



*The Newsletter of the Society for Electro-Acoustic Music in the United States,  
providing news, interviews, and announcements.*

Published Three Times a Year

Winter 2015 Issue

## Interview with Kim Cascone

*Kim Cascone responds to questions posed by newsletter editor Steve Ricks and talks about his background, the creative process, meditation, and his current projects.*



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*"The human being knows himself only insofar as he knows the world; he perceives the world only in himself, and himself only in the world. Every new object, clearly seen, opens up a new organ of perception in us."*

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

**Kim Cascone** studied electronic music at the Berklee College of Music and privately at the New School in Manhattan. He founded Silent Records in 1985 and has released more than 50 albums of electronic music on Silent, Sub Rosa, Mille Plateaux, Raster-Noton, Störung and Monotype. Cascone has performed with Merzbow, Keith Rowe, Scanner, John Tilbury, Tony Conrad, Pauline Oliveros and worked as assistant music editor on two David Lynch films. Cascone founded the .microsound list in 1999, has written for MIT Press and Contemporary Music Review and is an advisor for the audio culture journal Interference. His writings are included in many books on sound art.

SR: You mention recognizing at an early age the "power to manipulate sounds with tape recorders – and later on with synthesizers and computers." In your essay ["Transcendigital Imagination: Developing Organs of Subtle Perception"](#) you have some concerns about this relationship—thinking of the sound as the "other" or an outside object. When did your perception change?

KC: My perception began to change after learning to meditate at a Buddhist meditation center in the 70's. I

*continued on page 3*

FROM THE EDITOR



*Hello SEAMUS Members!  
2015 is here, and I hope it's shaping up  
to be a good year for each of you.  
SEAMUS 2015 is coming up soon. Best  
wishes to our conference hosts and to all  
those who will participate and attend.  
You can see a brief note from our hosts  
on this page, and Scott Miller announces  
this year's SEAMUS Award winner in  
his letter on page 4.*

*I'm very excited to present an interview with Kim Cascone in this issue. I've  
admired Kim's work for years and appreciated connecting with the  
microsound.org community several years ago that he helped build. I even  
ended up buying a hydrophone from him, but had never talked with him  
directly about his work. This was a welcome opportunity to engage with  
him and become better acquainted with the philosophies and experiences  
that continue to shape his creations. I hope you like it as much as I do.*

*I'm also happy to include three new CD reviews by our resident critic, Tom  
Demptster, p. 15. If you have recordings you'd like to send his way, please  
contact him via email at [tjdempster@gmail.com](mailto:tjdempster@gmail.com), and make arrangements. I  
hope you enjoy this issue!*

*Sincerely,*

Steve Ricks

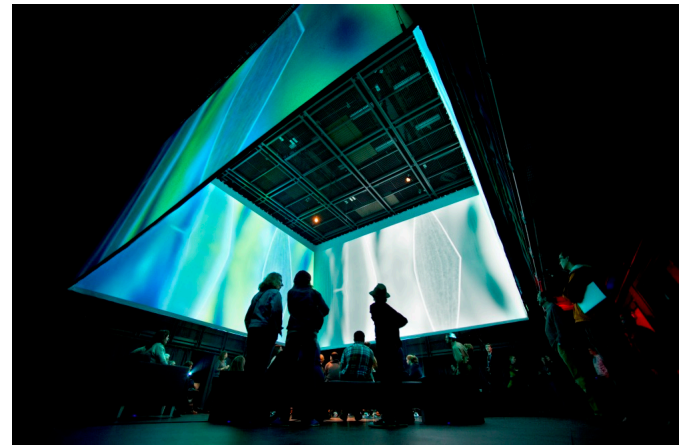
## SEAMUS 2015

### A note from the conference hosts . . .

SEAMUS 2015 is shaping up nicely with an exciting variety of pieces, installations, and papers. We are thrilled by the response to the call for works and papers, and are working hard to organize a thought-provoking and engaging conference. We look forward to seeing you March 26-28 at SEAMUS 2015 in Blacksburg, VA!

<<http://seamus.music.vt.edu>>

Ivica Ico Bukvic, Eric Lyon, and Charles Nichols,  
SEAMUS 2015 National Conference Co-Hosts



Virginia Tech's Cube (above)  
and  
Moss Arts Center (below)



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noticed a subtle shift mainly in my perception of sound events. Sound shifted from being a sensory to a supersensory experience. This happened while I was in music school so the changes were more noticeable because I was immersed in a sonically rich environment. I began to sense the "essence" or "psychic signature" that leaked through sounds which I sensed as "soundshapes." Instead of sound being a sensory event which happened to me I found that sound acted more as a conduit or a portal.

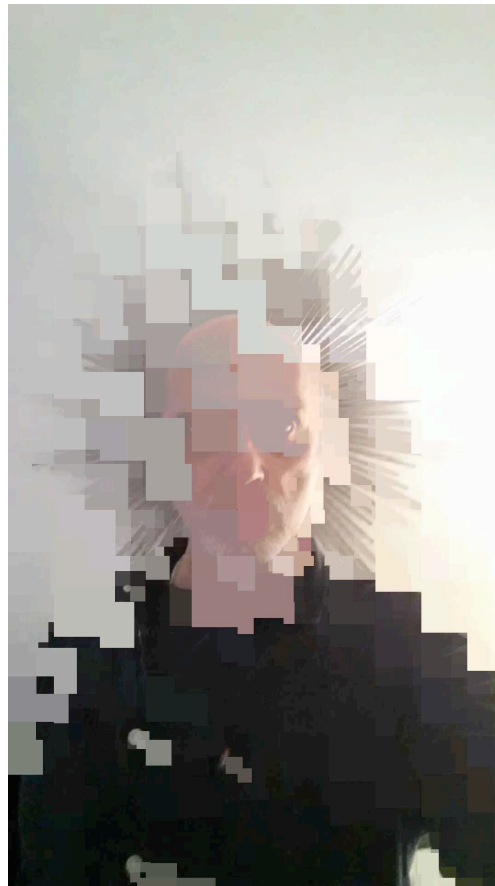
Frits Julius, a student of Rudolf Steiner, wrote a wonderful little book titled "Sound Between Matter and Spirit." In it Julius suggests that the color of a blue flower is not really part of the flower itself, but emanates from another place through the form of the flower and that one's imagination could travel into the blueness of the form into another realm.

