

# Sound Festival

The following is a brief introduction to the coming Sound Festival. We would like to provide an historical perspective to SOUND WORKS, organised by MEDIA-SPACE and supported by the Festival of Perth.

Contemporary Music has contracted in some respects with few of the innovations that marked the early 20th century in evidence today. The 1920's saw a desire to escape from a continual reference to tonality or key as well as sound seen only in the terms of notes. This led to the emergence of the composition of "noise", or "sound" (sound as opposed to music in the form of notes). The idea of the use of noise by composers, led to the important concept of "texture". Texture is the writing of a piece in such a way that it attempts to convey an idea or atmosphere by the use of the "colour" of the instrument rather than its ability to convey an idea.

In some cases a piece consisting only of noises, is an important development. If we begin to use noises in music there is no need to "resolve", to follow one particular noise/chord with another, as in atonality created by overblowing woodwind instruments. The attempts to create new sounds developed a great desire to create instruments which had an almost unlimited range of sounds available to them.

As early as 1913 the composer Luigi Russolo had written his ideas on the use of noise in music. He placed the noises into six categories:

- 1: Bangs, Thunder Claps, Explosions.
- 2: Whistles, Hisses, Snorts.
- 3: Whispers, Murmurs, Gurgling, etc.
- 4: Screams, Cracking, Buzzes
- 5: Sounds from Striking Metal, Stone, Wood, etc.
- 6: Cries, Roars, Sobs, Laughter, etc.

The Futurist group performed a number of concerts in the early part of the century and were an important influence on works by following composers. Scheffer's "Concert of Noises" was greatly admired by the Futurists, and interest was generated by the broadcast of the concert in 1948. Shortly after the broadcast a new group of musicians formed consisting of some important composers in the field of new music. (Henry Cowell, John Cage, etc.)

An extension of the use of noise can also be seen in sound/poetry, a recent development in experimental poetry. Ordinary (legitimate) poetry is made of words, and sound poetry of sounds. Peter Mayer has extended Russolo's 1913 list to 32 speech sounds. (i.e. Yodelling, Tongue-twisters Mouth Music, Babbling and Glibberish.)

During World War II the tape

recorder was beginning to be developed. This gave the composer much greater flexibility. The sound artist with the use of a tape recorder and magnetic tape could, by cutting and splicing the tape, create a collection of recorded sounds existing as an isolated source. Or the tape could be replayed in a repeating loop at the same speed thus altering the

sounds, producing the same sound, or reversing the envelope of the note.

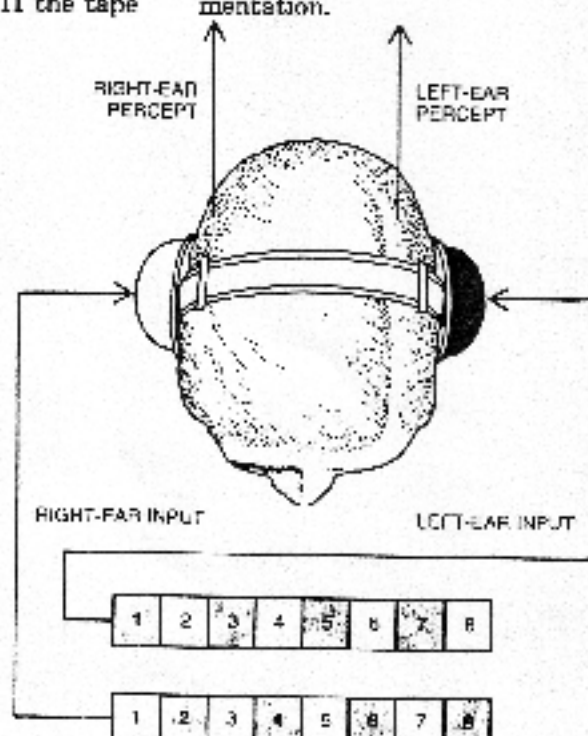
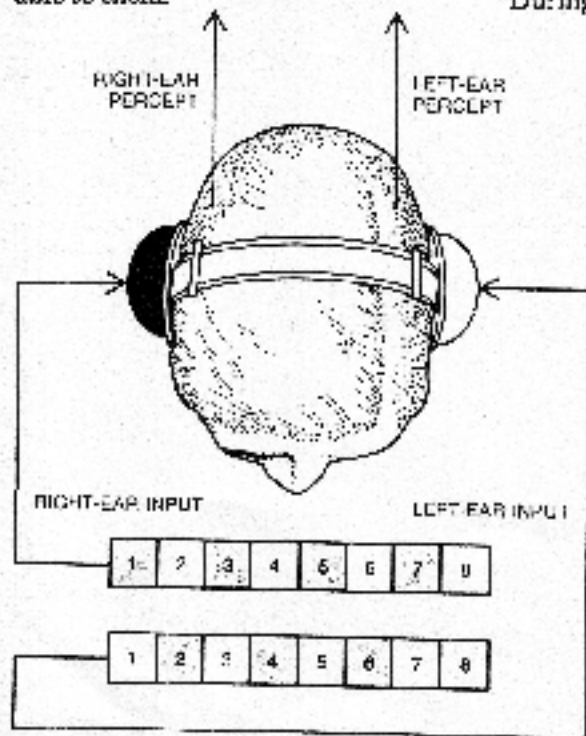
Since that development, sound artists from different backgrounds have found the production and reproduction of sound possible. The decreasing cost and increasing complexity of modern electronics has made sophisticated equipment accessible.

Recently the computer has entered the sound world. (See Praxis M #6, Thomas Kayser "Dark Drums in Dynamo".) The computer can store, mix and create sound, contributing new variations.

The Sound Festival will be held at two separate venues from the 15th of February for one week.

**WHIZBAH:** Hay Street, Perth. Live performances in the evening.

**GALLERY DUSSLEDORF:** Hay Street, Perth. Permanent exhibition of Sound tapes and Documentation.



For more information contact  
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