

Field Recording/Sonic Postcard/Soundscape Assignment

In his book *The Tuning of the World*, R. Murray Schafer coined the term soundscape to express the idea that what we hear and what we see are equally important. Sounds often recall a specific time, place, or mood, and the sounds we encounter are especially effective given the way they work unconsciously in/on many people. Just as the physical landscape surrounds us so does the soundscape, and it creates an aural identity of the places we inhabit.

Murray describes three key elements to a soundscape:

- **Keynote Sounds** are created by nature (geography and climate): wind, water, forests, plains, birds, insects, animals. In many urban areas, traffic has become the keynote sound. The keynote sounds may not always be heard consciously, but they outline the character of the people living there.
- **Sound Signals** are foreground sounds, which are listened to consciously. Ex: warning devices, bells, whistles, horns, sirens, etc.
- **Soundmark** - a sound which is unique to an area. Once a Soundmark has been identified, it deserves to be protected, for soundmarks make the acoustic life of a community unique. (This is derived from the term landmark)

For this assignment, you will create a 60-second soundscape of a real-life location. Visit a site here in Spartanburg where you can sit and listen to that place. Locations outside of Spartanburg will do, but it must be a place you can visit to obtain a field recording.

This assignment is meant to create an experience of a specific location or environment. Think about how the layering and mixture of sounds can create a sonic identity as unique as a fingerprint, and how all of it would sound to a person who found themselves in such a place.

Due: Thursday 2/23

- Upload edited file to Moodle
- Bring laptop/Audacity file to class for re-mixing activity