

WITH THE EYES SHUT:
THE SOUND OF THE AVANT-GARDE

Editor: Douglas Kahn
855 Page Street, San Francisco, CA 94117
Home telephone: 415/431-5339

Associate editors: Christopher Schiff, (Colorado Springs), Helen
Thorington (Brooklyn), Gregory Whitehead (Philadelphia)

Length: Approximately 785 manuscript pages
Submission date: October 1989

With the Eyes Shut is an inaugural collection of historical documents and critical essays. There has never been an adequate accounting of recorded sound, mimetic sound, radio art, sound poetry, and experimental/avant-garde music. Their histories have been entirely ignored, grossly neglected or submerged within other topics. Nor have there been theories and interpretations based upon this history, nor an opening up to practical artistic possibilities. There has never been a history of sound in the arts -- not even the notion of one exists.

*John
Grove
10/28/89*

With the Eyes Shut demonstrates that this history is centrally positioned among (and escapes) the main currents of modern art. For the student of history, With the Eyes Shut will be valuable for its new perspective on familiar individuals and for its contribution to a general understanding of the arts in the 20th century. In the minds of many artists it will become apparent that the productive consequence of neglect is a potential for major discovery: a rare opportunity in contemporary art! We are providing material to inform and provoke this opportunity.

With the Eyes Shut will serve as a text for university classes in art history, cultural studies, inter-media arts (performance, video, audio), communications, experimental music, etc. It will be of practical interest anywhere sound is used. It will be of interest to theoreticians because it presents an historical base for approaches countering visuality in Western thought.

With the Eyes Shut will supply material on individuals, events and issues which have received little attention or no attention in English: the sounds trapped in avant-garde literature, the very idea of conceptual sound, the inaugural work of Luigi Russolo, the bruitisme which ran throughout the avant-garde, the radio art of the Italian Futurists, Surrealism's relationship to music and sound, radio art in Germany, etc.

Of special note is the book's presentation of the first historical scenario of the artistic use of recorded sound (in any language) and the introduction of the concept of radio art to an Anglophone audience.

The sequence of the essays is structured through topical and chronological means. The format contains three major elements: historical documents, editorial essays and essays by contributors. The documents are grouped in general proximity to the essays which refer to them. The editorial essays by Kahn, Schiff and Whitehead are generalist in nature, while the commissioned essays are much more specific. There are five contributors, all of whom have agreed to write the essays as described.

With few exceptions, the documents are reprinted from English sources. Translation in general has been kept to a minimum; the largest translation project being the essay and documents relating to Italian Futurist radio. The book will be illustrated by material which relates directly to the essays and documents and indirectly to the book's theme. We have already located most of the illustrations.

Expenses for manuscript preparation consist primarily of:

1. commissioned essays
2. translations
3. principal editor's fees
4. editorial operating costs
5. rights on documents and illustrations
6. reproduction of illustrations

We are confident that an agreement can easily be reached for an advance that will cover all manuscript preparation expenses.

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FRONT MATTER

INTRODUCTION [25 manuscript pages]

Part I - Artistic, analytic and theoretical trends and possibilities. Arguments for new approaches to the arts of sound. Anthology contents and structure.

Part II - Social, technological, institutional and artistic overviews. Historiographic premises, critique of existing scenarios. Relationship of avant-garde to present day arts, modernism and post-modernism.

Part III - Acknowledgements. Rights information. Contributors.

BODY

DOCUMENTS [40 manuscript pages]

-Wassily Kandinsky, "Yellow Sound" (1912) - synaesthetic drama from the Blaue Reiter Almanac.

-Raymond Roussel, passages from Impressions of Africa (1910) and Locus Solus (1914)

-Rainer Maria Rilke, "Primal Sound" (1919)

-William Burroughs, "The Invisible Generation" (1962)

-Aleksey Kruchonykh, from "Pomada" (1913)

-Hugo Ball, sound poems (1916)

-Kurt Schwitters, excerpt from the Ursonate (1921-32)

-Raoul Hausmann, phonetic poems (1918)

--Douglas Kahn and Gregory Whitehead, "Recorded, Displaced and Difficult Sound" [80 manuscript pages] on sound in literature and orature. Discussion of the synaesthetic sounds in J.K. Huysmans, Kandinsky and elsewhere, difficult sounds in Roussel, displaced sound in Apollinaire, recording in Rilke and Burroughs, and sound poeries from zaum through Lettrisme to text-sound.

--Craig Adcock, "The Sound of Marcel Duchamp" [40 manuscript pages] on his ideas and realizations of music, sound and conceptual sound.

DOCUMENTS [30 manuscript pages]

- Alberto Savinio, "Music and Drama" (1914)
- Alberto Savinio, "Program Notes to a Concert" (1914)
- Alberto Savinio, "Dammi l'anatema, cosa lasciva" (1915)
- Giorgio de Chirico, "No Music" (1914)
- Giorgio de Chirico, "On Silence" (1924)
- André Breton, "Silence is Golden" (1944)

--Christopher Schiff, "Silence and Surrealism" [70 manuscript pages] on the Surrealists' relationships to music, sound and film sound. Discussion on Surrealist antipathy to music, Belgian Surrealist music, the influence of Savinio and de Chirico, the film sound of Buñuel.

