

# EXTENDED MUSIC - "OUT IN THE OPEN"

## ("Lammasmerizing" listenings)

*Jérôme Joy*

### 1. — Spaces & Expanses — (after the essay by Bastien Gallet)

Around and through places, all hypothetically listening spaces, there are sounding expanses that are played, or fortuitous plays or ambiances;

A listening situation is a conglomerate of sites, each revealed by the sounds that stretch until they vanish in time, and in the distance that separates us from them;

The expanse of a sound is represented by its spreading in a space;

Emissions of sounds remain, most of the time, localized, drawing acoustic perimeters distinguished by reflecting and reverberating surfaces among which, we listeners, are positioned still or mobile;

Our listening is established based on the acoustic variations of sound intensity (and expanse) revealing the distances between our listening station and the production of sounds, more or less close by or distant, and also based on the modulated differences stemming from the acoustic extents echoed by the sites;

Our listening is made of these permanent acoustic modulations;

The sonic ambiance of a place is represented by the endlessly fluctuating entanglement of these spaces in our listening perimeter; sounds, above or below the constantly changing atmosphere of a place, use such reverberations (and echoes and repercussions) in order to be distinguished and build a listening variation;

When we select our listening station, we place ourselves in the crossing of acoustic spaces that echo through places and also on our shoulders and our bodies;

Our listening is usually confined to rooms and locations possessing acoustics determined by the walls surrounding them as perimeters of reverberation; our music, our shows are generally independent of such spaces;

They can be reproduced in any location without taking into account the negligible variations or the distinctive properties of each place, and without consideration of the listeners' positions and courses;

Distances are absorbed in order to remain homogeneous and also to set a listening based on the slight variations of intensity whose scale remains widespread whatever the location of the listeners and the spacing between them;

The duration of the sounds is also accentuated at the start and at the end of emission between two silences, the silence beforehand and the silence afterwards, both more or less identical and neglected or negligible signatures of the site's acoustics;

The common duration between the beginning and the end of a listening indicates the musical duration and the making of music, without any input of the acoustic memory of a place and the soundscape which turn this place into a listening site crossed and traveled through: the listener's position is more or less momentary and a located station of a listening modulated by scales of distance and duration;

In this common case, music can overlook such reverberations and the listening is made without mundane acoustics;

The listener's station is independent upon his travels and wanderings through the soundscape created by the distances and durations of the incidental and locations of everyday life;

Most of the time, distance listening is proscribed and condensed to the commonly accepted average distance in our auditoriums and such average distance rescinds ambiances, remoteness and spacing between the listeners;

The allocation of sounds is bound by a "perimeter" in a face-to-face topography (the stage, the audience) and momentarily prescribed to a duration of musical listening;

The durations are advisedly determined;

The most relevant musical intent would aim to saturate and "watermark" the place of the music concert which is set on its walls and comfortable acoustics in order to make the listening critical, in other words, to make it distinct from the listening of other resonant, spatial and temporal spaces;

Our listening is constant and not only limited to the places dedicated for listening; they relentlessly build circuits and relationships between the soundscape and the places, through our travels and the

mobile sounds from our surroundings and sounds played;

This creates a shared listening connected to our decisions of making ourselves available to the listening and to point out listening stations to other listeners;

Listening refers to offering an undetermined situation, to be assessed together, and such situation creates a circuit, a relationship among us, through the intricate soundscape crossed by us;

Listening indicates a critical attention, in other words an attention that reveals the surroundings, the soundscape and durations and suggests a slow down and slowness of our crossing spaces and moments: the attention to the temporary patterns of our time-passing, both individual and collective;

When, instead of the built walls of our auditoriums, we use other locations, such as non-prescribed ones or those already existing in our environments, thus we suggest the listening of other spaces and expanses and other variations of the soundscape which, at first, seem too eccentric and unusual for conducive listening;

However, then a second dimension of the soundscape appears, extending the music to other locations and acoustics through other methods of acoustic propagation;

The first example, that we will not develop here, relates to interrelating distant spaces and locations through the transportation of sounds and suggests a distance and live listening of acoustic spaces initiated by other disconnected locations from our listening position. Such acoustic spaces, purposely tinted by their space of origin, reverberate in our space through the process of electroacoustic diffusion: it is the case of networked music and the networking of acoustic spaces, which create a fabricated soundscape and a simultaneous listening of acoustic spaces (distant spaces as well as the multiple spaces of the listeners) all the while allowing to foresee, through such process, a chain of acoustic and sound pick-ups and feedbacks, through distance transmission and the diffusion of the ambiances and sounds between these spaces, and a chance to create "dubbed" and simultaneous electroacoustic configurations producing a virtual place made of the original locations;

