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MARYANNE AMACHER

Composer and sound installation artist. My early educational background included piano study at the Philadelphia Conservatory of Music; musical studies in Salzburg Austria, and Dartington Devon, England as an Institute for International Education Fellow; and composition studies with Karlheinz Stockhausen. Undergraduate and graduate studies in music and computer science at the University of Pennsylvania, where I received the Hugh Clark Fine Arts Prize, and the Laisse Fine Arts Award; and the University of Illinois, Urbana, where I studied acoustics and began creating my first electro-acoustic sound works. While a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Visual Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1972-76) I developed a number of projects for solo and group shows in collaboration with the visual artists Scott Fisher, Luis Frangella, and the architect Juan Navarro Baldeweg.

This was a very interesting time, especially because of our ideas about what has since become known as virtual reality, telepresence technologies, and the internet. For three years I received a continuous real-time transmission of the BOSTON HARBOR sound environment in my studio. Dedicated 15kc telelinks transmitted the live sound from a microphone which I installed on a window overlooking the ocean at Pier 6 Boston Harbor. (1973-76) Scott Fisher, who is now distinguished for his pioneering work at NASA in founding VIEW the virtual reality workstation in 1985, which developed the first head mount display and glove systems, had a wide ranging background in stereoscopic imaging techniques, including theoretical aspects of binocular perception, and the making of stereoscopic images in many media, particularly stereoscopic photography. Together with Baldeweg we gave a course at MIT which was called "Live Space," investigating "cross-sensory explorations between stereo vision and auditory dimension: composite mental images of immersion in space, direct physiological experience of an acoustic space, as distinguished from the perception of an acoustic space, aurally as image. After-images. Thresholds. Physiological resonances....." My contribution included a number of different ideas that I was developing in my sonic telepresence installations, "CITY-LINKS" (1967- ) in which telecommunication technologies were used to produce the real-time transmission of remote sonic environments to exhibition spaces in the United States and Europe. In these same years I also had interesting collaborations with the electronic arts media group called Pulsa, creating large scale installations of light, sound, and video.

During the years 1973-1984 I was invited to create works with John Cage and Merce Cunningham. In 1975 I was invited by John Cage to compose the storm environment for his multimedia composition "Lecture On The Weather," based on texts from Thoreau's "Journals." We presented this work together in Canada, the United States, and Germany (1976-1982.) In 1978 John Cage asked me to create the sonic environment that would accompany his solo voice composition, "Empty Words" based on Thoreau's "Walden." I composed "Close Up," a sound work that is based on subtle acoustic features which characterize the "tone" of Walden Pond. We presented the ten hour "Empty Words/Close Up" for the first time together in Bonn, Germany in 1979 with subsequent performances in the United States (1979-84.) In 1976 I was commissioned by the Cunningham Dance Foundation to compose a repertoire sound work for Merce Cunningham's "TORSE." I participated in the first performances of "Torse" with the Cunningham Dance Company during its Broadway season at the Minskoff Theater NYC; McCarter Theater, Princeton; and Teatro Municipal, Caracas, Venezuela; and was invited to present other evening length sound works with the Cunningham Dance Company for the "Events" series in NYC (1974-1980.)

I was a Bunting Institute Fellow at the Mary Ingraham Bunting Institute of Radcliffe College, Harvard University (1978-79); a resident artist at the Capp Street Project in San Francisco (10/85-12/85); a guest artist at the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) in Berlin, as the recipient of a one year fellowship sponsored by the German government (Jan86-Apr87); and a Visiting Artist at the Banff Center for the Arts, Banff Alberta where I was invited to participate in the Virtual Reality Residency (Sept91-Jan92.) I was appointed the first Rosekrans Artist-in-Residence at Mills College in 1993.

My work is best represented in the three series of multimedia installations which have been produced in the United States, Europe, and Japan: the sonic telepresence series, "CITY-LINKS" #1-22 (1967- ); the architecturally staged "MUSIC FOR SOUND-JOINED ROOMS" (1980- ) and the "MINI-SOUND SERIES" (1985- ) a new multimedia form which I created for my major works, adopting the mini series television format. I wanted a more involving narrative context for my location-based installations, a serialized narrative that would be continued in consecutive episodes, as distinguished from an ongoing installation. The evolving Scenarios of the "Mini-Sound Series" build one upon the other over a period of several days or weeks. The six part "SOUND HOUSE" my first "Mini-Sound Series" was produced during a three month residency at the Capp Street Project in San Francisco (Nov16-Dec22 1985.) "THE MUSIC ROOMS" was produced by the DAAD gallery in Berlin, and staged over a four week period (Feb19-Mar15 1987); "STOLEN SOULS" commissioned by INKA Digital Arts in Amsterdam, was presented in De Beurs van Berlage Amsterdam (May20-24 1988); "2021 THE LIFE PEOPLE" commissioned by the Ars Electronic Festival, was presented in the Brucknerhaus, Linz Austria (Sept13-16 1989); and "THE BIAURALS" commissioned by The Electrical Matter, an electronic arts festival was presented at the Samuel Fleisher Art Memorial, Philadelphia, Pa. (Sept11-22 1990.)



