



maps and shadows

Noise is the *alter ego*,
Ianus Bifrons.
The *Philosophers' Stone*:
a golden stone is still a stone.

soundscape installation by Giorgio Magnanensi

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In this soundscape installation, recorded sounds from the Sechelt Gravel Pit have been "sculpted", remixed and layered to create a drone-like sound object broadcasted on a 4-speaker setup. Both the framing and the specific context of this project become the relevant aspect of the not-assertive quality of any possible "message". *Listening* here is not about any sentimental reception. The immediate and mediated reality of the place exists in fact autonomously from any kind of imposed directionality. The sound is yes *enhanced* but not *decorated*, and the enhancement contributes to the creation of shifting and variable perceptions of and within the place.

*"It's a paradox that so much of our information and pleasure comes from sound
and yet our culture is so biased toward the visual.
Most of us have views on how our environment should look,
but we could perhaps spend more time thinking about how it sounds."* (Bill Davies)

Listening, hearing is like a dialogue between the inside and the outside; listening like hearing can become a conscious creative activity in which the full body opens to receive and to engage with the multiple dimensions of sound. Aural perception is, together with visual perception, one of the most important channel through which we access knowledge of space, knowledge of our inner space, and active listening becomes an useful tool to compose and embed ourselves in space(s).

Sound art can help us to reconnect to sound in this way, to be more attentive,
to move within sound and place it within "*other*" stories and realities, some time hidden ones.

Is it possible to transform different representations of sound to space, and vice versa?
Is there a point where they collapse into each other?

Sound like space is a place in which we are embedded, in which the sensory experience
of reality and artistic form can finally converge.

Space as a dimension of time implies movement, maps and presence.
Sonorous spaces - like traversable spaces - map our perception of time;
and to light sound should be compared when sound is not just what we hear
but also the medium of our perception.

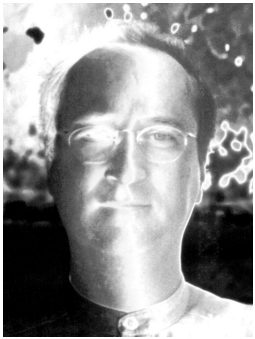
If we understand the close relation here between listening and seeing, sound and light,
then visualizing sound is like understanding that is not about what we *see* as what we *see in*.

Beyond the maps, the shadows imply a presence in time and in space;
and like walking in the city of Zora – one of Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*,
we might recognize a place that no one, having seen it, can ever forget:
[...] "*the city which can not be expunged from the mind is like an armature,
a honey-comb in whose cells each of us can place the things he wants to remember.*" [...]

*"sound/music is more than an object of study: it's a way of perceiving the world;
a tool of understanding... [it is] thus necessary to imagine radically new theoretical forms,
in order to speak to new realities. Sound, the organization of noise, is one such form.
It reflects the manufacture of society; it constitutes the audible waveband of the vibrations
and signs that make up society."* (Jacques Attali)

Giorgio Magnanensi, October 2013

Giorgio Magnanensi



Described by acclaimed composer Franco Donatoni as "... a composer, musician and conductor of great talent and one of the most interesting personalities of the Italian generation", Giorgio Magnanensi (b. 1960) has gained an International reputation winning numerous composition awards and serving as conductor for a number of esteemed Canadian and international new music ensembles. He taught composition Italy (1984–1998), at the School of Music of the University of British Columbia (2000–09) and currently he is lecturer at the School of Music of the Vancouver Community College. Besides his renowned work as artistic director of Vancouver New Music where he has been programming and producing innovative new music events, concert series, and festivals fostering a wide and experimental curatorial approach, he has become "...an increasingly influential figure in Vancouver's developing classical/jazz crossover culture" (Alex Varty). From 2005 he has been regularly invited as Faculty member at the Music & Sound Department of the Banff Centre, and in 2009 he was the recipient of the prestigious Paul D. Fleck Fellowship in the Arts. In 2007 he founded the *LABORATORIO Arts Society* to actively engage in creative work within and for the communities of the Sunshine Coast where he resides with his family.

To create this soundscape installation I worked with the audio samples using various kinds of filtering techniques, granular synthesis and self-generative audio processes, to try sculpting sounds within the dense context of the gravel pit's soundscape. The range of both the audio and dynamic spectrum of the site is very wide and in a few areas quite dense. It is also highly spatialized within the vast surface of the gravel pit. Hearing and listening become here very dynamic activities, enhancing shifting possibilities and spatial mobility. Furthermore, the redundancy of low frequencies in this specific soundscape is very fascinating in many ways. An audio filter in itself, the soundscape of the gravel pit has its own autonomous sculptural qualities. Hearing is actually very well suited to the exercise of sculpture, and such sounds achieve here their potential sculptural identity, simultaneously avoiding the limitation of the discontinued and frontal sequencing of seeing.

Sounds recorded with a ZOOM H4 (wav files 24 bit/98kHz) and "sculpted" with Max/Msp Jitter, MacPOD, Logic Express and various filter combinations. The sounds are broadcasted through a 4 speaker setup.