

Charlie Morrow: There are two questions: One is how is immersivity part of your practice as a composer and sound artist. The other is how did you get there? What was your first awareness of immersivity and how did that lead to where you are now? One's a timeline.

Annea Lockwood: Let me start with the timeline because I was thinking about that end of things when I was getting myself ready to make this call. I think it goes back to my experience of listening to recordings in the BBC archives and working with recordings of rituals in which trance was induced, and my passion to find out how our bodies respond to sound, what we do with it, so to speak, how it affects us and thus why our sonic connections are always so powerful in lots of areas.

So, I was curious about the parameters of music involved in trance. I was curious about which parameters in particular, such as reiterative rhythms and so on, might be really effective in drawing people inside the ritual itself, into the ritual arena spiritually. So that's really where Pauline [Oliveros] and I started our friendship too because we were both focusing quite a bit on sound in the body and this would have been in the late 60s and early 70s.

I did a series of short programs for the BBC on collaged, really collaged, excerpts from rituals around the world in which trance was induced and they were used as intermission programs in BBC recordings of standard concert programs from the Royal Albert Hall, which always sort of amused me. But from then on ... it's all about the real importance of how the sound we're producing might be affecting our bodies and those of our listeners. It's always been in the forefront of my mind when I'm working with sound.

Skipping from there to the Hudson River Sound Map, for example, and based on my experience as a kid listening to moving water, rivers, etc. in New Zealand, I intended that sound mapping to give listeners, especially New Yorkers, a visceral sense of the river's power, through their audio cortex and through their whole bodies, as the sound sort of passes through one's body as well as listening. I have the feeling that for a lot of New Yorkers the Hudson is a visual marvel, as it were, an important part of their lives visually, but most people rarely have an opportunity to encounter it as a phenomenon, as a substance and thus gain a clearer sense of its power, of just how powerful the currents are in the river. That's not really visible most of the time from the surface of your eyes as you're scanning the water's surface. It's not at all apparent and they're immensely powerful; so starting consciously working with sound, the body, and connection to an immersion in the environment really

started with the river archive and then the Hudson River Sound Map. And it flows on through the Sound Map of the Danube and the Housatonic and the collaboration I did in 2014 with Bob Bielecki at Caramoor, "Wild Energy", which is an installation rooted in infra and ultrasound from non--human phenomena.

2

I can talk more about the concept for "Wild Energy," but just to give you a general timeline, I think that's pretty much how it's gone and I think it applies to my concert pieces too, for that matter. Yarn/Wire and I just created a piece collectively called "Into the Vanishing Point," which boils down to being our sort of lamenting or mourning, really, the the disappearance of insect populations worldwide - the collapse of insect populations and all the ramifications of that, on through other animals and other beings in the world. So, it was based on our recognition from reading and hearing about the fact that that's happening and our response to it and, of course, we hope that audiences and listeners will get drawn into that feeling-vortex.

Charlie Morrow: That's a fantastic journey you've made. I remember that we first met I think over pulsars. We had both had an interest in pulsars and it seemed that you were already thinking beyond the orb of the earth and beyond the human size into smaller, smaller universes as well even then.

Annea Lockwood: I remember it was thrilling to hear that particular pulsar,[in the Vela Supernova], to hear it's wonderful syncopated rhythms at that time; just as it was thrilling in "Wild Energy" to be listening to solar oscillations, talking of expansions out into the universe and listening to them. This was a remarkable experience ... Yes, our connections have been strong for a very long time but we certainly connected over pulsars.

Charlie Morrow: I think I'm really curious: what is your own sense of immersion. Where do you hear yourself being at this point and how does that reflect in your work?

Annea Lockwood: Immersion is always very strongly connected in my mind. And more explicitly so with how we can overturn the inherited species hierarchy, which puts us always at the top of an exploiting role, and just see how we are an intrinsic part of the world, this planet, all its processes and lifeforms. How we're not separate from anything on our planet. We're all of us interconnected with all of those other life--forms and phenomena and I think sound is a wonderful channel for intuitively sensing connection because of its

potent effects on our body. It's such an immediate conduit for that sense of connection.

