

# Stepping outside for a moment: narrative space in two works for sound alone

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I believe we have a need for a new kind of literature to explain works of art for sound, one that listens differently to what is going on and allows for subjective interpretation as a valued tool. In my personal interpretation of the two works I have chosen<sup>1</sup> – by Paul Lansky and Luc Ferrari – I have found more resonances in the varied narratives of fiction, in particular the rich, multilayered diversity of the novel, than in music. This chapter itself explores fiction and non-conventional presentation as a vital way of illuminating narrative in two works for sound alone.

Stepping outside  
'Things she carried' – first movement of *Things She Carried*  
by Paul Lansky

The movement begins with a loud, fairly low-pitched note, recognisably of electric guitar origin. Then a female voice announces the title of the movement (which is also 'Things she carried') in a matter-of-fact way. Slow, guitar-like drones continue, and a steady rhythmic patterning commences on percussion, continuing throughout most of the movement. Whilst this is going on the speaking voice lists a series of objects, those likely to be found in a woman's pocketbook or handbag. Some time after the voice has stopped the music fades.

There is, of course, far more to it than that.

1

A few seconds into the piece, a female voice announces the title. Although the loud guitar note which opened the movement decreases in

amplitude at this point, the voice is not unequivocally at the forefront of the texture. There are no clear clues as to either what, or who, the voice represents or its function here: it could be that of a radio continuity announcer, a narrator, or someone about to read a poem. It could be an actor playing any of the above. Regardless of this dilemma, in announcing a title the voice initiates the expectancy of an ensuing narrative of some kind, albeit one that does not yet claim a genre.

## 2

The 'guitar' notes amble in slow, consonant intervals around a central pitch. They are generally lower in amplitude than the speaking voice, though not always. It should be relatively easy to relegate these aimless drones to the 'background' as an attractive aural wall-paper, but there remains a disquieting sense that something isn't 'right'. Wall-papering is difficult when the dimensions of the hypothetical space are impossible to gauge. Several familiar listening cues as to space have been 'corrupted' by the way that sounds are presented. For instance, the electric guitar sound is compromised on at least two counts, proximity and timbre: the long notes have rather too large and mobile a timbre for a 'real' guitar, some sounds are less guitar-like than others; subtle differences of reverberation and a lack of attack on some of the notes indicate that the sound might emanate from a distant point in a large space, on the other hand fluctuations in amplitude sometimes hint at precisely the opposite.

## 3

The 'gamelan'-like percussion pattern starts pottering around pleasantly when the voice comes in. The sound is immediately and unnervingly 'close': if this were a 'real' instrument our understanding of its proximity to our listening ears would be informed by the small sounds that close-mic-ing picks up and the resonance created by the space. But these sounds – like the guitar notes – have a tendency to treat the stereo field to a game of spatial hopscotch. Their timbre is more reminiscent of pots and pans than gongs and bells, yet these kitchen implements are perfectly tuned and played with machine-precision accuracy. There is nothing new, now, in the hyper-perfection of quantised, synthetic timbre from which 'human' intervention has been somehow miraculously erased, but there is something that doesn't ring true in the conflicting spatial and timbral signals implied individually by this patterning, the guitars and – as will be discussed further – the nature of the speaking voice. They refuse to sit down together. Nevertheless, the innocuous timbres, harmonic predictability and the static rhythmic patter contribute to a

relaxed feel and a sense that, though something will happen soon, there's no hurry.

#### 4

The piece is framed, the title is announced. Let action commence – ‘and now, Radio 4 presents *Things She Carried*, starring Hannah Mackay’. Imagine the scene: as the guitar soundtrack fades we’ll tune in to the foreground sound of a bag being emptied, perhaps a few contextualising mutterings from the female character and the scraping of wood against a tile floor. A room, a bag, a table, a chair, a woman sitting down. Safe in the knowledge that we are now equipped with the requisite clues for visualisation – since in radio drama the audience is asked to provide the set – we can settle back as the action (even a monologue is active internal dialogue) unfolds before our ears and inner eye.

We can almost see it. Right?

#### ASIDE: The lure of the open door

Perhaps paintings can have a soundtrack too, if we broaden our definition to include the internal music of the observer’s response in looking at a work of visual art.<sup>2</sup> Lansky is not unaware of that possibility, drawing analogies to Vermeer’s *The Love Letter*, in alluding to what he is trying to achieve.

You’re standing in front of Vermeer’s painting, *The Love Letter*. Looking through a doorway, you see a woman holding a lute. She has just been handed a letter by another woman ... You could invent a different story [to ‘explain’ the painting’s subject] each time, and it wouldn’t matter. What does matter is the way the painting creates a vibrating moment – the consequence of some things that might have happened – and the way you, the viewer, experience the painting through that imagined moment (Lansky, liner notes to *Things She Carried*, 1997).

In trying to pin down the potent attraction of *trompe l’oeil* painting, Baudrillard attests that it is our appreciation of the *un-reality* of the depiction that ‘lures’ us into being seduced by the painting’s charm. In his view it is the *absence* of a dimension which creates this sense of ‘almost but not quite’ and gives the image its strength. Our senses are mystified so that we are at once aware that we are not seeing a real object, but are attuned to the ‘immanence’ of the real.<sup>3</sup> By extension we might judge that *trompe l’oeil* attunes us to the immanence of the real sense of – in this case – seeing. We know we are looking at a painting but, in our mystification, respond as if we are looking at the objects depicted, rather than their depiction. This latter subtle variation of *trompe l’oeil* reception, I suggest, need not be confined to visual works, and has important implications for our response to narrative in sound.

To use Vermeer's *The Love Letter* as an example: the composition of the painting is, indeed, 'as if' seen through a doorway, and is typical of his work in this respect. The composition is framed, in addition to the physical frame, by the frame of the door in the painting itself. We look through, we see. We could almost be there.

Almost.