I began to sense sound in a similar way, i.e., the "event" of a sound acted as a portal through which its essence or "signature" emanated but also through which the imagination could travel. I can only compare it to the feeling of hypnagogia, that feeling one has as they are just about to fall asleep when strange visions or thoughts occur.

I use an exercise in my Subtle Listening workshops in which I ask students to sense the "shape" of a word. From there they begin to sense the size, shape, weight, color, texture of sounds heard in

their environments and draw them on paper. This exercise gets them used to visualizing sound as well as teaches them how to get what's in their imagination into a physical manifestation. You can see this same process at work in many graphically notated scores.

I have yet to teach the more advanced forms of "traveling through a sound event" because one needs to have developed new organs of perception first. I need more work with this meditation as well since it is an advanced and difficult practice.



SR: How would an artist in a "heightened state of imaginative awareness" behave differently in practice? I assume it could be different for every person, but I assume you are talking not just

about a different state of being but actually different behavior in the physical world? So it's not just about responding differently to sounds which already exist or are already recorded, but that the act/process/tools/etc. of recording/creating would change?

KC: You are correct in that it is different for each person but I don't distinguish a state of being from behavior in the physical world. They blend into one and the same thing. One's consciousness creates the world and our observations affect it. But even that dichotomy can be collapsed into something called consciousness...everything is consciousness although we separate it according to our five senses.

The Sufi musician/philosopher Hazrat Inayat Khan wrote that although humans have five senses with which we distinguish the world there is really only one sense...all that is visible and all that is audible is one and the same.

As creatives we can choose to be limited by our physical senses or tap into the supersensory as artists and philosophers have been doing for thousands of years. I feel that artists need to relearn this skill to achieve a balance with our current techno-materialist consciousness or we can continue our slide into a devastating future.

The philosopher Jean Gebser called this consciousness Integral Structure because it integrates intuitive/spiritual and materialist modes of consciousness.

(continued on p. 5)



## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear members of SEAMUS,

It is the time of year when our biggest event is on the horizon, the SEAMUS National Conference. SEAMUS 2015 will be at Virginia Tech, hosted by Ico Bukvic, Eric Lyon, and Charles Nichols. It will be a memorable event for all of the wonderful performances, installations, and papers that will be presented. This year's SEAMUS Award winner is **Dave Smith**--instrument designer, Grammy-winner, founder of Sequential Circuits, the originator of the ideas behind MIDI. Mr. Smith will be our honored guest at the banquet, a great opportunity to meet an instrumental figure in sound

synthesis and electronic music making of the past four decades. For more information about the conference, please visit the official conference website <<http://seamus.music.vt.edu>>

As promised, we have been working on new opportunities for SEAMUS members and I am pleased to announce our newest program. Interactions is a new recording series that features works for instruments and electronics, and it solicits submissions from performers as well as composers. We look forward to an early summer release of the recording. I want to especially thank Vice President of Programs, Keith

Kirchoff, for designing and seeing through the development of this recording series. It is a welcome addition to our efforts to reach out to composers and performers of electro-acoustic music, and disseminate our members' work as much as possible.

There will be more to share at the General Meeting at the upcoming conference, and I hope to see you there. As always, I welcome your comments and input on how SEAMUS can serve the membership best and make what the organization does more valuable to you.

Scott L. Miller  
President, SEAMUS





(Cascone/Ricks interview, cont.)

Once an artist develops new "organs of perception" they can develop their own way of manifesting the supersensory. There are artists who achieve this state without consciously knowing it. Poets and mystics are able to sense and express the supersensory, while many of today's sound artists are only able to let the tool express itself. Technology presents a "use-narrative", i.e., workflow, that determines the content created with it. This is what I'm trying to correct in my Subtle Listening workshops.

SR: How long do you meditate each day? How long in one "session" is required for you to get the experience you need? Is meditation a creative act? What are you composing/creating?

KC: My meditation practice is influenced by techniques I've collected and modified over the past 40 years. I meditate for 30 to 45 minutes every day - sometimes I take advantage of the time I have on airplanes and meditate then.

The act of meditation is no more a creative act than eating dinner or washing your hands. Meditation is a nutritive act that opens up ways of perceiving the "outer" world as a continuum with your inner world or imagination. Any conscious intention (i.e., results, goals, etc.) held in the mind during meditation takes you out of the process. That being said, the creative act can be a type of meditation.

It's best to let go of intentions, expectations or any other ego-related desires to establish a connection with one's unconscious. This is a common mistake that new meditators make. It is difficult for beginners to stop the "monkey mind" when they have intentions. Often times new meditators are worried they aren't doing it correctly or don't feel bliss or get results they are seeking or whatever. Once you stop holding onto intentions during meditation and let go you are then able to let the process happen all by itself. Meditation is a process, not an achievement.

SR: I often share the following quote from Luciano Berio with my students:

"Composers who work with new means in electronic music (computers included) tend to place their pasts in parentheses . . . Sometimes, one has the impression that they let themselves be chosen by the new technologies without being able to establish, dialectically, a real rapport and a true need for them. We can in fact pass indifferently from one system to another, from one computer to another—they are ever faster, more sophisticated, more powerful, and ever smaller—without really using musically that which was there."

I think your critique of technology and how composers use the products of technological development has similarities to Berio's, but is also distinct. How would you respond to Berio's

thoughts?

KC: One problem with technology is that, despite what people may claim, it is rarely transparent. Often times I hear people dismiss my statement: "the medium is no longer the message, the tool has become the message" because they are unable to see how commercial, off-the-shelf tools have an "agenda" embedded into the product. By agenda I mean a feature which collapses the steps of a complex process into a devastatingly simple red knob. The term used today is "workflow."

By hiding the complexity involved in creating something and wiring the parameters to a single red knob the designers have already made creative decisions for the user and these decisions often steer the creative process towards a particular end. The problem is that if everyone is using the same simple red knob you are going to get clustering of stylistic results. Offloading complexity to a computer is good for hands-free smartphones while driving a car but I'm not sure it has done much good for culture.

