

**Sounding Places with Hildegard Westerkamp**  
Developed from a PhD dissertation submitted to York University Graduate  
Programme in Music

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\* This section of the site contains pages with a large amount of text and no internal links, so you may wish to print each chapter to read it. Please cite as follows:

McCartney, Andra. "Sounding Places with Hildegard Westerkamp." Electronic Music Foundation Institute site, November 2000:  
<http://www.emf.org/guidetotheworld/artists/mccartney00/>

In this writing, I consider the significance of Hildegard Westerkamp's work to current scholarship in the area of feminist epistemology, and to contemporary electroacoustic music in the genre of soundscape composition, specifically in her receptive, dialogic approach to particular places and their sonic, social, political and technological resonances. I introduce how I will do this in Chapter One.

In Chapter Two I discuss how Canadian concert composers deal with the idea of Canada as a place within music of the last century, differentiating the generalized myths of nationalist music from Westerkamp's focus on specific places.

In Chapter Three, I focus on the position of soundscape composition within electroacoustic music, using feminist epistemology as a critical lens.

Chapter Four is a biography of Westerkamp.

Chapter Five is about my analytical methods: I bring together critical and feminist theory with James Tenney's gestalt approach to musical analysis, and listener responses.

In Chapter Six I discuss the importance of soundwalking to Westerkamp's association with acoustic ecology, to her early compositional formation, as well as to her work as a radio artist, through an analysis of Kit's Beach Soundwalk. This is related to the soundwalking section of the website.

In Chapter Seven, I analyze Cricket Voice, a wilderness piece about the sounds of a cricket in the desert and about the urban person's experience of desert as spiritual refuge and alien environment.

Moments of Laughter, the subject of Chapter Eight, is a performance piece based on Westerkamp's musical relationship with her daughter. This is related to the "Moments" section of the site, which includes excerpts of Moments of Laughter linked to images and score excerpts.

In Chapter Nine, I analyze Breathing Room, a miniature intended to reflect Westerkamp's overall style. I interpret Breathing Room as a representation of a cyborg body, using Donna Haraway's ironic image of the cyborg. The "In the Studio" section of this site includes Westerkamp's score and my transcription of this piece. In Chapter Ten, I analyze Gently Penetrating Beneath the Sounding Surfaces of Another Place, which is representative of Westerkamp's current international work, based on her experiences of sound in New Delhi. I chronicle the construction of this piece in a section of the website called "In the Studio."

The conclusions consider interactivity in the hybrid form of the dissertation, in the developing relationship between Westerkamp and myself, and in the constructed dialogues of my analyses.

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