The painting is not concerned with *trompe l'oeil* objects but has an element of *trompe l'oeil* with regard to *seeing*. By inserting the frame of the painted doorway within the frame of the painting Vermeer lures us into believing that we are 'seeing through his eyes' or perhaps that he has somehow 'stepped out' of the painting and has joined us in seeing – that the story of the painting, in these terms, exists now, in our time. The skewed composition – a partial view through a doorway, off-centre, deliberately 'un-composed' – exploits a visual 'trick' or lure that film and TV has cheapened and done to death: consider the numerous schlock horror movies where we 'see' through the unseen villain's eyes as he stalks his unsuspecting prey, or the hand-held shaky camera movement exploited by numerous 'real life' documentaries or cop shows. Vermeer is more subtle – he doesn't paint his paintbrush into the scene. This is a *trompe l'oeil* with regard to experience rather than recognition and, though he does not 'lure' us into thinking we are seeing the 'real thing', he does lure us into thinking we are *really* seeing the thing. That is, that our seeing is unmediated, in the present, and it is happening now. In terms of narrative the painting conflates third and first person voice, and is ambiguous in tense: he saw it and we see it; he is seeing it, and we are seeing it. And we are seeing it – just a trick of the (narrative) 'I' – under the impression that the act of seeing is unmediated by the painter's brush. Yet we are at no time convinced that this is not a painting. This appreciation of the 'artefact', as Baudrillard suggests, offers a more satisfying and involving experience than the 'perfection' of virtual reality which, as he puts it, can 'expel the reality out of reality'.<sup>4</sup>

The absence of dimension that Baudrillard identifies as empowering the painted *trompe l'oeil* is the absence engendered by the lack of real three-dimensional space. The two-dimensional painting seeks, instead, to magically create an illusion that should – that must – be recognised as just that in order to acquire its alluring mystery. The space which things occupy defines their reality – and this is no less true of sound. So, is there a comparable nuance of aural '*trompe l'oreille*' in which we can be lured into the experience of, not 'hearing the real thing' but of 'really hearing the thing', in which we can be gripped by the same illusion in relation to listening to sound? I would argue that while a great deal of energy has been expended on theories relating to the notion of hearing sound objects as 'real' (or by reversal, 'not real'), the notion of 'real' listening in a work of 'fictional'<sup>5</sup> sound art is underexplored. Yet the conviction that when we listen we are 'really hearing' the narrative before us is a powerful tool. Once convinced of this, the narrative can travel to all sorts of unreal places and

rely on us coming along for the ride, and even doing the steering. And, like *trompe l'oeil*, the power of this tool emerges from an absence of dimension.

## 5

Wrong. (To pick up the narrative thread).

This piece does *not* encourage our visualisation of an imaginary stage set. We are *not* supplied with the necessary aural clues to point towards visual objects – chair, table, bag, woman. The list of ‘things’ is not illustrated with any audible ‘evidence’ – nobody audibly unwraps the chewing gum, shakes a bottle of pills or (and more of this later) places coins on a table. However, although we should not underestimate the relevance of this sonic absence, the use of overt visualisation clues is arguably more often an optional ‘extra’ to sound’s narrative – their removal does not constitute an absence of natural dimension in Baudrillard’s sense. In this example of sound art the dimensional absence, I would argue, comes – as with the visual equivalent – from the ‘removal’ of real space.

We already know that Lansky’s space isn’t real. Everything about it *lacks* ‘virtual’ reality – this is not a ‘3-D’ environment. Surround-sound assumes our ears are at the focal point of its virtual reality, it places us (literally) in a passive armchair listening position: we recoil in our seats as the freight train bears down on us, or the plane passes over us. Lansky’s presentation of *trompe l’oreille* hearing (as opposed to *trompe l’oreille* things) is encouraged by its lack of ‘3-D’ reality. Fixed spatial boundaries – and by implication a fixed flow of time – are the *absent* dimension. Just as in *trompe l’oeil* painting it is the obviously ‘unreal’ surface that provides the lure, here it is the removal of the real acoustic space and its replacement with something that doesn’t ‘make sense’ in real terms that both ‘spaces us out’ and lures us in.

## 6

Filtering out the ‘reality’ of any sense of place is extraordinarily difficult. It is not enough to turn the volume down. Record a woman speaking in a room and, however much you remove every scrap of extraneous noise or ambience, you will still have a recording of a woman speaking in a room. It will just be a different room – even if it is the dead ‘non’-room of a radio studio (perhaps the most recognisable space of all).

In order to obliterate space, time and place, something has to step in to muffle the loud silence of reality’s departure. So, bring on the giant

guitars that, in Lansky's space, provide not the hyper-reality of film music's emotional colour-wash, nor the unlistened-to sedative of musak, but a music which heightens the absence of dimension.

#### ASIDE : A different space

In the radio play music can serve as both outer and inner space, to accompany both scene-changes and 'internalised' thought. In cut and dried cases the music is indeed 'incidental' in that it amplifies events in a foreground narrative, in a similar manner to the emotional narrative supplied by music in film. Whilst in radio plays background music frequently comes to the fore, takes over for a few seconds or carries on while the drama continues it generally subscribes – unless chosen for particularly specific ends – to the conservative norms for the genre; it is harmonically regular, predictable, illustrative (in terms of mood) and has no long-term goals.

Watching a film we have no difficulty in creating separate spaces for 'seeing' and 'listening' to narrative and 'hearing' music. Indeed, often we are listening to music without even consciously acknowledging the fact. The rescued kid gets a big close-up hug and a cheesy crescendo from surging strings triggers our emotional empathy to such a point that tears are inevitable. But it's well-nigh impossible to *listen* to two things at once without a visual (or visualised) narrative without trying to relate one to another in the same conceptual space. In a musical work we can certainly prioritise as to 'importance' – the lead guitar, the solo violin, the loud acousmatic gesture – but only in relation to the other sounds we hear, at the same time.

Lansky's piece has a slightly more interesting hold on the division between background and foreground *musical* gestures, partly precisely because it both exploits and undermines some of the 'easy' listening foibles of incidental music and the solo/accompaniment relationship traditional to many forms of abstract music. It places us in a listening 'comfort zone' in which we might feel at ease with the seemingly unchallenging harmonic and timbral ambience. The guitars and percussion are 'music' in conventional terms whilst the voice isn't. This background music plays tricks, and raises questions as to what might be meant by 'background' in the context of a work such as this, for sound alone. To be in the background means to occupy a different space from the foreground.

7

There is more to speak of.

Given that this is patently not a radio play or a straightforward recitation, we might expect a defined relationship between voice and 'music

accompaniment' to emerge: either she starts to rap, breaks into song or the percussion should start to do something a darned sight more interesting. If it's that rather uncomfortable hybrid, poetry recited over music, the voice should be an up front recitation, situated apart. But the voice is definitely part of it – whatever 'it' is: the sound of the speaking voice is subject to just enough sonic processing and manipulation to bring disembodied voice and 'music' into the same strange, unquantifiable space inhabited by extremely large guitars and a hyperclean-living percussion section.