Because off-the-shelf tools often over-determine creative artifacts I tell sound artists to learn to build their own tools in Pure Data or Max/MSP and to do pre-compositional work before opening a laptop. These programming environments allow an artist to solve their own aesthetic problems and let the project determine the technology used instead of the other way around.

That being said, a different sort of problem arises when people get caught up in the techno-materialism of programming and lose sight of the intuitive...what is most needed is balance of head, heart and hands.

SR: I recently interviewed composer Scott Johnson (who I found out meditates daily, FYI), and he is heavily influenced by evolutionary biology. He often referenced the idea that "the hand shapes itself to fit the tool" to describe his own process in using technology. What are your thoughts about this sentiment? It seems that what you're calling for with "new organs of perception" is sort of the opposite to this way of thinking.

KC: To my way of thinking the tool should shape itself to fit the project. Ideally, a tool should be in a fluid state of "becoming" as you work with it. If your hand is shaping to fit the tool then the tool is too involved in determining the result via its agenda.

If a painter selects a particular type of brush that gives her a striated, thick brushstroke on canvas that is one thing, but music technology is an entire environment in itself -- it is brush, paint, canvas and gallery all rolled into one. And it is difficult to disentangle these functions in today's technology due to convergence.

The collapse of these functions into a single package has created an expectation of convenience, ease-of-use and real-time usage. People no longer have to carry a

camera, a GPS, a laptop and a cell phone -- all they need now is a single smartphone that fits in their pocket and provides a number of functions in one package...a single red knob as it were. So we have come to expect a similar collapse of functions in other things too because we want our technology to be convenient and easy to use.

But if all this complexity is hidden from view in music technology there is little opportunity to develop a deep understanding of the tool. The user doesn't take responsibility for the process. What your hand is "shaping to" is a predetermined agenda, ease-of-use, as implemented by a marketing department.

If you listen to Sufi music you can hear that the musicians are channeling something deeper than mere technical proficiency...they are conduits and like the color of the blue flower I mentioned earlier, the sounds made by their instruments act as portals through which the listener can travel.

SR: I'm interested in your statement that "a tool should be in a fluid state of 'becoming' as you work with it." I'm interested in thinking about what is meant, or could be meant by "tool," and also how what you're talking about relates to composition for acoustic instruments, or voice, or whatever. If I am writing a piece for solo violin, what is the "tool" I am using . . . my technique, imagination, etc.? Or if I am creating a work that uses traditional instruments with electronics, or voice with

electronics, or if I am giving particular concern to the space in which a piece or concert is presented--in what sense are these other elements the "tool" or part of the tool? In all of those situations, what would it mean for the tool to be in a fluid state of becoming?

KC: My definition of a tool is "one or more things that allow a thought to manifest from one's imagination into the world as an object." We have different types of tools: cognitive tools, mental models, music notation, the violin itself, even the acoustics of a space -- but they all form an assembly line consisting of functions that aid in the act of creation.

I tend to conflate all of these under the single term of "tool," but people tend to reduce them to separate moving parts with different functions, while this is useful for solving problems or developing ideas it can limit how one views the act of creation.

If you view the act of creation as a process of "becoming" then the tool should really recede into the background and impart more than its own signature to the work. All the separate tools should blur into one fluidic function: to be a sort of "silent channel."

This fluidity presents itself as a way of co-evolving with the act of creation, a fluidic tool changes shape as it performs the tasks necessary to complete the finished work -- from imagination to final performance or recording.

The fluidic process doesn't actually

create the artifact so much as reveal it. Like the sculptor who finds the statue in the block of marble or the documentary filmmaker sifting through hours of interviews hunting for the key narrative, it's all there already. We only need to unveil the final work via the process of becoming. This process of becoming doesn't differentiate between our internal and external reality. Those distinctions are no longer useful or necessary – they just get in the way. Once that barrier is broken the creative act can manifest ones imagination much more easily.

SR: Also, when writing for

acoustic/traditional instruments/voices, composers often speak of "idiomatic" writing--taking into account the inherent properties of the instrument, some of which are fixed (say the pitch range of the piano), or the capabilities of performers, etc. Is it valid to discuss or consider "idiomatic" writing for the electronic medium, in its various forms?

KC: The properties you mention are located in the materiality of the physical instrument - they are the mechanical aspects of an instrument that determine what can be written and played.

This is the outer manifestation of the instrument. There is also the inner essence or "psychic signature" of an instrument. Roland Barthes refers to this quality as "grain," i.e., a transcendental, ineffable quality that cannot be quantified or empirically analyzed but is intuitively sensed in a work of art.

This quality comes from a place that transcends the mechanical aspect of the instrument. The same can be said for electronic instruments, if one has developed organs of perception they will help one to connect with the essence of an instrument, allowing the

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machine to enunciate the imagination as it travels through the conduit into the artifact. Acoustic instruments invite a different sort of relationship due to a level of physical mastery needed to form that channel or conduit, whereas electronic instruments today offload physical, and mental, mastery to the developer.

That being said, there are pieces of electronic music such as David Tudor's "Rainforest" or Pauline Oliveros' "I of IV" which channel that grain through contact mics and tape machines without foregrounding the technology.

SR: You obviously are concerned with the way technological tools can have an undesired influence on the creative process and a work itself. Is there a danger that teachers and mentors, or even peers--including their works--can have too much influence on an artist's work, and if so, how have you dealt with this and what are your feelings about it?

KC: A friend of mine who teaches electronic music in a university says he feels like a vocational teacher rather than an art teacher. He feels there is too much emphasis on teaching the mechanics of production and says he ends up "teaching the manual" rather than nurturing the artistic process. Very little of the history of electronic music makes an impression on the students, it seems antiquated and boring because it doesn't have a drum machine or fit into some micro-niche of EDM (electronic dance music). So in my experience there

is less influence from teachers as opposed to the pop music marketplace which has taken on the role of mentor.

SR: Are you still involved in .microsound.org? I really appreciated discovering it several years ago, and as an "academic" composer teaching at a somewhat isolated university, I appreciated how I felt that it connected me to this worldwide network of electronic music enthusiasts that were largely outside the academy and were open to discussing questions on a wide range of topics, from gear to aesthetic issues to whatever. Is it just my impression, or has the conversation died down a bit over the last few years? I never participated in any of the projects, like the one you proposed when DFW died, or the Pi Day projects--it seems it's been a while since one of those happened. Is this just the natural course of things? What's changed?

