

THE MUSIC OF THE ENVIRONMENT SERIES

- No. 1 The Music of the Environment.
- No. 2. The Vancouver Soundscape.
- No. 3. European Sound Diary.
- No. 4. Five Village Soundscapes.
- No. 5. Handbook for Acoustic Ecology.

FIVE VILLAGE SOUNDSCAPES

No. 4, The Music of the Environment Series

These 2 CD's contain excerpts of the original Audio Cassettes that complemented the book of the same title and are thereby considered to be a part of Document #4 in The Music of the Environment Series.

FIVE VILLAGE SOUNDSCAPES

CD PROGRAM NOTES

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Original Introduction:

To record sounds is to put a frame around them. Just as a photograph frames a visual environment, which may be inspected at leisure and in detail, so a recording isolates an acoustic environment and makes it a repeatable event for study purposes. The recording of acoustic environments is not new, but it often takes considerable listening experience to begin to perceive their details accurately. A complex sensation may seem bland or boring if listened to carelessly. We hope, therefore, that listeners will discover new sounds with each replay of the cassettes in this set.

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CD PROGRAM NOTES

Skruv

CD 1, Track 1. *Winter Images.*

We begin with a series of short vignettes; it is February in the village - the ambience is quiet and clear, with most of the activity taking place indoors in homes, stores and factories. The places visited in this short overture are:

The Glassworks (0.00-0'35): the acid bath machine & guide's commentary.

Near the railway station (0'35- 1'20): a passing train.

Village stream (1'20-2'10).

In a home (2'10-2'45): voices in conversation.

The main street at night (2'45-4'05): footsteps on frozen ground, pause to listen to a bird [squealing tires?], and factory ambience in background.

Railway station (4'00-5'15): passenger train arrives, *bop bop* of its electric motor.

Outside the Brewery (5'15-6'30): the creek again, & Brewery shift whistle.

CD 1, Track 2. *Glassworks & Brewery.*

Inside the glassworks and the brewery, it is a loud day's work for many village men. Here we move through both of Skruv's main industries (2'25).

CD 1, Track 3. *Home Workshop & Station Platform.*

It is 12 noon, and both shift whistles can be heard throughout the village. The recordist walks, pauses, hears the bird again. Inside, at the home of the Bohman family, we hear the smaller-scale sounds of glass engraving in Mr. Bohman's workshop (2'40-4'40); he talks about his work, and what the various sounds associated with it mean to him (4'45-5'45). The family clock chimes 11 a.m., and the scene changes as we move outside and walk toward the train station. A passenger train pulls in and idles a short while before shutting off its engines, waiting for a non-stop freight train to pass through at full speed (10'10). Then the train starts up again and pulls away into the quiet countryside (10'50). Sequence ends (11'39).

CD 1, Track 4. *The Bells of Ljuder.*

In this recording we listen for the sound of the distant church bells in Ljuder, 6 km away, from our hotel window in Skruv (Skruv itself has no church) to find out just how audible they are to the villagers. In the foreground are the sounds of men loading a truck and birds singing; very faintly in the background the bells can be heard, in between the louder local sounds (1'10-2'55).

In the hotel later on, we ask directions to the church to get a closer recording of these bells. The ring pattern begins with each of the three bells rung separately, then all together; it is presented here in its entirety (3'30-8'50). Then we move back again to Skruv for a last listen to the bells in the village, as the men continue working. (See Chapter 5, "Acoustic Definition" for more on this and other community soundmarks.) (11'36 total)

Bissingen

CD 1, Track 5. *A Children's Church Service, and the Bells of Bissingen.*

There is one church in Bissingen (Lutheran denomination). A separate service is held for the children here, where the first sequence begins as the offering is being taken. Coins ring in the collection trays, then the rush of voices calms down for a series of hymns and responsive readings (0'50-3'45). Outside on the street, the five powerful church bells peal a long ring (to 8'20), ending with the street sounds again; a military helicopter throbs overhead toward the end - as typical a sound now in Bissingen as the bells, birds and roosters, and one which is amplified by the bowl shape of the hills surrounding the village. See Chapter 5, "Acoustic Definition" for a further discussion. (10'27 total)

CD 1, Track 6. *Bissingen Town & Country.*

A weekday morning: 6 a.m. A single bell signals mass in the empty streets. Seven o'clock (1'30): the birds are awake, people are moving about, there are voices, a car, the clatter of milk cans and wagons, the sound of footsteps, and then a tractor pulls up and the driver talks with another man on the street. Just under the loud idling motor, you can hear the church bell ring 8 a.m. (5'20) as they continue their conversation.

