

Suzuki continues playing on the corrugated surface, but he is also listening to the clicking of the reel.

Kosugi reappears in the doorway, and we realize that now he is reeling the line in instead of letting it out. He is intent on what he is doing, but he is also listening to the sound of the stick moving across the corrugated surface.

The two performers now come together in one of the oddest and most beautiful duets I have ever heard. They never force a relationship. They never attempt to imitate each other. They don't take turns making their similar sounds, but they don't not take turns either. They are not controlling, organizing, composing. Yet they are listening, sensing. I have seldom seen two performers so completely tuned in on the same types of sounds, the same performance attitude, the same philosophy, the same sense of what music ought to be. They are at one with the reel, the stick, the situation and each other. And while I realize that I am romanticizing in an inappropriately Western way, I can not help feeling that they are tuned in on some sort of basic life flow.

Suzuki eventually gets up and moves over to the black cylinder at the end of the coiled spring that stretches clear across the room.

Kosugi eventually finishes reeling in his line and disappears backstage again.

Suzuki now focuses on his new black cylinder and, with one little tap, produces the most amazing sound of the afternoon. The tap races down the coiled spring, resonates in the black cylinder at the other end, races back, races down again, and makes five or six round trips before fading off into silence. It is an ingenious sound discovery, unlike anything I have ever heard before. The effect could easily hold my interest for twenty minutes, but the inventor-sculptor-performer lets us hear it only a few times. How odd. I can't think of any other musicians who would work for fifteen or twenty minutes with a familiar everyday sort of clicking and would then toss off a brilliant sound discovery like this in less than a minute. What elegant pacing.

Kosugi reappears with his violin. He improvises short phrases, some of which revolve around only two notes, and some of which are more active. The phrases have unique individual curves that remind me of the quick brush strokes of a calligrapher. And each one has a few little flaws too. Places where the ink or the sound doesn't quite fill in. Places where a brush hair or a bow hair wanders a little to one side. The violinist moves a lot as he plays. Many phrases begin standing tall and end in crouch. The music seems to emanate from his breathing, from his body. I don't think his brain has a whole lot to do with it. He seems quite at home on his instrument, and I have little doubt that he could play Bach respectably if he wanted to. But now he is not striving for any specific, thought-out results. The sounds have a more physical origin, and the scratchiness or mellowness of the tone seems more a matter of muscular accident than conscious

decision. Sometimes the phrases are quite strident, but since they are disconnected from the will, they never seem aggressive.

Suzuki is now balancing a small board on one end. Sometimes it falls to one side and clicks against a dowel he holds in his right hand. Sometimes it falls against the dowel in his left hand. There is something quite elegant about the choice of wood and the appearance of the grain. It is clear that this man has produced a lot of sculpture. His sensitivity to materials, colours and lines is apparent in all of his instruments, and one senses a sculptor's eye even in the little piece of wood he is playing now. Sometimes he moves over to a metal plate, rubbing on it with a stick, and producing rough sounds that relate more closely to the violin music.

Kosugi continues playing his violin, or perhaps allowing the violin to play him. As always, he and his partner remain tuned in on one another, listening, flowing and allowing the coincidences to happen until, as another kind of coincidence, they stop playing and end the performance.

It was a quiet Tuesday afternoon again, though I felt much different from before. [...] Experimental music, I learned, is still largely ignored in Japan, even when the aesthetic seems totally Japanese, and the two do not expect many performing opportunities there.

Tom Johnson, 'Takehisa Kosugi and Akio Suzuki: Stunning by Coincidence', *Village Voice* (New York, 23 April 1979).

Christina Kubisch **About My Installations//1986**

My sound installations are based on electro-magnetic sound transmission. A series of electric cables are installed in an indoor/outdoor situation. The cables can be fixed to walls, ceilings and floors or suspended in the air. They can follow the natural forms and architecture of the place (for example, cables can be wrapped around trees in a wooded area or strung around columns in an old monastery) or they can form an independent geometric structure throughout the space.