The use of the voice in this movement fuels interesting dilemmas as to genre. The composer describes the work as a 'musical portrait of a woman' in a similar way to the Vermeer he refers to (which, like *Things She Carried*, is anything but a simple likeness). Whereas many of Lansky's works use deliberate obfuscation to enhance the 'hidden' meanings inherent in the timbres and rhythms of natural speech, this voice presents words that are, for the most part, completely intelligible. Indeed, a measured recitation of a list of mundane objects, read by a softly-spoken, attractive voice provides a peculiarly one-dimensional perspective that borders on monotony. This would serve well as a means for focussing on sonic content – lifting the material into the abstract plane of acoustic metaphor (think of Normandeu's *Spleen*, for instance, an acousmatic masterpiece in this vein) but here it is verbal meaning that matters. It is the subtle complexity of what is going on in the use of voice, text and narrative perspective that gives this movement – and the whole work – conviction as a work of fiction for sound alone.<sup>6</sup>

## 8

The opening section of the text (which divides broadly into 'verses', with 'things she carried' serving as a recurring refrain) is spoken in normal, if measured, tones. The sound is quite 'realistic' in that there is none of the overt comb-filtering that characterises much of Lansky's previous work with speech (though – perhaps as a gentle, even unconscious, aside – the text describes a comb at length) but there is a great deal more going on.

Each short phrase is presented as a close layering of very slightly different versions of the same spoken material. The small delay, a deliberate spatial 'spread' between the simultaneous voices, and the minutely detuned timbres all heighten the disembodiment of the voice. Though delay or reverberation has almost become the norm for indicating a move from foreground present to internalised thought or 'dream state'

in radio and TV, this is far more subtle. Although each component 'voice' is separately audible – but only just – the aural effect is undoubtedly that of a single 'real' voice observed simultaneously from very slightly different perspectives; the aural equivalent, perhaps, of looking in one of those hinged mirrors that offers a three-way reflection from left, right and centre.

In terms of narrative voice, too, we are engaged in a game of magic mirrors in which we hear, alternately, a voice, a reader, a character, the eponymous 'she', or ourselves listening. Sometimes – contorting ourselves in front of grandmother's dressing-table – we catch an enchanting glimpse of all our reflections at once.

#### ASIDE: stepping outside for a moment

In a novel the author, as narrator, can assume an omniscient viewpoint, or can write from the point of view of a particular character – either in the first or third person or by slipping, by various devices, from one to the other. So the narrative voice in fiction can shift imperceptibly back and forth between different points of view, different 'points in space', different minds. It is possible to direct narration as if from a hypothetical 'reader' who observes external action without knowing the inner thoughts of the characters, and with whom we – as actual reader – can identify. Similarly, self-conscious (and, dear reader, by their nature 'fiction-conscious') asides to the invisible audience can allow a narrator to 'step out' of the text for a moment. The way in which words are presented – in particular the subtle ambiguity of free direct speech<sup>7</sup> – can place the reader in a state of flux with regard to where they are currently situated in terms of tense (or time) and point of view (or place).

In drama there is, generally, no narrative voice<sup>8</sup> since drama is action and dialogue played out before your very eyes and ears. Instances of 'narrative voice' within a play are quite unusual, because it is difficult to convince an audience that the play is no longer the thing. A character can play the role of narrator from within the plot (often, in an interesting piece of cross-pollination, acting out on stage the *invisible* 'voice-over' narration that more often occurs in film.)<sup>9</sup> But when a character on stage 'steps out of character' he or she 'steps in' to another, equally 'acted' role. It is *very* hard to convince an audience that a character has 'dropped the act' in making an aside – the fool is still 'in character' when he tells us a joke – though performance art, in particular, plays with appearing to dissolve these boundaries.

In dramatic art, rather than literary fiction, an audience – those 'within hearing' – can be asked to cross the divide and become 'present' in the play: one



could argue that when Hamlet soliloquises, the stage extends to encompass the auditorium as the audience 'joins' him, each member of the audience playing, at that moment, the character of Hamlet's internal listening – 'really listening' to his thoughts. So when we applaud Hamlet, we applaud our own performance too. This kind of involvement, perhaps, is comparable to the kind of 'real listening' that, I suggest, is enabled by Lansky's spatial lure. Once hooked, we are gently inveigled into different narrative relationships to both the sound of the voice and the words spoken.

## 9

The voice – as with the guitars and percussion – is a mobile entity.

The manner of speech is measured but fairly natural. Significantly, there are no extraneous 'human' sounds. The voice is placed, rhythmically, within the surrounding texture – the transparently composed placing of the vocal fragments assures us that the voice inhabits the same ambiguous place as guitar and percussion, and takes its time from their measure. The 'she' of the title is still uncreated; she is neither here nor there because neither 'here' nor 'there' has been defined with any reliability. 'She' might be the omniscient narrator looking down, or a third-person character musing as she holds up 'a comb, a fine comb, a broken comb' then, quietly and fading towards a resolution, 'three pens and two pencils'.

'Things she carried'.

'A cheap comb, a comb with several teeth missing'.

This minor shift in the text invites our evaluation and possibly kickstarts mental journeys (what kind of person would keep such a comb, and why?). It is accompanied – using the word reservedly now – by a shift in the guitar-like sounds, which dissolve into a quieter, warmer ambience. As a result, the voice moves further forward on our listening 'stage'.

'Three pens and two pencils', again; but this time the voice is in the foreground, louder and definite in tone. She – narrator, reader, reciter? – has reached centre stage in our listening. She is still separate. Her world is a third-person narrative, apart from our first person listening. She is 'inside our head' but we are not inside hers.

**ASIDE: Feeling tense**

There can be no narrative without tense whether that tense is past, present or a fluctuating no-man's-land between the two. A narrative – at least in the English language – requires the inclusion of verbs in order to proceed through time, in order for things to ‘happen’ convincingly. The deliberate obliteration of tense is difficult to achieve, and is perhaps more usually the province of haiku’s encapsulated images or the deliberate opacity of found-object sound poetry. Even so, it is very rare to find narration with no time at all.