KC: I co-founded .microsound.org in 1999 before the Internet was turned into a medium for consumer data collection. At that time email and forums were the two most common ways to build a community on the Internet. Now there are any number of technologies, such as Facebook or Google Hangouts, with which to build a community. Over time many of the original members of the .microsound list have drifted onto other projects or lifestyles while others have migrated to the Facebook .microsound page. I've also moved on to concentrate on other things so there has been less

involvement on my part.

Another reason for migration away from the list was that places like Soundcloud became centers for more visible distribution. Soundcloud has a prominent social component that email lists don't. Lists feel too anachronistic to many newcomers these days. There is still a core constituency on the .microsound mailing list but it has quieted down a lot in the past 5 years or so.

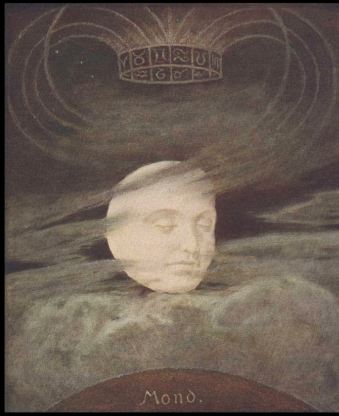
As for .microsound projects, it became increasingly difficult to get people to contribute to them. I have theories as to why this is but I will save that for another time.

SR: How would you assess the work of "composers," or even sound artists--again, probably the category most of the members of SEAMUS would fall into--in relation to your work and what has become most important to you at present?

KC: I don't assess the work of other artists. Many younger producers ask me to critique their work or give feedback on their CD or a track online and I tell them I don't do this. My opinion about another artist's work means absolutely nothing.

SR: Lunar Mansions is the first of your works I've encountered that combines an acoustic instrument with electronics. Could you talk about how this work came about, and how it fits into your current interests?





Lunar Mansions  
for Organ & Sine Waves

Kim Cascone

October 29th 2014  
Union Chapel, London, UK  
Doors: 7pm && Starts: 7:30pm

KC: A friend of mine recently became the music director for the Union Chapel in London which has a wonderful 19th century Henry Willis pipe organ. She asked me to write something for it so I decided to combine my work with interference tones and the organ. I knew the organ was tuned in equal temperament -- which of course changed due to temperature and humidity -- and being that I was very interested in just intonation my plan was to play sine waves tuned to just intervals that would interfere with or beat against the intervals played by the organ.

So for example, I'd have the organ play an octave and I introduced an interval that was a false unison. The organ pipes, in the front of the chapel, weren't mic'd and I performed my sine waves through speakers situated in the rear so the entire chapel was activated by these interference tones or beats

which can't be fully experienced from the recording I sent you. The experience of this phenomenon in that setting was very meditative.

As an aside, the way people enter and behave in a church is very different compared to a regular performance space...there is a kind of quiet reverence that permeates the space and engages a different mode of reception in the percipient.

The idea for "Lunar Mansions" grew out of my piece "Dark Stations." In that piece I arranged three speakers in a large equilateral triangle in which both the audience and a large subwoofer were placed inside. I noticed a curious effect when I played noise bands in the main three speakers and monaural beats in the subwoofer. The low frequencies in the subwoofer modulated the noise bands so the entire room seemed to pulsate. From what I've researched, this effect takes place in the basilar membrane and not in the actual acoustics of a space. I wanted to work with this phenomenon more and decided to see if I could incorporate it into my work with acoustic instruments.

The effect of acoustic interferences played in total darkness for a meditating audience is a powerful experience.

The inspiration for "Lunar Mansions" comes from the writings of Rudolf Steiner, La Monte Young's "Dream House" as well as the visual art of James Turrell. This

quote by filmmaker Gene Youngblood comes to mind: "the meta-designer creates context, not content" and has had an impact on my work for decades.

SR: Do you anticipate more works like this, or is it a sort of detour?

KC: Yes. I am currently arranging "Lunar Mansions" for different acoustic instruments for some performances coming up in the fall. I'm working on a version for three cellos which might be something I perform in Mexico City this year but haven't gotten a green light for that yet.

I'm also performing versions of my "subflowers" CD which is coming out this fall on a small label in Berlin called Emitter Micro. I have two versions of "subflowers," one for low-middle frequencies for regular speakers and the other for low frequencies which will be played in two subwoofers.

SR: What are your current projects--any concerts, writings, recordings, or other activities coming up?

KC: I'm writing an essay on spirituality in sound art, writing new versions of "Lunar Mansions" for various instrumentation and curating a film festival this spring in the Netherlands called "Drone Cinema Film Festival." Despite the name the film festival is not a collection of aerial drone videos but a showcase of sound artists interpreting what a audio drone might look like on film. I am on tour in Europe this March where I'll

conduct a Subtle Listening workshop in Sweden and perform a version of "subflowers" at STEIM in Amsterdam.

SR: I think most, or at least a majority of the members of SEAMUS are attached to academic institutions and are often involved in teaching young musicians. I loved the quote from your infinitegrain interview: "I think all media arts and music schools should incorporate meditation into their curricula." What other thoughts or advice would you have for music schools/teachers?

KC: There's a funny story that a friend of mine who worked at Berklee College of Music told me a while ago. It seems the teaching staff at Berklee was very interested in inviting Ornette Coleman to the school to get his opinion on what they should be teaching young musicians. They flew him to Boston, put him up in a nice hotel, in short they rolled out the red carpet for him. There were PowerPoint presentations from teachers from various departments who got up and talked about their approaches to teaching music, they took him out for a fancy lunch and lavished him with praise and accolades.

At the end of all this fanfare they asked him what he thought they should be doing to better equip students for careers in music. He responded "Pray for me." Nothing else, just those simple words -- then he got up and left. They were less than amused and actually were

quite angry after he left.

