of composers from this era and region: Boulez, Stockhausen, and Nono as well as Maderna, Berio, and Xenakis. For background on this era see Born (1995, 40-56), de Leeuw 1997, Griffiths (2010, 34-49), and Iddon 2013.

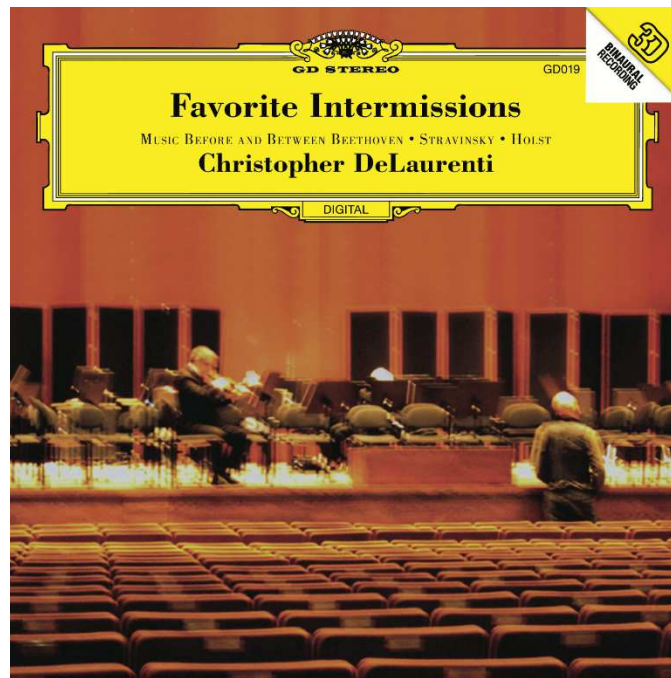
¹⁰⁸ When asked at a public lecture for scores to recommend for teaching contemporary musical notation, Stockhausen replied “My scores; I can’t think of any others I would want to recommend” (Maconie 1991, 169).

typical of the heyday of *enfant terribles* Boulez, Stockhausen, Nono, et al.: “Today’s glitch is tomorrow’s melody” (Ibid).¹⁰⁹

Despite speaking in the *enfant terrible* voice of a post-World War II avant-garde composer, my ventriloquism may seem incomplete. How am I not, in Justin E.H. Smith’s phrase “speaking in one’s own name” (2019)? After all, I gave myself an all-caps byline at the end of the essay; my name is plastered on the cover in the second-largest font (see Figure 7, below). My name, though visibly present, is inarguably unknown and unfamiliar compared to my parody of the famed DG marquee.¹¹⁰ When I meet fellow artists at experimental music gigs and festivals, my name occasionally “rings a bell,” but only becomes familiar or known when I (or someone who knows me) adds the sobriquet, “he’s the guy who did that album of orchestra intermissions.” This has happened at all but two or three of my live performances since 2008. My impersonation is contingent not only on phonography and literary style, but graphic design (Bell 2007; Gottschalk 2007; and Borchert 2008).

¹⁰⁹ And earlier modernists: Nadia Boulanger, the most consequential teacher of composers in the 20th century, declared in her 1925 lecture on Modern French Music “‘The dissonances of to-day are the consonances of tomorrow’—an immemorial commonplace of musical history which everyone knows in theory but whose force becomes apparent only by personal experience” (1926, 114).

¹¹⁰ Colloquially referred to by DG as the “Yellow Label,” I refrain from that term here because I was parodying the marquee, not the other reduced and otherwise transformed iterations of the marquee also tallied by DG’s attorney under the rubric of “trade dress” (Miller 2007a).



*Figure 7 Cover of Favorite Intermissions.
Design by Christopher DeLaurenti, photograph by Ian Vollmer; Fair Use / Fair Dealing.*

The central paratext of *Favorite Intermissions* is the cover, a vehement parody of DG’s typical album art (Figure 7, above). Excepting budget-priced and mid-line reissues,¹¹¹ the yellow DG marquee has consistently crowned a photograph of a composer, conductor or other performer, and infrequently, a painting or sculpture since 1958.¹¹² I wanted to surprise listeners, so I did not want the cover to reside in the ghetto of “The New Music,” an appellation, according to Adorno which “simply confirms the way it is institutionalized in studios, special societies, or concerts” (1998 [1963], 250). Nor did I plan to cohabit with living composers who have their own ghetto delineated by the graphic design of the DG “20th Century Classics” or “20/21”

¹¹¹ These DG releases appeared with a series name and logo such as “Galleria,” “Musikfest,” and “Klassikon.”

¹¹² The template which places the marquee atop an image has been used since 1953. See <https://www.discogs.com/label/7703-Deutsche-Grammophon?sort=year&limit=500&genre=All&page=2> for a visual evolution of the DG marquee from 1953 to the present. Accessed February 11, 2019.

series.¹¹³ I wanted my protest to be understood, so I chose to satirize a known, unambiguous target, the yellow DG marquee.

Upon removing the plastic shrinkwrap¹¹⁴ and opening the CD, the reverse of the cover (also known as the “insert”) contained a tracklist with impertinent titles: *Holst*, *Hitherto*; *Before Petrushka*; “SF Variations;” *Holding Out For Ein Helden*; *Awaiting AGON*; and *After Beethoven*. Furthermore, the insert of *Favorite Intermissions* lists “Christopher DeLaurenti” as dead (1967-2071). Truly, I wanted to stay that way, oxymoronically immortalized by trumpeting a self-selected death date. “Parody is not quiet,” avers musicologist and cultural historian Josh Kun:

Part of the task of parody is to be noticed, to leave a mark and make a statement, to commit an aggressive, guerrilla crime of reversal and takeover. (2005, 73)

The precisely imitated, sharply rendered DG marquee took me over 50 hours to scan, edit and color-correct. The visual aspect of my “aggressive, guerilla crime of reversal

¹¹³ A notable exception to the marquee-and-image template can be seen in the DG reissue series “20th Century Classics,” which was published from 1988 to 1994. Designed by Hartmut Pfeiffer, a miniature DG logo adorns imaginatively cut, shaped, and glued construction paper formed and illuminated in abstract shapes, arresting color palettes, and compelling *ganzfeld* effects emerging from lush spectral gradients. Reissues represent one of the few overt instances where classical music record companies acknowledge that their product is a commodity, defined by bell hooks as an object or experience “produced and marketed to entice any and all consumers” (2016) rather than a luxury good or specialist item upon its initial appearance. See <https://www.discogs.com/label/221100-20th-Century-Classics> Accessed February 11, 2019.

Started in 1999, “20/21,” DGs subsequent (and sporadically ongoing) series devoted to contemporary classical music, mostly eschews narrative photographs. See <https://www.discogs.com/label/222724-2021-Music-of-Our-Time> for a complete inventory of cover images. Accessed February 11, 2019.

¹¹⁴ *Favorite Intermissions*, my eighth solo album, was the first and so far only album of mine to be released with single-use shrinkwrap, which I have detested since the 1980s. Shrinkwrap itself is a paratext denoting a commercial, mainstream product; most niche, non-pop releases of experimental or at least adventurous music on LP, cassette, or compact disc employ reusable sleeves, open cases, or some kind of ornate, fully permanent packaging.

and takeover” entailed clicking pixel by pixel with Adobe Photoshop’s pencil tool. Subverting any semblance of pristine imitation, my counterfeit logo hovers over a blurry photograph, the only extant image of me surreptitiously recording an orchestra intermission. Snapped moments before an usher scolded the photographer and commanded that the camera’s image must be deleted,¹¹⁵ the photo is indistinct enough to suggest a screencap from a distant surveillance camera, albeit in saturated, off-register colors. As a paratext of *Favorite Intermissions*, the image is at once spontaneous yet uncertain, visually akin to several traits of my practice of phonography: embracing errors (off-register colors); audible edits and multiple fidelities (cleanly rendered logo vs. blurry photography); and the presence of the recordist (my back facing the camera).

The paratexts of *Favorite Intermissions*, especially the cover, create a context “that isn’t there” by eliciting what Pauline Oliveros identified as two “attention archetypes,” focal and global attention (1984, 185).

First, a cautious word about the use of “attention,” described by neuroscientists and auditory researchers as “a term whose meaning is ‘understood’ by everyone, but whose scientific description encompasses a variety of operational definitions” (Hafter et al. 2008, 115). While landmark books by noted researchers such as Albert Bregman (1990) and Carryl L. Baldwin (2012) and papers¹¹⁶ concentrate on the scientific

¹¹⁵ It is a testament to the ethical, honorable conduct of GD Stereo that the photographer, Ian Vollmer, was rewarded for his convincing pantomime with the Delete button and fairly remunerated for the use of his image.

¹¹⁶ Hafter et al (2008, 115-116), Baldwin (2012, 4-6, 54-70) and Deutsch (2013), summarize many seminal auditory research papers of the 20th century; for a detailed survey spanning 1860-1930, see Davis and Merzbach (1975).

measurement of auditory perception, “the focus of attentional theories ranges from stimulus cohesion, whereby attention binds sensory features into higher-order percepts (Treisman and Gelade 1980), to segregation, which breaks stimuli into parts so that selective processing can be allotted to the attended element” (Haftner et al. 2008, 115).

Oliveros, by contrast, seems to syncretize two sources. The first is *Attention and Effort*, a book by Daniel Kahneman (1973) which “described one of the earliest conceptual models of attention as limited (or limiting) processing capacity” (Baldwin 2012, 72). Attention is a mental workload in which “mental effort is used synonymously with attention and is accompanied by the ensuing implication that humans are able to direct, exert, and invest attention among multiple stimuli” (Ibid). Although the theory has detractors and flaws,¹¹⁷ Kahneman’s work remains “the most influential theory of mental workload to date” (Ibid, 75).

The second source is suggested by Stephen Miles who, noting that Oliveros is a Buddhist (2008, 7), ventures a parallel between Oliveros’ concept of focal and global attention and “the positive samadhi and the absolute samadhi of Zen Buddhism” (Ibid, 37). He continues:

In positive samadhi there is an emphasis on focus and concentration, and the active exclusion of external stimuli. Absolute samadhi, on the other hand, is more diffused in character. (Ibid)

¹¹⁷ Jones 1976 (345) and Baldwin 2012 (74-75) offer substantial critiques of Kahneman (1973) and the subsequent Multiple Resource Theory of attention.

Although not an auditory researcher, Oliveros syncretizes Kahneman's still-valid model of attention with a half-century of knowledge rooted in her practice as a composer, improviser, and teacher.

In *Deep Listening: A Composer's Sound Practice*, Oliveros likens focal attention to a lens that produces "clear detail limited to the object of attention" (2005, 13). Global attention, by contrast, is "diffuse, open, and non-judgmental" (Oliveros 1984, 183). Similarly, cognitive scientists distinguish between focal and ambient (or global) visual processing (Baldwin 2012, 196). Espied casually or from afar (or on the tiny screen of a cell phone) with global attention, the CD of *Favorite Intermissions* radiates an aura of generic classical music—at least to anyone who has purchased a classical music album—despite being published by GD Stereo, a label devoted to experimental sound and listening.

When viewed with focal attention, something should seem amiss to a canny buyer familiar with DG's compact discs: DG CDs never incorporated liner notes on the back. Typically, the enclosed essay was (and is) nestled in the cover-cum-booklet and written not by the artist, but by a regally erudite or at least an informative, not infrequently witty writer.

Moreover, on the cover of *Favorite Intermissions* an exactly rendered marquee and blurry, vaporous image share an uneasy space. To paraphrase Dumiel (2007), the viewer has to choose what to do with their knowledge, if any, of the DG logo. Disregarding their vague or precise knowledge becomes fraught with implications as

any other strategy. The contrasting fidelity of the marquee and the fuzzy image at once supports and displaces the text, conforming to Dworkin's insight that paratexts "stage a related set of tensions: between literal and metaphoric language" and "between the form of a work and its ostensible themes" (2013, 59). Genette's notion that "the paratext is neither on the interior nor on the exterior: it is both; it is on the threshold; and it is on this very site" (1997, xvii) hints at a threshold between focal and global attention in *Favorite Intermissions* that is also made audible.