Perhaps, in the same way that, as Lansky suggests, a painting can invite the viewer to create their own story (or stories), poetic imagery can invite the reader – by their subjective response to its allusions – to create their own temporal narrative and set their own clock running. But in general, once the narrative clock is ticking, careful engineering is required in order to move back and forth in time. Consider a common device in film: we hear a character in voice-over, telling a story from her past. As we listen we see the past happening on screen before our eyes – our eyes share her internal memory. Then, by a simple closing in of the shot, we ‘enter’ the memory and the past becomes present. The characters on screen take over the dialogue in their present, the voice-over fades. This kind of shift of focus is a simple device, regularly exploited in film, and sometimes literature, since visual (or visualised) information can help us go with the flow. There is a temporal counterpoint between two media – the aural ‘past’ and the visual ‘present’ – and we can easily isolate one tense at a time. It is much harder to appreciate that kind of separation in works for sound alone since – as with any ‘single media’ work – the nature of the material is elemental. There is certainly a counterpoint between the work and our reception of it but – especially in the case of sound-art – within the work tense can be usefully entangled with the abstract ‘no time’ of musical process.

**10**

Up until this point there has been no tense to this narrative other than that of the intermittently repeated ‘things she carried’, a phrase which tentatively imbues the list of objects with a reported past and keeps us at a comfortable listening distance.

But, during the course of two lines of text there is a seemingly minor shift where, I suggest, everything changes. From this point forward, we – listening – know that nothing will be the same. Though there is no verb, these lines are in the present tense. Hannah Mackay’s expertise – and Lansky’s use of it – is such that a couple of subtle vocal inflexions take our listening from then to now.

‘Change purse with one dollar and coins’

A brief sigh, an inhalation on the word ‘change’, then the smallest of pauses before the word ‘coins’. It’s the first audible breath in the piece and the implication of human presence couldn’t be louder.

She is looking at the coins. They are in front of her – we now know this. The disembodied narrative voice has gone, instead we are listening to – no, *with* – a first person narrative, speaking now.

‘Change purse with a dollar and 25, 35, 45 cents.’

She counts the change deliberately, pausing as she lays out the coins – ‘...25...35...45 cents’. We don’t hear the coins – in fact it is essential that we don’t for then the work would tumble into the kind of ‘radio play’ genre that is the least of its concerns. Instead we are there, inside her head, listening – *really* listening – to the music of her thoughts.

After a pause in which we can only contemplate we hear her voice again – ‘Things she carried’. Whereas the first time around this was merely the title of the piece, now we are together, *really* listening, and she is there. The voice speaks to us, the volume and placing of the sound is close to our listening ears – she has looked up to tell us something in an explanatory aside. She has entered our listening – and we have entered hers – just as we look through the door by way of Vermeer’s sight.

And things sound different from the inside. When the voice returns the processing is more apparent. The real (almost) unprocessed voice is layered with versions of itself that are blurred and sonorous rather than clearly intelligible as speech. Now the distinction between processed and unprocessed is apparent – a division between verbal meaning and emotional association is implied, indicating the personal narrative of ‘feeling’ within the character with whom we now listen and through whom we hear. The emotional highs and lows that accompany inward reflection are often unpredictable and inconsistent, similarly, the balance between music and meaning fluctuates here. For instance, the phrase ‘a packet of homeopathic insomnia tablets’ is heavily processed and tuned – possibly by some poignant association on her behalf – while ‘rumped kleenex’ – perhaps a very ordinary and expected thing to find in a bag – is set up front, sounds ‘real’ and appears emotionally insignificant.

The voice stops, but the sound of her time and place continues for quite a while. And all the while we are still with her in the listening space that

she, too, continues to inhabit. The sounds we hear are the sounds of inward listening. And we are still listening with her when the next movement starts ('Things she noticed'), we are still in her thoughts as her story continues to unfold.

The twist of narrative time and place that takes place in this piece is achieved not by words – not by verbs, tense or descriptive language – but by a narrative sensibility with regard to the composition of *sound*.

**For a moment**  
*Presque rien avec filles* by Luc Ferrari

The activity of listening can make us vulnerable; by apprising us of associations that we might not expect, or want, to encounter, or by prising all kinds of emotional resonances from the depths of our memory banks. This is no less true whether we are listening to Mozart or the cry of a newborn baby. But at least, listening to either *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* or a child's bedtime wail, we know which listening clothes to put on: we understand the boundaries of the experience. Perhaps the kind of trivial sampling trick that produces a chorus of dogs barking the National Anthem is mildly amusing because it makes a play on the discrepancy between these two listening attires. At the other extreme, it can sometimes seem as if the proffering of listening 'theories' to delineate the abstracted timbral gestures of acousmatic music is an attempt to fit us out with 'musical' clothes of a predetermined style.

Well, in these terms Ferrari's *Presque rien avec filles* forces us to run around naked half the time. Once, at a concert, I observed someone listening to this piece with an ostentatious display of boredom and watch-glancing frustration. His behaviour partly indicated he was trying – and trying *very* hard – not to listen. The piece evidently didn't sit well in a concert situation, but this particularly obvious discrepancy between one listener's expectations of a 'tape piece' and what he actually got, made me wonder about what might be contributing to his 'being bored' so angrily. He was left waiting – for something that didn't turn up. And, as Adam Phillips remarks 'in this familiar situation, which evokes such intensities of feeling, we wait and we try to do something other than waiting, and we often get bored – the boredom of protest that is always a screen for rage' (Phillips, 1994, p. 82).

Of course, it all depends on what you're waiting for. *Presque rien avec filles* breaks all the rules of engagement for both abstract music and, what might be construed as its counterpart in this context, a straightforward recording of the natural environment. At times it has a beat, yet in some respects it is an amorphous anecdotal fabric made of soundscape recordings. There are overtly *musique concrète* gestures and acousmatic abstraction, but there are also birds, wind, and distant gunshots. There are words, but there are no easily intelligible phrases. There is no story. Or rather, there are as many conflicting stories as you care to make. This is a piece that defies – that *defends* itself against – any revelations through formal analysis, and refuses to acquiesce to a single genre other than being a 'work for sound alone'.

At many levels *Presque rien avec filles* draws attention to the several boundaries it fails to respect: those between music and sound, between coherence and confusion, between subjective and quasi-objective analysis – and between listening and being bored. The transgressing of boundaries is always risky, since it can place us with our feet in unknown territory. And we should beware of this, for if you accidentally step on the cracks between the paving stones, a bear will come and eat you up – there's a danger of a nasty surprise. But, for me, what makes *Presque rien avec filles* an interesting study in narrative terms is that by stepping on the cracks 'accidentally on purpose' it makes us aware of the space between, for a moment – and surprises are not all bad.