--Allen S. Weiss, "Artaud's Pour en finir avec le jugement de Dieu (1948)" [45 manuscript pages] on his censored work for Radiodiffusion Française.

DOCUMENTS [60 manuscript pages]

- Luigi Russolo, "The Art of Noises" (1913)
- Luigi Russolo, "The Noises of War" (1916)
- Luigi Russolo, "The Noises of Language (Consonants)" (1916)
- Lazlo Moholy-Nagy, "New Form in Music. Potentialities of the Phonograph" (1923)
- John Cage, pages from Williams Mix (1951)

--Douglas Kahn, "The Incursion of Noise" [100 manuscript pages] on noise from Russolo to Cage. Discussion of Russolo and reception of Italian Futurist noise throughout Western Europe and Russia (Mondrian, Diaghilev, Varese, Vertov, Moholy-Nagy, Vorticists, Dadaists, French Surrealists, etc.). Discussion of bruitism, mechano-music and contraptual musics. The philosophy and practice of sound/noise in John Cage. Phonography in music, esp. musique concrète and the Music for Magnetic Tape Project. Theoretical notions of noise found in present-day writings of Attali, Serres and others.

--Gian Franco Maffina, "Italian Futurist Radio" [40 manuscript pages] on the background and context of Marinetti and Masnata's "La Radia" manifesto and on the radio sintesi of the 1930s.

DOCUMENTS [45 manuscript pages]

- Velimir Khlebnikov, "The Radio of the Future" (1921)
- Stanislaw Mlodozieniec, "Radio Romans" (1924)
- Bertholt Brecht, "Radio As a Means of Communication" (1930)
- F.T. Marinetti/Pino Masnata, "La Radia" (1933)
- F.T. Marinetti, radio sintesi (1930s)

--Mark Ensign Cory, "German Hörspiel" [35 manuscript pages] on experimental Hörspiel during the late-Weimar Republic, Walter Ruttmann's sound montage Hörspiel "Weekend", Bertolt Brecht and radio, and Das neue Hörspiel of the late-1960s.

DOCUMENTS [20 manuscript pages]

- Arseni Avra'amov, "Symphony of Factory Whistles" (1923).
- Dziga Vertov, "Sound March" (1929), Enthusiasm sound script.
- Harry Potamkin, "Playing with Sound" (1930) - on experimental sound film by Grigori Alexandrov, Romance Sentimentale, to which Eisenstein contributed.

--Douglas Kahn, "Sound on Film" [35 manuscript pages] on the coming of sound to Russian Revolutionary film. Concentration on Dziga Vertov and Sergei Eisenstein.

--Collette Brooks, "Beckett and the Theatre of No Bodies" [40 manuscript pages] on his radio productions and the properties of radio as theatrical space.

--Gregory Whitehead, "Out of the Dark" [40 manuscript pages] on radio art during the 20th century. Discussion of Khlebnikov, Deharme, Themerson, Marinetti, Brecht, Hörspiel, Artaud, Bachelard, Beckett, Arnheim and others.

BACK MATTERBIBLIOGRAPHY [30 manuscript pages]INDEX [10 manuscript pages]

COMMISSIONED CONTRIBUTORS

Craig Adcock teaches at University of Notre Dame and is author of Marcel Duchamp's Notes from the "Large Glass": An N-Dimensional Analysis (1983).

Collette Brooks is a writer and critic specializing in theatre and technology. A 1986 recipient of a Rockefeller Humanities Fellowship, she teaches writing at Harvard University.

Mark Ensign Cory teaches at the University of Arkansas and is author of The Emergence of an Acoustical Art Form: An Analysis of the German Experimental Hörspiel of the 1960s (1974).

Gian Franco Maffina, Director of the Pratella/Russolo archives, author of Luigi Russolo e l'arte dei rumori (1978).

Allen S. Weiss is the editor of Art Brut: Madness and Marginalia, a special issue of Art and Text and co-editor of Psychosis and Sexual Identity: Toward a Post-Analytic View of the Schreber Case (1988). He has published widely in the field of philosophy, psychoanalytic theory, film studies, comparative literature and art history. A collection of his essays will be published by SUNY Press in 1989.

TRANSLATORS

1. Stanislaw Mlodozieniec, "Radio Romans" by Bogdana Carpenter. Ms. Carpenter teaches at University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and is author of The Poetic Avant-garde in Poland: 1918-1939 (1983).

2. F.T. Marinetti/Pino Masnata and Maffina -- Italian translator as yet unconfirmed.

3. Arseni Avra'amov -- Russian translator as yet unconfirmed.

Note: French translations in editorial essays performed by editors. Contributors will perform or secure their own translations.