My feeling strongly is: that the more we recognize that it is a given, which it is, to my mind, just submerged much of the time. The more we recognize it as a given, the more we can work within our environment to ensure that we don't continue to do harm, to see if we can alleviate harms which we have done and to acknowledge that we're going to have to work with environmental systems not to control them. I think the one comes out of the other. If our bodies and our imaginations can recognize, can really sense that we are intertwined with everything else – it's even beyond the connection. We're just part of everything else. The more our whole systems can sense that intuitively, the more naturally we will work to come to terms with how we need to change, what we can do to alleviate some of the oncoming cascade of climate change effects and processes that are going to otherwise overwhelm us, and how we can just simply stop trying to control everything else.

I think that was what was behind the River Sound Maps. They are attempts to entice listeners, to draw listening ears actually inside a river – feel its power, feel its structure, feel its beauty, feel how it moves and be part of that movement. It has just become more explicitly defined for me as I've gone on through the years. Bob Bielecki and I wrote an introduction to Wild Energy when Caramoor first mounted the installation. I think we're up to about eleven speakers arrayed in a grove of trees, and within a rock fall at the very edge of the Caramoor Estate in Katonah (New York), which is a beautiful estate. I'm sure you're familiar with it. I bet you've been there. This is a really wild patch of Caramoor, and so Bob did one of his gorgeous spatial arrays of speakers in amongst the rocks and trees. In 'Wild Energy' there's various sounds from Mount Kilauea, from the sun, (the solar oscillations), from bats, big brown bats and tiger moths facing off, jamming each other's signals, all sorts of different phenomenological sounds - choruses and whistlers and so on

3

just sort of float through those trees and come out of the rocks – as immersive an effect as we can possibly engender. To which end we also set up a couple of hammocks in that space, which I've been dying to do with an installation for years, thinking that the more relaxed your body is, the more it's willing to absorb and, in this case, absorb sound energy. So you can just lie back in a hammock and stare up at the canopy and let all that go through your body and yourself. That's the most recent – that and the collaboration with Yarn/Wire ['Into the Vanishing Point'] are my most recent attempts to create immersion and connection for people.

Charlie Morrow: I appreciate hearing your ideas and you've been very inspiring to listen to. Your passion for what you hear and what you're translating what you hear into is phenomenal. So, I thank you for today's interview ...

Annea Lockwood: Sure, but let me ask you a question, Charlie. How do you feel working within the acoustic environment and what do you feel that induces in listeners?

Charlie Morrow: I think that it can induce everything. I believe that we are immersed whether we like it or not.

Annea Lockwood: Absolutely.

Charlie Morrow: I see this at two ends of my life: currently as a sound installation maker, building systems that people can live and work in. I make sound systems for multiple rooms and locations. I started out doing narrative pieces, but these are more solid environments for work and healing and so forth. They are always on, you turn them off. So it goes along with heat and light as part of the construction of how people are building the world both indoors and out. So, I feel it very strongly because I think that it's a missing element in the design of our built environment and that's where I'm focusing my energy.

On the other end of the story, I had the remarkable experience of waking up, becoming conscious of sound before I was born. I had done a regressive series of thought journeys until I reached the stage before I was born when I was on my mother's operating system, so to speak, and merged. I heard sounds outside of her body and later on I duplicated that for the WDR, West German radio, as it was very striking. And then it was an amazing moment to be shot out into the world of air and start to smell because, of course, smell had not been in the picture in the same way. It was liquid going through our pre--birth nostrils ... it's more like the ways you feel liquid when you're swimming or taking a bath on your fingers, your skin and so that enormous transition has powered my journey.

Annea Lockwood: Charlie, that is amazing to hear and absolutely beautiful. So, of course, we intellectually know that our lives are a whole but you absolutely experienced the continuation from pre--birth through the rest of your life – that's beautiful, man.

Charlie Morrow: I've always thought of it as a cross to bear, frankly. I am glad you can see the beauty in it.

