

Living in Sound

Today I am sitting in a conference, anticipating the demands of the Lectern microphone. What are the expectations of the audience? Where should I set the level? Can I hear the presenter clearly?

Outside they are cutting down a tree, the chainsaws drone and whine, the rumble of the diesel buses hums under the ambient clamor of the sounds of living, of society, of a city full of humanity. The chatter patter and punctuation of 100 people chatting, talking, meeting at this conference over sets this aural picture.

This sense of listening, of hearing through the layers of sonic invasion, permeates my life my brain, my reality. So how do I process this, how do I express or replicate this subtle nuance of this sense of sound.

Being conscious of sound and of the conditions surrounding the expectations of sound and its representation for the audience, much of my working life has been an exploration and experiment into the realms of audio manipulation and representation beyond the conventions.

Approaching from an entirely innocent tangent, under the interest of curiosity and fun, it was almost a surprise to find that sound is surrounded with many conditions that dictate to the general mind not only what is possible but also what is real.

So to attempt to alter or augment sonic environments into unconventional conditions is considered to be black magic or more directly offensive.

Sound is then discovered as a fundamental structure of society, one of the balancing elements to our universal human experience. It becomes a key associate with of our memories, our histories, our awareness, and our environment.

Here today again, my job is to provide and supply sound as close to the real as possible.

I am to reinforce the voice of the presenter with clarity and loudness; I am to support the environment with music at designated times and levels in order to create excitement and atmosphere.

However what I hear exceeds this expectation. I hear the inherent failure of the sound systems, the threshold of feedback. I hear the sound off the walls, the density of the air as humidity alters the sonic conditions. I can hear the rustling of paper and the squeaking chairs. I hear the voice of the presenter grow tired and strained.

I hear the sound of sound, the vibrations of living, the deeper subtle sense of all that surrounds me, its haunts me and flaunts its esoteric pattern on my mind.

So here we are as frequencies collide, half and double, melding with other sounds, like waves on the ocean making infinite patterns and ripples upon our sonic shores.

Within this almost autistic sensation, I desire to not only capture and represent this experience but to creatively reinvent the sensation into dimensional experience and expression.

My regard is to treat sound as an environment that can be adjusted, influenced, interacted with. Through which you can physically illustrate participation and involvement as a tangible existence.

Much of modern culture isolates us and abstracts us from being human, being intimate, being connected and associated to earth that we live on.

Sound systems for business, social or artistic purposes are still controlled by universal conventions of what people expect sound to be. This expectation is perpetuated by cultural conditions of our society.

Because of this, sound becomes a fundamental form through which new ideas can be expressed and explored. It becomes an undefined platform for challenging the paradigm of our existence.

As other avenues of Art, Media, Culture and Politics become ingrained in astute legacies; the structure of Sound remains unconsiderd, unexplored and undiscoverd.

However against this potential lies an almost aggressive resistance to change, a deep and stubborn objection to realize other realities. So again Sound is a contentious form with many people who are unwilling to accept that you can consider alternatives.

Yet sound surrounds us, it envelops us. Sound is life, emotion, energy, information, sound is a structure through which we live and our lives.

So sound seeks treatment, seeks our involvement and our interest, it offers new existence, new ways to express and explore our identity as humans, as a societies. It offers us the ability to rediscover the intangible connections to spirit and earth, to question the conditions of what we know, what we expect to be true.

Today sound is important; the presenter must be heard with clarity and loudness. The message must be carried to the audience. The audience experience relies upon this experience to draw value from their time invested.

Tomorrow the importance of sound lies in our ability to extend its potential through artistic endeavors or conventional reinvention. Facing this challenge will reward us with new realities of expression, new ways of understanding and new systems of living.

Sound is living, it is growing and I can hear my future.

...

Simon Kong

Written: 28th October 2005

