

# Essays

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## → A survey of four Contemporary Sound Artists - Mark Garry

**The purpose of this essay is to investigate a number of the processes and intentions of contemporary artists who work with sound. This is not an overview of contemporary sound art but simply four particular practitioners responding to a sequence of questions I have outlined.**

Taking a survey format I have chosen a number of artists from a broad range of geographic and educational backgrounds and asked them to respond to certain specific questions that I hoped would aid me in determining if similarities in methodology existed between these artists?, and if so, in what capacity these parallels are implemented?

These artists are Dennis McNulty, Slavek Kwi, Jody Elff, and Randall Packer, a biography of each of these artists is available at the end of this essay.

Contemporary developments in sound technologies has significantly expanded the scope for the manipulation of sound and to an extent has negated the necessity of any formal musical education. Countless contemporary practitioners no longer use traditional formal structural elements in the generating of sound.

The ability to understand how to manipulate sound through the use of traditional instrumentation or any knowledge of the practice of scoring notes and rhythms are no longer viewed in any capacity as important. Many contemporary musicians sit behind laptops playing manipulating sound through computer programs or sit on stage operating samplers and sequencers in the absence of a voice of instrument.

Later in this essay I will expand on the participants use of contemporary technologies but on quite a basic level I didn't notice any fundamental difference between what I was seeing on stage at music venues (particularly in the field of music categorised as Abstract Electronica. Acts such as Autechre, Oval, Murmur among others.) and within galleries in terms of the processes employed or the outcomes achieved. Therefore I was concerned with isolating if and where any differentiation occurs between musicians and sound artists and in particular whether the participants could isolate any difference?

I structured this question in three parts

1, A: can you differentiate between people who make music and people who make sound art?

Slavek Kwi felt that *Technically, there is no difference between music and sound-art.*

John Cage: *"Music is the organisation of sounds and silence".*

*Adding a psychological dimension: "Any sound-situation which attracts my attention becomes automatically musical". There is no importance if it is intentionally generated by human beings or coincidentally produced by the sound-environment. In the moment I am according, from whatsoever reason, attention to it, it has meaning. In this sense, active (generating sounds) or passive (listening) has the same value.*

*This difficulty to distinguish difference is also felt by Jody Elff his response was: In order to do this, you have to make a distinction between the two, which is virtually impossible to do in the current creative environment, where "music" has been as deconstructed as it can possibly be, and "sound art" is often more carefully crafted than many musical compositions. I think one of the simplest and most easily definable distinctions is the context in which the work is presented. A non-performance-space presentation of a sonic work is likely to be labelled "sound art" while a presentation of the same work activated by physical performers will certainly be called musical.*

*On the other hand, there is a very active group of free improvisers around the world whose entire discipline is based on the exploration of sound and sonic relationships. I feel that their work is much closer in spirit to "sound art", whereas many sonic presentations in gallery and museum spaces (advertised as "sound art") are actually carefully crafted recordings that repeat over and over - something that is both so clearly fixed in time and so specifically repeatable feels much more like a musical composition to me than a unique, dynamic piece of sonic art.*

Dennis Mc Nulty : *I find the way you phrase this question interesting:*

*'people who ... ' like there are two categories of people and they are mutually exclusive.*

*Categorisation has always been an difficult issue for me. Some work seems to be focussed on more or less musical concerns and some seems to be focussed on concerns other than strictly musical ones, but the relationship between the two is complicated in my mind and has a lot to do with the listener.*

*The emphasis can change depending on lots of factors, many of which are outside the control of the artist.*

Randall Packer however believes the distinction is quite clear: *Music composition is more formalist in nature while sound art often involves real subject matter as with other art forms in the visual arts.*

1B: If so, can this differentiation be simply defined by the cultural context that the work is placed or discussed within?

