

Volker Straebel

Centre and Grand. Sound Observation #5

live diffusion of four-channel digital audio (2010)

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 *Centre and Grand*, I spent three hours recording on the fire escape of Phill Niblock's loft at 224 Centre Street, New York. A head-mounted microphone was positioned successively such that the recorded stereo fields were parallel to Centre Street, Grand Street, and in a 45° angle to both.

In a concert performance, the audience is surrounded by four speakers. The recordings are superimposed and mapped to the speakers such that the concert space replicates the spatial layout of the recorded site: in front and from behind, one hears two recordings of Centre Street; from the left and right, two recordings of Grand Street; and diagonally across the room, the 45° angle recordings of both streets.

Each of these six stereo fields is individually scanned by slowly moving band-pass filters. Entry and exit times are chance determined. The duration is 30'10".

[The radio version is abridged to avoid extreme frequencies that can't be reproduced on home stereo systems.]

Performance:

To experience the full dynamic range of the piece, the music should be played rather loud. Dynamics are adjusted live. Depending on the available sound system, the amplitude should be increased at the beginning and at the end of the piece. As the frequency range is 20 Hz (in the very beginning) to 20 kHz (at the very end), a subwoofer is desirable. Slight emphasis should be given to the speakers in front of the audience (where the piece begins and ends).

Documentation:

Audio recordings by Volker Straebel, June 4th, 2010. Filtered in ProTools with EQ3: low pass 12 db/octave, high pass 18 db/octave, peak quality 10, gain 18 dB. When the center frequency is above 1000 Hz, an additional peak filter is used (quality 10), whereby the gain increases from 0 dB to 18 dB from 1,000 Hz to 20,000 Hz (or decreases respectively).

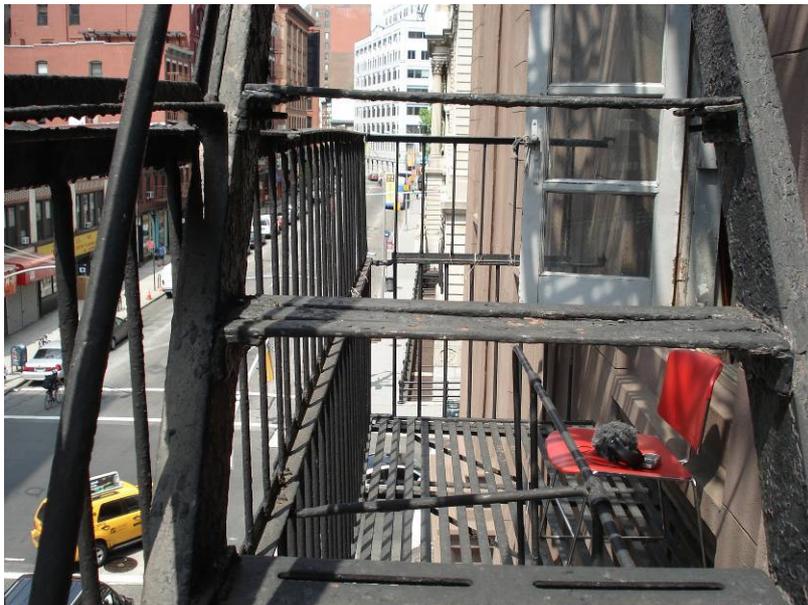
The entrance points of the rising glissandi between 0:00 and 5:00, of the falling glissandi between 5:00 and 10:00, and all exit points between 25:00 and 30:00, were chance determined by means of Andrew Culver's *I Ching* software *tic*.

Centre Street (noon)	in front of audience	0:00	30:00	rising
Centre Street (12:30 p.m.)	behind audience	4:44	26:14	rising
Grand Street (1:30 p.m.)	left of audience	2:30	26:57	rising
Grand Street (2:00 p.m.)	right of audience	3:24	28:43	rising
45° recording (10:30 p.m.)	left-rear to right-front	8:38	27:36	falling
45° recording (11:00 p.m.)	right-front to left-rear	9:23	25:39	falling

The radio version is abridged to avoid extreme frequencies that can't be reproduced on home stereo systems. It begins at 8:38 and lasts until 26:39 (plus a three second fade out). From 25:39 on, the volume is steadily increased, ultimately reaching +12 dB.

Produced at the Electronic Music Studio of the Technical University Berlin, Audio-communication Group, and Studio P4. Thanks to Jens Brand, Bill Dietz, boris d hegenbart-matsui, Phill Niblock, Jean Szymczak, and Laurence Vale. For Ch.

First performed at Experimental Intermedia, New York (the place where the recordings were made), on December 19th, 2010.



Photos: Straebel / Vale