The sequence continues with a slow dissolve to the hillsides on the outskirts of Bissingen (6'40). Children are playing near one of the farmhouses, and there is a tractor (perhaps the same one as earlier) working away in the distance. A bell rings in the village below, and the scene begins to change again: we hear the blacksmith (who is now retired) working with an assistant, hammers bouncing on hot iron in dancelike rhythms. He talks about former times, sharpens a scythe for us (9'55) and cracks one of his old buggy whips for the microphones. He explains his craft to the soundscape people, then the scene changes once more: this time to the butcher shop, located just below our guesthouse on Bissingen's main street (11'40). The men struggle with a large pig, then electrocute it, slit its throat, and slip the carcass into a vat of boiling water to remove the hide: all in a day's work.

We move back to the textile mill again, where the siren signals a shift change. After work, people gather at the same butcher shop and hotel, which becomes the village pub, to wind down the day with beer and music (14'05); this particular day was the occasion of a wedding celebration: the M.C. (Master of Ceremonies) explains the rules for a party game and dance. Finally we move out of the pub and into the quiet evening streets of

Bissingen as the sequence ends (15'35).

Cembra

CD 1, Track 7. *Cembra, Easter Morning.*

During the Easter weekend, we planted our microphones behind a screened window on the upper floor of the village guesthouse overlooking the main plaza; we took a 10-minute sample every hour from midnight of Easter Eve to the following midnight. This passage from that recording takes place between 7 and 10 a.m., Sunday morning, and gives an abbreviated version of the village coming alive on the festive weekend. A heavy snowfall is melting from the rooftops, a car passes in the distance, and 7 o'clock mass is rung from St. Peter's church (one of 3 in Cembra). Footsteps appear, and the spring loaded locks of the sliding shutters covering nearby shop windows are released with loud bangs; birds, a rooster, more shutters, and by 9 o'clock the streets are filling with sounds and people. It will not die down now until after midnight. For the conclusion of this recording, refer to CD 2, Track 3. (7'15 total)

CD 1, Track 8. *Easter Eve, St. Maria's Church.*

In the vestibule of the church, (Cembra's newest, and the one in which most services are presently held), St. Maria's tiny bell catches the recordists a little off guard before they move inside for the Easter Evening service. Heard under the singing are the bells of St. Rocco's church across the other side of the village (0'47, 2'15), and the recordists move to the plaza outside for a closer audit of them (2'37). People are still coming in, and move past the microphones. The three bells die off to one, which rings underneath the four Hallelujahs sung by the congregation inside (4'10), muted behind the large wooden doors. On the fourth and final repetition, the recordists move back inside to rejoin the service. The music is sung in the old church modes, with a choir of men and boys, singing antiphonally with the congregation, a capella. A second hymn occurring later in the service (7'00) is mixed in at this point to conclude the sequence. (8'14 total)

CD 2, Track 1. *Morra.*

Seven a.m. Easter Monday morning: footsteps mark their way across the plaza facing the Albergo, and other things come and go - a tractor, voices, birds, a moped, a stone, more footsteps, a tin can, and a laundry truck advertising itself with amplified voice and clarinet. Boys' voices in the street transform into men's voices playing *Morra* (4'10), an illegal betting game which often causes havoc (which is why it is prohibited). Players sit opposite each other and signal numbers with their fingers in quick succession, shouting out their guess for the combined total each time. As long as one is correct, the play continues; when both are wrong, new partners enter. This game was arranged especially for us on the night of our departure by the son of the hotel keeper; it was supervised by a visiting priest who kept the language clean. Suddenly the scene changes back to boys' voices in the street, (5'45) before the recordist moves through big creaking double doors

into the relative safety of the Albergo (6'30) to greet his colleagues and eat a late supper. (7'09 total)

CD 2, Track 2. *Snow Games.*

The higher part of Cembra reaches up the mountainside, a maze of closely spaced houses and winding lanes. This recording was made on a walk through the dense neighbourhood, listening for its moods. A fresh snowfall, together with the Easter vacation give the children plenty of time for fun, sledding down the steep curving streets. Towards the end of the sequence, the recordist moves around a corner or two to a quieter section, surrounded by the dripping eaves of melting snow. Sequence ends (5'27).

