

Session 3 : Special Session

Electroacoustic Music in Musicology

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Chair : Mikako Mizuno (Nagoya City University)

ABSTRACTS:

This panel discussion focuses on the current situation of musicology concerning electroacoustic music. The theme covers the vast range from the historical source research to the technical evaluation of the compositional/performing system. Here we will discuss some aspects of Japanese musicological research and education in comparison with that of the United States and Europe.

1. Outline of the Panel Discussion

As discussed at the Electroacoustic Music Studies (EMS) conferences, founded by Leigh Landy and Marc Battier, the writings and statements of Pierre Schaeffer are globally actualized in the creation and the experiments of today's electroacoustic music even though the contents of his gigantic book *Traité des Objets Musicaux* has not yet been discussed in detail in languages other than French. As a point of departure, then, we take a look at Schaeffer's influence in Japan. In 1952 Toshiro Mayuzumi encountered Schaeffer's *musique concrète* in Paris and several aesthetic discussions appeared in *Ongakugeijyutu* after Mayuzumi's return to Japan. In ensuing decade Schaeffer attracted the attention of specialists in the fields of music psychology, semiology, and sociology, as well as composition. In the 1990s, especially on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the first official concert of *musique concrète* (1948-1998), we discovered many young composers who were unfamiliar with Schaeffer's music but who nonetheless enjoyed acousmatic music as performed with the acousmonium. In the academic field of Japanese musicology, electroacoustic music is seldom taught or presented. Following a survey of the general topics by Mizuno, Numano will talk about the history of the reception of electroacoustic music in Japan.

The second item on the agenda concerns the documentation of electroacoustic works in Japan. Mizuno will talk briefly about an Asian musicological research project, *CHEARS*, a

Chinese database of terminology and other references related to electroacoustic music. This is an example of a new type of musicological enterprise, and it should be discussed whether or not this kind of undertaking is suitable for the situation in Japan.

Perhaps due to the educational system of Japanese universities and colleges, there have been difficulties in dealing with electroacoustic music within the field of musicology in Japan. Music theory is also an underdeveloped field in Japan. Cox will present a brief overview of the development of musicological and music-theoretical research concerned with electroacoustic music from a North American perspective, with a discussion of how recent scholars have sought solutions to the particular challenges posed by this music.

Japanese electroacoustic music has had a longer history than that of other Asian countries. But we have no database nor any standard vision with respect to the analysis of such works. Historical documents should be researched and categorized into a database, and other resources, especially of recent works, should be analyzed and evaluated together with the composer's comments. Fukunaka will talk about an interesting source collection, which is as of yet little known outside of Japan.

2. The Reception of Electroacoustic Music in Japan

Yuji Numano

As is generally known, electroacoustic music was imported from Europe to Japan in the beginning of 1950s. In this early reception process, the original intention of such music was not adequately understood and therefore Japanese electroacoustic music had unexpectedly unique characteristics (Kawasaki 2009). In this paper, I will discuss this tendency through an examination of the titles of such works. The title, generally speaking, expresses the main characteristic of a work; in other words, a title might reflect the wish of the composer with respect to how the work

should be received or understood. Surveying the titles of electroacoustic works of leading Japanese composers from the 1950s through the 1990s, we find a strong tendency in the use of metaphors of nature. It would be worth examining the implications of this tendency within the context of Japanese contemporary music in general.

3. Musicology, Music Theory, and Electroacoustic Music

Cathy Cox

In this talk, I will discuss the state of musicological research in electroacoustic music from a North American perspective. A survey of leading North American journals of musicology from the 1930s through the end of the twentieth century helps to uncover some trends in research as well as specific challenges that electroacoustic music poses for musicologists and theorists. These challenges include questions of methodologies, such as whether works created by the use of electronic/computer technologies require the use of electronic/computer technologies (spectral analysis, etc.) in their evaluation (explanation); as well as deeper ontological issues, such as how—or even whether—these works fit within a larger historical narrative of Western art music. I conclude with a consideration of how these issues have been addressed in recent literature (such as Demers 2010 and Landy 2007), together with a description of how I have sought to address them in my own work both in and outside of the classroom.

3. Acoustics Laboratory at *Geidai*

Fuyuko Fukunaka

In this talk, I will take a brief look at the history of the Acoustics Laboratory at the Tokyo University of the Arts (*Geidai*), where I now teach musicology, and see what role, if any, it has played in the development of electronic music in Japan. Founded in 1967, it was one of the earliest studios to own analogue synthesizers in Japan. It affiliated itself with the Department of Musicology, rather than of Composition. This fact, I believe, presents itself as rather symptomatic in hindsight: the lab now seems to maintain minimum contact with the composition department of *Geidai*, while the absence of relevant human resources within the musicology department—that might otherwise leverage this facility to its maximum potential—serves to limit the function of the Lab to relatively subordinate activities, such as recording on-campus concerts.

My intention is to search the activities of the lab for symptoms of larger realities surrounding

electronic music in Japan, such as the general aversion to the use of electronic media among main-stream composers in Japan and the lack of interest among musicologists in analyzing electronic music.

If time allows, I would like to play some electronic compositions created during the “heyday” of the lab.

REFERENCES

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