Jody Elff: *In a pure sense, "sound" as a medium to work within is a very dynamic "material". It transforms constantly depending on where and how it is presented. In order to craft a purely sonic experience, I feel that it must be presented dynamically. As soon as a sonic gesture is committed to a repeatable process (i.e. a recording or score), it takes on the permanence of a composition.*

Dennis McNulty: *Process/Intention/Context are all important, but I don't think it can be broken down as simply as that. I don't subscribe to a 'this equals this' view of the world. The work will almost always be readable in a number of different ways or on a number of different levels.*

Randall Packer: *Again, sound art addresses issues that lie outside of the medium itself while music composition is so often self-referential formally speaking.*

Slavek Kwi: *The term "music" can be limiting regarding its cultural reference. Generally it is associated with a conditioned and reducing definition of music: melody and rhythm, conventional instruments etc. However, music is sometimes defined as "art of sounds", though the criteria stays the same as noted above. The term "sound-art" suggests more options than "music". Sound-art includes music and anything else dealing with sound-media.*

1C: Or by the process that the artist/musicians use or the intended outcome of the work?

Jody Elff: *This is harder, because so many people manipulate sonic experiences with so many mediums. There are plenty of contemporary musicians who utilize computers to create and craft their music. There are plenty of artists who use their computers to make sound art. The medium is identical, but the intent of the end result is different. There is a musician here in New York City whose primary instrument is balloons. In spite of the fact that his instrument is completely unconventional by traditional western standards, he still very much considers himself a musician, not a sound artist.*

Randall Packer: *Sound art is often the listener as a more active-participant while music composition it seems to me is more traditional in the way it engages the passive-recipient.*

Slavek Kwi: *Sound-art seems to be coming from a visual-art background, approaching sound-media morphologically – e.g. perceiving sounds as colours, textures etc. and includes also sometimes objects generating sounds as an equal part. Modern electroacoustic music (incl. acousmatic and "musique concrete"), though coming from "classical" musical background, recognizes the morphological character of sounds too. It seems to stay in the realm of sounds only.*

The boundary between sound-art and music is blurred, if there is one...

Perhaps a correlation between these artists if one existed lay in methodology and I asked the artists to (Question 2) outline in either specific or general terms what did their practice involve?

Randall Packer: *I am interested in forms that derive from the integration of music and other disciplines. I am interested in the transformative potential of art and most recently this has involved the creation of a political work entitled the US Department of Art & Technology, a virtual government agency.*

Dennis McNulty: *(I am interested in) Thinking about the relationships between things. Recording sounds or taking pre-existing recordings/found-sound [e.g. CD or the radio]. Subjecting them to some simple processing mechanism via a computer, usually some kind of live improvisation. One project I'm working on at the moment involves recording each performance in a series and using that recorded material as possible source material for future performances: folding time & space back in on itself.*

Slavek Kwi: *My interest is in the process of creation as organic phenomena. The form is conceived as a consequent result of this process. I am focused on 'state of mind'. Creation [and all included in this process] is clearly a tool. The form documents momentary states of perception, including subjectivity, automatically. I would employ anything that comes to my mind, which seems appropriate during the process of creation. It changes due to the character of each project, of course.*

Jody Elff: *I work primarily with computers in the manipulation of sound and sonic presentations. In addition to the pursuit of an aesthetically pleasing experience, my work hopes to achieve two things clearly - to raise the awareness of the experience they have through listening, and to draw attention to the experience of space and spatial relationships through the use of sound. The sounds themselves are not necessarily the sounds of "things" (street noise, voices, etc.) but pure sound in their own right. They may be indicative of other things, but that is up to the listener to decide for themselves.*

The sounds themselves are typically very simple sounds - sine waves, pink noise, or simple oscillators - that are then subjected to a vast array of process in order to manipulate and transform the simple sounds into much more harmonically rich and dynamic results.

John Cage's seminal piece 4mins 33 seconds from 1953 emphasised the performer and audiences awareness of the informal sonic environment that surrounded them and in doing so paved the way for an ideology that acknowledged the non structured sonic possibilities in a performance and in ones participation with that performance. Or as David Toop put it "He made people listen to the world"<sup>1</sup>. With this piece he foregrounded a type of non formal critical listening. This notion of critical listening seems to be a crucial element in contemporary sound art i.e. that one is as discerning with ones listening processes as they would be when interacting with the world visually. I asked the participants how if in any way does the notion of critical listening impact on or inform their work?