I'll never forget this story as long as I live. The teachers were handed one of the most important lessons they will ever hear and they missed it entirely. The message was clear if you have ears to hear it. The teachers had completely forgotten about the spiritual, or intuitive, aspects of creativity and the need to nourish the artist in their materialist-oriented music curricula. The message is simple: art is not merely a mechanical or intellectual skill, it comes from the soul which needs to be nourished and they have forgotten this. We have all forgotten this. The fact they got angry about his response shows just how out of touch they are.

SR: Well, I wonder if you would think SEAMUS members are out of touch (or not?). A typical scenario that occurs at our yearly national conference, and in which probably many of our members are involved throughout the year, is where we create a "work" or "piece" that is meant to be experienced by an audience at a concert. Are we the enemy to your vision of what these types of communal gatherings could be? Is it a medium capable of greater transcendence, depending on the artist's sensitivity and willingness to develop the "organs" you talk about? I'm not trying to be overly provocative here, but I'm interested in inviting our community (and myself) to examine what we do and how it could be different--your thoughts?

KC: I find it interesting that you chose the word "enemy" in your question since it implies a dichotomy. The dichotomy that exists for many is the spiritual/materialist one, which are really just polarities or modes of consciousness. In our society we privilege the materialist mode of consciousness over the spiritual/intuitive. And in the technological arts, such as electro-acoustic music, this is very obvious. Much of what is created in the technological or media arts foregrounds the materialistic aspect of the work. I see a need for a re-balancing our approach to creativity where the material is the carrier for the spiritual.

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Kim has a new CD titled "subflowers - Φ" coming out this fall on Berlin-based label Emitter Micro. Check their website: <http://emittermicro.com/> for more info this summer.

## Suggested Reading List:

*History of Consciousness*

- Gary Lachman

*The Ever Present Origin*

- Jean Gebser

*The Wholeness of Nature*

- Henri Bortoft

*The Reenchantment of the World*

- Morris Berman

*Saving the Appearances: a Study in Idolatry*

- Owen Barfield

*Sound Between Matter and Spirit*

- Frits Julius

*The Mysticism of Sound and Music*

- Hazrat Inayat Khan

Canadian Electroacoustic Community (CEC)  
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# eContact!

Published online four times a year since 1998,  
*eContact!* is the CEC's online journal  
for electroacoustics. Themed issues cover  
a range of topics related to EA.

jeu de temps/times play project • women in ea  
regional, national and international activities  
sound diffusion • interviews • hearing (loss)  
mastering in electroacoustics • canadian figures  
inter/national associations • and more...

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# Member News

**Elizabeth Anderson** gave the avant-première of her octophonic acousmatic work *Solar Winds...and Beyond* at the CIME Festival 2014 at the University of North Texas on October 4, 2014. A second avant-première of *Solar Winds...and Beyond* took place at the X BIMESP 2014 Festival, Sao Paulo, Brazil. Following, *Solar Winds* was performed at the Bernoala Festival 2014, Espacio Sinkro, Bilbao, Spain on October 26, 2014. The world première of *Solar Winds...and Beyond* took place on February 11, 2015 during the concert Parmerud et Créations at the L'Espace Senghor in Brussels Belgium. The work will also be performed at the Sonorities Festival 'Fractured Narratives' at the Sonic Arts Research Centre, Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland on April 23, 2015.

**Brian Belet** presented a project audio demonstration followed by a formal paper at the 1<sup>st</sup> Web Audio Conference, IRCAM (in the aptly named Igor Stravinsky Room), Paris, France, on January 26 & 27, 2015 (<http://wac.ircam.fr/>). "Birds

of a Feather (Les Oiseaux de Même Plumage): Dynamic Soundscapes using Real-time Manipulation of Locally Relevant Birdsongs," co-authored with Dr. William Walker (Mozilla Corporation), is published in the conference proceedings. Drs. Walker and Belet also presented their paper at Mozilla's corporate headquarters in Mt. View, CA, January 16, 2015.

More details are posted on Dr. Belet's web site. See: [www.BeletMusic.com](http://www.BeletMusic.com)

**Christopher DeLaurenti** performed with the New England Phonographers Union at Hearing Landscape Critically, a transdisciplinary conference at Harvard University on January 16, 2015. Last fall, his *Silences normalized from the complete organ works of Olivier Messiaen (Disc 2)* premiered at the Helicotrema Festival in Milan. A specially commissioned revised version of *N30: Who guards the Guardians* aired on Soundproof, a weekly radio show devoted to the audio arts on Australia's Radio National.

Christopher has just completed the installation of a recording studio at the College of William & Mary.

After finishing his term of 4 plus years as the director of the FIU School of Music, **Orlando Jacinto Garcia** accepted the position of Composer in Residence for the School this past May. Between April 30 and January 12 Garcia was on a research assignment completing 8 new works while realizing artistic residencies at the MacDowell Colony, Casa Zia Lina on the island of Elba Italy, and the Millay Colony in upstate NY. In addition between September and November he presented conferences about his work, conducted his music, and attended performances of his acoustic and electro-acoustic compositions at festivals and concert series in Mexico City, Merida, and Morelia, Mexico, York and Manchester universities in the UK, and Madrid, Spain. In April and May he will be in residence at the Bogliasco Foundation Center in Genoa, Italy, and later in August at the VICC center in Visby, Sweden,



completing new works for chamber ensemble and for soloist and electronics. Garcia's most recent solo CD was released on the Toccata Classics label this past September and features the Malaga Philharmonic with Jose Serebrier conducting.

**Scott L. Miller** was in Tallinn, Estonia, for the Fall 2014 semester, teaching electronic music composition as a Fulbright Scholar at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre. While there, he presented a four concert series of his music. The first concert in the series was his acousmatic and ecosystemic music; the second, third, and fourth concerts featured him as composer and performer along with visiting musical collaborators Nathan Hanson (saxophones), Pat O'Keefe (clarinet/bass clarinet), and Anne La Berge (flute/electronics). Other concerts featuring his music include a concert at Splendor, in Amsterdam; a premier for organ and interactive electronics (*Electro-organic Ecosystem for Lübeck*) and the premier of a collaborative work with Anne La Berge (*A Lovely Gesture*) at KISS 2014 in Lübeck, Germany; the performance of *Jardins Mécaniques* by ensemble U.; in Tallinn, and the performance of *Every Problem is a Nail* at ICMC 2014, in Athens. As a performer and improviser of real-time electronics, Miller appeared on the Improtest series twice, first with Taavi Kerikmäe and Michel Doneda in a performance at Niguliste Church and then in concert with Pat O'Keefe; he also presented an ambient noise set

with guitarist Ted Parker at Philly Joe's Jazz Klubi. He completed his visit in Estonia with lecture/performances of his music at the Heino Eller Music School in Tartu, and at the Pärnu Days of Contemporary Music.