Parallel to this example of listening experiences linked to our current apparatuses of sound transmission, a second case is represented by "outdoor" sound expanses created from the undetermined entwinement of surroundings plays and sounds, contextual and fortuitous, using the multiple listening situations of the listeners spread and wandering freely in a site with heterogeneous spaces;

Such configuration of concerts and sound and music performances plays upon the variations of distance and acoustic diffusion; in this case, the listening experiences become multiple, differentiated and localized: we need to lead our listening and direct and adjust ourselves in the opportunity presented;

However unusual it may seem, we are already familiar with this listening position and come across it everyday as it leads us to "turn the distances and travels in acoustic spaces into instruments of playing situations" and modulate, live, the conditions of our own listening: the social relationship created in the situation of listening together from individual listening locations and experiences creates this common musical moment, the moment of a listening event;

Music spreads, outside walls, in the occasional dimensions linked to open spaces and long and slow temporalities: it generates a wandering listening experience in order to explore the various acoustic spaces and extents, as well as the sounds produced creating them, it can be mobile and intently circulate in order to generate variations of intensity and remoteness;

Acoustic movements and localizations, associated with the wandering of listening experiences in order to adjust our perception in an open space, lead to a situation of assessing "together". Decisions are made concerning listening positions (the spaces between sounds and acoustic wakes, reverberations and echoes of the said sounds) and comprehension (seizing) of acoustic moments and spaces;

We may not all hear the same thing, even though we recognize or distinguish the source or the cause of a sound transmission; some elements may still not be perceived because they are too remote or "concealed" and filtered through other spaces;

The reason why music becomes a series of sound expanses, besides the unusual acoustic and sound transmissions and spreading in the open space and outdoor open acoustics, relates to its opening up to the mix of ambiances and places and to a "musical transformation" of the social space. In other words, music opens up to an attentive and aiming attitude intensifying our (mutual and individual) consciousness through the listening of what comes to us and the music that we create, fabricate and compose.

Extended music, whether it is "outdoor" or, as we mentioned earlier, transmitted through distance and sound transportation and diffusion systems into other remote acoustic spaces, is neither antagonistic or complementary of the music aimed for concert houses ('Musikhaus' or 'Kammermusik'). Both diffuse various facets of the real and are linked to diverse listening experiences, between a directed listening, intended to perceive everything in space ("panacousticon") and a listening we must direct and adapt, and which will remain, probably partial and wandering, all the while profoundly altering our perception of our environments and our interpretation of the world.

The reason why today I wish to explore the conditions of an extended music, through concerts and performances, most of the time improvised, based on minimum saturation and intensity of acoustic spaces ("merging into the surroundings") and the devices of networked music (or "telemusic") or

distance listening in which the alien, fortuitous and the “set” interfere through the rebuilding of perceptions of distance and spacing, is because it seems to me that music is linked to the fabrication of listening experiences. One needs to explore and experience this fabrication in order to question our surroundings;

The sounds I listened to at Tung O Beach on Lamma island during the *Around* festival organized by soundpocket, based on my past experiences as a listener of “outdoor” shows by Akio Suzuki and the work of Kawai Shiu, have haunted me until now. These sounds mix with my thoughts about extended music that I have just developed above. Both artists, each in her own way, collaborate with the environment and experiment with acoustic expanses.

## 2. — Shakkei

Both events by Suzuki and Shiu are able to modify at the same time our participation as listeners and our perception of what music is made of, between what is being played and what is receiving these sounds played. In the first event, music is a procession and a wandering; in the second one, a distribution and a dissemination. Both events participate in an art of roaming.

In his performances, Akio Suzuki creates wakes of sounds that we are led to follow during an aimless stroll. Successive sounds of stones banged together by the performer reverberate as we walk on the more or less reflective surfaces of the environment, along the narrow path crossing a grass area, then a small hamlet of houses built close together then entering an emerging forest under a canopy. The sounds transmitted while wandering successively light up echoing acoustics. Our own wandering follows the furrow and “groove”, without recording or reading a preliminary sound, and creates acoustic filtering due to the distances and our on-going movement between the transmission and the reception of the sounds struck, which come back to us reverberated and reflected. In some ways, it reminds us of a practice of ambulatory lighting as it stimulates and explores acoustic spaces thorough the soundscape. What is already there becomes real through our wandering and temporary spacing. We interpret these perceptible spaces, occasionally or by seizing the opportunity of the moment and places, when we receive what is already there and manifests itself and reverberates through its multiple fragments and variations, as if they were as many coloured and tinted plans and volumes. Such perception profoundly and permanently alters the topography: the road and the landscape are more complex than they seemed to be at first. Simultaneously, we lose our way and discover new landmarks.