Based on my observations of hundreds of orchestra concerts across the United States from 1998 to 2018, most intermissions, including those heard in *Favorite Intermissions*, share a similar sonic trajectory. To borrow a phrase from Helmholtz, this "tumbled entanglement" (1895, 26) follows a familiar contour: After applause concludes the first half of the program, most of the audience departs; one or two musicians remain on, or return to the stage. The general din of the symphony hall—murmuring voices, seemingly random notes, and conversations both near and far—becomes subsumed by focal attention and local activity, such as talking or listening to the person next to you. It is possible to aurally soak in the entire soundscape with "diffuse, open, and non-judgmental" (Oliveros 1984, 183) global attention.

Yet most listeners ignore the intermission. For the audience, intermission is the aural negative space during which one stretches their legs, goes to the bathroom, buys a drink, says hello to friends, or engages in people-watching. Coats, bags, and concert programs remain unattended, strewn across seats. As Christopher Small remarks in his seminal ethnography of Western orchestral performance *Musicking*, "a concert

hall is a place where middle-class white people can feel safe together” (Small 1999, 42). While surreptitiously recording orchestra intermissions, I was, as I recounted in the *Favorite Intermissions* liner notes, “furtive, vigilant, with my eyes everywhere” and never felt safe “for I might get caught!” (DeLaurenti 2008c).

Depending on the orchestra and concert venue, some musicians never exit. The sonic trajectory of intermission also subsumes overlooked workers. As observed by geographer and orchestral musician David B. Knight, stagehands and assorted assistants collect and replace music on stands, shift chairs, and otherwise arrange the stage, heeding the conductor’s score which, for example,

may call for many tuned and untuned percussion instruments for the first number in a concert, but only snare drum and cymbals after the intermission, with all unrequired equipment removed. (Ibid 2006, 41)

As intermission continues, more musicians return to the stage while the audience trickles back into the hall. The soundscape shifts from hi-fi to lo-fi, from an open space perforated with sparse music to a dense wall of sound.

The recordings on *Favorite Intermissions* not only document but transform this shifting soundscape through an additional technique in my practice of phonography: Corporeal improvisation by audibly mobile movement.

Although *Favorite Intermissions* was labelled as a “binaural recording” (see Figure 7, above), “moving wide binaural” would have been more accurate because I am

“improvising corporeally” with “body-mounted microphones” (DeLaurenti 2008c). In standard binaural recording, the microphones capture a “realistic” stereo image with the human head acting as a baffle, delaying and muffling sound coming from the opposite side of the head (Krause 2002, 77). This stereo image generally preserves sonic relationships of proximity and clarity (Ibid, 149) with fixed-position microphones. But Dallas Simpson, a pioneer of integrating site-specific performance with binaural recording, contends that “the binaural apparatus as an instrument in its own right implies experimentation in recording techniques [as] part of the creative performance” (1997).

In *Favorite Intermissions*, my moving wide binaural recording set-up moves when I do. Secreted in my leather vest, wrapped in moleskin, and secured with black electrical tape (see Figures 8 and 9, below), my “body-mounted microphones” rested on my shoulders while recording orchestra intermissions. These low-cost but decent omnidirectional microphones¹¹⁸ defined how and what I would capture. To borrow a line from Andra McCartney, I “use microphones as prostheses, extending listening, and providing both a recording of a sound experience as well as the possibility of reflection on that sonic experience” (2002, 1). With my shoulder-mounted microphones angled at about 110 degrees,¹¹⁹ I attempted to capture the most interesting balance, either antiphonally or proximately. As I wrote in the album’s essay, “my ears are attuned to ‘playing’ the orchestra,” as I move around the orchestra hall, positioning myself “usually at the edge of the stage or leaning over into the pit”

¹¹⁸ The same microphones mentioned in “On Phonography” footnote 39.

¹¹⁹ This is the angle of the standard ORTF stereo microphone configuration (Alten 2013, 406).

(DeLaurenti 2008c). I hoped that my microphones could group musicians together in the same way that they seemed to group themselves musically at intermission.



Figure 8 Leather vest inlaid with hidden microphones; pockets contain extra MiniDiscs, and spare AA/HP7 batteries.

I attuned my ears to the soundscape of intermissions without headphones, earbuds, or any kind of monitoring of the recording. Eschewing headphones made me a better listener. Wearing headphones would have meant that my ears would not only have monitored what my microphones recorded, but due to acoustic leakage—also called “bleed” (Huber 2018, 130) by audio engineers—I would also have heard the enveloping acoustics of the concert hall.

As composer and theorist Cathy Lane notes, “Technology can help us to LISTEN it can also help us not to LISTEN” (Lane 2017, 76 emphasis in original). Without

headphones, I can remember and treasure what I heard, even if the recording fails.

Then as now, I seldom wear headphones when recording. My intent is to remember the soundscape well enough so that I can EQ or otherwise process the recording so that it resembles my memory of the soundscape, not my memory of what I heard through headphones.

Recording without headphones also enabled me to shift specific parts of my body to record, sometimes with unexpected results: A loosened microphone meant that my footsteps or tense breathing might be audible. Or my right shoulder (and its hidden microphone) aimed at a cavorting bassoon melody was actually documenting someone's awkward conversation. My head was almost always pointed down, looking at that evening's program spread out on the page; to enhance my strategy of visual misdirection, I would scrawl field notes into the program. Towards the end of an intermission, I often found myself pinned between two audience members at the edge of the stage, gabbing away.



Figure 9 Shoulder-mounted microphone with Sony MZ-R50 MiniDisc recorder; recorder fits into an ordinary shirt pocket.

Listening and recording with “diffuse, open, and non-judgmental” global attention (Oliveros 1984, 183) posed a great challenge. Live and on my intermission recordings, the tumbled entanglement of audience murmurs eventually swamp the musicians. My field notes and post-intermission tailslates are full of gripes and regrets about “talkers” and “loud crowds.” It took me years of repeated listening to learn and understand that the audience is essential to almost every track on *Favorite Intermissions*. Generally heard as an undifferentiated mass with a few interjections from those next to me, the audience generates a safe cocoon for the musicians to engage in focal attention and play.

Within this cocoon, and because classical performers “do not address the audience verbally for the full extent of their time spent on stage” according to research by social psychologists (Dobson and Sloboda 2014, 159), such playing at intermission should be heard as personal, individual expression emanating from musicians who are not star soloists.

As a journalist covering classical music, I usually had access to the backstage area, green rooms, and other places where musicians socialized. Based on multiple conversations with about two dozen musicians who performed in the various orchestras I recorded in the making of *Favorite Intermissions*, I believe that rank-and-file orchestra members make the sounds they want to make and play the music they want to play at intermission and before the orchestra tunes up. From a scientific perspective, this is anecdotal data derived from a minuscule sample size gathered

under highly variable, contingent, and often hurried conditions during my decade as a music journalist. In any case, based on my visual and aural observations at over 600 concerts made while planning, recording, or reflecting upon *Favorite Intermissions*, the musicians' attention is usually but not always focal, concentrated on the music in front of them.

Attentive listening, a fusion of local and global attention, is the *sine qua non* of musical performance, according to ethnomusicologist David Borgo.

Individuals cultivate specific instrumental skills and knowledge about specific musical roles, but in order to create an effective ensemble they must constantly listen to each other and synchronize their gestures, sounds, and sentiments in order to create a compelling performance. (2005, 181)

But the threshold between focal and global attention sets orchestral intermissions apart from other forms of performance.

Unusually, *Favorite Intermissions* documents another, perhaps unique, form of performance. I observed and recorded musicians freely playing solo, in tandem, or within protean ad hoc groups, and then veer off in any direction desired, or even stop and start at will: Excerpts from orchestral scores, favorite warm-up routines, unique musical tics (scales, melodic cells) fuse into unusual and startling music. Performers had—and based on ongoing concert attendance still have—the option of focal or global attention at any moment, regardless of musical structure or social expectation. Engaged in focal attention, a musician might choose to rehearse and repeat a favorite (or difficult) fragment of music, often culled from that evening's program. Engaged in

global attention—albeit less frequently—a musician can hear a familiar passage played elsewhere on stage and join in sometimes for just a note or two, sometimes for several measures, akin to Genette’s notion of the paratext as “neither on the interior nor on the exterior: it is both; it is on the threshold; and it is on this very site” (1997, xvii).

These musicians occasionally occupy the threshold between focal and global attention, what Oliveros categorizes as “multi-dimensional listening” where the musicians “are giving attention to more than one flow of sound, in parallel or simultaneously, as well as discerning the direction and context” (2005, 15). Their roles are not specific. The musicians are free to solo, free to duet, free to just listen, free to ignore and continue autonomously.

John Cage, writing about Robert Rauschenberg’s use of apparently disparate materials—“scraps of this and that” (1973 [1961], 100)—for the famed combines, proposes a compelling dynamic between focal and global attention:

We know two ways to unfocus attention: symmetry is one of them; the other is the over-all where each small part is a sample of what you find elsewhere. In either case, there is at least the possibility of looking anywhere, not just where someone arranged you should. You are then free to deal with your freedom just as the artist dealt with his, not in the same way but, nevertheless, originally. (Ibid)

Similarly at intermission, listeners are free to listen and synthesize—or synchronize—what the musicians themselves are discarding, ignoring, and commenting upon what was just played elsewhere on stage. Helmholtz’s conclusion about the ball-room

sounds that open this chapter also applies to the soundscape of intermission: “the ear is able to distinguish all the separate constituent parts of this confused whole” (Ibid 1895, 27).

As Dumiel noted earlier, “the listener can then use a memory of another sound to hear each intermission, and use the intermission to re-approach each piece” (2007).

Anyone who remembers Stravinsky’s *Petrushka* will hear three melodies overlay one another in the first few minutes (time index 1’11” to 2’21”) of *Before Petrushka*, the second track on *Favorite Intermissions*: The percolating bassoon from the “Danse Russe,” the horn from “Dance of the Wet-Nurses,” and the scrambling flute, which occurs throughout *Petrushka*, notably in the fight between the Moor and Petrushka.

Coupled with knowledge of *Petrushka*, the listener’s expectation of the intermission—sounds to be ignored, perceived as musical detritus—might incite detailed, perhaps meaningful multi-dimensional listening. The “flow” of *Petrushka* is heard in the listener’s memory “in parallel or simultaneously” with variations live and in real time. Hearing these layers with multi-dimensional attention results in listening that is laminal. Eddie Prévost, drummer and theorist of the pioneering free improvisation group AMM, characterizes the laminal effect as a kind of listening in which individual contributions are layered together; form is allowed to emerge as a “constituent framework” (2004, 357), not from a prescribed plan.

Unlike those attending a symphony concert who may feel like “an impounded audience” (Schafer 1993, 118) or worse,¹²⁰ intermission listeners like myself experience the form of a seemingly formless performance through the constituent framework of listening, attention, and the fade-in/fade-out, either on a recording or at the concert. What was formerly the interstitial or paratextual segment of a concert—the intermission—can be heard as music itself.

In this chapter’s penultimate section, I encapsulate the public response to *Favorite Intermissions* under Genette’s rubric of the “public epitext.” In the Postlude I conclude with a chronicle of how DG became entwined with *Favorite Intermissions* and my legal travails resulting from the cover parody.

Presto: From Fifteen People to Fifteen Minutes of Fame

I had doubts about the parodying a DG album. When I mused aloud to Maryanne Amacher, one of my favorite teachers at Bard College, that I might give *Favorite Intermissions* away for free by secreting the CD in program booklets at orchestra concerts, her response was curt. “I think you should go for the money.”¹²¹

On May 29, 2007, due to the extraordinary efforts of GD Stereo’s publicity campaign, I appeared on the front page of *The New York Times* website, nytimes.com, as well as

¹²⁰ See Friedl 2002 for an intriguing exploration of concert attendance as a sadomasochistic act.

