

*Steam (2001)*  
*for amplified alto flute and tape*

**BARRY TRUAX**

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*Steam* is a homage to the unique Canadian whistles and foghorns that populate the nation's soundscape from coast to coast. Some are actual steam whistles, but most are the air horns designed by Robert Swanson to imitate their earlier counterparts, the most famous being the E-flat minor triad of the transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railway and the O Canada horn in Vancouver. Other horns that are heard in the piece are a shift whistle in Prince Edward Island, a steam foghorn in New Brunswick, the Royal Hudson steam train, the West Coast Express, the CPR and Chemainus mill shift whistles, all from the West Coast. The rich timbres of these horns provide a set of pitches that are elaborated in the live part. The work is dedicated to the memory of Robert Swanson, one of the most significant designers of the Canadian soundscape. *Steam* was commissioned by Kathryn Cernauskas.

Original sound recordings by the World Soundscape Project and the composer.

Barry Truax: STEAM (2001), for amplified alto flute and two digital soundtracks

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Technical note:

The work was realized using the composer's PODX system which incorporates the DMX-1000 Digital Signal Processor controlled by a PDP Micro-11 computer with software for real-time granular synthesis and signal processing (such as digital resonators) developed by the composer in the School for the Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University.

[www.sfu.ca/~truax](http://www.sfu.ca/~truax)

# Steam

amplified alto flute and CD

Note: Accidentals apply only to the notes they precede

Barry Truax

blend with texture , emerge as solo

Alto Flute

CD

decay .... thinning ....

3-horn mix

gl. gl.

0:19 0:23 0:27 0:30 0:38 0:41

PEI shift whistle

0:52 0:55 1:04 1:07

dim. mp echo

1:17 1:22 1:26

West Coast Express

energetic

mf echo f echo f echo

1:37 1:45 1:51

approaching ...

WCE Royal Hudson steam train

imitate Royal Hudson

*f* 3 2:00 WCE 2:03 RH

2:08 WCE echo ...

2:18 RH *f* 3 *dim.*

2:30 RH *f* 3

*dim.* *rit.* 3 2:50 2:56

CPR train whistle pulsing

♩. = 46

3:00

*mp legato*

3:30

gradually more articulated

*mf*

*f marcato*

4:00

*mf*

*mp legato*

*mf gradually more articulated*

*f marcato*

4:30

*f*

*mf*

4:48

repeat if necessary

♩. = 36

4:50 (with CD)

*mp* *cresc.* *dim.*

♩. ♩. etc.

Loco whistle Royal Hudson (fading in, then lengthening)

(maintain tempo, not with CD)

*f* *dim.* *f*

*dim.* *f*

*dim.*

*f*

*dim.* *f*

*dim.* 5:58

CPR shift whistle,  
Vancouver

pulsed sound  
fades in



♩ = 66 lively

6:10

*mf*

*cresc.*

*f* *mf*

3 3

3 3

3 3 *cresc.*

3 3 *f*

*rit.* *dim.*

repeat during decay of whistle

fade till 7:00

same tempo as CD

*fl.*

normal

bend

7:01

Steam foghorn Cape Tormentine, NB (transposed down a half tone)

Slow, as at start

*mf*

decay .....

7:16

3-horn mix

slow, expressive

7:30

7:34

7:42

Chemainus, BC mill whistle

Chemainus

slow, stately

*mf*

7:48

7:58

slow, echo

*mp*

O Canada horn, Vancouver

echo

Chemainus

*p*

8:15

8:26

8:31