

## 14:45 Rymer Auditorium

### Liminal: *Swash*

*Swash* is a permanent, 24 channel sound installation created for the opening of 'Living Coasts' visitor attraction in Torquay in June 2003. 'Living Coasts' is owned by Paignton Zoo and during the planning stage of its construction, the zoo had an artist in residence, Melanie Thompson who suggested commissioning a piece of permanent sound art for the new site and raised the necessary funds to do so. *liminal* were commissioned to devise the piece after a competition in December 2002. As the building was still being planned, we were able to work closely with the architects in choosing a location for a work and were immediately drawn to a long, winding tunnel near the entrance of the site. By placing 22 independently controlled speakers at regular intervals throughout the space we were able to create an environment in which a number of different spatial behavioural models could be explored. The premise of the original installation was based around these movement models so that the spatial dimension of the piece became its primary focus. The fact that all the sounds used were derived from recordings of water was, in the first instance, a secondary theme. However, nearly three years after completing the work I was asked to return to undertake some maintenance and on hearing the piece again I decided that these sounds had the potential to be explored in other contexts.

My first reinterpretation of the piece was conceived as an 8 track, acousmatic tape work. This piece was not merely an eight-channel reduction of the original installation but an entirely new composition based on the same materials in which I focussed my attention on the gestural potential, latent but not fully exploited in the original materials. Unlike the original installation, the concert version has a very definite teleology. This version of the piece was premiered at the Martin Harris centre, Manchester in June 2006 as part of the Sonic Arts Network EXPO.

In the final, improvised version presented today, I have returned again to the source materials, this time only making use of the under-water recordings captured with a variety of hydrophones in different locations. Where the 'fixed' concert version concentrated on movement in the sounds, both spatial and dynamic, I was always aware of another latent quality to these sounds; namely, the dense, static, immersive textures which unfold sometimes almost imperceptibly slowly. Responding then, to James Tenney's notion that: "You don't expect a river all of a sudden to change its speed, to make itself more interesting"<sup>1</sup>, I have in this version eschewed all sense of 'development' as such and instead concentrated on the creation of a slowly evolving soundscape much closer in form to the sonic contexts in which the original recordings were made.

*liminal* is a partnership that specialises in architectural sound art and design and the research, development and creation of 'sonic spaces'. The partnership was founded in 2003 by artist and musician David Prior and architect Frances Crow.

Before founding *liminal*, David and Frances worked together on projects that combined their expertise in architecture and sound and covered the areas of public art works, education and installation. The areas that *liminal* have since worked in include: site specific, spatialised sound installations; sound consultancy and design for architects, artists and designers and research into relationships between architectural and public space and sonic art practices. *liminal* are currently lead-artists on the master-planning phase of a development in Birmingham while also working on the master-planning of the Cotswolds Water Park.

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<sup>1</sup> Lucier, Alvin (ed.) Gronemeyer and Oehlschlagel, 1995, Reflections: Interviews Scores Writings 1965-1994, Musiktexte 003, Germany