Sound transmission originates with an audio source (generally tape) that is amplified by a specially built amplifier from which the cables are sent and returned, forming a loop. One 'pair' of cable structures forms a stereo output (left and right channels). The public (listener) wears a wireless headphone with an

adjustable dynamic range control. The listener can walk around freely, receiving the sounds via the built-in electro-magnets, which function like pickups. Through movement (or non-movement), the listener is able to choose between various sound sources and their combinations. The volume of the sound increases as the listener moves closer to the cables. Quick movements through the space cause the sounds to fade into one another, while slow movements cause sequences of sounds. The space between the cable fields produces silence.

The sounds can be electronic, natural or instrumental and are compiled, in advance, in my sound studio. The 'composition' for any given installation is related to the 'sound-architecture' of the cable structure.

Sounds

I generally work with 'opposing' sounds.

Natural sounds: recordings made in nature, animal sounds, water sounds, the sounds of different materials, the voice, primitive instruments like a sea-shell or an Australian didgeridoo.

I am particularly interested in these sounds because they are evocative and, when heard in a different space from the original, can take on a magical and mysterious quality. My intent is to create a landscape of sounds (soundscape) in which the public can move freely, exploring and individually changing the composition. It's like walking in a jungle or along the seaside at different times of the day and on different paths.

Electronic sounds: I like to create sounds that are close to the character of the above mentioned sounds, interesting in their timbre and structure, and yet, not immediately identifiable with traditional instruments. The sounds are more articulated in their innate micro-structure than in melodic or harmonic patterns. Of special interest to me are rhythmic. Structures and their combinations. For example, a listener 'caught' between two cable-fields is apt to hear a polyrhythmic pattern. Natural and electronic sounds can be integrated into a kind of music that I call Ethno Electronics: music where electronic nature and natural electronics are so integrated that they form a new unity.

Afterword

The predominant means of acoustic communication today are radio, records, cassette tape and video. The technical media have radically altered the relationship existing between listener and music. Technology has bred a musical standard that is intended to be appreciated through loudspeaker systems and has very little to do with performance techniques used in the past.

As early as 1958 Karlheinz Stockhausen, a pioneer in the field of electronic music, wrote:

And what have record and radio producers done up to now? They have reproduced a music that was conceived and written for performance in concert halls and opera houses. Radio has striven to perfect technical reproduction to a standard that made it progressively more difficult for the listener to distinguish between original and copy. The illusion must be complete. The conscious deception perfect. All this leads towards a society that gains its spiritual sustenance from cans.

Canned music is able, through computer-controlled recording and reproduction techniques, to produce the sensation of 'being in the centre of the musical performance'. However, it is precisely this 'perfection' that discourage listeners from indulging in musical activities themselves. Creative musical experience need not, however, be limited to academic practice or to recorder recitals during 'musical afternoons' at home. The fear of electronics ignores the fact that each note is an electrically converted vibration and that live sound material can be produced 'naturally' by current, in the same way as traditional instruments. Listening is, in itself, an activity that must be consciously learned and developed. In contrast to the conditions in concert halls, our ears, coupled with the other senses, perceive rotund, spherical and moving sound. Creative listening is the starting point for my sound installations and sound-zones in which the structure of the composition is combined with sequences of tone and movement. The audience is able to move freely between various acoustic fields distributed throughout the sound zone, enabling the listener to discover ever new and individual sound combinations. These sound zones are often created in the open air: in woodland glades for instance, or in buildings that were not constructed to act as concert halls, such as deserted factories, shipyards and cellars.

Christina Kubisch, 'About My Installations', in *A Different Climate: Women Artists Use New Media* (Düsseldorf: Städtliche Kunsthalle, 1986); reprinted in *Sound by Artists*, ed. Dan Lander and Micah Lexier (Toronto: Art Metropole, 1990) 69-72.