The intent of this piece seems deliberately opaque and alienating, and yet it rails against attempts to decipher it in other than subjective terms. The structure is an aural hotch-potch of disparate sections and sudden juxtapositions. Events don't seem to 'go' anywhere, and yet many things happen without apparent rhyme or reason. There's no point scrabbling to pin down the facts since facts, in Ferrari's world, are slippery events. So, to hell with both bears and boundaries; perhaps a personal approach to his sonic fiction is all that's left in terms of useful explanation. And a subjective, disjointed plurality is common practice in that epitome of the inclusive form – the novel. As a form, the novel can fruitfully accommodate all kinds of genre 'transgressions' – from letters, diary entries, and travel writing, to poetic imagery and even factual journalism. Just possibly there might be intimations that works for sound alone can have more allegiance to the literary than is audibly apparent. And that would be worth waiting for. So listen dangerously, up close and personal.

### SOME KINDS OF NOW

Last Spring they had moved to a new house. She hadn't wanted to. Even now she lies in bed each night trying, with increasing desperation, to retain her image of the old house by cataloguing its details. With the child's inherent conservatism she longs to keep things 'the same', and so she drags her half-asleep consciousness on an internal journey, forcing herself to remember – the blousy red flowers on the sitting-room wallpaper; the little varnished pile of coins that served as a magic doorstep in the study; the hall carpet with its mysterious cobweb patterns; the smooth perfect rail of the banisters; the big tree in the back garden, that creaked against the wind like a ship at sea.

Third-person narrative by omniscient narrator who is privy to the memory and emotions of a character within the text. The 'now' is that of the character who is observed. We are not explicitly aware of the narrator as a persona. Fiction – could not happen in real life.

*Actually I made most of that up (did you believe me?). Well, on reflection it is mostly true, but the facts get a little more Proustian in the re-telling and poignancy has been laid on thick. Some facts have been changed to aid the flow. The memories have been infiltrated by a general comment on child behaviour in the third sentence, and a rather lame simile near the end. Of course, the purpose has also changed. Thirty-odd years ago a petulant kid in a strange new home wanted a 'security blanket' memory to grasp hold of. Now I'm older, sitting at a distance, in a different chair – and there's an audience.*

First person confessional aside by 'the author': a narrator self-consciously aware of the reader and the text. Implication of veracity – a false 'truth'. A shift in chronology ('thirty-odd years' ... 'I'm older') brings time forward. Now, it appears, the narrator is stepping out of the text and speaking 'to camera'. The first paragraph is, in retrospect, revealed as a fiction.

And that was fiction, of course.

Yet even as I write this I find that I, too, can still take my internal journey around my own childhood home. And now, led back by details, I have retrieved the differing sensations of the cold tiles on a kitchen floor, stale air in a fusty conservatory, and the rough bark of a towering ash, warm under my small hand.

Fiction. Now a new narrator implies that the time of writing is 'now': 'as I write this' claims the authority of *real* truth for the last paragraph and also

draws the reader back to the 'real' time of writing – *before this was made fiction*. The authority of 'truth' is accentuated by the fact that now the reader is being invited to share a private moment of reflection, apparent fact in contrast to the preceding fiction. The narrator who speaks is 'the true author'. The second paragraph is, in retrospect, revealed as a fiction.

*And that was fiction too, of course.*

And that was fiction, too, of course.

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And that was fiction too. Of course! – pure fabrication, knocked together to illustrate a point about shifting narrative voice. Such shifts of inflection can merrily play havoc with our evaluation of the difference between fictional truth, fictionalised truth and the 'real' truth of non-fiction. Now I am telling the truth. But beware of the cracks: a change of font is an unreliable test of authority.

*Presque rien avec filles* is subject to similar unreliability in its transitions; between different narrative presences, and between where 'fiction' ends and 'truth' begins. One ostensibly straightforward narrative voice is the actual sound of the composer. At times we hear foreground sounds that are undeniably evidence of a human presence – breathing, movement and, just twice, a male voice. We deductively construct the narrative voice of 'the composer' who moves – now – in the natural landscape, listening, and recording material for his piece. Except that this *is* his piece that we are listening to. Like a dream within a dream, in which we wake to find we are still dreaming, Ferrari's apparent presence within his own piece provides an invasive irritant that draws attention to boundaries we might otherwise not have noticed.

### ***Listen ...***

At about 3:40 a male voice – a single word (*perhaps 'vont', I can't be sure*), quite loudly in the foreground. Unexpected. And then the sound of someone moving –

*the composer?*

*In retrospect it's as if the opening minutes of the piece were just an overture to something that will now unfold more clearly. But instead he pulls across the curtain and ushers in a more 'realistic' section of outdoor, natural sound. A forest or mountain landscape filled with the sound of the wind in the trees, birdsong and open space.*

Much later, the sound of feet moving over the undergrowth, and again the crunching and scrabbling that indicate small sounds of movement writ large by proximity. The foreground sounds of breathing and the rustle of movement.

At the very end of the piece, his voice again.

*To me the words sound (possibly) like 'caché dans la main' – 'concealed in the hand'. If so, this is perhaps an explicit reference to the microphone, the act of recording and of his 'being there'. But, whatever he says – and it doesn't really matter – his voice is a reminder of his continuing presence.*

and then a faint female voice speaking to a companion in the landscape to which he listens, his breath audible to us but not to her.

*The woman who speaks to her companion is a distant part of the 'now' of the observed landscape of Nature. Her voice is almost blown away on the breeze. It is his nature, and hers – but she cannot hear him listening.*

The sound of his breath, and of his feet moving – in the landscape. Finally, the sound of his breath again – but moving inside, into a room acoustic without any sounds from the natural landscape. Indoors.

*In the different 'kind' of now we now inhabit, the 'real' composer is making the piece, or listening to it. Making it up now – as we listen.*



Each entry of 'the composer' comes as a minor surprise – like meeting a friend in the street, though we knew they lived in the vicinity. At these points – most noticeably when he actually speaks – we are suddenly aware of the difference between the 'first-person' fabricated 'composer' and the apparently unmediated natural environment. When he was absent, we were not especially aware of the absence – we did not *hear* the absence. When he comes back, we notice he wasn't there – and we perceive the difference: bumping into our friend we yell – 'hello! I



haven't seen you for *ages!*' rather than 'there you are!'. And the friction between absence and presence reveals something in the space between: while absence and presence are jostling together, another voice is made explicit for a moment, that of the piece itself. We notice that which is usually taken for granted – the compositional equivalent of the authorial voice of the novel. The tantalising, barely perceived, awareness of a separate 'personality' who relates the text we read is precisely the voice that gives the novel the authority of being (for the duration of our reading) 'true'. An authorial voice is part of the novel and cannot be perceived as distinct from the work itself just as, recorded inside the landscape, 'the composer' is an elemental part of *Presque rien avec filles*.

