

Introduction

This book consists of a collection of texts that were presented at the symposium *Soundscape in the Arts*, produced by NOTAM and the Norwegian Academy of Music in April, 2010. The list of contributors includes composers, visual and installation artists, sculptors, film sound artists and recordists, in a relatively balanced mix.

Most soundscape works develop similar elements; individual sounds and their characteristics, combinations of these sounds and their references, interactive aspects, issues of space and auditory perspective, and finally the place and contexts for both recording and presentation. This mix of elements makes it difficult to establish clear delimitations of the different approaches, and, perhaps, the similarities are more interesting than the differences; the term ‘soundscape’ is now approximately 40 years old, yet the use of the term itself, as well as the associated terminology, is remarkably consistent. The interest in holistic listening is dominant in this art, and the sounds themselves, what they refer to and can be associated with, have come into focus. Also in much of the recent sound art as well, soundscape perspectives are significant. This development is examined in this book.

A volume like this could easily have based itself fully on theoretical perspectives, and presented only analytical approaches. This, however, is not the approach that has been taken. A few texts are of a more theoretical and general nature, and they provide a framework for the collection, as well as an introduction to the term ‘soundscape’ and the relevant terminology. However, in the majority of the texts, we have deliberately chosen to focus on concrete works and artistic approaches, drawing directly on the artistic reflections, intentions and perspectives. As a result, this book is rich with personal observations and discussions of individual approaches and methods, and some of the texts also comment on relevant parts of the discourse that are contained in other authors’ texts from the symposium. To sum it up, the texts present a selection of interesting insights into the processes that artists go through when they are formulating their ideas in the soundscape domain.

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