¹²¹ I received no monies from *Favorite Intermissions*, except for 40-60 artist copies to sell at live performances. My correspondence from that era confirms that I gave most copies away to inquiring reviewers and friends. In the 1990s and early 2000s it was understood among artists that labels that published experimental sound work did so at a loss. An artist who lived for decades on the economic margins, Amacher exhorted her students to follow the adage of the arts: “Always accept the money.”

on the first page of the B section in the print edition (Wakin 2007). The accompanying article, syndicated around the world,¹²² profiled me and connected *Favorite Intermissions* to an icon of the avant-garde.

“The recording,” wrote the reporter for *The New York Times*, falls firmly in the conceptual tradition championed by John Cage, who turned randomness into a compositional tool” (Wakin 2007). Furthermore, *Favorite Intermissions* was compared to Cage’s *4’33*” “in which a pianist sits silently at the keyboard for 4 minutes 33 seconds and ambient sounds become the performance” (Ibid).

I did not contest the connection of *Favorite Intermissions* to Cage’s signature work, but Scott Smallwood, a phonographer from the phonography listserv did: “To pass this off as an outdated, Cagean orientation would be to misrepresent the context of this work” (2008, 21). He continues:

But that isn’t what is being done here, nor is it at all what John Cage was doing, for that matter. This music is a curated collection of specifically edited and framed sonic snapshots of the quasi-improvisational chatter during the intermission of an orchestra concert, which is different from a Cage score, which contains specific instructions for performers in order to create a real time listening experience of sound in the concert hall. (Ibid, 21-22)

¹²² I was not savvy enough to employ a clipping service so what follows is a piecemeal list of the syndicated articles:

“Músico lança CD com ruídos da platéia em shows” *Terra*, (Brazil) May 30, 2007

“Intermission music an unexpected find” *San Diego Union Tribune*, June 3, 2007

“Halftime Highlights: Secret intermission recordings by ‘sound artist’ yield CD” *Dallas Morning News*, June 3, 2007

“Please cough into the microphone” *Sydney Morning Herald*, (Australia) June 6, 2007

“‘Sound Art’ Captures an Orchestra at Rest” *Le Monde*, (English language supplement) June 9, 2007

“Intermedios de conciertos son fuente de grabaciones” *El Universo*, (Ecuador) June 10, 2007

“Finding Music During Intermission” *Chicago Tribune*, June 14, 2007

Unlike *Favorite Intermissions*, Cage's *4'33"* is performed from a score. In its original 1952 incarnation—not the famed version typed in 1953 bearing a dedication to Irwin Kremen—*4'33"* was notated conventionally with a staff, clef, measures, bar-lines, and a metronome marking (Gann 2010, 178). Presented in an outdoor theatre, Maverick Concert Hall in Woodstock, New York, the premiere of *4'33"* included natural sounds of the surrounding woods (Ibid, 4). Cage called *4'33"* “my silent piece” (Cage 1973 [1961], 98), however in at least one instance Cage personally welcomed audience interruptions of expected silence (Berger 2002, 103). Unlike *4'33"* *Favorite Intermissions* has no score,¹²³ and therefore cannot silence performers on stage with a direction of *Tacet*, and remains rooted in a recording; or if heard live, is framed by the listener or the concert schedule.

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By LINDA GREENHOUSE 7:39 PM ET
The Supreme Court made it harder today for many workers to sue their employers for discrimination in pay.
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By STEVEN R. WEISMAN 1 minute ago
Robert B. Zoellick, a senior diplomat and trade envoy, has been tapped to try to heal the

Concerts Found While Others Take a Break
By DANIEL J. WAKIN 5:18 PM ET
Christopher DeLaurenti has compiled a CD of recordings he made during the intermissions at orchestral concerts.

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Trade Smarter
Fidelity

Figure 10 Homepage of *The New York Times* on May 29, 2007. Fair Use / Fair Dealing.

¹²³ In 2009, Ensemble Zwischentöne performed *Petrushka Schatten* (“Petrushka Shadows”) an approximate transcription of “Before Petrushka” from *Favorite Intermissions*. Commissioned in 2008, this work mingles traditional and text-based notation.

The New York Times' interpretation of *Favorite Intermissions* was, in Genette's terminology, a "public epitext," (1997, 344), a supplementary text aimed simultaneously at readers and the general public of "non-readers" (345) who would be nonetheless recipients of the text's—or in this case the album's—adumbrated message. This public epitext transformed me into a public figure.

Instead of being famous to 15 people,¹²⁴ I received 15 minutes of fame. The ensuing publicity resulted in a deluge of invitations and shady "opportunities." Some of the more ludicrous invitations included contributing sound design to a Christian rock group's album; appearing on *The Early Show* (a nationwide morning TV show broadcast by CBS equivalent to *Good Morning Britain*) with my vest wired with microphones; paying (!) \$3,995 to be interviewed for an in-flight radio program to air on American Airlines; and recording a ghost hunt at Seattle's Open Circle Theatre. Besieged by congratulatory (and a few grasping) emails in tandem with dozens of interview requests and dubious business propositions, I opted to do only the latter. No ghosts were found.

But I was also blessed by a few letters from sensitive listeners.¹²⁵ The adumbrated message—to aid and abet new listening—of *Favorite Intermissions* had penetrated into the general public.

¹²⁴ Forecasting the fragmentation of the music industry star system in 1991, musician, writer, and media theorist Momus ventured that "In the future everyone will be famous for fifteen people..." (2003 [1991]).

¹²⁵ And a few kudos from my musical idols. Conrad Schnitzler wrote, "I hear *Favorite Intermissions* CD Great, I am glad you did it. It was my wish already 40 years. I could not do it. BRAVO !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

I just started listening to clips of “Favorite Intermissions” on the nytimes website. I am a native New Yorker, and college student, currently living in Santiago, Chile. There are no late night, communal study spaces here like at universities in the states, and I often find the quiet of my apartment a poor study environment. I think your recordings are exactly what I need. A little gentle, pleasant background music. Some life. I’ll probably purchase the cd upon my return to the states—I could honestly use about 50 hours of this, so that it’s always new. (Kohn 2007)

I received many emails, all examples of listeners engaging *in medias res* with the epitexts of *Favorite Intermissions* and evidence of Dworkin’s claim that paratexts can simultaneously “supplement, support, and displace the body of the text” (2013, 59). *The New York Times* article prompted two earwitness testimonies, one of which was tantalizingly detailed in a letter to the editor by a long-time violinist with the Metropolitan Opera.

It’s a pity that Chris DeLaurenti, the Seattle-based “sound artist”¹²⁶ and composer, wasn’t around in the early 1960s to clandestinely tape the intermission sounds emanating from the old Metropolitan Opera pit.

Preserved for posterity would be the anecdotal banter in French, German and Italian of musicians born in the 19th century; an incredible rendition of Paganini’s “God Save the Queen” by my Italian stand-partner (on a violin presented to him by Benito Mussolini); the croaking of a contrabassoon reed, whittled by a former president of the Vienna Philharmonic; and my own youthful attempts to master a difficult passage of Strauss or Wagner. (Dreyer 2007)

¹²⁶ The author’s enclosure of sound artist in quotes follows the usage in Wakin 2007 and likely reflects the letter writer’s unfamiliarity with the term, not a connotation of disdain or gentle suspicion.

The above letter along with several more heartfelt missives from listeners confirmed what I had told Daniel Wakin, the reporter for the *Times*.

“I feel I will have succeeded,” Mr. DeLaurenti said, “if someone merely looks at the package and says, ‘Oh, I should listen next time at intermission and see if I hear something musical.’” (2007)

As a protest, *Favorite Intermissions* achieved several goals: mocking the staid classical music industry through cultural sabotage of an iconic paratext and music found in the margins of the symphony concert; documenting and publicizing a heretofore overlooked form of performance; and alerting listeners to the possibility of “even more” (DeLaurenti 2008c) adventurous music at musically conservative orchestra concerts. Much to my delight, a friend of mine who tended bar at the Seattle Symphony’s concert hall managed to sneak a copy of *Favorite Intermissions* into the dressing room of the Symphony’s Music Director, Gerard Schwarz. Maybe the maestro got the message too.

Postlude: Cover courtesy of Deutsche Grammophon

On June 18, 2007, the Universal Music Group (UMG), the corporate “parent” of Deutsche Grammophon (DG) initiated legal action against myself and GD Stereo (Miller 2007a). Owned by the Paris-based media conglomerate Vivendi, UMG is one of the so-called “big three” labels along with Sony and Warner Music. These entities control “almost 80 percent of the music market or even more depending on the year” (McDonald 2019). UMG asserted that I was “marketing a sound recording entitled *Favorite Intermissions* (“the Infringing Sound Recording”) which utilizes the DG Mark as a principal part of its label and packaging...in its entirety” (Miller 2007a).

UMG “feared tremendous confusion in the minds of the consuming public and trade”

(Ibid).

Further, your marketing, promotion and/or offering for sale of the Infringing Sound Recording could lead the public to believe that some association exists between your product and Deutsche Grammophon or UMG.
(Ibid)

Claiming that the album violated their trademark and the attendant (and nebulous) concept of “trade dress” of DG, UMG demanded that I and GD Stereo “surrender to us for destruction all copies” of *Favorite Intermissions*.

John Oswald had faced a similar threat of legal action with his 1989 compact disc, *plunderphonic* (Oswald and Igma 2001, 23-28).¹²⁷ In early 1990, Oswald surrendered the album’s master tapes (Ibid, 27) and approximately 300 remaining (of the run of 1,000) compact discs (Gans 1995, 140) to the Canadian Recording Industry Association (CRIA) to be crushed and destroyed (Oswald and Igma 2001, 27). Although Oswald creates and composes his plunderphonics by extracting, editing, transforming, and crediting recognizable samples (Tholl 2011; Oswald and Igma 2001)¹²⁸ as well as enlisting additional musicians for overdubs (Gans 1995, 138), legal action against *plunderphonic* resulted from the album’s chief paratext, the cover (Oswald and Igma 2001, 25). For *plunderphonic* Oswald created a photo collage of

¹²⁷ Oswald titled his 1989 compact disc *plunderphonic* while the 1988 12-inch EP and the 2001 two compact disc retrospective set were titled *Plunderphonics*. Keenan 2002 and Oswald himself refers to it as *69/96*, though this might be for legal reasons as *Plunderphonics* was “pirated” by Seeland and “legally prohibited” from being distributed by Oswald through his own label (Keenan 2002, 43). For an explication of the ambiguous titles Oswald affixed to *Plunderphonics* see Tholl 2011, 15.

¹²⁸ In a 2003 interview, Oswald defined plunderphonics as “a term I’ve coined to cover the counter-covert world of converted sound and retrofitted music where collective melodic memories of the familiar are minced and rehabilitated to a new life” (Steenhuisen 2009, 128).

Michael Jackson's head placed atop a nude, white, female model (Ibid, 23, 26, 46).

Similarly, the parodied yellow DG marquee on the cover of *Favorite Intermissions* prompted legal action from UMG (Miller 2007a).

Despite fundamentally antipodal source material—professional commercial studio recordings and field recordings of variable fidelity—the *plunderphonic* and *Favorite Intermissions* compact discs were acts of resistance and protest: Oswald contested draconian copyright laws and advocated for the right of anyone to borrow and transform existing music:

The property metaphor used to illustrate an artist's rights is difficult to pursue through publication and mass dissemination. The Hit Parade publicly promenades the aural floats of pop. As curious tourists, should we not be able to take our own snapshots ("tiny reproductions of the Taj Mahal") rather than be restricted to the official souvenir postcards and programs? (Oswald 1987, 108)

In the *plunderphonic* CD insert, Oswald is succinct: "If creativity is a field, copyright is the fence" (Cutler 2000, 105 and 113n13). Oswald did not ask permission (Keenan 2002, 48). Neither did I. Unlike Oswald, I was engaged in a speculative "salvage anthropology" (Jensen 2015, 243) by recording, as I stated in the liner notes to *Favorite Intermissions*, "a soundscape that could be blithely abolished by the arrival of a new music director" (DeLaurenti 2008c).¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Although I've been using snippets, and substantial segments of other people's music in my own work since the early 1980s, I eschewed terms like plunderphonics, sampling, mash-ups, or sound collage. When I met John Oswald on July 11, 2006, he kindly told me he didn't mind if others used the term plunderphonics. Discovering Oswald's four track EP, *Plunderphonics*, at the King County Library midway through making *Three Camels for Orchestra* (1993-1995) gave me the extra, crucial spur to finish the piece, but calling what I do "plunderphonics" didn't feel right. In my heart I believe I wasn't stealing anything. I eventually settled on "fair use music." Almost all of my fair use music falls outside the chronological scope (2008-2018) of this dissertation.

