Some Hallways Lead to Other Hallways and Some Lead to Dead Ends

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Abstract

*Some Hallways Lead To Other Hallways And Some Lead To Dead Ends* is a one-hour long synchronized audio tour for ten people. Listening to their assigned tracks played through headphones, the audience is mobilized through the SFU Woodward’s building. The aural content is comprised of choreographic instructions and my personal stories as a third culture kid in finding home.

Appendix A is a research paper written for FPA 812, where I examine Henri Lefebvre’s ideas of space and how these ideas are present within the work visual artist Janet Cardiff and soundscape composer Hildegard Westerkamp.

**Keywords**: Space and place; nostalgia; audio tour; soundscape composition; site-specific and site-responsive performance; SFU Woodward’s
Dedication

To every place that I have called home,
And to every person who has made it so.
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My deepest thanks to Steven Hill, and Martin Gotfrit for your time, energy, and mentorship.

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1. Thesis Defence Statement:

Some Hallways Lead to Other Hallways and Some Lead to Dead Ends

My thesis project, Some Hallways Lead To Other Hallways And Some Lead To Dead Ends (from here on referred to as Hallways) is a one-hour long synchronized audio tour for ten people. Listening to their assigned tracks played through headphones, the audience is mobilized through the SFU Woodward’s building. Hallways was presented eight times during May 4th and 5th, 2013. My audio tour is a realization of my continued interest in the triangulation of sound, body and space within my artistic practice. In creating my project, I pose my research question as follows: how can I, as a composer and an interdisciplinary artist, apply my habitual compositional techniques in creating musical works as methodology in creating performances outside of the musical discipline?

How did you begin?

I began my process with a few questions as strategic principles that created and obstructed possibilities in developing Hallways. I will highlight two of these questions here with the first one from professor Linda Catlin-Smith, my first composition teacher. During a composition lesson in 2005, Catlin-Smith asked me “Why won’t you write?” The second question was prompted by professor D. D. Kugler during a lecture in his play reading class last year, “Why does the audience need to see your show?” I will further discuss the impact of this question below. In response to the first question, I wrote out a long list of ideas that I will not further investigate and the reasons for why that is. By sharing the ‘list of do not do’ with my dramaturges, Mr. Daniel O’Shea and Mr. Sean

1 Writing in this case refers to composing.
Marshall Jr., I, with the help of my dramaturges, refined the concept for *Hallways*.² By attending to the insights offered by my dramaturges, I realized that by recontextualizing field recordings taken from SFU Woodwards back into the site during the performance *Hallways* evoked the experience of nostalgia. With the refocused intent of making *Hallways* an embodied experience of nostalgia, I was freed from the pressure of fitting my concept into pre-existing labels such as site-specific performance, and auto-ethnography.³

To answer the second question, “Why does the audience need to see your show?” I responded with the form of an audio tour. *Hallways*, like Cardiff’s audio walk, *Her Long Black Hair*, necessitated an embodied experience from the audience by way of walking, and actively listening as well as looking. Similar to the form of Cardiff’s audio walk, my audiences were instructed throughout the audio tour of their direction, and their orientation with references to visual landmarks and aural cues. To further solidify the importance of having an audience in *Hallways*, I designed interactions between my audiences. These interactions made audience participation an imperative element to the experience of the audio tour. At 50 minutes and 30 seconds of the track *retrace* the male ‘spect-actor’ was instructed to follow a man who has been waiting for him. The man in wait was instructed to do so while listening to the track *here I am*. When the two men meet at 51 minutes and 28 seconds, they are told that one is to follow while the other leads after the two men trade headphones. The invitation for reciprocity at this moment created the anticipation of trust and possible betrayal. Furthermore, these interactions led to other discoveries that presented themselves as interesting dialectics within *Hallways*, and they are: presence/absence, convergence/divergence, space/place, and instruction/narration.

² Mr. Daniel O’Shea was my text dramaturge, and Mr. Sean Marshall Jr. was my production dramaturge, though as the project progressed these roles were less easily defined.
³ The initial conceptual objective of *Hallways* aimed for a site-specific auto-ethnographic performance. I aimed to use my status as a graduate student at SFU Woodwards to open a dialogue about the SFU Woodward’s the building from a student’s point of view. I hoped that it would reveal a new perspective on the site different from other site-specific pieces done in the Downtown Eastside in Vancouver.
What was the role of the audience?

