

WFAE 2011 PAPER SESSION (11):

“Acoustic Ecology and Music Analysis.”

Thursday, 6/10/2011—15:45 - 16:30 -- Ionian Academy, Corfu

Session Chair: Ioannis Zannos¹

Title of Presentation: *“Crossing listening paths through space, place and location – soundscape works of Serbian artist Igor Stangliczky.”*

Abstract:

The title of my paper derives from the theoretical discourse of Joanna Demers about spatial dimension of sound, in context of ambient, soundscape and field recording practices. She introduces the concept of site speaking about sound as spatial or situated phenomenon, which “entails not only the environments in which sound propagates, but also those that listeners physically and metaphorically occupy”. The idea of site thus refers on three spatial models: space (large-scale sites that could be physical, mental, or cultural in nature), place (local sites managed by interpersonal, ecological, or political relationship; implies reflection on the conditions that produce sound), and location (physical placement of listeners and sound object). According to Demers, sound could transmit information about space, place and location, bearing different messages embodied during the listening process. Thus, the listener, but also the author of one sound work, has the possibility to pass different ways of perception, and afterward to cross different listening paths.

While Demers elaborates represented concept on the example of different genres, I will try to realize this concept on the example of the poetics of one author, a Serbian multimedia artist Igor Stangliczky. My aim is to elaborate how Stangliczky created/evoked different listening sites through his three sound projects based on the soundscape method. A place paradigm will be analyzed through his work *Tenebrae* (2007) based on the sounds of the city of Belgrade, recorded during the night in the silent atmosphere of wood Kosutnjak, at the suburb of town. He actually use found sounds as documentary footage, making a possibility to tell a story about ecological, social, historical, or cultural dynamic of specific place. The practice of interaction with the location – acoustical (includes the spatial characteristic of an environment) or thematic (in the sense of incorporation of aspects of its history, culture, ecology), Stangliczky develops in work *Danube* (European Sound Delta project, 2008), making the listening journey down the Danube

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from Belgrade, over Vukovar, to Budapest. The third example represent Stnagliczky's album Cyan City (2010), established on the recorded found sounds, electronic and acoustic guitar, with the idea to evoke a slow and calm ambient. Thus, we could follow the notion of sound which can create space, but not only one specific, physical space, but also psychological, drawing on the idea of humility through the music.

AUTHOR

Biljana Sreckovic, Assistant for the field of musicology, Faculty of Music in Belgrade, Serbia

Biljana Srećković (1982, Belgrade) is an assistant for the field of musicology, Department of Musicology, Faculty of Music, University of Arts in Belgrade. At the same institution, she is attending the third year of doctoral studies. She publishes papers for national musical magazines, such as New Sound and Third program. Her studies include electroacoustic music, with particular focus on the interdisciplinary researches of contemporary musical practices. Besides that, she is also interested in philosophy, sociology, esthetics and theory of art. Currently, she is working on her PhD thesis based on critical review of relations between music and sound art.

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Title of Presentation: *“On Xenakis and acoustic ecology.”*

Abstract

Iannis Xenakis is a composer who expressed a great interest in natural phenomena; the natural paradigm shaped a large part of his musical works as well as his theoretical texts. The aim of this paper is to make apparent a certain affinity that exists between Xenakis' musical - theoretical thinking and the acoustic ecology's intentions. This affinity is apparent in different levels and on various areas of Xenakis' interests:

In his instrumental music, we can find sonorities inspired from, or referring to, acoustic natural phenomena. In his electroacoustic works, the sonic material is often recordings of "concrete" sounds, or other sonorities that evoke the sounds of nature, like earthquakes, and thunderstorms, but also environmental sounds due to human activity like sounds of jet planes, crashing railroad cars, ...