Slavek Kwi: *My work is based on intense listening ... Over years of practice I developed my sense of self-critical listening, there is nobody who could possibly judge my work better than myself – it is my responsibility, what I make available to the public and I have to accept the consequences. I will never let you hear something I cannot stand behind. As my work deals with exploring unknown territories of sound-potential, I rely only on my own intuition. The response from outside confirms (or not) my intuition, the only criteria is to obtain a real connection with the listener.*

*Often I would consider critical comments irrelevant. Usually it is based on individual likes and dislikes of a particular person. It informs me not about my work but about the subjective relationship of the other person to my work, which I might find interesting or not. However, it doesn't alter my work.*

*I am trying to liberate myself from my own likes and dislikes, focussing more on the creative stream coming from my unconscious and consciousness as it is stimulated by specific situations, feelings, state of mind. The perpetual tendency towards balancing the paradox, I and reality, seems to me more interesting than any limited aesthetic or conceptual ideology. The real authenticity seems being able to communicate and connect with others by its fundamental nature. In such situation, the work is only a bridge connecting I and other. The intention to connect must be mutual.*

Dennis McNulty: *I think listening happens at a number of different levels and they're all important.*

Randall Packer: *I am interested in "critical being," in which the viewer is entirely immersed in the work, a fully sensory experience that engages the whole being as well as the mind.*

Jody Elff: *Critical listening is central to the work. It is my hope that my work will inspire more careful listening in the people who see it.*

Following from the question relating to critical listening I felt it was important to expand the question to incorporate the elements that inform this listening: specifically how the artists respond to a physical environment?

I asked, when working in a live or installation capacity how if at all does the architecture of the space you are situated in inform or influence your installations/performances?

Dennis McNulty: *The function of the space, it's history & where it is are important to me. How the space sounds is always important: in a live performance/improvisation situation, the acoustic of a space is like a collaborator. The architecture of a space usually suggests ways to arrange the sound, the performer and the audience/auditors/spectators in relation to each other.*

Randall Packer: *it is impossible for me to separate the work from the space, since I am interested in visceral experiences that engage all of one's being.*

Jody Elff: *While the pieces themselves can be presented in any physical space, the architecture of the space is a critical component of how the work is experienced. Some of my pieces will work better in certain spaces than they will in others. ANY architectural space will impose its unique sonic influence on any sound introduced into that space, and it is essential that this be considered when presenting a sound art work. Some of my pieces are designed with specific spaces in mind and others are not, but the work is influenced by the presentation space regardless, and often the pieces need to be modified during the installation process in order to better integrate into the space.*

Slavek Kwi: *Architecture of space, including acoustics, certainly stimulates my creative process. Each specific space suggests many possibilities to interact already and is approached as unique.*

This question expanded further into how the artists incorporated existing sonic environments into their responses or compositions?

Slavek Kwi: *The majority of my work takes into account sound environments and its inner inter-relationships. I am interested in complex systems as urban environments and natural habitats, about the way sounds are organized. Situations stimulating awareness of inter-connectedness fascinate me.*

Dennis McNulty: *I think of the sound in a space and other sound sources like broadcast media or the soundfiles archived on my laptop as kinds of flows. A particular space at a particular time is like a unique coincidence of these streams of sound/information. One way to think about a performance is as a harnessing or disruption of these flows for some purpose. I am interested in how these flows and others behave in public or temporarily public spaces.*

Randall Packer: *Sound is the most completely immersive of all media, it penetrates our being by literally entering into the body with its vibrations and emotional content.*

Jody Elff: *Sometimes. The sonic articulation of a space is a very interesting experience for me, and one that I enjoy exploring.*

Ashley Kahn in his book *A Love Supreme* the story of John Coltrane's classic album tells us of the confusion felt by critics of the time when encountering Coltrane's solos "why were his solos so long? Was he performing or practicing? Critics wanted what they were familiar with---polish not process." 2

