

## **Aural Screenshots**

### **WOLFGANG DORNINGER**



The project 'aural screenshots' opens Ars Electronica with an acoustic preview of the festival, a preview of events, performances and presentations. The second evening is designed as a review. The formal objective is to convey information through music in such a way that unexpected situations develop. Fragments are taken from computer screens, catalogue texts or illustrations and thus form the raw material for the creation of aural screenshots. In the present project, the theme 'The Myth of Information' will be subjected to yet another interpretation — this time through music.

### **INFORMATION SCULPTURE**

The studio as a synopsis, motor and playing area allows the musicians to keep compositional processes moving, to integrate updated moments of the festival and to create a provocative, experimental medium. Mixing meaningless sounds with sounds that have been attributed a semantic meaning allows the artist to incorporate perceptually interactive parts into composed elements. Such music environments give rise to new space and unknown situations. As the studio has been placed within the restaurant and is thus part of the Wired Café, the musicians can use the free space to arrange sound compositions that differ from traditional stage productions. The introduction of the artist's surprise in the composition is the main focus of this information sculpture — contextual shifts meet with pre-arranged compositions, which have been loaded into the system on the basis of project descriptions and catalogue texts.

### **THE (INHERENT) SPACE OF ELECTRONIC SOUND**

The inherent nature of synthesizers allows the composer to overcome traditional forms of musical expression and to go as far as incorporating technically undefinable forms into the composition process, declaring them a separate form. Wrongly applied routings on oscillators, filters and envelopes create digital feedback or irregular internal slurs and overmodulations, which in turn produce an uncontrollable sound pattern. The destruction of information paths and parameters produces sounds which, by diverting from the instrument-specific language, mutate into non-language and become culturally transparent only by the interference of a higher system. The myth of a synthetically reproduced sound reality, of imitating natural sounds was marketable only with the help of digital technologies, even though this whole concept was a fallacy. Sounds are recorded with a microphone and travel along an ADA path (analog to digital to analog). They can be synthetically edited at the DA stage only. The sounds for aural screenshots are taken out of the traditional instrumental context. They are

always generated with regard to the inherent nature of synthesizers and placed within a new arrangement

## **WAVES IN THE SEA OF AIR**

As long as a person is awake he/she perceives a neverending stream of sound messages from the exterior world. These messages must be filtered and arranged. Humans can hear sounds so delicate that the eardrum oscillates less than the diameter of a hydrogen molecule. On the other hand, noise that is ten million times stronger will hardly be able to destroy the auditory mechanism according to a work on sound and hearing by S.S. Stevens and Fred Warshofsky

If we assume that distance and loudness influence hearing precision, we can also suppose that new sounds influence our auditory experience. Since the 17th century the field of psychophysics has studied the reactions of the senses to physical stimuli. Changes in living space go hand in hand with changes in the auditory experience. New technologies have led to the development of techno music. This form of industrial music operates not only with sound phenomena but also indicates a marked shift in the creation process. The means and modes of expression applied differ clearly from traditional forms of composition and cause the acoustic background to come to the fore in our minds. In this sense, aural screenshots arrange acoustic foregrounds and environmental soundscapes.

Staff:

Technical development concept and musical realisation: Wolfgang Dorninger \*works in film and video sound composition, student of the Master Class for Visual Design in Vienna, musician for the multimedia group Monochrome Bleu and WipeOut

Concept and musical realisation:

Josef Linschinger \* composer, musician with Fuckhead

Production: Sonic Sound

Performer:

Dietmar Bruckmayr \*singer, performer and lyricist for Fuckhead and WipeOut

Lighting:

Peter Thalhammer \*freelance lighting designer and dancer

Sound: Alex Jöchtl \*musician and sound engineer

Composition:

Wolfgang Dorninger, Josef Linschinger, Biosphere, Peter Androsch