Listening while walking as a form is widely employed within a few artistic disciplines, namely as audio walks, perfected by the visual artist Janet Cardiff, as pod-plays, made popular by the Vancouver based theatre company Neworld Theatre, and as soundwalks, proliferated by the World Soundscape Project at SFU in the late 60s to the early 70s. While audio walks and pod-plays are mostly individual listening experiences presented through headphones, soundwalks appealed to a collective listening experience where a group of people listens while walking together. In Hallways, I aimed to achieve the objective of presenting both the collective and the individual listening experiences. In doing so, I organized the first twenty minutes of the hour-long experience as an ensemble activity where the ten audience members listen to the same segment of audio within their headphones. The collective experience is made explicit to the group when the first instruction of “turn around” is prompted at 1 minute and 40 seconds. At that moment the audience turned around in perfect synchrony.

As each audience member observes and performs the instructed choreography, they are made aware of each other and of themselves, simultaneously becoming a spectator and an actor, or simply put, a ‘spect-actor’. The ‘spect-actor’ referenced here bears some resemblance to Boal’s “spect-actor” in that their actions directly change their immediate circumstance. However, in Boal’s practice of forum theatre, the actions taken by the “spect-actors” have much wider social effects than my ‘spect-actor’ within Hallways (Boal, xxi). My ‘spect-actors’ are more appropriately related to Svetlana Boym’s description of Charles’s Baudelair’s “love[rs] at last sight” (Boym, 254). In regards to a Baudelaire’s poem about a man and a woman falling in “love at last sight” Boym writes, “… a simultaneous shock of recognition and loss, is more than a melancholic passion; it reveals itself as a miracle of possibilities. “Love at last sight” strikes the urban stranger when that person realizes he or she is onstage, at once an actor and a spectator” (ibid). Unlike Baudelaire’s lovers and Boal’s “spect-actors”, my audiences are self-defined ‘spect-actors’, whereas in the other two cases, the subjects

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4 Theatre practitioner Augusto Boal in describing the participants in forum theatre first coined the word, “spect-actor” (Boal, xxi).
involved are sometimes oblivious of their presence onstage but are referred to by onlookers as “spect-actors” (Boal, xxi).

**What is the relationship between the audience and the artist?**

The relationship between my audience and me, as the artist, is both an aesthetic and a philosophical inquiry. It was clear to me from the inception of *Hallways* that the subject matter was dotted with personal anecdotes, and whispers of secrets. As such, I wanted to share these stories with my friends. As I started writing for *Hallway*, I, with the tremendous support and facilitation from O’Shea and Marshall, delved deeply into the investigation of boundaries between specificity and generality in the descriptions of lived experiences. Throughout this process, the appeal of sharing my experiences with strangers was a risk that I could not mitigate or ignore. After all, even the closest of friends are estranged by the deepest secrets we hold. Or, put another way, I wanted to think of my ‘spect-actors’ as my friends, with whom I am familiar in varying degrees. I address this discovery, which first presented itself as a struggle, within the tracks *Here I am*, and *wait*. Though spatialized in different parts of the building, the two ‘spect-actors’, heard the following text stereophonically (see Figure 1).

*Figure 1.1.* **The text is heard simultaneously with the left and right columns playing through respective sides of the headphones.**

It’s wonderful and terrifying to come back here. I’m coming back to the streets that know me, and I, them. But I’m just getting used to the city made of glass, and last call at midnight. I can’t come back here anymore.

The moment of realization sets in:

new faces are appearing in my reoccurring dreams. I haven’t let go of the safety line yet, and I am reaching for the nearing shore.

It’s wonderful and terrifying to leave here. I’m just becoming more comfortable with long walks uphill, and the green sweaty moss on slippery rocks. But I’ll be returning to where the streets know me, and I, them. I can’t go back there anymore.

The moment of realization sets in:

my friends are becoming strangers again. I haven’t reached the shore yet, and I have to let go of the safety line first.

Admittedly, the subtleties of these confessions as exemplified above are most likely lost to the audience, however, the vulnerability and generosity in sharing with my

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5 At one point, I was reluctant to share the work with strangers.
audience was the real idea that I hoped to convey. In extending my personal stories, I invite my audience to open themselves up to remember and to be nostalgic with me.