This desire for a familiar recognisable structure reminded me of a conversation I had with one of the participants Jody Elff a couple of years ago. He differentiated his sound art work from music in a quite simple way. He said that music was based on repeated structures and patterns that very quickly became familiar to the listener, and that the listener ceased to engage with the individual sounds in the same way as soon as this familiarity became apparent. Jody ensured this phenomena never occurred in his works by, as he puts it "by using a computer, I can randomly alter the nature and occurrence of the sounds so that the work is constantly transforming. It is very important that the presentations not be pre-recorded, and because of this the specific sonic events in each work are not predictable or repeatable .This quite significant differentiation is exclusively enabled by the use of present-day technologies.

Contemporary recording techniques such as samplers allow contemporary sound artists the ability to record sonic environments in real time and computer programmes permit them to very quickly manipulate these sounds and re present them back to an audience. This method is just one way in which contemporary machinery are utilised by artists to heighten a participants awareness of the sonic possibilities of a particular environment. This possibility would not have been possible prior to the advent of computerised technology. One of the unifying element that connects each of these artists was the use contemporary computerised technology. I was interested in finding out what kinds of technologies they used when generating, capturing/recording

manipulating or outputting sound? How these tools are incorporated in their practice?

Slavek Kwi: *My interest is in the process of creation as an organic phenomena. The form is conceived as a consequent result of this process. I am focused on 'state of mind'. Creation [and all included in this process] is clearly a tool. The form documents momentary states of perception, including subjectivity, automatically. I would employ anything that comes to my mind, which seems appropriate during the process of creation. It changes due to the character of each project, of course.*

*I do not design computer programs – so far I haven't needed to. I have no interest in technology itself, other than as a tool. However, in the last 10 years I am using digital computer-based editing and processing systems. Before I employed analogue reel-to-reel tapes. Aside from obvious techniques of editing/mixing, the main processes I am using are filters (eq) and pitch shift (slow/accelerate) only, sometimes reverbs (almost never effects). The majority of sounds explored would be field-recordings recorded by myself. Recording itself is an important part of whole process. Sounds are captured with binaural microphones and dat-recorder (or mini disc) mainly. Output is mostly on CD, some projects on multi channel digital tapes (as Adat 8-track).*

*I am also creating various "low-tech" sound-objects / instruments using rotating motors, solar-powered devices, shaving machines, timers etc. and simple, mainly acoustical, sound-devices using any material suitable to each specific project (as performances, workshops).*

Dennis McNulty: *I set up a process or situation, which usually involves a space, a computer and some idea of an audience and then I interact with it in some way. i.e. I leave it alone somewhere and observe it, or I 'play' it to some degree or other like an instrument. Decisions about what to do and how to do it are specific to each instance. 'Liveness' is important to me, so I use equipment [a computer, midi-controllers, software] that enables me to do what I want to do in real-time.*

Randall Packer: *In terms of sound technology, I am interested in real-time system that enable interaction between the viewer/listener and the work. For this purpose, I have used Max/MSP/Jitter for the past 15 years.*

*I tend to design systems that involve the integration of sound and other media. I am also interested in the physical space, and how the performance or installation makes use of the space as an integral aspect of the work.*

Jody Elff: *I create my own programs - in fact each sound work is usually a dedicated piece of software. By not using a piece of fixed hardware or a specific computer program, I am not restrained to doing anything with sound based on what some designer somewhere else thinks I might want to do. Most software available for the manipulation of sound is designed with a linear, music making process in mind. This kind of working environment is seldom suitable to the presentations I want to create, so designing my own software is in fact much more efficient.*

I am aware that this is a gross over simplification of the practice of many song writers but I feel that the conventional objective of a song is to convey or evoke emotion in some capacity, and much of the negotiation of sound by present-day artist appears in a way to deal in a quite clinical manner with the specific mechanics of sound and the possibilities for the manipulation of a resonance. I was curious to note if in any capacity the participants were interested in evoking specific emotional responses to the work they make?

Dennis McNulty: No. I am interested in how people respond to my work, but don't set out to evoke a particular emotional response in them.