But it is not Ferrari's voice, or movement, or his words that, ultimately, reveal the 'authorial voice' of the piece – it is the moment at the end of the piece when we hear him 'outside' the natural environment. We have been prepared for the sudden shift by the friction between hearing 'the composer' in the landscape and hearing the landscape alone. But the last few seconds of the piece, where we hear 'him' in a different acoustic with no 'outdoor' ambience, show 'the composer' divided from his text. The ending of a piece is a powerful moment, and this disruptive revelation places all our 'memories' of how the piece 'went' at risk – it's as if we've peeped behind the scenes and seen how it's done. Things will never be the same, no matter how many details we try to remember.

### ***Some music ...***

Now the beginning.

Now a low drum slowly beating, gradually emerging as an almost regular pulse. The timbre is muffled and indistinct, but quite loud.

Now, over the drum, there's a hissing, flanged sound – it is looped repeatedly, almost three to a measure. An intensification of volume and timbre. But some kind of 'real-world' environment – birds, thunder, wind? – seems to be leaking through from beneath the surface.

Now a change – to a less regular drum beat. A new, harsher flanged sound that could be processed wind or thunder. Then a higher-pitched sweeping sound over this. Again, repetitions over the drum

beat. The sounds move, panning left to right. 'Off stage' sound interrupts and comes forward for a few moments – something dark and thundering.

Now a new section, *più mosso*: a metallic hammering sound moving left to right in a regular rhythm, plus a quicker pulse – like a rather energetic bird that can keep time. Possibly a dog barked a couple of times – somewhere in the distance, outside.

Now everything stops. A male voice utters a single word, (perhaps 'vont', I can't be sure), quite loudly and 'to audience'.



Ferrari's authorial games are just one aspect of an extraordinarily disruptive ethos. An ethos which values insecurity, subjectivity, and choosing to be lost.

This opening passage of *Presque rien avec filles* functions primarily as abstract music: its formal processes are clear – extremely simple in fact – and though the timbres are fairly complex, the way they are orchestrated is easily comprehended. Though the music is not explicitly programmatic, there is something ritualistic, perhaps processional, about the repetition over a slow drum beat. It goes on for nearly four minutes. Listening to this as the opening of an abstract work we might have certain crude expectations – namely that it will probably get louder and louder and then there will be some kind of bang. The tam-tam player is counting furiously, or the drummer has both sticks poised. In this world time and place are measured in pulse and pitch. All the indications are that this stuff is music, so we listen accordingly.

But although this passage might seem conventional on the surface, it is engaged in an under-the-table battle with sounds that don't ask for 'musical' listening. Whenever musical phrases stop for a breather some ambiguous sound from the real world leaks through – as if the music is screening some neighbouring eyesore that, though it can't be removed, can at least be concealed from view.

There's another problem: the expected 'bang' doesn't happen. The tam-tam player stands idle and instead we get a brief utterance from 'the composer' to introduce a natural, outside environment, dripping with

birdsong, the resonance of wind in the trees and echoes from the hills. These sounds invite – require – a different listening; more than that, they appear to defeat musical listening. It's just one thing after another.<sup>10</sup> Our evaluation of 'what this work is' is undermined. The opening minutes commit us to musical listening – despite a few dodgy moments – and then, just when we'd got comfortable, the carpet is pulled from under our feet. Of course, the piece can't pull that trick twice since we're now wary, ready to hop from one foot to another. But the bang will come – later – when we're least expecting it.

In narrative terms these juxtaposed passages perhaps reveal the difference between one kind of literary variety and another. Turning the page we find the next chapter starts with an epistle. But although the narrative is deliberately fractured, we are not yet lost.

### ***Some more music ...***

In the natural landscape, almost nothing going on: one ear on Ferrari in the foreground and the other on the sounds of birds and the wind. Here's a dog – a hot dog, panting for a drink. A bit too close – and the sound pans from right to left, the repeated sound of his panting becomes a regular pulse. And then he's gone. Some very distant gun shots.

[... ...]

In the natural landscape, *almost* 'almost nothing' going on: one ear idly listening to the familiar natural landscape, the other noticing that distant gun shots have started. Perhaps they're shooting birds. Was that a cuckoo? Forty seconds later the landscape seems to have started tapping its feet – short gestures that sound a bit like the guns, bits of cuckoo and a little plink occasionally. Some of those timbres came out of the percussion cupboard. The texture is gradually getting more complicated and louder. Music.

[... ...]

In the natural landscape, almost music going on: those fragmentary sounds have become less shy; louder and there are more of them. The 'musical' patterning they make is clearly distinct from the continuing

natural landscape. Just then a fragment, suddenly, of a female voice 'mmm ...', speaking in the landscape.

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We've been listening to two worlds, attending at one moment to the sounds of a natural landscape and at other times to a distinctly 'musical' structuring. With two rule-books open on our laps, we're able to mix and match, and to appreciate the contrast between the (apparently) natural landscape where things just happen, and the (apparently) musical landscape where things are composed and need to be deciphered. The fragments of sound that become 'notes' for a more rhythmically structured patterning are drawn from the natural environment, or sound as if they could have been, and the composed rhythms infiltrate the natural rhythm of the landscape before coming to the fore as 'music'. We appreciate the sounds of the natural environment in their new role as musical objects – a cuckoo makes an interesting ostinato, guns are quite convincing as percussive instruments – and we appreciate the two 'varieties' of listening. Unlike the opening of the piece, 'music' here arises out of the natural landscape. The trick now is to somehow detach this music from the surrounding landscape without removing either from view. It's as if a juggler has picked up some objects from the kitchen table, and now delights us with an increasingly daring display of throw and catch. But it's only natural that he'll drop the pepperpot eventually.

### ***With a bang ...***

In the natural landscape, almost nothing going on: one ear on Ferrari in the foreground and the other on the sounds of birds and the wind. Here's a dog – a hot dog, panting for a drink. A bit too close – and the sound pans from right to left, the repeated sound of his panting becomes a regular pulse. And then he's gone. Some very distant gun shots.