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Installations of "MUSIC FOR SOUND-JOINED ROOMS" (1980-1995) include works created for the Galerie Nachst St. Stephan, Vienna, Austria; the Kunsthalle, Basel, Switzerland; Oggi Music Festival, Lugano, Switzerland; Cultural Commune di Roma, Italy; Walker Arts Center, Minneapolis; Kunstmuseum, Bern; DAAD Gallery, Berlin; Capp Street Project, San Francisco; 21st Century Cultural Information Museum, Tokushima, Japan; the Kunsthalle-Krems, Austria.

In "MUSIC FOR SOUND JOINED ROOMS" and "MINI-SOUND SERIES" I use the architectural features of a building to customize sound, visual, and spatial elements, creating intense and dramatic sound experiences. I produce these works in location-based installations that are built from "structure borne" sound (sound traveling through walls, floors, rooms, corridors) which acousticians distinguish from the "airborne" sound experienced with conventional loudspeaker placements. An entire building or series of rooms provides a stage for the sonic and visual sets of my installations. Immersive aural architectures are constructed, linking the main audience space sonically with adjoining rooms through specially designed multiple loudspeaker configurations, creating the effect that sounds originate from specific locations and heights rather than from the loudspeakers. The idea is to create an atmosphere similar to the drama of entering a cinematic closeup, a form of "sonic theater" in which architecture magnifies the expressive dimensions of the work.

The audience enters the set and walks into the "world" of the story, exploring multi-perceptual viewpoints. As they move through new scenes being created by the "Sound Characters," they discover clues to the story distributed throughout the rooms. Places of "thematic focus" are selected to create the scenes - rooms, corridors, walls, doorways, balconies, stairways. In some episodes sound sweeps through the rooms; in others, chords, and tonalities are intricately joined between the rooms; in still others a particular sound shape is emphasized to animate sonic imaging in a distant room. Together with the architectural staging of projected visual environments, I am able to construct multi-dimensional environment-oriented experiences, anticipating virtual immersion environments. Rooms, walls, and corridors that sing. Architecture especially articulates sonic imaging in "structure borne" sound, magnifying color and spatial presence as the sound shapes interact with the structural characteristics of the rooms before reaching the listener. *The rooms themselves become speakers, producing sound which is felt throughout the body as well as heard.*

In two recent installations I had the opportunity to produce "Music For Sound Joined Rooms" in remarkable architectures with unique acoustical characteristics: the Kunsthalle-Krems in Austria (1995;) and the 21st Century Cultural Information Museum in Tokushima Japan (1992.) I created distinct sonic worlds that could only be articulated through architecture. The Kunsthalle-Krems Minoritenkirche is a large expansive space that was originally part of a monastery that was built in the 11th century. I produced my work, "A Step Into It, Imagining 1001 Years" in the six areas of the Kunsthalle: the main hall; the altar spaces (one at a high elevation approached by a tall stairway); the two antechambers adjoining the high altar; and the crypt. A space of expanded seeing and hearing enfolded throughout the Church, linking sonic interactions and visual imaging in six thematic locations. Aural events appeared larger than life; as though many miles away; inside the listener. For "Synaptic Island" which I produced at the 21st Century Cultural Information Museum in Tokushima, I created very discrete placements of sound, emphasizing distinct characteristics in four adjoining rooms. Special layering of sonic imaging was developed; areas of intense sonic pressure; others very ethereal. Staged at specific locations and heights, these sonic areas became tactile in presence, existing as "things in themselves."

To produce the location-based installations for my major works, intensive acoustic and auditory research in the space is required. Usually a residency of one month is needed for my investigations, depending on the size of the space and the number of rooms. During this period I discover special acoustic features of each room, exploring how they interact sonically with each other, and develop the aural imaging and spatial characteristics of the installation. Creating the detailed sound design is very much like scripting a sonic choreography.



