

Audible Relationships in Acousmatic Music Composition

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Introduction

- “Musical structure depends on establishing audible relationships amongst the sound materials” of a musical work (Wishart 1994)
- This presentation:
 - My own ideas around audible relationships
 - Explorations is my own work
 - Merits/difficulties of adopting these ideas

Questions

- How are sounds related when listening to a work?
- How to create such relationships when composing?
- And how might they operate over the various timescales of a composition?
- Largely focus on the first two today
- Looking at recurrent phenomena

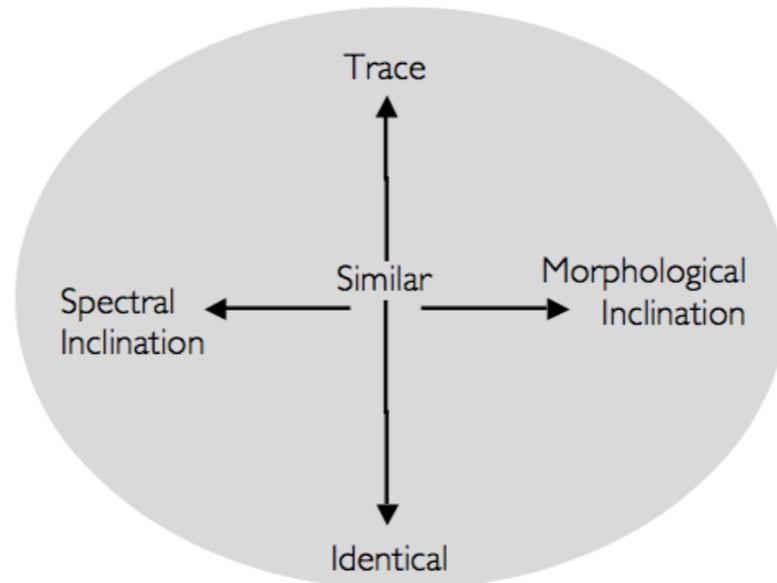
Some definitions

- Acousmatic music
- “Music where (in live performance) the sources and causes of the sounds are invisible – a music for loudspeakers alone” (Smalley 1997)
- A culture of practice evolving from Pierre Schaeffer’s musique concrète

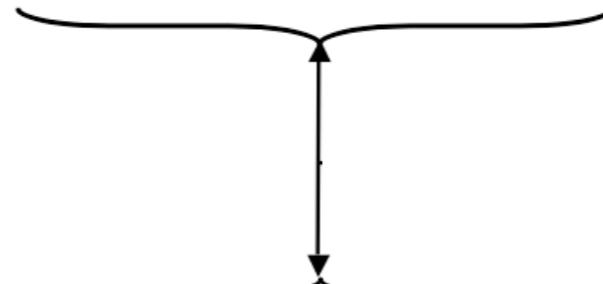
Recurrence

- “Audible relationships” founded on recurrence
- “sound materials that refer back to earlier related instances” (Seddon 2013)
- Degrees of similarity
 - apparent sameness to just vestiges of resemblance.

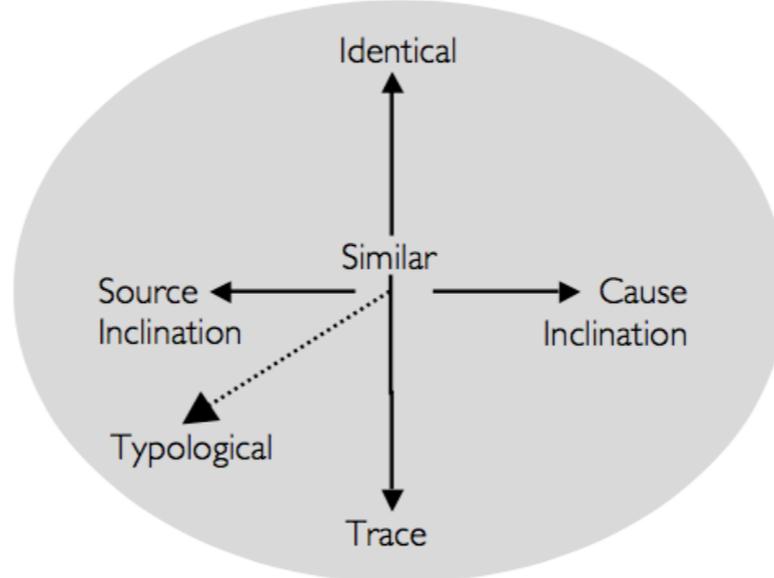
Correspondence



Spectromorphological



Source-bonded



Some important factors

- Listener must notice sounds in first place
- Strong identity
- Context within the work
 - What else is happening?

Pellere (2012)

- An 8-channel acousmatic work
- Loudspeakers surround the listening area
- Listen 0 – 1'20

Source recordings

- Aiming for distinct sound shapes
- Violin and cello
 - Striking identities
 - Sounds to sculpt into striking identities
- String-ness not the core theme of the music

ID1 - Bounces

- Instrumental gestures
 - Natural acceleration
 - pitch and noise elements
 - Like a micro-composition
- Listen

Bounce family

- Some processing
- Spectral contrast
 - Enhance pitch content
- Spectral warp
 - reconfigure spectrum
- Delays
 - Reshape the sound (to a degree...)

ID2 - Descents

- Various manifestations
 - slow-onset/slow-decay sound-shape
 - descending pitch and spectral sweeps
- Sound shape more important than source (for me)
- Listen (3)

Descent family

- Family variability based around changes in:
 - register
 - speed of morphological evolution
 - position around the listener (circumspace (Smalley 2007))
 - proximity to the listener - filtering (duller sounds seem further away)

ID3 - Pulses/iterations

- Violin sound source
- sound family
 - original gestures are NOT left in-tact,
 - identities are shaped by the sound processing

Pulse/iteration family

- Granular synthesis
- Pulses
 - to drive the music forward
 - a common morphology
- Spectrally contrasting instances
- Different spatial zones around the listener
- 13.5 Hz!

The Opening

- Listen

Final comments

- Ideas useful but...
- Hard to work in a prescriptive way
- Informs approach

Bibliography

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