My goal with *Favorite Intermissions* was to mock the staid classical music industry through cultural sabotage of an iconic paratext; document and publicize a heretofore overlooked form of performance found in the margins of the symphony concert; and alert listeners to the possibility of “even more” (DeLaurenti 2008c) adventurous music at musically conservative orchestra concerts.

Under threat of legal action, Oswald began negotiating personally with his adversaries (Oswald and Igma 2001, 25).¹³⁰ I too negotiated with my adversaries, because “poor Americans enjoy no similar right to counsel in our civil justice system” (Hornstein 2010, 1059). Trained by cop shows, most every adult American in the United States likely knows the concluding lines of the Miranda Warning, stated at every arrest: “You have the right to an attorney. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be provided for you.” The criminally accused, even the impoverished, have a right to appointed counsel, which might mean a great, good, or at least a semi-conscientious professional will advocate for you in criminal court. Impoverished civil litigants, by contrast, have no constitutional or statutory right to appointed counsel.

This is particularly troubling in a constitutional democracy that is anchored to the rule of law and accepts as an article of public faith the principle that, regardless of one’s station in life, whether it be high or low, all Americans stand equal before the bar of justice. For too many Americans, however, the price of equal justice is simply beyond their means. (Hornstein 2010, 1065)

¹³⁰ This interview contains Oswald’s account of direct communication by telephone with Brian Robertson, head of the CRIA (Oswald and Igma 2001, 25). Oswald “eventually” (Gans 1995, 140) “engaged a rather expensive lawyer” to avoid having to recall of 700 or already distributed discs of *plunderphonic* (Oswald and Igma 2001, 26).

In the United States, legal aid societies and non-profit organizations may or may not take your case. Budgetary constraints and available staff as well as the expectation (or lack thereof) of victory mitigate against any guaranteed advocacy. Unlike the accused in a criminal case, *litigants* in civil court must fund and hire their own counsel.

As an impoverished artist,¹³¹ I was up against UMG, a corporation with billions of dollars in the bank which threatened me with “disgorgement of your profits, punitive damages, and attorneys’ fees” (Miller 2007a) in civil court. True to the ethic of resourceful scavenging in phonography, I consulted with friends and allies—video and installation artist Keith Sanborn, Rick Prelinger of the Internet Archive, the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), and attorney Kohel Haver—to strategize the best path forward. No one wanted to take the case. The EFF told me that defeat was likely.

Anyone somewhat immersed in the twinned history of album covers and graphic design will surmise that a solid case could have been made against UMG for failing to enforce their trademark and “trade dress.” *Favorite Intermissions* was not the first to parody the DG look, however mounting such a defense would have placed—based on my own research—over two dozen artists and labels at risk for civil litigation. Citing or listing them here could place them in legal jeopardy. Rather than betray my fellow parodists and pit them against a corporate colossus with well-funded in-house legal

¹³¹ My gross income in 2008 as a student working as a freelance writer, performer, and composer was \$14,567.93. The U.S. Government threshold of poverty that year was \$10,400 (Federal Register 2008, 3971). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the average household income in 2008 in the United States was \$52,175 (Rosentiel 2008).

counsel, I did the unexpected. When my friends asked what was going on with *Favorite Intermissions*, I told them, “I befriended the enemy.”

I negotiated directly with UMG on behalf of myself and GD Stereo. We reached a compromise which allowed *Favorite Intermissions* to return after the offending originals were surrendered and destroyed. Luckily, UMG did not insist on the retrieval of already sold copies; such a recall would have probably engendered bad publicity of a big corporation picking on a lone, impoverished artist.

Although GD Stereo and I wanted the replacement cover to remain congruent with the multifarious intent of the album, we also didn’t want to give the corporate behemoth another opportunity to squash us. We had two options: Create a new cover and hope UMG would leave us alone; or do the smart thing: We asked UMG to approve the cover.

UMG’s counsel rejected the first four (Figure 11 below, from left to right) replacement cover designs depicted in the image-strip below, responding “Although it is, admittedly, a clever pictorial representation of your agreement in response to our cease and desist letter, I must object...” (Miller 2007b).



Figure 11 Sequence of proposed covers to *Favorite Intermissions*. Image courtesy GD Stereo.

I eventually reached an agreement with UMG, whose lead attorney responded “I have reviewed your revised cover, and it is fine” (Miller 2007c). The torn, blackened cover on the far right of the above image-strip is the current cover of *Favorite Intermissions* reissued in 2008.

UMG’s ultimate approval of the revised cover of *Favorite Intermissions* created another kind of tumbled entanglement, one which unwittingly fulfilled the corporate giant’s central accusation: My intent to establish a relationship between DG and *Favorite Intermissions*. Ironically, the relationship was established at the behest of DG. Since the presentation of the original text of this chapter on my website and many lectures and presentations since 2012, a relationship between DG and *Favorite Intermissions* has become another paratext affixed to *Favorite Intermissions*.

A Length of Sound: Soundwalking in *To the Cooling Tower, Satsop*

Previous chapters in this dissertation follow the standard model of scholarship.

Carefully marshalled facts in tandem with ideas and traces of experience are framed, developed, theorized, and connected to the research of established scholars and theorists. Conclusions are amassed, announced (or “signposted” in current parlance), and summarized to suit a reader scanning or scavenging for information and ideas.

This structure of scholarly writing diminishes, and at times eliminates, the possibility of unexpected, felicitous discovery. In the spirit of Roland Barthes’ notion of a “moderately plural” (2002 [1974], 6) text, this chapter dislodges such expectations.

I seek to honor, continue, and extend the lineage of the field recordists who preceded me, notably Ludwig Koch (1955) and Bernie Krause (1996; 2002) who wrote lengthy, absorbing, first-person accounts of recording in the field. “The ultimate mark of power may be its invisibility” declares Michel-Rolph Trouillot, “the ultimate challenge, the exposition of its roots” (Ibid 2015, xxiii). First-person accounts by pioneering field recordists and latter-day phonographers like me help expose the roots—the dominant ideology—of field recording as not requiring multiple kinds of mastery (technological, corporeal, economic). Flaws and mistakes provide instruction superior to perfection. This chapter’s exposition of my practice as haphazard, clumsy, lucky, uncertain, and visible as a readable text depletes my unneeded power, and I hope, transfers it to others as Koch and Krause did for me.

To paraphrase Barthes, I “renounce structuring this text in large masses” (2002 [1974], 11) by alternating first-person accounts of recording *To the Cooling Tower*,

Satsop (DeLaurenti 2015a) near Elma, Washington with a history of nuclear power in Washington State. Each section is preceded by an epigraph. Paratextually, scholarly writing conjures the expectation of a connection and adept regurgitation of such epigraphs; the epigraph is justified in the main text as an overt addition to knowledge. In this chapter these epigraphs instead follow the Western literary tradition, serving as evocative signposts and metaphorically offering what Claude Lévi-Strauss identified as

chance fragments of landscape, momentary snatches of life, reflections caught on the wing—such are the things that alone make it possible for us to understand and interpret horizons which would otherwise have nothing to offer us. (1961 [1955], 50)

The epigraphs. My first-person account of soundwalking through and recording within a tunnel beneath an incomplete nuclear power station. The absence of time indexes. The late introduction of heretofore unused, unmentioned, unexpected critical frameworks and conclusions. These fragments, absences, snatches of life, and fleeting reflections serve a purpose: To open and hybridize a moderately plural path for the reader and listener to understand and interpret the murky, echoing horizons of *To the Cooling Tower, Satsop* (DeLaurenti 2015a).

I also seek to temporarily dislodge this dissertation's frame of scholarly writing by refusing "to surrender to the visually dominant culture and its love of systems" (Schafer 1993, 8). I hope to reaffirm what Westerkamp calls "a strong oppositional place of conscious listening" (Ibid 2000), but in prose. This chapter echoes the other unwritten half of this dissertation: My disruptive and unorthodox sound work.

I

I met a traveller from an antique land
 Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
 Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
 Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
 And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
 Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
 Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
 The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed:
 And on the pedestal these words appear:
 'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
 The lone and level sands stretch far away.'

- Percy Bysshe Shelley (1826, 100)

Nuclear power bears no mightier synecdoche than the cooling tower. The silhouette is iconic: One of usually two trunkless limbs juts against the sky, spewing steam into clouds. Who knows where those hollow, concrete stumps might terminate hidden arteries of tunnels and sunken chambers? Indeed, most nuclear facilities sit far from the "boundless and bare" terrain of Shelley's famed sonnet due to a voracious need for flowing water and willing wage labor. Nonetheless, "Ozymandias" still conjures a post-Apocalyptic vision, tempting comparisons to ruined landscapes recently laid waste by the nuclear accidents at Three Mile Island (1979), Chernobyl (1986), and Fukushima (2011).

Listening to the poem hints at a grander prophecy, a resonance beyond any vision. In "Ozymandias" the ruins remain silent. "Nothing beside remains," Shelley avers, with nothing to hear and only near nothingness—"lone and level sands"—to see. A soundscape where all sound is muted, save for the moral echo of a futile boast,

denotes an utter absence of life and implies an ongoing, steadily emanating death which can “stretch far away.” Our “traveller from an antique land” faces an unfurling duration verging on eternity.

My ears match Shelley’s prophetic imagery to the great, hidden danger of nuclear power: The “over 2,000 metric tons of radioactive waste produced a year” (Biello 2009, Pearce 2017) by nuclear reactors for a total of “79,000 tonnes of spent fuel in at least 76 power-station cooling ponds and secure dry stores” in the United States (Biello 2009).¹³² In other words, unimaginable amounts of toxic garbage will remain deadly to humans for at least 10,000 years, the U.S. government’s myopic period of “regulatory concern” for nuclear waste (Trauth 1993, 1-6).¹³³ Michael Madsen, director of a documentary about Onkalo, the long-term nuclear waste storage site in Finland, aptly describes the caching of such timeless poison as “a crime against humanity in the future” (Van Wyck 2016, 28).

I have feared nuclear power since my childhood. The popular “Nucléaire? Non merci!” stickers decorated my three-ring binder for school. As an adult I attended marches and wrote letters. But more than the wind can topple the statue of Ozymandias or any other seemingly intransigent power. The poem’s unnamed artist, a sculptor, may have helped. She, who “well those passions read,” inscribed a premonitory warning against the powerful “sneer of cold command” on the “half-

¹³² According to Biello 2009, this amount does not include the addition of 160,000 cubic feet (4,530 cubic metres) annually of radioactive items which ranges “from workers’ coveralls to water filters.”

¹³³ Categorized as High Level Waste, liquid nuclear waste, fuel rods, and spent nuclear fuel can remain deadly for up to 250,000 years.

sunk” and “shattered visage” of Ozymandias. How might listening, soundwalking, and field recording defy and prophesy against nuclear power?

II

to hear what i see

hin hih hum hih vy tih twum

to see what i hear

- Edwin Torres (2009, 2)

Wherever we go, we will give our ears priority.

- Hildegard Westerkamp (1974, 18)

When I am unsure of myself or my situation, I rely on my ears for guidance. Listening has a foundational role to play in contesting nuclear power. In *Why do Whales and Children Sing?* composer and nature recordist David Dunn suggests:

At a time of ecological crisis we need to embrace every tool we have that can remind us of the sacred. Not only can aural and musical metaphors provide us with a means to describe the world in ways that remind us of our physical connection to the environment, but the physical act of using our aural sense, in contrast to entertainment, can become a means for integrative meditation. (1999, 15)

For Dunn, listening is not only a means of exploration but of discovery, which I believe encompasses critical thinking, radical inquiry, and boundary-breaking empathy. Listening with what the psychologist Carl Rogers called “unconditional positive regard” confers our greatest gifts—time and our mortality—and empowers those who speak as well as nourishes those who listen. Listening can connect the ostensibly unseen, the disconnected, the distant. “A quiet place outdoors has no physical borders or limits to perception,” writes nature recordist and advocate Gordon

Hempton. “One can commonly hear for miles and listen even farther” (2009, 12).