**Steve Ricks's** composition *Medusa in Fragments* (2011), for amplified piano, video, and quadrophonic sound, has received several performances this year as part of Keith Kirchoff's "The Electro-Acoustic Piano" project. Recent performances include those at Brandeis University, Miami University of Ohio, Rutgers University: Mason Gross School of the Arts, University of Utah, University of Oklahoma, University of North Texas, and University of Texas, Austin. A forthcoming portrait CD of chamber music with and without electronics is scheduled for release in June 2015 on New Focus Recordings.



**Adam Vidiksis** recently returned from Zürich, Switzerland, where he was Composer in Residence at the Institute for Computer Music and Sound Technology. Vidiksis spent

time there consulting on the Sensor-Augmented Bass Clarinet Research (SABRe) project, performing his solo works for percussion and live processing, and lecturing on the aesthetics of live processing at Zürcher Hochschule der Künste. Additionally, he has been commissioned to write a piece for SABRe for renowned clarinetist, Matthias Mueller. Vidiksis has been active writing new music for theater and dance, including commissioned performances with Renegade Theater, the Barnes Foundation, Anne-Marie Mulgrew and Dancers Company, the Idiopathic Ridiculopathy Consortium, and the Walnut Theater this season. Vidiksis's recently completed one-hour electroacoustic opera, "On the Road for 17527 Miles", based on the text by Gregor Weichbrodt referencing the GPS directions to all the places visited by the characters in Kerouac's novel, will be premiered in Philadelphia in March. Vidiksis will be collaborating this spring in an art installation with composer Gene Coleman and artists Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla that will be performed over 70 times in the Venice Biennale this summer. Vidiksis continues his year-long artist residency at <fidget> in Philadelphia, where he recently performed a program with acclaimed new music ensemble ThingNY. This spring, Vidiksis will conduct Ensemble NJ\_P, a chamber ensemble composed of traditional Japanese and Western instruments, in a studio recording for release this summer. In addition to his performances, Vidiksis continues to serve on the faculty

of Temple University, where he directs the Boyer Electroacoustic Ensemble Project (BEEP). He has been actively maintaining the submission server for SEAMUS's 2015 National Conference, where he will perform his work *Things that Live in the Whirligig*, and continues to maintain and develop our organization's website, [seamusonline.org](http://seamusonline.org). Vidiksis's newish daughter Olivia is now 6 months old, and finally starting to sleep a little, maybe, he hopes.

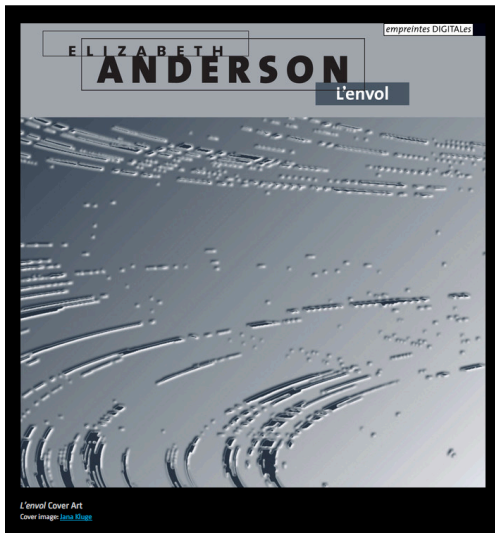
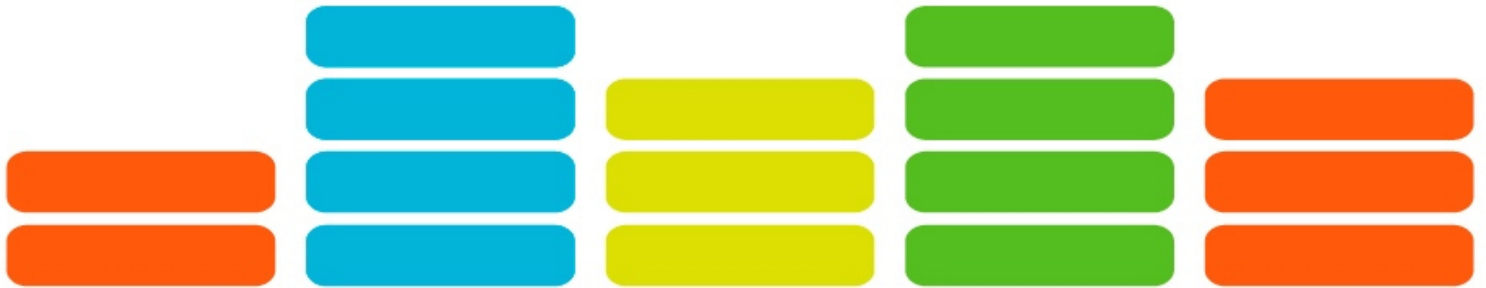


Adam Vidiksis and the students of the Boyer Electroacoustic Ensemble Project (BEEP) at Temple University  
(photo by Tyler Horst)





## Recording Reviews by Tom Dempster



### *L'envol*

Empreintes Digitales IMED 14127,  
2014

### Elizabeth Anderson

Spanning twenty years of output, *L'envol* reflects Elizabeth Anderson's trajectory, from the dialogic, event-driven, and directly cinematic *Mimoyecques*, to the abstracted,

texture-carried, more deliberate (...and *Beyond*). This is not to suggest a lack of kinship between then and now; if nothing else, the works presented here point to a galvanization and redoubling of technique. Like a painter applying layers of paint, removing some material, repainting, removing, and covering again, Anderson's works, obliquely and at times directly, engages with a satisfying process of building, removing, and finding ways to erase delineation. Her sound world is unified as though it were fog marrying a forest at dusk: an obscured but not precisely static system of pitchless textures, with elements slowly coming to light (as in the inexorably chilling yet moving opening to *Solar Winds*). Throughout these works, Anderson places focus on timbral and spectral space and organic evolution of material, featuring small, yet energetic, flashes of warm light that delicately pull the listener deeper

and deeper into these gently hallucinatory worlds.

