

FOR THE DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND ENJOYMENT OF UNUSUAL SOUND SOURCES

EXPERIMENTAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

ronmental sound and sound collage. Let's look at some of the individual selections.

The tape opens with an excerpt from Annea Lockwood's *River Archive*, which is an extensive compilation of river sounds presented as a study in geography. The sound heard in this selection is that of a human voice: a park ranger working in the Adirondacks along the Hudson river, describing the experience of particular sounds associated with the river -- an everyday, conversational voice inviting us, in a word, to listen.

Next we hear one of Bill and Mary Buchen's large aeolian harps. These strings, far longer than conventional instrument strings, produce masses of clustered overtones, with some pitches standing out more clearly than others. One listens not for melody or harmony but for sound quality, and for the patterns of the wind. The wind harp sound is set off evocatively by crickets chirping.

Bill Fontana's *Landscape Sculpture with Foghorns* works with the sounds of foghorns on San Francisco Bay. Speakers at the listening site played live broadcasts from microphones set up at eight widespread points on the bay. All of the microphones heard the same booming foghorns, but timing, tone quality and volume was slightly different for each due to the varying distances between different mics and different horns. The broadcast sounds combined with the natural sound of the horns and other ambient sounds at the site. The cumulative effect is not so very strange, but it possesses a certain fullness and spatial richness.

Brass Screen and Bronze Screen are samples from Richard Lemman's *Transducer* series, which explores the idea of using everyday materials as transducers, converting sound waves in the air into the analogous patterns of electron movement just as microphones do. In this recording we hear the vibrations occurring in small metal screens (as sensed by tiny contact mics, apparently), as they respond to impulses in the surrounding air. The screens are thus functioning like the diaphragms in microphones. The resulting sound turns out to be not unlike what you'd expect in metal screen vibrations.

In Mozart's *Moog*, Jim Pomeroy presents the sounds of 49 prepared music boxes going simultaneously. Wonderful music!

In *Voyager II: Uranus FlyBy*, Dr. Frederic Scarf gives us a recording of radiation emitting from space, by converting the electromagnetic radiation from space into analogous waves in the air within the audible frequency range. The sound is a little like an electronic wind.

David Behrman and George Lewis' *Installation for Parc de La Villette* has as its central element a kalimba, set out to be played by visitors to the site. A set of sensors on the instrument are linked to a computer system which controls both a graphics display and a synthesizer. The synth and graphics screen respond to the human player's musical figures with related patterns of their own generated by a special program. The music is lovely; successful simply because the chosen synthesizer timbres work nicely with the natural kalimba tones, and the note patterns that arise, with their mix of programmed and human elements,

are musical and appealing.

Speaker Swinging is Gordon Monahan's work in which three or more performers swing speakers on long wires in huge circles, as the speakers play sine tones or other synthesized drones. Doppler effects, directional effects, and acoustic interference effects between the speakers enrich what would otherwise be simple drones.

Extrait d'*Resurgence*, by Bernard Baschet, Michel Deneuve & Alain Dumont, is a performance on several Baschet instruments, which include (judging tentatively by the sound), some metal friction rod instruments and a wobbly-pitch string instrument, in a single droning but appealingly varied and moving chord.

Jeffrey Bartone's *Sky Concert* is a recording of a concert consisting of radio receivers located on roofs across a 1 mile area, playing tape music and environmental sound broadcast by KAOS-fm radio. On this (the *Soundviews* tape) recording, sounds from the locations where the speakers were placed are heard as well. Within the collage we hear pan music, water sounds, kids playing and adults conversing, applause, a glass harmonica, and a boiler-room fireman at a brewery, discussing the importance in his work of attention to sounds associated with the operation of the plant.

In *No More Fear*, with Pauline Oliveros, Linda Montano, Tom Jaremba and children, a group of youngsters provide sound accompaniment and character voices for a story. The sound of the children's voices is like some irresistible snapshot of kids at play, only better.

Factory Whistle Carols is an old, scratchy recording of an anonymous worker in Pittsburg playing Christmas carols at great volume on a sliding steam-operated factory whistle.

On one level, some of the sounds on this tape eventually become uninteresting, especially if the listener doesn't make the effort to explore each piece diligently both for purely aural content and for emotional meaning. This is particularly true for noisy (i.e., lacking meaningful frequency relationships) droning sounds, cheap electronics or things using not-so-great contact mics, and anything recorded on a boombox with an internal microphone. But there is a lot of material here. Most of it is diverse, interesting and enjoyable to listen too. Also most of it is intellectually challenging -- there are so many ways to create sound and so many ways to listen! -- and much of it is rich in human emotional meaning, or satisfying simply as music.