Indoors or in the city, our ears can tell us what lurks around corners as well as discern relationships and potential ideas in ways that the eyes might miss or mislead. Two examples:

After a presentation of my multichannel soundscape work *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* (DeLaurenti 2008b), someone in the audience asked if I knew the photo of a black-clad anarchist throwing rocks from the roof of Seattle’s flagship Nike shoe store (“Niketown”) while wearing Nike running shoes. Noting the irony of the image, my questioner insinuated that the rock-thrower, “quite likely part of the so-called black bloc,” was a transient, perhaps trendy, clueless, or possibly hypocritical *agent provocateur* participating in the protest.

“How do you know those shoes weren’t stolen?” I replied. Aside from alluding to the impossibility of escaping the web of commodity relations in a capitalist society, the image taught me that the eyes abet one viewpoint while the ears might expand or refute a rote, visually-oriented perspective. I have encountered black bloc members who defended shoplifting and “heisting”—blatantly stealing an obvious quantity of commercial goods with arrogant exuberance—as another tactic of resistance.

In 2006, an eye- and earwitness participant at the 1999 WTO protest in Seattle recalled, “We experimented with cooperative living, confrontational unemployment, and politically motivated crime” (Author unknown 2006, 2). A similar photo was taken in 2012 of a black-clad anarchist wearing Nike shoes while smashing the

window of the Nike Store in downtown Seattle during the May Day protest (Pulkkinen 2012).¹³⁴

It doesn't matter how the Nike shoes were obtained. Irony need not be reconciled neatly. Philosopher Mark Lilla distinguishes irony "as the ability to negotiate the gap between the real and ideal without doing violence to either" (Lilla 2016, 49). My eyes told me one thing, yet my ears heard another possible relationship between the protester and the corporate logo; first when some from the "black bloc" recounted jubilant tales of shoplifting; then when my reply tried to redefine (at least to those who were listening) what the photo might mean. I have been looking in tandem with listening to photos and paintings ever since.¹³⁵

In 1993, Sandia National Laboratories published a report, *Expert Judgment on Markers to Deter Human Intrusion into the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant* (Trauth 1993). This tatterdemalion 351-page document collated possible solutions for erecting signs and re-shaping the local terrain to warn humans away from the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) near Carlsbad, New Mexico. WIPP is an underground storage facility for nuclear waste generated by the United States military (Biello 2009; Conca 2017). While investigating WIPP, journalist Elmo Keep unearthed a story which, though possibly apocryphal, suggested that the Sandia plan for WIPP was misguided and needlessly elaborate:

¹³⁴ The photo is credited to "Seattle Police Department."

¹³⁵ Richard Leppert explicates 18th and 19th century paintings with his concept of the sonoric landscape: "Sonoric landscapes are both heard and seen" (1993, 18). Tina M. Kampt sagely suggests that "listening to images is at once a description and a method" (2017, 5).

...a Western Shoshone Nation representative in the consultation on the [WIPP] proposal said that the story of the danger of the mountain would be passed down, were people still around to pass it onto, as stories had been for thousands of years.

“We would just tell each other.” (2015)

True or not, the tale illustrates the transtemporal power of sound and listening.

My own attempt to connect listening to nuclear power began with an acronym whose onomatopoeia proved prophetic. In 1972, the Washington Public Power Supply System (WPPSS) proposed building two nuclear power stations at opposite ends of Washington State: one in Hanford, the other sited at Satsop near Elma, a forested, road-hugging town easily strolled through in less than five minutes.

In economically stagnant Grays Harbor County in southwest Washington (Pope 2008, 79), the Satsop project created over 1,500 jobs (Author unknown 2000). Workers were well-paid and confident enough to go on strike for better wages and working conditions frequently; Pope notes that “in one particularly contentious month in 1978, ten separate labor disputes slowed the [construction] projects” at Satsop (2008, 139).

Due to multi-year construction delays and cost overruns, WPPSS was ridiculed statewide by the emphatic pronunciation of its acronym, “Whoops!” (Wilma 2003).

Growing up in Seattle, I remember hearing “Whoops!” spoken to mock WPPSS in conversations as well as on local TV and radio news throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

Ultimately, neither plant was completed. In 1983, WPPSS halted construction at Satsop (Pope 2008, 196), eventually defaulting on “\$2.25 billion in bonds” (Alexander 1983, 58).

Satsop’s two cooling towers and an attendant network of tunnels remained fenced off for twenty-five years. Tunnels were buried or blocked. In 1996, WPPSS “filed a motion for withdrawal of application for an operating license” for a nuclear power station (Federal Register 1999, 4725). Later that year, the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board granted the motion, which led to the termination of the construction permit in 1999 by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (Ibid), a government agency tasked with overseeing nuclear power in the United States. At the behest of local and state government officials, the facility was renamed Satsop Development Park in 1999 (Author unknown 2000). The two cooling towers remained, potential landmarks for possible corporate logos. By 2011, after visiting the Park several times, I noted that after more “light industrial”¹³⁶ manufacturers and warehouses had moved in, the area had been rechristened Satsop Business Park.¹³⁷

But Satsop’s tunnels and towers as well as their unique acoustic signatures survived, and should be counted among the sonic wonders of Washington: the Dan Harpole Cistern at Fort Worden; *A Sound Garden* by Douglas Hollis at the decommissioned Sand Point Naval Air Station in Seattle; and the One Square Inch of Silence

¹³⁶ Light industrial refers to the manufacture, assembly, or packaging of (usually small) consumer goods.

¹³⁷ While various print and on-line newspapers employed “Satsop Development Park” and “Satsop Business Park” interchangeably, screen captures of <http://www.satsop.com> from the Internet Archive Wayback Machine at <http://web.archive.org/web/20110128084607/http://satsop.com> indicate a change as of January 11, 2011.

demarcated by Gordon Hempton in the Hoh Rain Forest (2009, 13).¹³⁸ All of these places—some merely remote, others hidden—lure visitors to listen to the world in a new way. In Westerkamp’s formulation, “a strong oppositional place of conscious listening” (Ibid 2000) created by these sonic wonders¹³⁹ seem contingent on geographical presence. You have to be there.

I found a tangible way to connect listening to nuclear power in 2009 when I stumbled onto and into the tunnels of Satsop during an artist residency with the now-defunct organization Environmental Aesthetics. Fostering new work inspired by Satsop, this scrappy, volunteer-run arts organization commissioned several musicians and sound artists: Yann Novak, the Olympia-based collective Problems, Nyello Electronics, and the Seattle Phonographers Union (often abbreviated “SPU”) (Environmental Aesthetics 2011),¹⁴⁰ an ensemble I co-founded in 2002.

During the SPU’s 2009 Environmental Aesthetics residency, I found a partially buried tunnel next to WNP-5, the most incomplete of the two approximately 500-foot tall cooling towers at Satsop. Barricaded by a mound of dirt, only dim light penetrated the first few meters of the tunnel. The rest was dark. Hours later, our residency was over and it was time to leave. While the SPU had been artists-in-residence, we spent our time recording and projecting sound into the empty cooling tower.

¹³⁸ See <http://onesquareinch.org/> for details about one of the fewer than a half-dozen remaining areas of “natural quiet” (as defined by Hempton) west of the Mississippi River.

¹³⁹ The sonic wonders are not well known enough to be soundmarks, too remote to be keynote sounds.

¹⁴⁰ The SPU received and submitted a signed contract before completing the residency, yet Environmental Aesthetics went defunct before the group was listed on the website.

We were “in residence” but not completely so. We inhabited a site but failed to interrogate it thoroughly. Sound artist Tansy Spinks proposes a thorough suite of questions for site-specific art-making:

What is its purpose? How was it used or how is it used now? Who has been in this space before? What aspect lends itself to some form of sonic interpretation? How can some aspect of that previous existence or current usage be harnessed and transmitted performatively?
(2013, 15)

I had answered “What is its purpose?” (a nuclear power station); How was it used or how is it used now?” and “Who has been in this space before?” (Abandoned, then converted to a “business park”); before my arrival (and here, a few pages ago on 226 and 227). My colleagues in the SPU and I answered “What aspect lends itself to some form of sonic interpretation?” by blasting recordings into the echoing cooling towers which were later released on LP (Seattle Phonographers Union 2013).

But crucially, I had yet to fully answer Spinks’ final question “How can some aspect of that previous existence or current usage be harnessed and transmitted performatively?”

III

The dreamed-of-city contained him as a young man

- Italo Calvino (1974, 8)

Into dominant night: My rental car glides across the asphalt. I switch off the headlights. I turn onto a dirt road, slow enough to hear the lone pops of rocks under the tires. The car rolls to the edge of a shallow gully. I wait, watching for other headlights. No one follows. I have returned to the cooling tower.

I want my microphones. Windows up, my car is hermetically sealed, dulling the night into a faint hum like the *mmmmmmmm* you swear is there long after your refrigerator rattles to a stop. Though I won't hear through them until I get home, my microphones open my ears wider, further, longer.

Rushed, I unzip my bag, yanking the zipper's serrations into a chirp. If I get caught, they will catch me going there, not here folded up in this cradle of a car seat. I must hurry. My fingers fumble around for a modest roll of surgical tape. I tear several strips about one to one-and-a-half inches long. I daub them onto the steering wheel, counting off an arc of sticky rectangles: One for each microphone, three for each cable, and two for fastening the cables at the nape of my neck. I drag a sleeve to wipe the sweat from my head, shaved earlier in the day. My skin scratches audibly and I rue leaving a razor at home, otherwise I could shear off sweat and stubble at the same time. I silence my body to listen.

As a child, I often fell asleep immersed in sound: The thump of my carotid artery amplified by the leaden loaf of my regrettably antique feather pillow; the slow, swelling rustle of sheets as I breathed; and everything else (which could be anything else), from wind-blown pine needles scrawling on the window to the smeared fanfare of trains crossing into the next county.

When Gordon Hempton taught me to gauge the wind by watching blades of grass bend and flutter, his lesson was familiar; years before, I remembered hearing the hairs on my head and arms flex and wilt when I moved ever so faintly in bed.

But now I listen with microphones, each the size of a child's tooth, pale and stubby affixed to a threadlike cable. I pull one along the side of my scalp and anchor it with chunks of tape, tamping and sculpting a scar-like ridge against my head.

Did I attach the microphones correctly? I check for symmetry by tilting my face in the rearview mirror. Higher up, the microphones would poke out like devil's horns; here, taped just above my ears in a classic binaural pickup pattern, it looks like I'm modeling phantom glasses magically suspended with only the temples—no frames, no lenses—visible.

Binaural recording is the most intimate form of recording. As a pair, the microphones should capture a realistic stereo image with the human head acting as a baffle, delaying and muffling sound coming from the opposite direction (Krause 2002, 77). You can test this acoustically by rubbing your fingers together next to one ear just one

to three inches away. Keep rubbing your fingers together while moving them along a level arc in front of your face to the opposite ear. The sound will become distant and muffled in one ear and alive in the other.¹⁴¹ Binaural recording preserves sonic relationships of proximity and clarity (Krause 2002, 149). But most binaural recording set-ups do not move.

By contrast, my binaural microphones move as I walk, akin and indebted to the recording practice of Viv Corringham, Dallas Simpson, Andra McCartney, Quiet American, and a few others. Simpson states that “the binaural apparatus as an instrument in its own right implies experimentation in recording techniques [as] part of the creative performance” (1997), which is true for me. McCartney’s vivid comparison, “Whereas a jazz improviser works with melodic and rhythmic lines and harmonic progressions, a soundwalk recordist improvises with perspective, motion, and proximity” (2000, 31), describes what I do every time I attach binaural microphones to my head.

In theory, anyone who listens on headphones will hear something very close to what I heard and how I moved. But I won’t know until I finish recording: I don’t wear headphones because monitoring is not listening, and levels lie. Listening with, but not to, my microphones makes me a better listener. Without headphones, I will remember and treasure what I heard, even if the recording fails.

