

About

This piece forms part of a developing series of performances and audiovisual compositions called 'Ecollages'. Each piece explores listening- and sounding-with the more-than-human world, through improvisatory listening and performance strategies of different kinds. The series uses combinations of field recordings, DIY and non-DIY instruments, electronics, visuals, and movement to think about our relationships with dynamic, living environments.

Ecollages questions – 'how can we better *think, see, hear, and feel* ourselves as part of natural ecologies?' – 'how might we find ways of co-composing with human and more-than-human sounds where neither is prioritised, neither is erased, and both can be valued?' – 'what changes can be made in our listening to understand that we are always 'sounding with' the world around us'?

Ecollage_01 is written as a text score for interpretation by up to three performers in live performance. The piece can be played either with field recordings and instrument(s), or in a site-specific context (with naturally occurring soundscape). The piece has several possible durations: 5, 10, 25, and 45 minutes. Performers should choose which duration they will play in advance. Any instrumentation is suitable for this piece, inclusive of DIY or home-built instruments, or conventional instruments of any musical tradition (including western concert instruments).

Preparation and performance specifications

(1) Live performance with field recordings

In this version of the piece, performers should (ideally) record and collage a series of field recordings, with which they will perform in live performance. Recordings can be taken anywhere, and on any audio-recording device. Using any DAW, these recordings should be collaged together (as the performers wish) with care taken to avoid harsh clipping (i.e. at the end or beginning of clips). Ideally, the sounds should crossfade seamlessly across the duration of the audio clip. The file should be bounced into a usable format (such as .wav, .mp3). When deciding where the sounds go in the collage, performers might want to: (1) experiment by letting clips fall naturally on top of each other (and just see what happens); (2) listening for particular gestures, textures, or soundworlds which are complimentary (or highly contrasting); (3) arrange clips in relation to the real world locations from which they come, or by the kinds of sounds featured in the clip.

Where recording sounds is not possible, performers can use recordings taken from this folder to make the collage. The folder includes clips of varying durations, taken from sites across the UK, Netherlands, Canada, France, and Switzerland.

(https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1IRMI9og8gRJo4l4ZmP5uDOnHA26tPdC_?usp=sharing)

Where making the collage is not an option for performers, they can use the pre-made collages in the folder.

In the performance, the sound collage should be played through speakers in venue (either stereo, or multichannel) at a volume which sits between the overall **mf** and **f** dynamics for the given ensemble.

(2) Site-specific performance

In this version of the piece, an outdoor location should be chosen for the performance. Any practical location is okay (urban or rural, 'noisy' or 'quiet'), but performers may wish to spend some time in the location in advance to listen closely to the surrounding environment across the duration they wish to perform.

When choosing the location, in addition to thinking about the soundscape, as well as logistical aspects (power supply, etc.), performers should consider: how would performance (complete with sound, people, voices, movement, lights, etc.) in this location impact local human and more-than-human communities? What is the material relationship between our instruments/sounding objects and the space we will be in?

In performance, where possible, performers should organise themselves facing each other (in a triangle, or opposite each other), and audience should be invited to watch/listen in a circle around the performers. Where this isn't possible, performers are invited to explore arrangements where the audience can

The score

- (1) The world in which we sound is filled with others. Begin this piece by listening to them.

Try not to cling too strongly to any particular sound, but let your ears (and eyes, and minds) wander freely. Notice what calls your attention (let it call, and let it go)? How many sounds are there (can you hear them without counting them)? Where do you sit within this world (as one of many sounding beings)?

- (2) When the environment asks you, begin to play (throughout this piece, play when you are asked to play)

Try only to play what is needed, taking up space as needed, responding as needed. If you are not sure what is needed, just listen.

Remember, the world in which we sound is filled with others. They have their own space here.

- (3) Attention flies like a bird; this is okay. Sometimes we focus on our own activity, sometimes on our relationships with others close by, and sometimes we hold the whole soundworld in our ears (and eyes, and bodies, and minds). Let your attention move, as well as come to rest, but try to remain sensitive to the diversity of sounds around you. Different textures, transitions, interruptions, points of stillness, and surges of movement will all happen. Let them come, and let them go.

- (4) The piece should finish when the collage comes to an end, or at the end of the chosen duration.

Henry McPherson

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