Also included on this tape but not mentioned above are: Karen McPherson's ambient nature sounds, Julius' little-speaker electronic bird sounds, Hildegard Westerkamp's urban environment sounds, Andrej Zdravich's cicada music, Harry Bertoia's metal rod sculptures, Doug Hollis' large aeolian pipes, Robin James' passing train, a carillon concert, Paul Panhuysen & Johan Goedhart's long string installations, Lief Brush's *Teleconstructs*, Ron Konzak's Puget Sound Wind Harp, Bart Hopkin's *Disorderly Tumbling* forth, Susan Stone's radio work, a John Cage interview, Robert Rutman's *Steel Cello*, a speech piece by Ellen Zweig, Peter Richards' *Wave Organ*, and Paul DeMarinis & David Behrman's interactive music and video game called *Sound Fountain*.

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

SOUNDVIEWS, Volume I: SOURCES

Soundviews, 218 1/2 West 4th Ave., Olympia, WA 98501.

This extensive compilation is an important and wide-ranging documentation of current activity in sound-art exploration, so I have singled it out for fuller coverage here.

The *Soundviews* cassette appeared this spring, after several years in the making. It documents, in short sound excerpts along with some interviews, the work of thirty-six currently active sound artists. Some of those represented are instrument makers; some are sound sculptors and makers of environmental or interactive sound installations; some work with electronics; and some are sound collage artists working with recordings of natural and environmental sound. The cassette comes nicely packaged with a 40-page booklet containing brief notes on each excerpt.

The project developed in connection with a series of broadcasts over radio station KAOS-fm in Olympia, Washington, under the guiding hand of Jeffrey Bartone. "The sounds on this tape," the notes say, "are in all cases excerpts from larger works, environments or processes ... sound often being simply one facet of the experience of a given work. In all these works there is a strong sense of new or enlarged contextuality of sound -- musically, spatially, or socially. *Sources* is offered in hopes of glimpsing these emerging soundscapes."

This tape frequently focuses on areas of sound exploration that *Experimental Musical Instruments* explores relatively rarely; in particular, envi-



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Various Artists, "Soundviews: Sources" (\$8.00 from What Next?, PO Box 15118, Santa Fe, NM 87506) For those interested in sound as sound, particularly when generated from unusual instruments or unlikely acoustic (for the most part) sources. In all 39 audio artists are represented here, with several of the tracks punctuated by interviews with the recording artists. The recordings range from unstructured aural landscapes to interactive music systems, to various natural phenomena including swinging speaker drones and a Uranus flyby. Nice packaging including a colorful, glossy booklet dedicating a page per artist; excellent recordings. (T/PMZ)

Various Artists

Soundviews: Sources

experimental • 1990 • \$8.00 • 90 minutes, chrome
• Nonsequitur, c/o Steve Peters, PO Box 15118,
Santa Fe, NM 87506; (505) 986-0004

A cassette-only anthology of 39 audio artists who work outside of the bounds of "music" per se — people who do installations, build instruments, work with environmental sound, etc.

GAJOOB: The introductory notes inside the excellent booklet that accompanies this tape package reads: "SoundViews has been a research index of an orbit of artists and explorers who variously work with sound and new contexts of musical expression... sound sculpture / constructions, audio environments / installations, natural sounds and audio ecology." This tape opens up a whole teeming, vibrant world of sound exploration. It's really fascinating to hear and learn about all the various ways people are experimenting with the sounds the environment makes; along with unique ways of constructing sound environments. It leaves you with a new understanding of sound as a medium. Artists featured are: Annea Lockwood, Mary & Bill Buchen, Stephan Von Huene, Karen McPherson, Julius, Hildegard Westerkamp, Andrej Zdravic, Bill Fontana, Richard Lerman, Harry Bertoia, Jim Pomeroy, Doug Hollis, Dr. Frederick Scarf, David Behrman & George Lewis, Gordon Monahan, Charlamagne Palestine, Bernard Baschet, Michel Deneuve, Alain Dumant, Paul Panhuysen & Johan Goedhart, Liz Phillips, Leif Brush, Ron Konzak, Bart Hopkins, Susan Stone, Jeffrey Bartone, Ellen Fullman, Pauline Oliveros, Linda Montana, Tom Jarembo, Carl Stone, John Cage, Robert Rutman, Ellen Zweig, Peter Richards, Paul DeMarinis & David Dehrman, Alvin Curran and Tony Schwartz. Highly Recommended. SOUND: excellent.