Annea Lockwood: Oh absolutely. May I say one more thing about this perspective of environmental sound, and hearing and sound being a conduit. That's a very vibrant concept to me and a generative concept, of course. It's important in my life and I often express it this being how sounds, how Kilauea is coursing through my body if I'm listening to a volcanic bench collapse. Given the way that sound is coursing through my body, as I experience that, I'm making a visceral connection to that event, a real strong visceral connection and I find that a compelling recognition of unity with that part of our environment. Those sounds are not artifacts; they are energy captured, or a flow of energy captured as a recording at one point, but still highly energized, flowing on, continuing on through me and other people and it's a very visceral thing which happens and that I find really powerful.

4

Charlie Morrow: I'm glad you did. I was going to ask you, since we live in a time--based state of mind, how you experience that as a time--based experience, what happens from the time that you hear the sound and respond and it travels on. What is that audio tsunami for you?

Annea Lockwood: The time element of it: What I don't experience is that I'm hearing a recording in a sense - that I'm hearing an artifact, a snapshot. What I do experience is pure energy.

Charlie Morrow: Makes sense. My point was that you know it wasn't there, then you hear it and it goes through you and your whole body responds as you described. I was intrigued about that because, in a way, it's as if you were to slow it down and look at the way it grew through you; I was just wondering how it grows in your body when you experience it. It happens fast but just what do you feel?

Annea Lockwood: Oh boy, it's a sort of internal glowing! My body just becomes irradiated. It's emotionally thrilling. So, that's tied up in my body's responses. Of course, you know, as our immersions always are, they're not separate either - it's thrilling. What amuses me still is that those sounds are so sheerly fascinating; they're so complex, really beautiful in themselves. So, I'm also experiencing them that way as absolute sonic beauty and complexity and relishing that too. But I don't hear them as if they were an artifact.

Charlie Morrow: No, I don't either. I had an early experience that was emblematic for me. I visited my father who was on a military base as a military doctor when I was maybe somewhere between one and two years old and I remember the military band came by and the drums were so loud that I felt them inside me and I couldn't close my ears with my hands or anything. The sound became part of my body and that was how I was changed by the sound. It seemed like you were describing something very similar and that's why I was pressing you for details. And I tried to at first close it out, because it was so intense, but then I couldn't and I went with it and I was changed by this sound.

Annea Lockwood: It's an exhilarating experience. Yes, sound is then part of your body. I feel so simultaneously enveloped in it, which is a wonderful sensation and I'm permeated by it too. All of the parts of my body are experiencing this, and I sort of believe they are, and it's totally exhilarating being simultaneously propelled out of oneself, one's everyday cognitive self and into a much, much bigger space and that's such a relief, among other things.

Charlie Morrow:
Beautiful.

Annea Lockwood:
Isn't it the most wonderful experience, total immersion like that via sound?

Charlie Morrow:
Absolutely.

Annea Lockwood:
I'm lucky to have that experience over and over again ...

5

Charlie Morrow: It's true. It's the basis for our life's work ... we visit it again and again, in different ways – and sometimes it visits us.

Annea Lockwood: As with your prenatal memories, right, maybe ...

Charlie Morrow: That's for sure.

Annea Lockwood: It's a beautiful thing to be writing about. Congratulations and thanks to you for tackling this. It's a lovely thing to be writing about, Charlie. Can't wait to see what your book will teach me ...

Charlie Morrow: I appreciate having the opportunity to share these thoughts with you because you're such a sensitive read in this vibratory universe and at the same time a generator ...

Annea Lockwood: Thank you, Charlie.

Charlie Morrow: I'll be in touch about this project of interviews with a lot of colleagues and collaborators. With one exception – a kind of overarching view of the different hats that Michael Gerson wore. Because in electronic immersivity he was the Einstein. He's the inventor, he invented ambisonics and he was also involved in recording improvised and choir music. I met him when I played with Derek Bailey during Company Week. Regrettably, he died at age 52, so he's kind of only known by engineering people and the engineering people and music people have a completely different picture of the man. But he's the important history--maker for immersivity.

Annea Lockwood: Wow, I didn't know his name either.

Charlie Morrow: I thought to mention it because it's really obscure. Well, thank you for today.

Annea Lockwood: Okay, bye bye.