***Bang!>>>>> an unidentifiable gesture that cuts across without warning. But it's gone before you know it, and isn't very long. Perhaps a processed gun sound. The birds don't stop singing.***

In the natural landscape, *almost* 'almost nothing' going on: one ear idly listening to the familiar natural landscape, the other noticing that distant gun

shots have started. Perhaps they're shooting birds. Was that a cuckoo? Forty seconds later the landscape seems to have started tapping its feet – short gestures that sound a bit like the guns, bits of cuckoo and a little plink occasionally. Some of those timbres came out of the percussion cupboard. The texture is gradually getting more complicated and louder. Music.

***BANG!>>>>> an unidentifiable gesture cuts across without warning. And this time it's much louder and more disruptive. But the birds continue.***

In the natural landscape, almost music going on: those fragmentary sounds have become less shy; louder and there are more of them. The 'musical' patterning they make is clearly distinct from the continuing natural landscape. Just then a fragment, suddenly, of a female voice 'mmm ...', speaking in the landscape.

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The music travels through the landscape and we shift our listening view from one to the other, without too much confusion. These first two 'bangs' which curtail events and bring us back to the natural landscape are unexpected but not completely alien. They are different in 'shape' from what we are used to but, like the dog who padded past a while ago, we can allow them a surreal familiarity. But there is an underlying friction here: in Barthes's terms we move from externalised listening to the internalised listening we employ for music, and yet we are cheated. The way in which 'music' arises from the landscape might seem to allow us to hedge our bets, but in fact the slow refocussing encourages us to commit far more to musical listening than we might if the piece cut suddenly from birdsong to Beethoven, and back again. But the 'music', despite its implications of 'going somewhere', is repeatedly thwarted by a disruptive gesture. We are once more aware of the natural landscape, and unsure of how things will 'go on'.

We don't know where we are, and we look at our watches in frustration. We are aware of two ways of listening, and of listening in two ways at once, but we are not yet aware of the space between.

## IN TRAIN

I am sitting in a train, at the back of the carriage, facing forward. The carriage is nearly empty – just four or five other people dotted about.

The walls are yellow, the seats are a deep blue. Even though it is mid-morning, the fluorescent strip-lights are on. All sitting in bright isolation, staring straight ahead.

Now I lean against the cold, greasy glass of the window – fingerprints and smudges show it for what it is. The world is outside: rain, trees, houses, office buildings, cars and people. A man is walking his dog across Walthamstow marshes, they are alone. Only we know this.

Then I turn away from the window to look directly down the train carriage again. The outside world exists only in peripheral vision as a blur of green and grey.

But then, for a moment, it seems as if the train carriage is a long tube of separate space – real, bright and stationary – travelling at speed through an equally stationary world. Both are perfectly in focus. Nothing moves except the difference between them.



Sometimes we transcend our normal interpretation of the facts: we manage to shift our narrative construction of experience and the invisible is made visible for a while. Perhaps Ferrari's offering of 'now it's music' and 'now it's landscape' is like being in the moving train and looking at the outside world. We can flit from observing one view to another – the train carriage or the outside world – and we can certainly apprehend both at once, but we do so by a process of comparison. This involves choosing one view or the other as our point of reference in relating the two. But the train is also *moving* through the world, just as the music 'moves through' the landscape of *Presque rien avec filles*. How would it be if, for a few moments, it was not music or landscape we listened to, but the *movement* of one thing through another.

When we followed 'the composer' around in the piece we accompanied, at his invitation, an audible narrator who himself moved through the landscape. We were walking around in the piece with him. But when we are walking in a landscape we do not perceive our movement as separate from ourselves and we do not, as a rule, perceive ourselves as apart from the landscape – like Ferrari, our feet are on the ground and we are 'doing' the moving. But when we listened to the distinctly musical textures that detached themselves from the landscape of natural sounds,

it was as if we were sitting – motionless – in the train carriage; at these times we were listening *inside* a music that itself travelled forward through a surrounding sonic landscape that, like the blurred view outside the window, had retreated to the background.

It would take something extremely bizarre to refocus our perception so that we could be not only aware of both worlds at once, but be aware of being ‘inside’ both music and landscape – *at the same time*. A shift in our subjective narrative would have to occur that meant what we were listening in two different ways simultaneously, in a manner that what we perceived was beyond the point of moving from one state to the other.

In the natural landscape, almost music going on: those fragmentary sounds have become less shy; louder and there are more of them. The ‘musical’ patterning they make is clearly distinct from the continuing natural landscape. Just then a fragment, suddenly, of a female voice ‘mmm ...’, speaking in the landscape.

***BANG! >>>>>> a very loud, very sudden and very surprising ‘drum-kit’ riff. Everything else stops while this is going on.***

As the cacophonous drum-kit clattering sears through the landscape we, along with the birds, fall off our listening perch. All we hear is movement. In isolation. The gesture is astoundingly unexpected – unpolished, unexplained and derivative of another world. It marks the point where the ‘visible’ narrative voices of music, of landscape and of the two together, are kicked out of view. Now there’s yet another narrator – who smirks knowingly, sitting behind a drum-kit with both sticks poised – who reveals all that ‘went on’ before as fiction. Even the stuff we thought was real.

Female voices. One German, one Italian, one French – to left, right and centre. Their words are intelligible some of the time, but the phrases are fragmented and sometimes masked by the sounds of the natural landscape. Among them I hear *der Blick ... s’importante ... quasi remoto ...* This is not a conversation. There are intermittent loud percussive gestures. Fragments of speech – sibilants and parts of words – interspersed with wood-block plinks and fragmentary temple-block glissandi.

Ferrari presents us with a sound that is the least likely to ‘succeed’ as abstract music, and he uses this sound to build a musical texture – an

obviously composed music. In normal circumstances we just cannot separate normal speech from the natural landscape of our experience – speech can be acted, made artificial in its rhythms and inflections, fragmented so that words become meaningless, spoken in a language we don't understand – but it is still speech and part of our world. Many composers have celebrated this fact and the effect on our listening when the normal role of speech is undermined.<sup>11</sup> And Ferrari does this too – the voices speak in different languages, together but in isolation. It is essential that they do not speak the same language, for even if their phrases were unrelated, we would attempt to make linguistic connections.<sup>12</sup> We hear intelligible speech, but for various reasons cannot quite make out what they're saying. Listening to these relaxed voices, speaking together within the natural landscape, we accept the sounds as phatic: expressions of human sociability – humans *being* – rather than carriers of narrative meaning. And this is a real achievement, since we generally grab hold of speech as a useful narrative lead – a while back, when 'the composer' spoke just one word to us, we followed him around for *ages*.