GAJOOB Magazine

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• **THE AERIAL: A Journal In Sound** The best of this first edition of *The Aerial* (and that's most of it) has a loose metaphysical orientation, but does not make any false moves toward accessibility. Ain't no new age here; this stuff represents a *real* exploration of various psychic and spiritual states. Highlights are, as they say, too numerous to mention, but Terry Setter's "Aphorism III: Like a Coat Or a Mask" is a serene and haunting experiment using rhythmic transliterations of ancient Greek, with gong, drum, and soprano sax sounds alternately suggesting Indonesian and west coast Indian sources. "Murdoch and the Sufi," by Richard Kostelanetz, is a clever and resonant collage of prayers, presented simultaneously, which include spoken texts and several types of religious chanting. Malcolm Goldstein treats the words of an Eskimo song-poem as sacred sounds, and breaks them up into linguistic components which have a true shamanistic quality. "Haunted House," an old blues tune, is given a slightly warped, avant treatment by vocalist Suzanne Langille and guitarist Loren Mazzacane (aka Guitar Roberts), who employs lots of tremolo and bent notes. Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't mention a whimsical but accurate revenge narrative titled "The Last Acts of St. Fuckyou." The CD is accompanied

by a handsome booklet providing biographical information and/or artistic manifestos from most of the contributors. This enterprise deserves the support of anyone seriously interested in experimental music. (Nonsequitur, Box 15118, Santa Fe, NM 87506) — Bill Tilland

SOUNDVIEWS: SOURCES There's precious little "music" on this anthology, but that's really not a problem, because its purpose is to present the work of 39 audio artists whose primary intentions, however varied, are not directed toward conventional music-making. The experimental/unusual instrument category is perhaps the most musical of the group, and includes selections from a carillon, from a keyboard instrument with eight lengths of copper pipe attached to each key, and from several sophisticated "long string" instruments. However, the largest represented class of audio art here is environmental — sometimes more or less pure (recording and arranging sounds from the natural environment), sometimes a translation of natural forces into sound (huge aeolian harps, wind organs, wave organs) and sometimes involving sound collages of varying degrees of complexity, from manipulated environmental sounds to surreal combinations of environmental and electronic source material. Some of the most fascinating pieces defy easy categorization, such as "Voyager II: Uranus Fly By," where electronic and magnetic sensors on the Voyager spacecraft were used to record plasma waves. These are truly "sounds of space," and appropriately ethereal. *Soundviews: Sources* is a very nice production, with good recording quality, and includes extensive biographical and critical information on each artist in an attractive, well-designed booklet. (Nonsequitur, Box 15118, Santa Fe, NM 87506, \$8) — Bill Tilland

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VARIOUS ARTISTS: Soundviews C90

An essential compilation of Audio-Art produced by Jeffery Bartone. The tape features the works of 45 artists including Annea Lockwood, Karen McPherson, Richard Lerman, Pauline Oliveros, Bart Hopkins, Carl Stone, Ellen Fullman and others. The tape, as a whole, is an aggregate montage of brilliant audio moments. Whether the artists are composing sound producing kinetic sculpture, putting sound sensors on Voyager II space craft, producing sound from the waves in the San Francisco harbor, or performing Mozart on "prepared music boxes beyond repair"—the pieces, although unique in departure, are presented with a continuity of vision. The tape comes with a colorful booklet containing brief descriptions/portraits of the artists who contributed to the tape. Brief excerpts from interviews with John Cage, Annea Lockwood, Doug Hollis, Richard Lerman, Brigitta Berola, Hildegard Westercamp, Liz Phillips, Ron Konzak, further place us in tune with the techniques and thought that propel audio art. The combined package is both an accessible introduction to audio art as well as a crucial documentary about the state of this art. The enclosed booklet requests submissions and suggests more editions of SoundViews may be on their way. This is a project that deserves attention and support as the movers behind SoundViews continue working hard to deliver the futuristic and the beautiful. (Nonsequitur Foundation, POB 15118, Santa Fe, NM 87506)—Darrell Jonsson