CD 2, Track 3. *Cembra, Easter Evening.*

The 24-hour recording concludes here: it is 4 p.m. outside the Albergo, where the vibrations of the jukebox are heard through the walls and windows. Bells ring, and an Easter Procession can just be heard from a couple of blocks' distance (0'40). Voices and cars mingle with the jukebox bass throb, and traffic builds to a wild crescendo following the conclusion of the afternoon service (ca. 3'30-4'30). A short calm is broken by a hotel customer who parks his idling car just outside the door, leaving it running for 20 minutes, burying the 7 o'clock announcement of the recordist (6'28). Sequence ends at 8 p.m. (8'08).

Lesconil

CD 2, Track 4. *Point d'Eckmuhl Lighthouse.*

This lighthouse stands a few kilometers from the village of Lesconil; its large moaning foghorn can be heard plainly in Lesconil however and it is the most conspicuous marine sound signal in the region. Inside the tower, a spiral staircase winds up a glistening tiled interior spire; sound reverberates wildly, and the blast of the horn itself - heard first outdoors, then inside, almost inhabits the place like a ghost. One of the attendants talks to us about the foghorn and how it works: you can hear the gas motor droning away from high above (1'10). It was built in 1897, and he says that nobody minds when the horn goes off. The recordist then climbs to the top, along with a dozen tourists, reaching it out of breath and exhausted. The perspective then opens out to the sea below (3'25), and we hear the horn again, with the sea in the background, birds closer up.

Once inside again (7'00) footsteps join voices on the way down, and just behind the microphones a woman is counting the steps in a whisper as she descends (there are 271). Sequence ends (8'30).

CD 2, Track 5. *La Criée.*

The port of Lesconil comes alive every day for the auction ("la criée") of the day's catch at the pier warehouse in the late afternoon. The boats begin to come in towards 4 p.m.;

they have been gone since the early morning, after shrimp, and in the afternoon sale about 13,000 kilos of seafood will be sold and trucked out to the major inland centres. The long airhorn blast (1'51) announces the opening of the sale, and at 3'35 we move from the pier to the warehouse and walk around between 10-15 buyers who come from as far as Paris. They bid with quick nods of the head, continuously bobbing up and down as the auctioneer registers the bids in rapid fire. (See Chapter 3 for more details.) (4'52 total)

CD 2, Track 6. *Bretagne Dialect.*

Two men work with planes and hammers building a small fishing boat in a yard just off one of the main streets; they speak the Gallic language of Bretagne. In the song which follows (2'50), recorded in one of the cafe-bars, one of the older women of the village tells the story of a sailor and his girl. Later, in the same place, two men oblige us with a sample of Bretagne dialect (5'25). They remark at the beginning in French (4'50) how it used to be discouraged, but that now they are proud to speak their traditional language. It must be true: real Bretagne folk music is in the jukebox, and after the conversation lapses back into French (7'20), traditionally tipsy sailors sing more traditional folk tunes (9'00). We move out to the street, and in the quiet afternoon, *Le Glas*, or funeral bell, is heard coming from the direction of the church. Then we hear the village priest, in fine voice as he preaches to his flock. Sequence ends (13'00).

Dollar

CD 2, Track 7. *On the Road to Muckert.*

The sequences on this side centre around a set of interviews with the former Town Clerk, Mr. David Graham, carried out at the same places he once frequented as a boy. Mr. Graham's knowledge of Dollar was extensive, and included detailed recollections of community sounds from his early youth. Not much escaped his attention: even details of local gates were familiar to him (0'00-1'40).

