

Reviews (continued)

the WSP Database) with a colour image of rock columns attached to its hull.

Regarding soundscape composition's commitment to the real-world significance of prerecorded sounds, *Elements and Beyond* invites audiences to make environmental and social associations and to connect what they hear to their own personal experiences. According to Truax:

My intent for me is to provoke a reflective listening...which gives you time and space to not just listen inside the sound, but also to relate it to your own experience. Hence, I regard soundscape composition as a subset of what might be called context-based approaches, keeping in mind that these are not always physical, social, or cultural contexts. They could also be inner kinds of context, in the sense of memory and recall.⁴

In order to create environments that encourage reflective listening, the audience is invited into these works as observers. Although I felt like an active participant in each composition, especially when there was a shift in spatial depth or a sense of movement through space, there were rarely moments where I imagined myself making sounds.

At a time when many sonic artists are using found sounds to invite listeners to consider real-world environments and conditions, Barry Truax reminds us of the importance of taking time to listen inwardly.

Elements and Beyond exemplifies that technology can heighten our awareness of real-world environmental sounds at the same time as it transports us to places of meaning and myth. The four elements are simultaneously raw material and symbolic substance in *Elements and Beyond*. The five compositions on the CD are studies in timbre, time, and texture as well as acoustic journeys into different environments. With attention to both the sonic properties and the external significance of source material, this album has the potential to enrich how listeners experience environmental sounds and acoustic spaces in daily life. With *Elements and Beyond*, Truax does not merely sketch mythic locales, he invites us to experience them firsthand.

About the Author

TYLER KINNEAR is a PhD candidate in musicology at the University of British Columbia. His research focuses on contemporary sonic art, with particular interest in conceptualizations of nature, phonography, soundscape composition, modes of listening, and alternative performance spaces.

Endnotes

1. In preparation for this review, I interviewed Truax about *Elements and Beyond* in the context of his 45 years working in soundscape composition. See full interview