One of the more striking works on the collection is 1994's *Mimoyecques*, a programmatic work inspired by the eponymous fortress in Marquise, France. Using separate readings about World War II, Anderson collects a kind of private monologue from persons speaking in the languages of prisoners during the War – Bulgarian, French, Czech, Danish – over a dozen, all told. Beyond the crystalline introductory passages open the doors of the fortress, the narratives one by one tumbling forth in what becomes a potent, if not heady, documentary of an invented memory. The narrative moves from French to a superimposition of Hebrew, German, and Russian, and the work builds to a dizzying and visceral climax, with a vocoded chorale of one arising from the collapse of the sonic material.

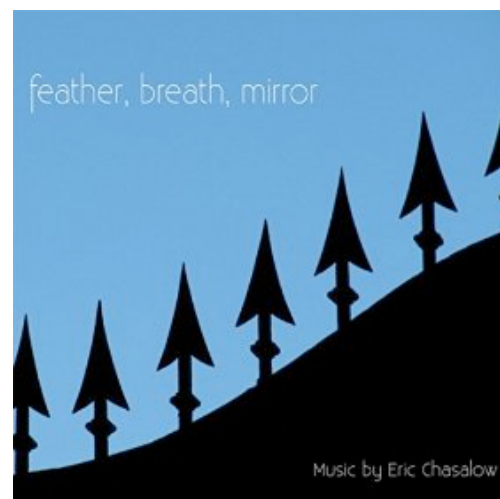


*Protopia/Tesseract* (2005-2007), inspired by Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle In Time*, examines Anderson's interpretation of spatio-temporal compression. In two movements, the first is a more slowly-evolving sound world, with shimmering, veiled threads that surface and disappear amidst a roiling, warm underpinning. A lightning bolt or a collapse of the universe onto itself and the listener is in the thick of a crowd, which spins away, as though it begins to orbit the background textures (which have, at this point, continued to transform). The second movement – the track which closes out the album – is a luxurious wash of timbres that seems to be in near-constant motion. The ensuing dizzying sonic journey – with strata moving at various speeds against each other – surrounds and consumes the listener, and the material, arresting in its own right, becomes further compelling as the spinning web of sounds somehow transmogrifies into an embrace, which itself slowly dissolves into the ether.

This ineffable warmth and richness prevails, particularly in the most recent pair of works, *Solar Winds* (2012) and *...and Beyond* (2014). *Solar Winds* – which Anderson constructed in part by incorporating acoustic translations of electromagnetic phenomena – emerges from a true nothing, with perhaps one of the most haunting and affecting opening gestures this side of Norgard; the chime and decay gesture more than a minute in, despite the relative low amplitude intensity, is tremendously effective, garnering a momentary stunned listener. And this is crucial to Anderson's technique: in an almost Webern-like way, a single small gesture or event in the right part of

the spectrum can have the impact of an unexpected rimshot. ...*and Beyond*, a companion piece to *Solar Winds*, questions the very nature of the universe and the universe beyond one's own mind. Again mapping astronomical information into the work (though I am compelled to ask how), Anderson creates a quietly lavish shifting plane of textures that ultimately moves into a realm of pulse and rhythm. The work, despite the quasi-programmatic nature of the piece as a vessel to look beyond the known, seems rooted in the very organic and very terrestrial as the work seems to inhale and exhale – and even has a heartbeat (or perhaps two) – as it maneuvers us through an unknown universe. The stunning yet restrained piece concludes with what may be tantamount to an acousmatic question mark.

Drawing her inspirations from a wealth of subjects – but in this release, predominantly science and speculative philosophy – Anderson's works are still somewhat spare in texture. Even at their most active and intense, the works are never adipose and remain texturally pellucid, smoldering aural embers that flare and glow, an inviting field of uniform color that inexplicably remains in constant flux, simultaneously drawing us in while engaging our most primordial senses of alertness. The works – rich, eloquent yet efficient, and strangely beguiling – are studies in an intense subtlety and an economy of spectrum coupled with a mastery of pacing, all the more remarkable in how the concentrated material can conjure up and propel the imagination.



### *feather, breath, mirror*

Suspicious Motives Records, 2014

Eric Chasalow

The first commercial release of Chasalow's music in over a decade, *feather, breath mirror* includes four works dating back to 2002. Half electroacoustic and half chamber works, we hear Chasalow at his most confident, his most centered at... well, at his most *Chasalow*. Forgive the tautology, but among these four pieces – and in particular *Due (Cinta)mani* for piano and fixed media and *Trois Espaces du Son* for piano, percussion, and fixed media – we are graced with the extensive, rich organic outgrowths of gesture, the playfulness of attack and timbre, and the mastery of texture many of us first came to know through his 1993 album *Over the Edge* (or I did, anyhow). On *feather, breath, mirror*, there is a difference: this is a composer in his prime, in total control over his materials, with loyal and intimate performances from performers who seem to breathe the works to life.

*Due (Cinta)mani* – which begins with a single D pitch in the piano amidst various microtonal and timbral



repartee in the fixed media part – is a cascade of colors, verging on the exuberant. Drawing inspiration from the cintamani pattern, flaming pearls in groups of three positioned above sea waves, the motion of the work indeed seems to come in waves, with arcs of gestures waxing and waning in intensity. Vicki Ray, the pianist in the recording, is sensitive to the dialogic entity of the fixed media and commanding, to the extent where the digital audio seems to react to her rather than vice versa. While we can hear the treatment of the audio regarding space and clarity as a nod to Chasalow's forebears, the liveliness and ephemeral nature of his sound-objects are Chasalow's own. In two movements, *Due (Cinta)mani* momentarily escapes a pointillistic, contrapuntal realm in the second movement (though not completely) for more sustained textures and gestures, yet preserving the transparency and color-play of the exciting first movement.