¹⁴¹ This is the CALFRASST test. See “Calibrated finger rub auditory screening test (CALFRASST)” <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2677516/>

It doesn't matter that I've devoted thousands of hours to field recording since the late 1980s. I am girded for failure. I don't masochistically exult in what Gabi Schaffner in her essential essay "The Madness of the Documentarist" pinpoints as "the quagmire of self-humiliation" (2009, 4). I have stumbled into and sat in that muck often. Yet failure has been essential to my work. The American philosopher John Dewey counsels "...failure is not mere failure. It is instructive. The person who really thinks learns quite as much from his failures as from his successes" (Dewey 2008, 205).¹⁴² In the field you are alone. Even though it sounds like a name, "mic" or "mike," the truncated slang for microphone, instills no intimacy. You have to use it to know it.

I'm almost ready. I plug the mic cables into a boxy portable pre-amplifier which I clasp against the recording deck. I hold them up my face to check thickness and weight. Held together, they look like a square sandwich. Then I remember to switch off my cell phone and shove it in the glovebox, lest I record the whining pulse of my phone's radiant electromagnetic field in lieu of the tunnel.¹⁴³

The wires trace along my scalp and trail down my shirt; they're obvious, yes, but how I record will remain nearly invisible except for bouncing green lights which display the volume level. High is good, low is bad. It's best to aim for a level above the middle in case of a loud, unexpected sound. Beginning recordists fuss over volume, checking then raising or lowering the levels in reaction to something too loud or too quiet. In my practice of phonography—a portmanteau of "the Greek *phonē* (sound,

¹⁴² Dewey was writing the 1950s, thus the use of "his" as a collective pronoun.

¹⁴³ I did this inside a Glasgow tunnel in 2010.

voice) with *graphē* (writing) or the related *gramma* (something written)” (Feaster 2015, 139)—I have learned that time and practice fosters an empathy with recording technology. Picking the right level becomes instinctive, based on listening and a little-risk taking. Slating my recording with a muttered “OK, OK is there any signal?” and a royal “We’re here at Satsop,” I set the levels.¹⁴⁴ This is the last time I will see those lights. I extract a small, soft wool hat from my bag and wrap everything up. Lights attract animals, insects, and security guards. I hope to make this site mine, at least temporarily. One outcome of “audile technique” as asserted by Sterne seems applicable: “The space of the auditory field became a form of private property, *a space* for the individual to inhabit alone” (2003 160 italics added).

The cooling tower jolts my definition of “looming.” The gray slab rises high enough to look like it might not just tilt, but fall. Beyond a shadowy tree-line, the whine of a late-shift factory hums along with an HVAC unit a half-mile or more away.

I don’t slam my car door. Instead, a muting embrace: I close it with a muffled *cluff* by bracing my body against the door and hugging the roof and windshield.

I head up the hill, jabbing the ground with my walking stick and splaying my feet with every step so I don’t stumble and slide. Years ago when I discovered an abandoned railroad tunnel couched in a deep ravine in North Carolina, I raced through the scrub and trees. I was too excited to carefully pace and splay my feet. How did I

¹⁴⁴ I was alone in the tunnel. This nosism permeates my head- and tailslates, regardless of where I record, a transtemporal, perhaps spiritual, acknowledgement of those who have preceded me in pressing the Record button.

fall? I only remember skidding, flailing, and rolling 90 feet downhill, thankful I left no limbs and only some bits of skin and blood in the bushes above me. *Bring the walking stick next time.* That black tunnel, though alluringly dank, disgorged my least favorite kind of wind: gusty and cold as granite—blasts of compressed force instead of elegant pressure. (I hope there are better tunnels in North Carolina for listening.)

I'm closer to the cooling tower. My crab-like waddle gives me traction against loose dirt and pockets of gravel. This hill takes just a minute or two. I anchor my ascent by grabbing clumps of grass, exposed roots, a few branches, and a stout trunk.

The chain-link fence is crested with coils of razor wire. That won't stop me. Above me, the cooling tower is a giant funnel soon to swallow the moon. I follow along the fence into the woods where someone has dug and wormed under already. Propping up a quilt of dirty chain-links with my walking stick, I lie down and, digging with my heels and elbows, squirm through feet first. I'm here. No cars, no footsteps, so I canter—really an ungainly loping series of hops, sprints, and crouches through waist-high grass and bushes—to the center of the tower. I look up to a perfect disk of night sky. Henry Miller might have called it atramentous. I just see dark, dark blue with a few white dots, still stars too beautiful to number.

I crouch and listen. Owls and the cries of unknown animals and that faraway factory rebound; their songs stutter and echo around each other, curling upwards into orbit against the cooling tower's tile-like surfaces. All sound spirals to the sky. I wait for more night and then slink towards the tunnel.

IV

How do sounds influence perception of the visible city?

- Michael Southworth (1969, 49)

“To see the landscape with one’s ears”—this succinct definition of “soundscape” was offered by R. Murray Schafer in a radio interview (Breitsameter 2013, 24). Although the soundscape, defined by Schafer as “the sonic environment” (1977, 274) has cultural boundaries and physiological limits, his core insight remains: Listening not only connects us to living things, but careful ears can locate relationships of power. Sabine Breitsameter, the German translator of *The Tuning of the World*, encapsulates the political critique inherent in Schafer’s concept of the soundscape declaring “Any soundscape’s manifestation points to the natural, cultural, technical, and social conditions of a society and refers back, then to the latter’s priorities, deficits and power structures” (Breitsameter 2013, 26).

Ears hear the soundscape, even below ground, away from the wilderness prized by Schafer, Bernie Krause (1996; 2002), and Gordon Hempton (2009). Patterned after caves, the mine, according to Lewis Mumford in *Technics and Civilization*, “is the first completely inorganic environment” made by humans (1934, 69). Frances Dyson and Douglas Kahn point out that the “acceleration of progress transmutes the mine into a tunnel” (2008, 228). In *The Art of Tunneling*, Károly Széchy proposes that a tunnel is “an underground structure built for the express purpose of communication” (1966, 36). With communication comes discovery and the chance to listen and perhaps a chance to dig deeper into Spinks’ first two questions: “What is its purpose?” and “How was it used or how is it used now?” (2013, 15).

The tunnels of the Industrial Age were more than mere conduits for goods and services, but a kind of city described by Calvino “that forces its way ahead in the earlier city and presses it toward the outside” (1974, 129). Rosalind Williams, visionary author of *Notes from the Underground*, stated in an interview “that between the late 1700s and the early 1900s, the ground of Britain and Europe was dug up repeatedly to lay the foundations for a new society” (Najafi 2008, 89). The influx of people and goods pushed the city and its idea outwards; tunnels prophetically led the way. Hillel Schwartz, composer and compiler of the magisterial atlas-cum-sound poem *Making Noise: From Babel to the Big Bang and Beyond*, asserts that such urban tunnels, “products of steam and nitroglycerine” (2011, 253), transformed darkness “into a louder place and noisier time; the tunnel was metonymic for what was happening in the dark” (254).

Tunnels, like city streets, became places where shadows bade one to hide, to become someone else. The perpetual—and optional—night within beckons my ears to discover a new path.

V

A walk expresses space and freedom
 and the knowledge of it can live
 in the imagination of anyone, and that
 is another space, too

- Richard Long (1986, 236)

My first time into the tunnel, I'm lucky. Only a mound of dirt covers the entrance. Before pressing the Record button, I remind myself that I record to teach myself to listen, to let what I hear transform me. This time, I wonder, can listening to this concrete carcass challenge or at least teach me something about nuclear power?

Beyond the entrance, this tube of concrete seems sealed, unlike the tunnels dug during the late Roman Republic in the 1st Century BCE. Roman *adits* were dug first with vertical shafts then joined with horizontal sections to form a tunnel (Landels 1978, 15). Aside from ensuring alignment and elevation, the vertical shafts enabled subsequent inspection and ventilation (Ibid, 38-39). My grandfather, Peter DeLaurenti (1903-1986), told me about working in the coal mines of Newcastle¹⁴⁵ before and during what he called “The Great War.” Mumford states that until modern tools such as the Davy lamp were invented, “children were employed from the earliest days to crawl along the narrow tunnel” of a mine (1934, 68).¹⁴⁶ Equipped with modern tools nevertheless, short scrawny Italian-American children like my grandfather fit snugly

¹⁴⁵ Named after Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Newcastle was a small settlement east of Seattle and northeast of Renton in Washington State.

¹⁴⁶ Mumford adds that “women indeed were so used as beasts of burden in English mines right up to the middle of the 19th century” (68).

into the suffocating small-bore tunnels. I take a deep breath so I can compare the air here with the atmosphere ahead.

Finding the mound to be well-packed, I can clear only a few inches of dirt away with my walking stick. After pushing in a small entryway with my feet, I scoot down the dirt mound into the tunnel. Pebbles, clods of dirt, and debris scrape and tumble into a pool of water. An apple-sized rock bounces alongside me with a splash that sounds like a “bloop” with a “ssh” tacked on at the end. The *bloopsssh* subsides quickly, and my ears adjust to the tunnel’s thrumming drone, an amplified roar of the distant factory and machinery. Freckles of light blink and undulate on the pool of water in front of me. Beyond is darkness.

I wade in, easing one foot forward. After two more tentative steps, water floods over my shoes. Suddenly, I am sliding into mud. The one-foot deep puddle I expected sucks me down past my knees. My right arm swoops in the air; some sense between panic and instinct keeps me upright. I seep into muck, my weight pulling me in. I push my left foot ahead and angle my other foot beneath me as if I’m on a surfboard. I can’t see across the pool. I close my eyes. My body, still gliding forward and sinking, knows it’s deeper. The water rises to my waist. Now it’s up to my chest. Am I soundwalking or surviving?

What I had assumed would be a listening walk where participants move, listen and don't do much else (Drever 2009, 189-191) has become a soundwalk.¹⁴⁷

Composer and theorist of soundscape composition Hildegard Westerkamp defines a soundwalk as “any excursion whose main purpose is listening to the environment” and “meant to be an intense introduction into the experience of uncompromised listening” whose “main purpose is to rediscover and reactivate our sense of hearing” (1974, 18). Her colleague Barry Truax states “the best way, in fact, to engage with [the] acoustic complexity [of the soundscape] is soundwalking” (Truax 2010, 3’17”).

I am audibly and corporeally engaging with the acoustic complexity of the tunnel. And not drowning due to my corporeal privilege—abilities, privileges and priorities when recording in the field—in this case standing 6’4” tall. With my free arm as a paddle, I start grandly swiping the water, then fifteen or so seconds later, a surging, single echo soaked with humming particles floats through the air above, a hovering *woheeeeeeeeeaaaaaaaaaaaaaassssssssmmmmhhhhhhhhhhhh*.

Somehow I’m still standing, holding my gear above my head. Machinery chimes behind me, singing a descending three note motif. The mic cables *should* be waterproof; a mild electrical shock might tell me otherwise.

¹⁴⁷ McCartney notes that “in common practice, the term soundwalk is often used rather than listening walk to refer to a silent public walk, often given free of charge at festivals and conferences” (2014, 221).

Up to my neck in muddy water, I remember that the tunnel was designed to circulate water from the reactor core to the cooling tower. This pool, though full, is probably similar to a kitchen sink trap, so I desperately hope that the other side slopes upwards. I am thinking and moving through my ears. The *sloosh* of rippling water confirms where I am and how far I must go. Anchored in a quagmire, I thrust each foot forward, recording deck and pre-amp still aloft.

Sheathed in soggy jeans, my legs stagger up through the pool like loose, dragging oars. But I keep going. My waterlogged feet emerge from the mud, making a moist fin-like *splat* with each step. The sound of my feet barely reverberates, which is one of the mysteries of the tunnel. Why did my splashing in the pool return as a giant hovering echo? Certain kinds of loud sounds accumulate and return. Others don't. The tunnel is what Alfred Bester's heroine Jisbella McQueen described as "a freak of echoes, passages, and whispering galleries" in *The Stars My Destination* (Bester 2009 [1956], 65). I stand and listen, hoping my deck is still recording, that no batteries have died and that no errant splash of water has fried something crucial. Although I am silent so as to not waste breath, this is self-reflexive earwitnessing, but with my body. I don't check anything, lest I disrupt my listening. Anyway, I'm wet but my ears are dry. The keening three note figure has blurred into a siren.