Randall Packer: I adhere to the ideas of the French poet Arthur Rimbaud who believe in the rearrangement or intoxication of the senses as a transformation of consciousness. The emotive I believe is directly connected with our perpetual awareness.

Slavek Kwi: I might observe certain emotional responses within myself during process of creation, I assume that I am not unique and there must be others who might feel similarly. I am leaving freedom to the other to connect or not. The intention to connect must be mutual.

Jody Elff: *Absolutely, and I find it fascinating to hear how different people will respond when experiencing the same work. What one person will find immersive and comforting, someone else will find disturbing and unsettling. I don't think it is possible to consistently evoke a uniform emotional response from everyone, but it is intriguing to hear what people take away from the experience of hearing one of my works.*

I was aware that each of the participants work in different capacities outside of their art practices Jody engineers and produces musicians and Slavek works in sound therapy. I was interested in determining firstly what other capacities did the participants work with sound outside of their art practice? Secondly how if in any way did this inform their practice?

Dennis McNulty: *These days I write programs in various languages to do things mostly related to sound in some way, but in the past I have worked as a burglar alarm service engineer.*

Jody Elff: *I make my primary living by audio engineering, mostly in live concert environments, but also for recordings. I work regularly with artists such as Laurie Anderson, Tan Dun, Bang On A Can, and a host of others. The live engineering environment is particularly interesting to me due to the dynamic sonic nature of a performance space, and the challenges of accurately presenting a musical experience in a variety of different spaces.*

Randall Packer: I don't consider anything I do outside of my art practice. I work hard at dissolving the boundary between art and life, or should I say, this boundary was eliminated years ago during the Pop movement.

Slavek Kwi: My practice of art is not separated from life, it is an integrated part of my life .I consider art as a spiritual discipline: changing my mind, enhancing my perception, growing awareness of myself and consequently relations to reality surrounding me, whatever it is ... In this sense, all my activities are inter-connected creating feedback to each other. Information is processed and applied as appropriate to each specific area.

How if in any way does this inform your practice?

Dennis McNulty: *Yes. In terms of the programming work I've done, I would consider discussions I've had in that context to have had an important impact*

on the way I work at a number of different levels, from the way I program the software I use for performances to ideas about architecture and technology. I think that in retrospect, the experiences I had while working as a burglar alarm engineer has had huge effect on my practice. Being in many different kinds of spaces every day [domestic, commercial, private, public]. Needing to be able to conceptualise space in a certain way: figuring out potential routes of entry, potential ways to run cables from one room to another, how the different spaces in a structure add up functionally and structurally etc. Seeing how people construct, alter and relate to their environment. In reality, no one aspect of someone's life can be completely separate from another.

Jody Elff: *It absolutely informs my artistic process by continually presenting me with new challenges about how to engage sonically with a physical space. Regardless of if I'm working professionally as an engineer or creatively as an artist, I am always evaluating my sonic experience and learning new ways to participate with it.*

Randall Packer: *I am engaged in integrated and theatrical forms of art practice that extrude into social and public spaces, that dematerialize the division between art and the outside world, that attempt to eliminate the idea of gallery or concert hall, etc.*

Slavek Kwi: *Example from sound-workshops methodology:*

*Exploration of acoustic materials, discovering sound potential of ordinary objects, based on their diversity of textures such as paper, plastic, wood, metal, simple devices created from these objects, for example, plastic bottles of various volumes with one glass-marble or grainy materials placed inside etc. and, of course, voice. Gradually adding more complex sound-objects and musical instruments as various percussions, whistles and string instruments. Through "playing" the objects, creativity is stimulated by the freedom to experiment and discover the potential of each object as a means of making "music". By observing the effects of each sound, participants begin to create their own "language" and develop techniques automatically.*

*This individual research within the group evolves into an awareness and sharing of "language", establishing an integrative (co-existence) and/or interactive environment. From an awareness of sounds, participants select particular sounds based simply on subjective likes. Through engaging with a specific sound, natural curiosity is awakened, stimulating further exploration and creativity, this has effect on my free-music practice etc.*