Kawai Shiu's work meant for five instruments (cello, two horns, trombone, violin, played by Hong Kong New Music Ensemble musicians) is played around an abandoned house. A detached house—which translates as ‘pavillon’ in French and also refers to an auricle—and a beach, such a membrane placed side by side to the sea horizon. The whole, as an extension of a small valley, becomes an open-air clearing. The auditorium is progressively built as the piece is played: the musicians move along and progressively spread themselves in the space, as electrons or in clusters. They move from the house to the beach, to the jetty and the coast, and meet together on the esplanade of the house facing the horizon. This movement, of a duration of about thirty minutes creates a powerful pulsation; the listeners divide themselves in the manner of a choir (from the Greek term, ‘choros’), fortuitously creating a ‘chôra’, which here means a temporary set-up of the space. They move along in order to set their listening on the sounds of the instruments responding to each other by phrases and through the echoing between points in the open space. Distances vary constantly between the instrumentalists and between the instrumentalists and the audience. Yet, instead of tearing apart and dissolving the music into some dismemberment and loss in the current acoustic background (the rustle of the waves and the wind), paths and expanses are created that, successively, utilize the acoustic environment (the ambiance) to blend in it. Furthermore, these sound expanses dominate the environment in terms of intensity. Such scattering in space creates an ensemble in the meaning of “playing music together” as the performers and the listeners adjust to each other from a distance, in the same way as the unison and harmonic meetings intensified in the instrumental music made unique by the response and reception times due to the distances and spacing.

Let us set the scene.

This art of fabrication of remote listening meets, by analogy, another art, ‘shakkei’ (which means borrowed scenery). In Japanese tradition, this art refers to the subtle practice of gardening considered as a technique of perception, construction and interpretation of the reality and corresponding to what is called ‘mitate’ (“see like”). This term could be taken to the acoustic field and translated by ‘ototate’ (so surprisingly close to the term ‘Oto date’, ritual of the listening station, designating specific works by Akio Suzuki).

The ‘shakkei’ allows us to become aware of the successive plans integrated in a perspective (such as an outlook, for instance). It offers a mode of conscious decision helping to place an item (for the gardener:

a plant) in a relationship between the foreground and a remote background. The plant in front of you is placed in a composed layout: the bed nearby, organized, and a mountain far away for example. I suggest that extended music and distance listening serve as “clutches” for such situations: through collaborating and borrowing from the distances and experimenting with expanses.

In his article *Making Music Together* (1951), Alfred Schütz analyzed the musical situation of a group of performers and listeners together, orienting themselves from each other using clues and reactions to the interpretation during a musical moment (this is referred to by Schütz as “syntonia”); it is the case of any concert-type event:

“Each action by each performer is not only influenced by the philosophy of the composer and his relationship to the public, but also, and in a reciprocal manner, it is based on the experiences in the external and internal moments of the other performers: [...] consequently each of them must take into account what the other one has to simultaneously perform. [...] Any music chamber instrumentalist knows the extent to which a setting preventing them from seeing each other can be disturbing. [...] Under all such circumstances, the performer and the listener tune to each other.”

We could also refer to more ancient works such as *On Listening to Lectures* (from the Greek ‘Peri tou akouein’) from Plutarch and also some extracts from the Books 1 and 3 of Montaigne’s *Essays*, including:

“The word belongs for half to the one who speaks it and for the other half to the one who listens.”

Whether in the case of “outdoor” music or in the more contemporary case of networked music which involves into its system of fabrication (or execution) and composition, the specific conditions of live performances and the simultaneous (tele-)presence from a distance (‘hic et nunc’, ‘illic et simul’, Latin expressions that means “here and now”, “there and at the same time”), the challenge is to explore the conditions of the allocated and distributed instrumentation and the systems of performance, composition and improvisation created in the context of distant multi-spatial configurations: the locations of the public, the audience, the listener and the musicians adjust to each other on the question of participation and syntonia.

It seems essential not to ignore either the interpretative intervention of the listener as a creative and interpretative act. The listener actively participates in the transformation of music into an “environmental” experiment of a new genre, which is absolutely an aesthetic experience, performed beyond the distracted wandering in spaces. In the case of our daily listening through devices, it goes beyond the simple operation of dials and switches (Glenn Gould) and steering of listening devices or software pre-programmed functions (Christophe Kihm).