He was very interested in the relations between soundscapes and landscapes. These relations guided him to sonic spatialization researches, but also to the transfer from visual to aural (Metastaseis, UPIC...), and in contrary, from aural to visual (Tourette, Philips Pavilion...). The Polytopes and the Diatope are paradigms of "alloys" between optic and acoustic diffusions.

In his theoretical writings, both musical and philosophical, he often refers to the sounds of nature. His main interest goes to mass natural acoustic phenomena, to "galaxies", or "clouds" of sounds as he calls them, like "the collision of hail or rain with hard surfaces", "the song of cicadas" etc. In a more abstract level, the constitution of these sound masses, the "game" between order and disorder, will first guide him to mathematic probabilities

and to "stochastic" music. Other compositional techniques, mainly inspired from a reflection on nature will follow, like arborescences, Brownian motion, and others. Large philosophical abstractions exploited by Xenakis, like Determinism-Indeterminism, also have their sources in the relationship between music and nature.

AUTHOR

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Kostas Paparrigopoulos is musicologist, PhD in Musicology from the Department of Music Studies - University of Athens. He graduated from the Department of Music - Université Paris VIII and the Institut d'Urbanisme de Paris. He currently teaches in the Department of Music Technology and Acoustics - Technological Educational Institute of Crete. His research interests are mainly in the music from the mid-20th century, especially the music of Iannis Xenakis and John Cage. He is member of the Hellenic Society for Acoustic Ecology, affiliated organization of World Forum for Acoustic Ecology. In the field of his interests, he has published research articles and has participated in related conferences and other events.

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Title of Presentation: *"Evolutionary theory in composition: Works by Biles, Waschka, Xenakis, and Miranda."*

Abstract:

Natural living systems have long been desirable models for scientists to study, and the development of computer techniques makes it possible to simulate or mimic their processes as complex as evolution. In recent decades, and in keeping with this trend, Dawkins's analogy of the theoretical context that connects biology to other scientific fields and to the study of music has inspired composers to apply systematic methodology to their compositional processes, and has provided new perspective for listeners seeking to delve into unexplored domains in more complex and elaborate ways. The evolutionary approach to music is not only the borrowing of concepts from the language of biology, but it is also the interaction of two areas. Such interaction has helped produce new compositional processes and expand musical territories as a way of the sonic embodiment of evolutionary ideas.

In this paper, evolutionary or biologically inspired compositions by four composers – Al Biles, Rodney Waschka, Iannis Xenakis, and Eduardo R. Miranda – are examined to determine how evolutionary theory influences or reflects each composer's view. Biles and Waschka employ their own systems that are based on genetic algorithms in creating music, such as JenGem and JenDash, and Xenakis and Miranda relate cellular automata to their own compositional ideas. The four composers' works were selected as clear demonstrations of evolutionary theory as a musical application both with practical success in terms of performances and in terms of conceptual recognition as evolutionary music. The focus of my discussion will be on each

composer's compositional techniques, the method of relating compositional ingenuity to biological aspects, and its consequent benefits and limitations. The evolutionary approach is generally based on algorithmic or systematic methodologies that composers choose when making their compositional decisions. Accordingly, the evaluation of their compositions will not be free from dispute when exploring systematic perfection and artistic creativity. In addition, the discussions of their works imply that genetic algorithms and cellular automata are based on laws of nature which have coexisted with music throughout its history.

AUTHOR

Youngmy Cho, Ph.D. Student, Duke University

Youngmi Cho is a composer in the Ph. D. program at Duke University, currently conducting her dissertation research with Scott Lindroth. Her music has been performed in Korea and in US venues including South Central Graduate Music Consortium, TIMARA/CCRMA workshops, New Music Festival at UNCG, Hawaii International Conference, and recently in France and Italy for contemporary music festivals. Cho received the Arts Technology Student Award for an audio/video installation. Before attending Duke, Cho studied piano and composition with Cheong-Ik Chang at Seoul National University in Korea, and earned a Master of Science in Arts Technology from Illinois State University.

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