

A concert of electroacoustic music at the University of Bristol

curated by
Adrian Moore

Wednesday 11th November 2009

This short concert of stereo electroacoustic music demonstrates composers wrestling with the question, ‘how do I work with this sound?’ A number of compositional processes including the contextualisation of one sound by another, the shaping of sound in both fixed and fluid structures, and the dramatic use of space will offer a handle on the real as we listen to the very unreal.

Bernard Parmegiani: *indicatif Roissy*: 1971: 0:07

First used in the French airport in 1974, this very short ‘call to attention’ says a great deal in a very short space of time. It is uplifting and refreshing (especially as you are probably about to be informed of a delay or cancellation) and more ‘musical’ than most sonic identifiers heard today.

Bernard Parmegiani (b.1927) is an acoustic engineer and composer and continues to write electroacoustic music in Paris. He is strongly associated with the Groupe de Recherches Musicales.

Alain Savouret: *Dulcinea from Don Quixotte Corporation*: 1980-81: 4:09

This piece demonstrates variation but not with any subtlety! Its beauty lies in its simplicity. The shapes are clear and the processes laid bare (filtering and time stretching - altering the duration without changing the pitch). The juxtaposition of the sounds creates the humour and connects us with the programme of the work - Don Quixote and Dulcinea as peasant girl, princess, dream. Dul - ci - ne - ahh.

Alain Savouret (b.1942) also worked at the GRM during the 1960s.

Alistair MacDonald: *Equivalence*: 2007: 12:30

MacDonald draws inspiration here from sculptor Carl Andre and photographer Alfred Stieglitz. The series of photos by Stieglitz entitled *Equivalent* shows an obsession with abstraction, an abstraction tending towards forms, lines and colours that could represent the “vibrations of the soul” (after Kandinsky); a theory of listening not worlds away from the idea of reduced listening suggested by Pierre Schaeffer in the 1950s. We have the sound of bricks. Twelve and a half minutes of the sound of bricks. Once we know this we must listen deeper. It is the beauty of the textures that draw us in and allow us to imagine shapes, contours and spaces.

Alistair MacDonald lives and works in Glasgow and is director of the electroacoustic studios at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama.

Beatriz Ferreyra: *Murmureln (Whispering)*: 2003: 4:08

This Radio Berlin commission is a tango that connects Ferreyra’s long standing involvement with musique concrète with her Argentinian roots. The structure here, like in the Savouret shows discrete sounds assembled using a recognisable rhythmic pattern. It is important to note however that each individual sound has a dynamic shape that suggests where in the phrase it should be placed.

Beatriz Ferreyra (b.1937) has had a long association with the GRM and the Institute of Electroacoustic Music at Bourges.

Gilles Gobeil and René Lussier: *Le Duel from Le contrat*: 1996-2003: 2:59

One very small movement from a sixty minute masterpiece. As the title suggests we have a real duel and a musical duel. Gestures are physical and their mirroring in the guitar pure genius.

Gilles Gobeil (b.1954) lives and works in Québec and has collaborated with René Lussier (b.1957) for many years.

Adrian Moore: *Dreaming of the Dawn*: 2004: 14:00

This Groupe de Recherches Musicales commission draws its title from a short poem by Emily Dickinson (used with permission)

Dreams - are well - but Waking's better,

If One Wake at Morn -

If One wake at Midnight - better -

Dreaming - of the Dawn -

Sweeter - the Surmising Robins -

Never Gladdened Tree -

*Than a Solid Dawn - confronting -
Leading to no Day - (Emily Dickinson, c. 1862)*

Large phrases are demarcated by a signature theme but within each phrase, we are taken to different spaces. Pitch (hopefully) stabilises some of the sound images/spaces.

Adrian Moore (b.1969) is a lecturer in music and director of the electroacoustic studios at the University of Sheffield.