It is the authors hope that the limitations of his knowledge in this field have not limited the participants engagement in this essay. The methodologies are various and complex and no definitive simple consistent concern could be isolated other than a desire to work with sound. In terms of approach and methodology sound artists and musicians can not be separated in any fundamental conclusive way. The integration of contemporary technology into each of their practices is the only reliable consistency. The manner in which I structured certain questions perhaps only left enough scope for very simplistic analogies in particular the question regarding evoking specific emotional responses to the work they make. Perhaps celebrating the diversity of approach as presented by these artists and noting their difference is the most enlightening aspect of this exercise.

I have not included all of the questions and responses posed by this survey principally because a number of them were motivated by a personal anecdote curiosity. Having said that many of the responses were far more profound than the scope of my questioning had initiated .I would like to conclude this essay with the Slavek Kwi's response to the question:

Did any particular artists, musicians or ideologies influence you to work with sound?

*My main interest lies in the phenomena of Perception as the fundamental determinant of relations with Reality. Nature is my perpetual inspiration.*

*We are influenced by our whole surrounding environment within the context of our life and simultaneously by genetic inheritance. With growing experience of exploring "I" (=myself), we are able to hold to our true individuality without being shaped by environment. The relationship is changing; we are not instinctively reacting to impulses from environment, but choosing to respond in a conscious manner.*

*Thinking further about the notion of influence, inspiration seems a more fitting term. For example, when I discovered Indian raga music, I was certainly inspired by it, but not that I would like to make music like that (=form), rather music that would evoke in me such feeling – its "containing" would effect me.*

*n the moment some particular situation attracts my attention and I am able to connect with it, automatically it stimulates my interest and consequently my desire to interact with it. Such encounter becomes mutually influential, it is resonating within me. I am exploring this relationship (= reality and I), through creative dialogue resulting in documenting this process. Sound-media offers a unique mode of \_expression; it is sensual and holds its own independence of existence, impossible to translate into a different mode of communication (= e.g. description of sound isn't sound itself). It certainly might evoke an intellectual process of comprehension, but it still stays within the area of very individual interpretation. Interpretation is always subjective, it never contains the entirety of the original object. It manifests an individual relationship to the object. The potential of the object is growing with the number of subjective interpretations.*

## **Randall Packer**

Randall Packer's work as a composer, media artist, and producer/curator has focused on the integration of live performance, technology and the interdisciplinary arts. From the revival of avant-garde music theater to the creation of new interactive media work, he has bridged current issues in art and technology with seminal interdisciplinary ideologies from throughout the 20th century.

In 1988 Packer founded Zakros InterArts (formerly New Music Theatre) in San Francisco, and produced, directed, and created critically acclaimed multimedia theater works including "Sur Scene" by Mauricio Kagel (1988), "Theater Piece" by John Cage (1989), "Originale" by Karlheinz Stockhausen (1990) and "Arches" by Randall Packer (1991). He produced the "Deep Listening" new music series (1991-93) as well as organized and directed the annual John Cage Memorial MusiCircus (1992-94). "Knossos," a work for piano, percussion, and live electronics, was commissioned by Radio France and performed in Paris (1993).

He has co-produced and composed music for CD-ROM under the Chronic Art series, computer films that were premiered at the 1996 San Francisco International Film Festival and the Mill Valley Film Festival. In 1997, he completed the collaborative sound-text work, "Through Invisible Cities," performed at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco and released on CD (1998). "Pleasure Island," an online multi-user virtual community was presented at the USC School of Cinema's Interactive Frictions conference (1999). His collaborative installation "Mori" was selected for the 1999 Biennial

Exhibition at the InterCommunication Center (ICC) in Tokyo, and his net project, the "Telematic Manifesto," was included in ZKM's (Center for Art and Media) "Net\_Condition" exhibition.

As a leading authority on the history of multimedia, Packer has recently completed the first phase of a multi-part hybrid project entitled Multimedia: From Wagner to Virtual Reality. The website component was sponsored by Intel's Artmuseum.net and the forthcoming book (spring, 2001) is being published by W.W. Norton.