The "field" in field recording is not a specific place but for me an unstable condition, a motile site of struggle: Atop the earth, under the sky, the soundscape may change radically at any moment. In the studio, the situation is stable, the location fixed, the doors closed, and you have probably paid to be there. Standard field recording

techniques mimic many studio techniques supplemented by rugged, element-resistant gear and an extra prayer or two. Plant your microphones in a peaceful place, uncoil some cable, wait, and listen (Krause 1996, 31-38; Hempton 2009, 141, 152, 192-193). Movement is minimal (Patton 2010, 79 and 262; Dorritie 2003, 53). Your distance from your microphones and recorder soon seems irrelevant. You might even leave and return in a few hours. What comes through the headphones guides you and your imagined listeners towards a tranquil, transparent sense of space and location.

In the field, I don't care about any of that. Like many phonographers, I "use field recordings in ways that transcend the straightforwardly mimetic" to "reach a musical or aesthetic form of expression" (Montgomery 2009, 148). I find a different way of listening and being in the world. Much of my practice of phonography embraces the flaws otherwise disdained by most phonographers—my struggles, incompetence, and erratic relationship to notions of fidelity (DeLaurenti 2005, 6). Out in the field, I have the luxury of failing without anyone else knowing. There are no re-takes. I never tell anyone what to do or re-do. I honor what happens, mourn what I miss. Recording heightens my senses, which is why that small flashlight stays in my pocket, switched off.

VI

Because I am never in the light, it is equally true
that I am never in the darkness.

- John M. Hull (1990, 68)

He felt the corridor walls, noted doors, noted their
texture, counted, listened, deduced, reported.

- Alfred Bester (2010 [1956], 68)

The last time I see within the tunnel is when I turn around. Behind me, a pinprick of light. The siren recedes *morendo* with every sloshing, *splat splorsh splat splorsh splat splorsh* through the tunnel's shallow stream. The darkness is dense. Stumbling, I stamp my foot and it reverberates, the skittery echo of *THOOM Thoom thoom thoom thump thump thump thump* trails off, telling me that the tunnel is gradually curving to my right. The keening siren has stopped. I need more sounds to help me make my way further. I step on a waterlogged board and bend down to drag then drop it. Another echo careens through the tunnel. I'm learning how to calibrate the reflective bounce of a sound. Hearing how fast it returns, my ears begin to see where I'm going, and what's in front of me.

I navigate (bypass, stumble over, probe, kick, step on, jab, echolocate) obstacles and small dangers with focused listening. My ears map the walls, the floor, the ceiling. Detecting changes in air pressure, my eardrums bend as oxygen thins. Sounds feel different inside and against me. This tunnel has an architectural pulse.

When does the body make music? The usual answer connects limbs, skin or voice to musical instruments. In the tunnel, I must breathe, walk, and resound. I pee, listening if the crackling water tells me anything about what lies ahead.

Soundwalking, my movement co-composes the soundscape of the tunnel. I heed Harry Partch's insistence on corporeal performance, that musicians must move and dance as well as sing and play an instrument. Partch's long-time friend and collaborator Ben Johnston explained that Corporealism "is a vehement protest against what he considered the negation of the body and the bodily in our society" (Johnston 1975, 85)."¹⁴⁸ As I soundwalk, I am answering Tansy Spinks' question "How can some aspect of that previous existence or current usage be harnessed and transmitted performatively?" (2013, 15). I am performing by surviving. I am moving in a place where life is not welcome, any life is transitory, no life is expected. Here, "there is something uniquely empowering about soundwalking" (Drever 2009, 192). My movement is an affirmation of life.

Instead of a frustrating slog or even a fearful occupation, my presence becomes performance: With eyes often shut, I continue walking through the tunnel, where "all sounds are site-specific (autochthonous), real-time, synchronized, diegetic" (Ibid). The sounds I make not only guide me through, but also become music perhaps akin, albeit fleetingly to "the Pitjantjara, Bayaka, and Jivaro hunter-gatherers" who "still use forest sounds as a kind of natural *karaoke* to which they create their own complex

¹⁴⁸ Partch included sawed-off and tuned Cloud-Chamber Bowls from the University of California Radiation Laboratory in his instrumentarium.

polyrhythmic and melodic music” (Krause 1996, 89). The evaporating drone behind me adds a ground bass to my taps, shuffles, and splashes.

Stabs of my walking stick create grandly echoing cadences, resting places where slamming sound waves help me trace the length of the tunnel. Performing blind belays most of the habits I have developed with other instruments and ideas as an improviser. With no light, I cannot know how the tunnel—My instrument? My collaborator?—will change, or even where I and the passage ahead will go. I can only move by listening.

Wanting the flashlight for a mere moment reminds me that darkness, nighttime, “the dark,” shadows, and even the poetic adjective “umbral” deceptively connote mystery, the unknown, fear, the Other, menace, and evil, as if “to see is to know.” To those who listen over time into a state of timelessness, darkness becomes a place of discovery, an aurally radiant invitation to re-listen and re-map the world. Eventually I emerge from the tunnel surprised to see my hand cramped into a lobster-like pincer. I’m still holding the wool hat bundling my preamp and recording deck, 45 minutes later; the exact length of what will become *To the Cooling Tower, Satsop* (DeLaurenti 2015a).

My small act of defiance, trespassing into a tunnel at an aborted, barely-built nuclear power station will not end the use of nuclear power and cannot compare to the bold protest of an eighty-two year-old nun, Sister Megan Rice. Along with Greg Boertje-Obed, and Michael Walli, Rice broke into the Y-12 nuclear weapons plant in Oak

Ridge, Tennessee in 2012 (McVeigh 2014). Boertje-Obed and Walli were sentenced to five years in prison while Rice received a 35 month sentence. The resulting album of my soundwalk, released in an edition of 250 copies by GD Stereo, *To the Cooling Tower, Satsop* (DeLaurenti 2015a), points to the possible transformation of such facilities into something benign, such as Wunderland Kalkar. This “amusement park just north of Düsseldorf is located in the cooling tower of an abandoned nuclear power plant” (Atlas Obscura 2013), which closed not because of the 40,000 protesters who marched onto the streets of Kalkar in 1977 (Aykut 2015, 71), but due to the fear induced by the 1986 Chernobyl disaster (Atlas Obscura 2013). Could the towers at Satsop become meditative monuments, a place to contemplate the anthropogenic dangers we face as a people?

In Shelley’s poem only the “trunkless legs,” pedestal, and “shattered visage” remain along with expansive vanity (Shelley 1826, 100). My vanity, I hope, spans a more modest horizon. I am not concerned with the compact disc as a fetish object, I just hope that adventurous listeners hear the work.¹⁴⁹ To paraphrase the nearly-forgotten philosopher Morse Peckham, the response to the soundwalk embedded in the *Satsop* compact disc determines the meaning of what I did or what you hear.¹⁵⁰

Now, listening to the recordings made at Satsop, I am an aural spectator. Did I do that? Someone did, but it does not seem to be me. Rather, I respond to a dramatic

¹⁴⁹ While most of my work exists as free digital files on my website, the acoustics of the tunnel suffer when subjected to a lossy compression format like mp3.

¹⁵⁰ Peckham 1979, xv. “The meaning of any utterance or any sign is the response to that utterance or sign.”

journey that postulates phonography as a form of (potentially post-) soundscape composition: Vivid, possibly transformative field recordings made in unexpected locations, amid accidents, and by often unorthodox means in tandem with an open embrace of the recordist's presence—and quest towards new ways to listen.

I agree with Costa Gröhn that “field recordings induce you to reflect on the world and question its state” (2008, 12). I hope my soundwalk and recordings sonically manifest the original intent, function, and attempted majesty of the Satsop Nuclear Power Station—contemplative, dramatic, peaceful, dynamic, uncertain, and dangerous—but without generating the nuclear waste which will infest the earth for a half-million years.

There is more, an *agon*, a struggle afoot. The defiance of my soundwalk and the resulting recording is a Non-Site—a partial, emblematic, relocation of, and response to a place.¹⁵¹ As defined by Robert Smithson in a short essay written in 1968:

The Non-Site (an indoor earthwork) is a three dimensional logical picture that is abstract, yet it represents an actual site in N.J. (The Pine Barrens Plains). It is by this dimensional metaphor that one site can represent another site which does not resemble it—thus The Non-Site. To understand this language of sites is to appreciate the metaphor between the syntactical construct and the complex of ideas, letting the former function as a three dimensional picture which doesn't look like a picture. (1996, 364)

¹⁵¹ Montgomery (2009, 147) notes that Licht (2007, 75-85) connects Smithson's concept and the ideas of other Land artists such as Walter de Maria to the sound work of Westerkamp, Bill Fontana, and Maryanne Amacher. I drew a parallel connection in 2006, before Licht's book was published and amidst of a revival of Smithson's ideas in my own community.

While Smithson made the metaphorical, metonymic leap with documents, maps, and sculptures of constrained raw materials, I use sound. Like any story, a recording is a performed memory culled and becoming something else—a recollection, a keynote, a forgettable distraction, a powerful experience, a brief diversion... His viewers look, I hope mine listen. In both cases, the work is not created by looking at the image or listening to the sound but by also imagining where it came from, what your senses experience, and perhaps visiting the site itself—or somewhere similar. Smithson speculates

It could be that ‘travel’ in this space is a vast metaphor. Everything between the two sites could become physical, metaphorical material devoid of natural meanings and realistic assumptions (1996, 364).

The briefest—and I think the most humble and heroic—Non-Site was made by one person, popularly dubbed “Tank Man,” who tried to block a column of tanks after the Tiananmen Square Protest of 1989 was crushed by the Chinese military (Makinen 2014).¹⁵² Beyond any and all reasonable assumptions, this futile act stands as a synecdoche for what the protesting students at Tiananmen and the world had hoped would happen in the People’s Republic of China, though only millions of Tank People could truly upend the regime there (or anywhere else).

What lies between the Non-Site of my soundwalk and the Site itself, Satsop? Certainly not “the nuclear sublime” as enunciated by Frances Ferguson in her eponymous 1984 article as “continuous with the notion of nuclear holocaust: to think

¹⁵² Despite the sobriquet, the identity and gender of “Tank Man” remains unknown.

the sublime would be to think the unthinkable and to exist in one's own nonexistence" (Ferguson 1984, 7). Today, the sites of atomic testing and atrocities, the "landscapes of fear" hauntingly captured by photographer Peter Goin in the 1980s (Goin 1991, xix) are no longer accompanied by headlines of Cold War conflict, nervous pop song lyrics ("You're about as easy as a nuclear war"¹⁵³), and classroom drills of "duck and cover" mocked in the 1982 film *The Atomic Café*. The recent concept of the "nuclear uncanny," articulated by Joseph Masco as existing "in the material effects, psychic tension and sensory confusion produced by nuclear weapons and radioactive materials" (Carpenter 2016a, 9), is not germane because Satsop is itself a nuclear Non-Site. The cooling towers and the reactor were never finished and never produced radioactive materials.

In his 1991 monograph *Nuclear Landscapes*, Peter Goin lists elements of his photographs—including bleached colors, the intersection of his subject with the horizon, and a vast scalar perspective to capture ruins and wreckage—to reconcile aesthetics and content (Goin 1991, xxii). Goin worried that the beauty of such images might muffle or nullify the message of his work, which is to comment critically on atomic and nuclear testing by iterating countless images of desolation in his book.

The document of my soundwalk and listening, *To the Cooling Tower, Satsop* contains analogous phonographic strategies that parallel Goin's photography: A willful range of recording fidelities, from high- or at least consistent fidelity to technically inept documentation which reflects a remote, unlikely and in many ways ugly setting; the

¹⁵³ This lyric is from a song by Duran Duran, "Is there something I should know?," which was a top 5 single in the UK, US, Canada, Australia, and Ireland in 1983.

intersection of my corporeal movement with the recording; and an expansive, uninterrupted 45-minute soundwalk where my body is part of the sounding instrument of the tunnel.