A major highway, the A91, runs through Dollar. In fact it is the main street. Outside of town about a mile, we stand with Mr. Graham next to the highway, at about the same point where he remembers his father saying he could once hear four different church bells ringing simultaneously on a Sunday morning. Our talk also took place on a Sunday morning, and we listen for what there is to hear, but observe only the single bell of Dollar church, and even that is being carried away by the wind. Congregations have dwindled and can no longer support their own minister, so services are staggered, and such soundscapes are now a part of the past. The last sound is the 'clicking' of a dead leaf as it is blown by the breeze. Sequence ends (6'35).

CD 2, Track 8. *Pipe Music.*

Here are three pipe tunes, played end to end during a practice session on the Dollar

Academy playing grounds. The town is proud of the school band, which regularly collects top honours in the yearly competitions. This sound carries well over the townsite itself, and over to the neighbouring village of Tillicoultry, carried in part by the tall Ochil hills which run to the north of the two communities. (3'28 total)

CD 2, Track 9. *The Cemetery Gate*. (0'13)

CD 2, Track 10. *Golf Course and Railway Station*.

In conversation again with David Graham, now high above the town, on the hillside by one of the golf course fairways. From this vantage point many of the village sounds can be heard and Mr. Graham recalls others from the past. Just as our tape was running out, he notes one further detail: the voices of the players passing by on the fairways "were not locals; the accents were English." (2'55)

Cars swoosh by on the A91 as we move back down to the town again to the site of the abandoned railway station (3'55). As children play in a nearby yard, Graham talks about the sounds that once abounded here: shunting in the goods yard (buffers, men shouting), the signal box codes (bell and gong), the ticket machine, weighing machine, the car doors unloading passengers, the guard's whistle and shouted instructions, the ganger and his crew resetting the track on hot summer days, the man who 'walked track', hammering back the wooden pegs which had become loosened (thump of boots on sleepers, the occasional whack of a key). (10'05 total)

CD 2, Track 11. *Dollar Church - Special Request*.

The one Sunday we had to record Dollar's church bell, something went wrong with one of our tape recorders and we asked the minister if he would have it rung again for our microphones. He declined, thinking it might be confusing. But when people heard that Dollar's bell might be the only one missing in our five village study, they rallied to the cause and we asked on their behalf whether the Minister wouldn't reconsider. He did, and this recording, made on a Tuesday morning as the postman was walking by (0'20-0'50), was the result.

Following this, the sequence continues with a visit to the church (1'25) during the Sunday morning sermon, then a quick cut to the Academy grounds (2'40) where the pipe band gets itself together for a drill practice. (4'11 total)

LIST OF EQUIPMENT USED FOR THE RECORDINGS

Field Recording Equipment

Nagra Model IV-S 1/2-track portable stereo tape recorders;
Uher Model 4200 1/2-track portable stereo tape recorder;
AKG Model C-451E Condenser Modular Microphone Systems, including:

CK-1 cardioid condenser microphone cartridges,
CK-9 interference tubes (shot gun),
C-451 E preamplifiers,
W- 17 windscreens;
AKG Model D202ES dynamic cardioid microphones;
AKG Model K-60 headphones;
Superex Model ST-PRO-B headphones.

Studio Recording Equipment

Three Ampex Model AG/350/2 1/2-track stereo tape recorders;
Ampex Model AG/440/2 four-channel (in-line) tape recorder;
AKG Model C 12A Electrostatic Microphone System;
Two Krohn-Hite Model 3100R band-pass filters;
Tascam 12:4 mixer

Analytical Equipment

Brüel and Kjaer Model 2205 sound level meters;
Brüel and Kjaer Model 4230 sound level calibrator;
Brüel and Kjaer Model 3347 Real-time Third-octave Analyzer, including:
Type 4710 Control and Display Unit,
Type 2130 Frequency Analyzer;
Model 2305 Graphic Level Recorder.

Studio Equipment

Two binaural construction microphone pistol-grips;
Bidwell Variable Speed Control Unit (for tape recorders);
Tape study unit (tape-loop playback machine).