### 3. — Listening

Historical examples demonstrate how music sometimes distracts us from our environments : strolls during specific concerts in the groves or under a canopy, orchestras set in gardens or in music pavilions, areas set up through a soniferous garden consisting of “auto-resonant” (or “autophone”) instruments played by the water and the wind (eolian harp, musical automats, ‘shishi-odoshi’ or deer scarer, ‘sozu’ or water fountain, ‘fuurin’ or wind bells, etc.), and even imitating instruments (bird organs, such as ‘merline’ and ‘serinette’, which imitated respectively the timbre of blackbirds and of finches, etc.). Let us explore the history of music from the point of view of its dialogue with the fortuitous and contingent, considered as an extension of the musical means of creation and diffusion.

A whole series of experimental dimensions linked to instrumentation represents part of the conditions of contemporary music and determines the challenges of a musical horizon: the horizon operated by Karlheinz Stockhausen in *Mikrophonie (I et II)* (1964/1965) in which a musical piece is created through experimenting with an instrument, by David Tudor in *Rainforest* (1968/1976) and John Cage in *Cartridge Music* (1960) concerning the integration of live music in the composition of a piece, or even, the challenges launched by initiatives considering the recording as a support of creation and investigation of transmission of live music (for instance ‘GrammophonMusik’ created by Alexander Dillmann in 1910 and Heinz Stuckenschmidt in 1925 and carried out in 1929 by Paul Hindemith and Ernst Toch before Pierre Schaeffer starts the adventure of concrete music, then electroacoustic and acousmatic music).

Such experimentations are rich by their characters and contents and they seem connected to another question, concerning the intent of playing and resounding the real in a musical piece: experimentations using borrowed sounds in the works of Charles Ives, Gustav Mahler, even Béla Bartók (and even, more remote in the past, in specific works by Jean-Philippe Rameau using in the shape of instrumental

additions some acoustic images of chaos and storms), and those, before the recent access to sampling techniques, by John Cage (*Roaratorio* in 1979), Luciano Berio (*Sinfonia*, 1968), Karlheinz Stockhausen (*Telemusik*, 1966, *Hymnen*, 1967) and in electroacoustic music (the series of *Presque Rien* (Almost Nothing) by Luc Ferrari, 1967-1998), and the very recent works linked to specific sonification techniques to produce resonant and musical material from variations of data picked up in the surroundings (the works by Charles Dodge and Andrea Polli). Similarly, taking into account the environment in a piece found its peak in *4'33"* by John Cage when on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1952 this “noisy” piece had been interpreted by David Tudor in a concert hall (the Maverick Concert Hall in Woodstock, New York) whose back door was directly open to the outside, allowing the fortuitous dubbing of surrounding sounds from the outside and sounds inadvertently produced by the public to “compose” the music.

Experimentations concerning the use of space and acoustic multi-dimensions that may develop in a musical piece, have existed in European music for several centuries - one example : ‘Cori Spezzati’ (separated and allocated choirs) by Giovanni Gabrieli (1557-1612). Today, the development of instrumental dimensions linked to space is expressed through the appropriation and musicalization of computerized techniques of spatialization and those linked to networks and streaming techniques. Regarding the use of distance through the positioning, travel or movement of musicians beyond the walls of a concert hall, in order to create acoustic effects of intensity and accentuation, Hector Berlioz in his book *Les Soirées de L’Orchestre* (Evenings with the Orchestra), and more specifically in a fiction titled *Euphonia ou la Ville Musicale* (Euphonia or the Musical City), described monumental concerts of over ten thousand musicians spread through the city. Another example is Charles Ives’ *Universe Symphony* in 1911, uncompleted, for which he imagined several orchestras and instrumental ensembles, each tuned on various harmonic systems and playing simultaneously despite being spread across mountains and valleys. Furthermore, Karlheinz Stockhausen’ works *Sternklang — Parkmusic* (1971) for 5 groups of instrumentalists over a duration of about three hours and *Musik für ein Haus* (1968) consisting of collective compositions simultaneously performed in four rooms of a same house, or even, *Alphabet für Liège* (1972), a work lasting 4 hours spread in fourteen rooms open side by side whereas the listeners were crossing these rooms and wandering (set in the basement of the Exhibition Hall of Liege in Belgium, which was under construction at the time).