But we don't feel the same now. For a start, we're still reeling from a narrative bang that snatched away all points of comparison. Previously we had perceived a gentle friction between music and landscape, but then we stood on the cracks for a moment. Now perhaps we are mistrustful of what is going on – or *how* things are 'going'. We don't listen only to the words, we don't listen only to the music. We are ready to listen to the space between.

The texture grows more frantic – faster, and more rhythmically defined. Low pitched sounds – vocal? – start to contribute a tuned pattern. Small sounds – a whistle, percussion, voice.

This passage – for me, speaking subjectively – is where time, and movement in time, shifts a notch: listening, I hear the *presence* of the movement of one thing through another, and not the moving things themselves. There is something external to my perception of a music that uses the sounds of landscape and a landscape that *is* music. The invisible is apprehended for a while.

Perhaps we are made ready for it; we have been moving from one view to another, comparing, contrasting, wondering what might happen and entertaining certain expectations. Things might not have happened quite as we expected, but we managed to adjust our reading of this diverse



narrative to incorporate the fictionalisation of Ferrari's scufflings, an over-heated dog, some musically inclined guns and a cuckoo that put itself about a bit too much. Even the percussive twangs made for interesting structural diversions that we, looking back, could relate to the kind of music that had bubbled up out of the sounds of the natural world. Everything had made sense until that big bang that recreated our listening universe. And now, in retrospect, one aspect of Ferrari's compositional 'simplicity' becomes apparent: if either the music – our view of the train carriage – or the landscape – our view of the world – had been too engrossing, we might have become too interested in the way things looked. It's OK to be bored.

Then there's the faint sound of human movement – inside a room, in another place. Just when recognisable birds begin to sing, everything stops.

For a moment.

## Notes

1. I have chosen these specific pieces for several reasons: I like them and they interest me; they are both quite widely obtainable on CD; they are very different from one another, yet neither sits well in the 'tape music' concert tradition and both are concerned with issues markedly outside the preoccupations of abstract music or art. This chapter is deliberately written to offer interest without necessarily requiring the works to hand on first reading. Exact 'timings' are avoided, since this is not analysis, but an invitation to listen. The text of the first movement of Lansky's work is given below, for information only (the composer himself suggests that a knowledge of the text is not essential to listening).

Things she carried:

A comb,

A fine comb,

A broken comb,

Three pens and two pencils,

Things she carried.

A cheap comb,

A comb with several teeth missing,

Five credit cards,

Social security card,

Library card,

Three pens and two pencils,

Change purse with one dollar and coins,

Change purse with a dollar and 25, 35, 45 cents,

Things she carried.  
 Keys,  
 Calculator,  
 Lipstick,  
 Piece of gum,  
 Ticket stubs,  
 Supermarket coupons,  
 Blank checks,  
 Three pens and two pencils,  
 A bottle of pain killers,  
 Brown leather bag,  
 A packet of homeopathic insomnia remedy,  
 Receipts,  
 House keys,  
 Credit card case,  
 Emory board,  
 An address book,  
 Phone numbers,  
 Fax numbers,  
 Orange wood stick,  
 Rumpled kleenex,  
 Car keys,  
 Woollen knitted gloves,  
 One earring,  
 Piece of gum,  
 Things she carried.

(text by Paul Lansky and Hannah MacKay, reprinted by permission.)

2. In my opinion gallery concerts, in which music is commissioned 'to go with' an exhibition both recognise at some level this likelihood and fail to understand the importance of a silent auditorium.
3. Liner notes, *Things She Carried*, Bridge, 1997.
4. '*Trompe l'oeil*, by taking away a dimension from real objects, highlights their presence and their magic through the simple unreality of their minimal exactness. *Trompe l'oeil* is the ecstasy of the real object in its immanent form. It adds to the formal charm of painting the spiritual charm of the lure, the mystification of the senses. For the sublime is not enough, we must have the subtle too, the spirit which consists in reversing the real in its very place. This is what we have unlearned from modernity – subtraction is what gives strength; power emerges from the absence.' (Baudrillard, 1997, p. 9).
5. 'All the utopias of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have, by realising themselves, expelled the reality out of reality and left us in a hyper-reality devoid of sense, since all final perspective has been absorbed, leaving as a residue only a surface without depth. Could it be that technology is the only force today that connects the sparse fragments of the real? But what has become of the constellation of sense? And what about the constellation of the secret?' (Baudrillard, 1997, p. 12).
6. I will come back to what fiction and non fiction in sound-art could mean in relation to Ferrari's *Presque rien avec filles*.

7. 'The writer moves from narrative to direct speech without the use of the usual markers (for example, *Mary approached John. Did the man see you yesterday? John looked away.*)' Crystal, 1987, p. 77).
8. In certain genres that inhabit a world between dramatic play and epic narration there can be a narrative voice, of course – consider the chorus or messenger of Greek Tragedy.
9. For instance, the narrator of *Our Town*. And this 'cross-pollination' also extends back to the novel, the 'Private Dick' detective novel being a prime example of a genre that borrows back the knowing voice-over from the B-movie film. The sixth movement of *Things She Carried* – not discussed here – makes homage to precisely that.
10. Roland Barthes provides a useful reflection on two different kinds of listening, if one ignores the woeful generality in his musical references: "listening" to a piece of classical music, the listener is called upon to "decipher" this piece, i.e. to recognize (by his culture, his application, his sensibility) its construction, quite as coded (predetermined) as that of a palace at a certain period; but "listening" to a composition (taking the word here in its etymological sense) by John Cage, it is each sound one after the next that I listen to, not in its syntagmatic extension, but in its raw and as though vertical *signifying*: by deconstructing itself, listening is externalized, it compels the subject to renounce his "inwardness" (Barthes, 1985, p. 259).
11. I discuss this more specifically in my contribution to *A Poetry of Reality: composing with recorded sound* (Norman, 1996).
12. As with Glenn Gould's sound documentary, *The Idea of North*, which plays on the tension to be had from connected meanings in a contrapuntal texture and thereby *encourages* a dual appreciation of 'music' and 'speech'.

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**Recordings**

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