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In my first sound works I developed the idea of sonic telepresence, pioneering the use of telecommunication in sound installations. In the telelink installations for "CITY-LINKS" #1-22 (1967- ) the sounds from one or more remote environment (in a city, or in several cities) are transmitted in real-time to the exhibition space, as an ongoing sonic environment. I create the "CITY-LINKS" installations using real-time telelinks, transmitting the sounds from microphones which I place at the remote locations. I introduced the concept of an environment-oriented spatial sound sculpture (created by combining and modulating several remote sound environments) at solo and group shows at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (1974) and the Walker Arts Center, "Projected Images," Minneapolis. (1974) The *adventure* is in receiving live sonic spaces from more than one location at the same time - the tower, the ocean, the abandoned mill. *Remote sounding environments enter our local spaces and become part of our rooms.*

I created these works with many different sonic environments, harbors, steel mills, stone towers, flour milles, factories, airports, rivers, open fields, utility companies, and with musicians "on location." In my installations I was particularly interested in the experience of "syncronicity" - hearing spaces distant from each other at the same time--which we do not experience in our lives. Very often quite remarkable sonic events would all of a sudden occur at the same moment of time! I developed different ideas for each installation. For example, "No More Miles" produced at the Walker Arts Center was an "acoustic twin." I installed microphones in an indoor arcade (at Budget Rent A Car) in Minneapolis, which was the acoustic double of the exhibition space acoustics: voices, footsteps, and other sounds completely matched those heard in the gallery. When in the gallery you would hear the sounds (produced by the installation) as though people were moving and talking around you, but discover "ghosts" in the otherwise silent space.

For over three years I received live sound from a microphone which I installed on a window overlooking the ocean at the New England Fish Exchange, Pier 6 Boston Harbor. Dedicated 15kc telelinks provided continuous transmission of the BOSTON HARBOR sound environment to mixing facilities at my studio. During this period I made links from my studio, transmitting the live sound received there to become part of other installations I was creating elsewhere. The Boston Harbor sound space became another instrument in my sound works and more important, a model in my research of spatial dimension. I selected such environmental models--for example Battery Park in NYC where I placed a microphone on a window in the Firehouse, and received the live sound in my studio for six months--for investigating acoustic depth and sound localization. These continuous transmissions gave me the opportunity to experience live incoming patterns over time. Time corresponds here to life of the space, to sense of being there. Approach and disappearances of sounding shapes.

Installations of "CITY-LINKS" #1-22 (1967- ) include works created for solo and group shows at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (1974); Walker Arts Center "Projected Images," Minneapolis (1974); Hayden Gallery MIT, "Interventions In Landscape," Cambridge, Mass (1975); Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, Mass. (1975); Corps de Garde, Groningen, Holland (1978.) Other installations were produced for the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, MIT Cambridge, Mass (1976-1980); the Kitchen Center, NYC (1979); Radio France Musique (1976); Mills College (1980 & 1994.) In 1968 I was awarded a prize from the National Institute of Radio and Television for the first "City-Links" (WBFOfm Buffalo): a twenty-eight hour, uninterrupted live radio work in which I received and mixed the real-time ongoing sound from eight remote sounding environments.

Recent projects include the creation of three major works: the Two Part Multimedia Narrative, "A Step Into It, Imagining 1001 Years," commissioned by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Culture and Siemens Kultur Program was produced in the Kunsthalle-Krems, Austria. (Feb-Mar 1995) "The Reference Room" a telelink installation using the "CITY-LINKS" format was produced for the Rosekrans Residency at Mills College. (1993) The Four Part Multimedia Narrative, "Synaptic Island" was commissioned by the Japanese government and produced at the 21st Century Cultural Information Museum in Tokushima Japan. (Apr-May 1992) I was invited to give the John Spencer Camp Lecture at Wesleyan University. (Nov 7 1995) Participation in the two week Symposium, "Tuned Matters Into Sound," Krems-Vienna with La Monte Young, Bernhard Leitner, James Tenney, and Georg Friedrich Haas at the Museum of Modern Art, Palais Liechtenstein, Vienna. (Feb20-Mar5 1995) 3-D sonic architectures, commissioned by the Matsushita Electric Company were designed and produced for the 750 programmable loudspeakers in Panasonic Hall, Tokyo. (1991) CD recordings were made for the Avant label (96;) and for the Asphodel Sombient Trilogy: "The Throne Of Drones" (May 95) "The Swarm Of Drones" (Oct 95) and "The Storm Of Drones" (Aug 96)

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