“A field recording is a future history of a non-existent present,” declares Aaron Ximm in the liner notes to his compact disc *Rockets of the Mekong* (2003). Given the ongoing avalanche of media making in Western culture, Ximm’s declaration is optimistic, but hints at a question. Could the vast metaphor of my journey in the tunnel transcend historical time as speculative future history?

“Poets,” decreed Shelley in his essay “A Defence of Poetry” “are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present” (Shelley 1904, 90). My exploration may be an unwitting rehearsal or a prophecy of what our unknowing descendants will do when confronting (remnants of) nuclear power, blind to the contamination remaining at many nuclear power stations and waste repositories such as WIPP.

As an albeit faint and feeble echo of the protest by Sister Rice and her comrades, my worming under the fence at Satsop might further the notion that no property is forbidden to artistic investigation, even nuclear facilities which “forbid visual recording of its sites and operations” (Carpenter 2016b, 15). Perhaps our society needs to build places for solo contemplative journeys that favor ears over the eyes. Just as “some soundwalks shift power relationships between artists and audiences” (McCartney 2014, 214), a soundwalk can also shift the power relationship between a

place and a person. Property is a perception. And though the presence of one person might be comparatively a mere ghost, a negligible presence, I believe sound and listening can re-imagine and re-intend any location, no matter the original purpose of the space. Utopias must be first imagined then fashioned. My journey through the tunnel was an instance of utopian listening

sensible and sensitive, enables the listening subject to find new possibilities. It takes part in societal change; it is open to the unknown and the foreign; it is always concerned with relations between individuals. The consciousness must be open to combinations of feelings and not only one state of mind at a time. Yet, this kind of listening has to be developed, since dominating cognitive patterns make open listening impossible, and the act of listening is too often dominated by sight and ideology. To listen is to be open. (Wallrup 2015, 178)

Utopian listening charts an edgeless map of possibilities. I find another Non-Site within myself. Across Smithson's vast metaphor, the true 'travel' is the distance between what I did and what I must do next. Which is and must be, somehow, more.

Conclusion

What is activist sound?

This conclusion summarizes my research findings and this dissertation's contributions to knowledge.

While explicating a representative selection of my unfolding practice in field recording and phonography from 2008 to 2018—*N30: Live at the WTO Protest November 30, 1999* (2008); *Favorite Intermissions* (2008); and *To the Cooling Tower, Satsop* (2015)—I have formulated a typology and critical framework, “activist sound,” for identifying field recordings and field recording-based sound works as a form of protest.

In “Towards Activist Sound,” I derive three modes of activist sound from my analysis of *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* (DeLaurenti 2008b): critical resistance material; self-reflexive earwitnessing; and utopian listening. The two other projects discussed in this dissertation, *Favorite Intermissions* (DeLaurenti 2008c); and *To the Cooling Tower, Satsop* (DeLaurenti 2015a), intersect and expand as well as complicate the possibility of activist sound as a critical framework and useful typology.

To the Cooling Tower, Satsop (Ibid), seems to offer little in the way of critical resistance material; its soundscape bears no audible connection to its purported setting, the underground tunnel of an incomplete nuclear power station. However its transgressive nature—trespassing into a restricted, government-owned property—and

its faint allusion to trespassing by anti-nuclear activists suggests that my worming under the fence at Satsop might further the notion that no property is forbidden to artistic investigation, even at nuclear facilities which “forbid visual recording of its sites and operations” (Carpenter 2016b, 15).

Just as “some soundwalks shift power relationships between artists and audiences” (McCartney 2014, 214), a soundwalk can also shift the power relationship between a place and a person. Can one own the land by listening? One outcome of “audile technique” I learned within the tunnel seems applicable: “The space of the auditory field became a form of private property, *a space* for the individual to inhabit alone” (Sterne 2003, 160 italics added). Here, Berger’s notion of symbolic capture “of a city or capital” (1968, 755) can be translated—as protesters have done with offices, bridges, roadways, etc. since the Civil Rights Movement (Branch 1988; Boyd and Mitchell 2012)—to the tunnel at Satsop.

To the Cooling Tower, Satsop is self-reflexive, though not verbally and not by showcasing audibly multiple recording fidelities. Instead, the recording is corporeally self-reflexive, mainly in the presence of the recordist’s slapping footsteps and tapping cane (DeLaurenti 2015a, *passim*), I do, in the words of Andra McCartney “use microphones as prostheses, extending listening, and providing both a recording of a sound experience as well as the possibility of reflection on that sonic experience” (2002, 1). However those prostheses add the “sound experience” of making my body audible and at times desperately so.

In *To the Cooling Tower, Satsop* (DeLaurenti 2015a), it is possible that utopian listening emerges and “enables the listening subject to find new possibilities” (Wallrup 2015, 178) in the use of property and perhaps the notion of soundwalking itself. The single 45 minute-long track enfolds the listener. As the spirit of utopian listening “is always concerned with relations between individuals” (Wallrup 2015, 178), the duration of the work and its palpable emergence from the tunnel (and the end of the album) may be transformative.

To the Cooling Tower, Satsop (DeLaurenti 2015a) suggests another aspect of activist sound. Makers of activist sound may, at some point, need to make a sonic testament to their own activist commitment, one that functions exclusively as a private call to action, in this case the chapter’s final sentence: “the true ‘travel’ is the distance between what I did and what I must do next. Which is and must be, somehow, more.” Fashioning such a private call to action may function as form of self-care, a hermetic refuge to revisit and recover from inevitable setbacks and defeats.

Favorite Intermissions (DeLaurenti 2008c) mines a rich vein of critical resistance material. The compact disc posits the potential to release additional seemingly ancillary recordings of orchestra intermissions, warm-ups, and tunings reframed as music. In addition, my techniques of surreptitious recording and mobile movement offer a low-cost model for capturing sound where recording is forbidden or frowned upon.

The extensive media-generated publicity of *Favorite Intermissions* (Ibid) also serves as a reminder that critical resistance material requires dissemination outside of ordinary, expected networks to be useful—and that diffusing such material is incredibly difficult, akin to winning the lottery with a provocative idea slightly bettering the odds of random numbers.

Favorite Intermissions (Ibid) presents several aspects of self-reflexive earwitnessing too, most notably the well-meaning interrogation directed toward me in *Holst*

Hitherto:

Do you wish you were up there playing something? Do you play an instrument? It's kind of [indecipherable) projecting yourself on stage... (Ibid, 10'03" to 10'17")

This precious interaction is the album's only instance of polyvalent address, addressing and implicating me as well as the listener. The result is a momentary one-on-one relational meeting where actions, values, and ideas are probed and provoked within the soundscape of an orchestral intermission.

The audio of *Favorite Intermissions* reveals a chance to reassess the literacy required to understand the concert through utopian listening. The orchestra concert becomes parallel yet coincident universe where traditional concert goers attend for a steady diet of Brahms and Bruckner while adventurous listeners arrive early for the warm-up and rush to the stage at intermission to hear “even *more* music” (DeLaurenti 2004, 22) amid the pleasant background of an ignorable repertoire of orchestral warhorses. This soundscape harbors a model for political settlement, a soft-border solution for

contested spaces. Two worlds can overlap the same territory while sensory focus rooted in focal attention relegates the other world to the background.

Summary: traits of activist sound

Generally, my proposed exemplars of activist sound suggest the following traits:

- Activist sound embeds a protest within a protest; at least one form of protest is generally discernible by a set of listeners.
- Paratexts such as titles, graphics, and texts not only supplement but shape the reception and meaning of the work.
- Paratexts also import limitations rooted in language, distribution, and media format (compact disc, streaming media, etc.) into activist sound.
- Makers of activist sound create a mission statement, a private sonic refuge which may be talismanic, yet impenetrable to other listeners.
- Activist sound offers multifarious uses as critical resistance material for training, education, research or more aggressive uses such as propaganda, disinformation, and warfare.
- Activist sound welcomes the risk of not being (or becoming) art.
- Activist sound employs self-reflexive earwitnessing, somehow alerting the listener to the evident construction and subjective (or polyvalent) viewpoint(s) embedded in the work.
- Activist sound evokes utopian listening through functioning as critical resistance material or by welcoming critique of the work through self-reflexive earwitnessing. Welcoming any entryway that opens the ears to listening,

utopian listening functions as a one-on-one relational meeting. Utopian listening to activist sound remaps the listener's sense of the soundscape, events and signals, and ultimately the self.

Further questions for activist sound

One theorist examining three case studies for a possible typology and critical framework is merely a beginning. Further questions await me and anyone else planning to continue theorizing activist sound. In his seminal work *Noise*, Jacques Attali describes "existing theories of music" as a disappointing "succession of innumerable typologies" which "are never innocent" (Attali 2009 [1977], 18).

I concur that my quest for activist sound is hardly innocent; it is rooted in an impossible question. One duty of the artist is to ask impossible questions and then suggest possible answers. As Sun Ra proclaimed, "The possible has been tried and failed; now I want to try the impossible" (Szwed 1997, 192). My investigation of activist sound can be distilled into one question: Can listening save the world?

More questions await me and future researchers: Cell phone recordings by African-Americans in the United States document police abuse, often with uncertain images confirmed with sound: What is the relationship of activist sound to images? Can songs produced in the recording studio tally as activist sound? How is activist sound limited by language? Is there a definitive method to trace the incipience, absorption, persistence, and evaporation of meaning in activist sound?

Contributions to knowledge

- Three sound works of substantive length and form, *N30: Live at the WTO Protest* (DeLaurenti 2008b); *Favorite Intermissions* (DeLaurenti 2008c); *To the Cooling Tower Satsop* (DeLaurenti 2015a), offered and discussed as examples of phonography
- History of the term “soundscape” entwined in the writings of Michael Southworth and R. Murray Schafer
- Critiques of Kelman’s and Ingold’s objections to the term “soundscape”
- Expository history of the term “earwitness”
- Brief history of the term “phonography” and its multiple definitions
- Early history and profile of the phonography listserv
- Comparison of phonography as practiced by members of the phonography listserv in the early 2000s with canonical makers of soundscape compositions, Barry Truax and Hildegard Westerkamp
- Examination of my practice of phonography and its characteristics
- Eyewitness account of field recording at the protest against the WTO Ministerial Conference in Seattle on November 30, 1999
- Examination of the role and function of chants (in American English) at political protests
- Outline of surreptitious recording techniques for *Favorite Intermissions*
- Critical framework of activist sound for identifying recordings as a form of protest

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Colophon: Sources

Written for this dissertation

Abstract	250
Introduction	2,500
On Phonography	13,350
Intermissions with the Orchestra	12,000
Conclusion	1,500
Total words	29,600

Author's published texts

Prologue: The Soundscape	6,700
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Guest Artist lecture at Harvard University, November 29, 2018

Towards Activist Sound	20,350
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DeLaurenti 2000a; DeLaurenti 2000b

From "Who needs it?" to "Three Modes"

DeLaurenti 2014b; DeLaurenti 2015b; DeLaurenti 2016

From "Phonography and Protest" to "The soundscape of protest"

Paper, College Art Association Annual Conference, Washington, DC, February 5, 2016

From "Three Modes" to "Conclusion"

Guest Artist lecture at Harvard University, November 30, 2018

From "N30: An acronym and a protest" to "Who needs it?"

Intermissions with the Orchestra	550
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DeLaurenti 2004; DeLaurenti 2008c

Liner notes, "Intermissions with the Orchestra," included with compact disc

A Length of Sound	8,600
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Paper, Sonic Contestations of Nuclear Power, Princeton University, October 23, 2015

Paper, American Musicological Society Conference, Vancouver, BC, November 3, 2016

Total words	36,200
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Total word count	65,800
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Author's published sound works on the USB drive

N30: Live at the WTO Protest November 30, 1999 (DeLaurenti 2008b)

Favorite Intermissions: Music Before and Between Beethoven-Stravinsky-Holst (DeLaurenti 2008c)

To the Cooling Tower, Satsop (DeLaurenti 2015b)