Equally incisive and concise, 2004's *Trois Espaces du Son* receives an energetic recording from the able hands of pianist Ancuza Aprodu and percussionist Thierry Miroglio, the work's dedicatees. In three movements, the work demonstrates a softer side of Chasalow (to an extent) through more continuous textures and a momentary reprieve from the intensity of Chasalow's typically contrapuntal handling of material. Employing subtler approaches to timbral and spectral manipulation throughout the work than in *Due (Cinta)mani*, color moves and metamorphoses at a generally slower rate. Nonetheless, a characteristic brilliance prevails in the active and spontaneous-feeling second

movement, where the percussionist leaves the percussion instrument setup to perform inside the piano. Subsequently, we hear a web of robust intricacies as the pitched and unpitched material and the digital audio converge, weave together, and dissolve, practically inseparable as to source. The final movement, beginning with a series of slowly contracting and expanding intervals, feels downright drone-like as the digital audio – still with the clarity and brilliance of the Chasalow sound – imitates the longer suspensions of tone found in the piano, vibraphone, and crotales.

The other two works on the album are concertante works: a flute concerto (*Flute Concerto: Three love poems*) from 2005 and a horn concerto (2008), both ably performed. The horn concerto, composed for Bruno Schneider, features Schneider as soloist, with the agile Boston Modern Orchestra Project directed by Gil Rose. Melodic fragments and single-note gestures weave in and out between the horn part and the orchestra, with furious, colorful scoring in the first movement giving way to more rhythmically stable material, featuring a much clearer horn-against-orchestra setting. In the first movement, the horn only plays the pitch class A – an intentional and deliberate humorous gesture on Chasalow's part: each time the A intones, I indeed waited while the orchestra cycled through its miniature explosions of color, only to hear another A. The laconic, distant, icy third movement (Chasalow is also playing with the concerto form here, pushing the slow movements against each other) is worth the hijinks in the first movement: the lyricism, tonal

references, and constant textures are beautiful foils to the fireworks of the outer movements.

Scored for clarinet, violin, cello, percussion, and piano, Chasalow's flute concerto is in three movements and perhaps the most melodic work on the album. The gestures are sweeping and the flute, which begins the work in its lowest, luscious registers, quickly covers its entire range and gives Tara Helen O'Connor, the flute soloist here, a mighty workout. O'Connor is in complete control of the work, though, with gorgeous tone to boot, ably conquering the demands of the material. The scoring – of course intricate and aggressively coloristic – never overpowers the flute, and the flute, as we would rightly expect, easily interweaves with textures and gestures, with instruments acting – particularly throughout the second movement – as a sample-and-hold for particular flute tones or overtones.

As Chasalow celebrates his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday this year, this disk is a fitting retrospective of his past decade of output, exhibiting Chasalow's unmistakable voice at its most idiomatic.



***Sori: Music For Instruments and Electroacoustic Sound***

**Accourant Records Aurec 1306, 2013**

**Kyong Mee Choi**

Kyong Mee Choi's music, for those who may not have noticed, has been practically everywhere recently: every major American electroacoustic festival, numerous new music festivals, numerous conferences ranging from small to international, over the past five years seems like it has programmed at least one of her works. This album, a selection of eight works for instruments and electronic sounds composed over the past decade, is an exceedingly strong case for why Choi's music is showing up everywhere – and serves as a reminder of the formidable consistency of her work and her prolific career.

Choi's soundworld is expansive but somehow seemingly self-contained: her sounds compelling, her gestures and metamorphoses of texture gratifying and affecting. While a textural idiom dominates her work in general, the recording quality of the disk seems to underscore that: instruments are deliberately miked

and mixed into the spaces that the electronic sounds cohabit. While not always necessarily effective – by the end of the album, the embedding of the instruments becomes a little monotonous – it is a testament to how Choi must think about space, about distance, about the motions of foregrounding and backgrounding, as though looking through thin layers of paint toward the back of a canvas from far away before peering in on one tiny detail before returning to a wonderfully evocative and rich space.

Perhaps the clearest example of this is in *Sublimation* for marimba and electronics: Choi plays with the attack point of the marimba and echoes this envelope of a single stroke in the electronics, and gestures grow out of this small detail of the envelope of a single sound. The dry, brittle timbre of the marimba complements the stretched, almost-tactile sounds that generate out of the initial electronic gesture, interspersed with a morphing, steadily moving texture. Against that backdrop (and usually within it), Sean Darby comfortably executes a challenging and thorny marimba part.

Shanna Guitierrez disappears and reappears within the dense strata of *Slight Uncertainty is Very Attractive*, a work for flute and electronics that quickly becomes a *trompe l'oreille* – the sumptuousness of the work is matched only by the multiple layers of flute, only one of which is not prerecorded. Still, despite the density of the work, Choi offers of a luminous and evocative work, meticulously executed by Guitierrez. In *The line we can't cross*, Michael Holmes, on alto saxophone, is emergent from a chrysalis of splendor. Perhaps one of the more restrained works on the

album (and I don't say that lightly, given how Choi's work builds to Dhomont-like ecstatic sonic overload and then adds more), the piece also demonstrates the wealth of variety that Choi brings forward in her work. Amidst this, Holmes is at turns delicate and explosive, matching the energy of the electronics equally.

Other works on the album include two piano-centric works that, in accordance with a secure compositional voice, pit performers against constantly-shifting electronic textures while performers patiently vacillate between sparse, individual tones and tour-de-force virtuosity. Pianists Winston Choi and Kuang-Hao Huang communicate their versatility and prowess clearly. Guitarist Timothy Ernest Johnson and electroacoustic champion and pioneer Craig Hultgren give fluid, lucid, and at times passionate performances of *It only needs to be seen* and *Inner Space*. Amongst perhaps the richest variety of sounds in and hefty atmosphere of *Ceaseless Cease*, clarinetist Esther Lamneck gives a commanding, vital, and aggressive performance, creating a hitherto unheard dynamic in the work as she goes toe to toe with the imposing sonic figures Choi constructs – and wins.

*Sori*, the title of the album, is Korean for "sound," though it can also be translated as "voice" – Kyong Mee Choi's voice is clear and unmistakable, and this collection of works goes beyond the realm of simple sound.

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