Former Director of the San Francisco State University Multimedia Studies Program and Director of Multimedia for the San Jose Museum of Art, he has served on the faculty of the Department of Art Practice at the University of California Berkeley and the Maryland Institute, College of Art in Baltimore, where he currently teaches courses in the history, theory and production of digital art.

#### **Slavek KWi** (a.k.a. Artificial Memory Trace) Czech Republic

Is a hugely celebrated sound-artist, composer, researcher and sound therapist.

He has worked extensive free-music experiments in various collectives (NDE, Paradox Total, Frogx, Momentary Nameless, Soun.din) and with different musicians (Peter Jacquemyn, Af Ursin, Martin Klapper, Sven Anderson etc.) and simultaneously continued my individual explorations of sound-media under the name Kwi and later on, from the 90ties, as Artificial Memory Trace.

#### **Jody Elff** USA

His explorations into alternative systems for the control and manipulation of sound have led to the development of an on-going series of sonic installations and sculptures. Jody's works have been shown at PS122, Dance Theater Workshop, The Kitchen, and with the Post Media Network at Moving Image Gallery in New York City. His international presentations include participation in "New York, New Sounds, New Spaces" show at the Museum of Contemporary Art at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Lyon, France, and the 2003 Dublin Fringe Festival.

Jody has always been fascinated with the marriage of sound and technology. As a student at Berklee College of Music, he focused on electronic music and the use of computer systems for music and sound manipulation. During his time at Berklee, he found that working as an audio engineer provided a professional resource, as well as a means to continue the exploration of sound. Since then, he has had the opportunity to work in a variety of environments, including concert broadcasts and tapings for MTV, live music broadcasts for cable and network television, and TV talk shows.

In addition to his work in New York City, he has had the pleasure of travelling around the country and the world, with such diverse artists as Ethel, Tan Dun, Diana Krall, The New York Voices, Paul Winter, Lou Reed, and the Bang On A Can All Stars. Since 1999, Jody has worked with Laurie Anderson as audio engineer for her concert tours, in addition to mixing her most recent album, "Laurie Anderson, Live At Town Hall, New York City, September 19-20, 2001".

He is the resident sound designer for the National Theater of the United States of America. He has served as a technical audio consultant for the Whitney Museum of American Art, and regularly functions as an audio design consultant for a variety of multimedia artists in theatre groups in New York City. In 1998 he became associated with Harvestworks, where he is a recording engineer, and teaches classes in music software, audio technology and recording.

Also a composer, Jody has created scores for short, documentary, and feature-length films, as well as theater, television and dance. He performs periodically in a variety of musical contexts, using guitar and voice that is heavily processed through a computer running his own custom-designed audio software.

**Dennis McNulty:** Working mainly with sound, Dennis McNulty combines site specific performances with improvisation, composition & programming.

From 1993 to 2003 he was one half of Irish electronic music pioneers Decal, releasing three albums and almost thirty other releases on labels such as Planet-Mu, Warp, Rotters Golf Club and D1. With Alan O'Boyle [who continues to release music under the Decal moniker to widespread acclaim] and promoter Paul Timoney he founded the Ultramack record label & studios and together they ran the influential 'Phunk City' club where McNulty and O'Boyle were resident DJs. In 2003 he co-founded i&e, an organisation dedicated to bringing new sonic experiences to Irish audiences.

As an improviser, he regularly plays in a duo with percussionist David Lacey. Together they have played with many international musicians as well as regular Irish collaborators Paul Vogel and Fergus Kelly. He is also a member of serverproject, an ongoing investigation into site-specific, networked, improvised electronic music with Donnacha Costello, Peter Maybury & David Donohue.

Recent/ongoing projects include 'http://alpha60.info' [a cd, a website & a series of sound performances in Ireland & São Paulo where he was one of the Irish representatives at the 26th São Paulo Bienal], 'my pet sounds' [a series of sound performances using vocal samples from the Beach Boys' 'Pet Sounds' album as source material] and sound work for film & dance.

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