More recently, other wandering and ambulatory works (musicians and/or audience) are developed, such as, as Bastien Gallet pointed out, Rebecca Saunders’ works in the series *Chroma* (2003), an instrumental “spatialized” piece utilizing the allocation and distribution of the musicians over various acoustic rooms within the same building. In addition, the Locus Sonus research group explored through networked acoustic spaces the concepts of “field spatialization” and “networked sonic spaces” in which sounds can cross and be transmitted in acoustic spaces of various nature (natural or synthetic, close by or remote: transmission through loud-speakers in a local area, in “outdoor” traveled-through places, streaming transmission in disconnected and distant spaces, intricate transmissions and acoustics between physical and virtual spaces). In these experiments, each space brought its own reverberation qualities and ambiance, according to the position of the listeners who might also have been spread in these various spaces (physical, virtual, mobile, etc.).

#### 4. — Metaphors

Various metaphors present in literature are used for the transportation of distant sounds, recording devices, networked musicians and music: sounds picked up and transported from one place to the next by sponges (Charles Sorel, 1632) or through frozen words (Mandeville, 1356; Balthasar de Castillon, 1528; Rabelais, 1552) —taking care of choosing the season wisely—, or still in a bamboo cane (legend from China), or finally through shafts, trunks and pipes (*New Atlantis*, Francis Bacon, 1627); some interfaces may be invented, such as this globe entwined with imperceptible shafts connected to remote locations of which one can hear the live sound ambiance (*Giphantie* by Tiphaigne de la Roche, 1760), or this keyboard or organ with multiplex microphones, each key switching on microphones spread across the globe, all the keys together playing the world symphony (*Le Roi-Lune* (The Moon-King), Apollinaire, 1916). Interfaces can be replaced by a stream of invented machines and devices, including the “telechromophotophonotetroscope” imagined by Didier de Chousy in *Ignis* (1883) and remote microphone-operated sensors, such as these set up by Télék (*Le Château des Carpathes* (The Castle of the Carpathians), Jules Verne, 1892) and the “telephonoscope” suggested in 1878 by George Daphné du Maurier and imagined by Camille Flammarion in 1894 to connect the Earth to Mars (*La Fin du Monde* (The End of the World)) or allowing to follow live and from a distance the musical or theatre shows (*Le Vingtième Siècle - La Vie Électrique* (The Twentieth Century - The Electric Life), Albert Robida, 1883). In 1875, Jules Verne described a networked concert by the pianist Pianowski playing remotely on pianos situated in various concert houses across the globe (*Une Ville Idéale* (An Ideal City - Amiens in the Year 2000), Jules Verne, 1875). Furthermore, Philip K. Dick imagined “psychokinetic” concerts played and remotely transmitted, without touching the instruments and without any acoustic or electroacoustic

diffusion, by the pianist Richard Kongrosian (*Simulacra*, 1963).

#### Dislocations — Echolocations.

Nowadays, our world is organized in networks; our surroundings have become interconnected and interconnectable, redesigning our outskirts and imminences, as well as our distances and remoteness, through all kinds of communication devices. Our perceptions of space and time are more and more dependent on devices. The development of telephony and radio at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, communication techniques which were invented for the transmission of sounds, parallel to phonography, allowed to raise the almost anthropological challenges linked to sound transmission and distance listening. Supports of listening, vision and writing spread out on the basis of this saturation, nowadays of a digital nature, making our activities inter-operable and connected and increasing our scales of perception and action. We are at the same time “hearers (of absent things)” (‘acousmates’ in French) and microphones, at every place and every moment, hypothetically a receptor and transmitter.

Let us quote this extract from Paul Valéry, from a text titled *La Conquête de l’Ubiquité* (The Conquest of Ubiquity) dated 1928, and based on the future of an all-connected world:

“I do not know whether a philosopher has ever dreamed of a society engaged in the home delivery of Sensitive Reality. [...] Such circumstance, added to the recent progress in the field of transmission means, suggested two technical issues:

1- Make heard in every location across the globe, instantaneously, a musical piece played anywhere.

2- In every location across the globe and instantaneously, replay at will a musical piece.

Such issues are now solved. The solutions become every day more perfect.”

What Paul Valéry also wants to point out is the issue underlined by our devices, which “dismember” us and “distribute” us simultaneously in several locations and moments. Against the speediness and performance of our techniques, is it possible to adopt, with and without these, another pace, slowed down, even stopped or fluctuating unevenly? Is it possible to travel and come back, with circumlocutions and interruptions? In short, is there a time to experiment vastness together?

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