Volker Straebel

Berlin aufräumen (Tidying up Berlin)
Sound Observation #7

Two-channel digital audio (2011)

I Berlin

II Aufräumen (Tidy up)

III Zusammensetzen (Piece together)

Program note:

Sound Observations is a series of electroacoustic works – live performances and sound installations – that observe the qualities of live or recorded soundscapes.

For *Berlin aufräumen (Tidying up Berlin),* fifty short soundscape recordings were made in Berlin, Germany, each six seconds in length, with ten of them belonging to each of the following five categories: outdoor public spaces, nature sounds, indoor public spaces, trains, and cars. Chance determines the order of the ten recordings within any category as well as the order of categories in the piece.

While the first movement presents the recordings unaltered, category by category, the second movement uses algorithmic feature extraction to organize the recorded sounds: the audio material is split into samples of 1/100 seconds' duration and then newly arranged so that the samples' dynamics steadily increase.

For the third movement, the audible spectrum is split into fifty equal intervals. One of the fifty frequency bands from the first recording is audible, two bands from the second, and so on, until the full frequency range is present when the fiftieth recording is played. While the number of frequency bands filtered systematically increases, the combination of audible bands is determined by chance.

The duration is 15'. Audio programming by Fabian Brinkmann.

Performance:

Playback through four speakers surrounding the audience is optimal. In this case, the left channel is projected front left and back right, and the right channel is projected front right and back left.

Volume should be modestly loud. Dynamics should not be changed during movements. Allow some time, 5 seconds at least, between movements.

Documentation:

Berlin aufräumen (Tidying up Berlin) was created in MatLab and programmed by Fabian Brinkmann (TU Berlin). Audio recording by Volker Straebel on January 7th, 2011.

In composing the second movement, the original audio material was split into samples of 1/100 seconds' duration to be newly arranged. However, the actual length of time in which any given recording is heard may vary: If the second sample is within a dynamic range of +/- 3 dB compared to the first, it plays in direct continuation, and if the third sample is within the same dynamic range compared to the first, it too continues in unaltered playback.

The third movement makes use of a 60 to 15,000 Hz frequency spectrum.

All chance operations use Andrew Culver's *I Ching* software.

Produced at the Electronic Music Studio of the Technical University Berlin, Audiocommunication Group.

First performed at Diapason Gallery for Sound, Brooklyn, NY on February 24th, 2011.