Like Boym, I had long held prejudice against the word, nostalgia; due to general perception of the word conveying the dismissal of criticality that indulges in romanticism either in the glorious past or of incomparable loss. In The Future of Nostalgia, Boym writes,

Nostalgia is something of a bad word, an affectionate insult at best. “Nostalgia is to memory as kitsch is to art,” writes Charles Maier. The word nostalgia is frequently used dismissively. “Nostalgia… is essentially history without guilt. Heritage is something that suffuses us with pride rather than with shame,” writes Michael Kammen. Nostalgia in this sense is an abdication of personal responsibility, a guilt-free homecoming, an ethical and aesthetic failure. (Boym, xiv)

I read the above passage in late January of 2013 when I was reviewing my ‘list of do not do’. I had feared that Hallways would become a kitschy piece of self-absorbed reflection, and when I shared my concern with my supervisor professor Steven Hill, he challenged me to further explore what kitsch is within my project. Through my exploration, and research, I found that my fear of producing kitsch was a misplaced fear of honestly in revealing my personal stories. In retrospect, what I produced and invited my audience to participate in were both “restorative” and “reflective nostalgia” (Boym, 49).

Boym categorizes nostalgia into two types: “restorative nostalgia” and “reflective nostalgia”. While the former preserves the glorious past by way of constant reconstruction and maintenance, the latter observes the absence of the bygone in acknowledging the weathering of ancient patina (ibid). In writing Hallways, I conducted interviews with my close friend, Kyle Lawler, and my mother, Amy Ng. They helped me restore and reflect on the past that we have shared. Within the interview, the writing, and the ad lib. narration, I was careful not to name the places that I visited. This choice was deliberate because I wanted to allude to the sense of place to my audience. In doing so, they are free to associate the sounds and stories of my past, to the sounds and stories that are familiar to their memories.

6 The interviews with Lawler and with Ng were used in various tracks of Hallways.
What was the effect of having ten different audio tracks on the audience?

Creating *Hallways* was comparable to composing a 10-part fugue, which when performed became the choreography of mobilizing ten people within the SFU Woodward’s building. In *Hallways*, my ‘spect-actors’ were like my musicians, my directions were the score, and the choreography observed outside of the experience was the music that was not heard, but seen. At 12 minutes and 22 seconds, I created a moment where the 10 ‘spect-actors’ stood together for a moment to acknowledge their collectiveness. They then split into 2 groups of 5, with one group going toward the windows on the left, and the other group heading toward the stairwell on the right. This split in the group is the first moment where the audience realizes that they can no longer follow the rest of the group. Rather, they are responsible for following the promptings played through their headphones. As the piece progressed, smaller groups were established, and by 26 minutes and 10 seconds, each ‘spect-actor’ embarks on an individualized journey. With diligent attention to timing and rhythm, I highlighted both the collective and the individual listening experiences by creating points of convergence and divergence within the ensemble of ten.

With weeks of audio editing and the acute sense of tempo, I was able to create ten interconnected audio tours. When I first started recording the tours at SFU Woodward’s, I devised ways of acknowledging convergence and divergence within each track; they can be categorized as interaction, incapacitation, and anticipation. As mentioned above, a few of the ‘spect-actors’ traded headphones with one another like in the tracks *retrace* and *here I am, run and wait, listen and sign*. In tracks *run* and *out front*, the two ‘spect-actors’ acknowledge each other with distance. Imagine that you are the woman listening to the track *run*. At 41 minutes and 51 seconds you are instructed to stop on the landing between the 3rd and 4th floor, there in front of you stood a man who is listening to the track *out front*. As you stand in front of each other, you are told that he is trying to meet your gaze. At the same time, you are told to subtly avert his gaze. Knowing that he is trying to look at you creates a sense of intimacy, and by abstaining from the gaze of one another creates distance. The incapacitation in this situation only lasts a minute before the tension breaks and you head downstairs as he continues to climb up. At 46 minutes and 25 seconds, you are told to not look at the hallway on your
left. He who had been listening to the track wait has been waiting for your arrival for the last 4 minutes. He knew exactly which direction you would come from, and that you are the one he was waiting for, but he had no clue when you were going to arrive. As he waited, anticipation built as the uncertainty of the promise grew. The exchanges between ‘spect-actors’ became the most distinguishable difference between Hallways and other works within this genre.

How was intimacy and distance communicated in Hallways?

In my project, I emphasized moments of intimacy and distance by employing different recording and compositional techniques in the sound design. In Hallways, I superimposed field recordings of dislocated places to evoke the co-existence of physical and imagined spaces. In Lefebvrean terms, the embodied space is the “space of representation” and the imagined space is “representational space” (Lefebvre, 33). In Hallways, I revealed the imagined spaces by inserting field recordings from various places. To solidify the imposition of places, I contextualized these recordings in close succession, thus in close proximity of each other when spatialized. Imagine that you are stopped in front of a long hallway when you are instructed to turn around. When you do so, you hear the sounds of water, and traffic as I tell you an anecdote of a rock beach. When instructed, you turn around and continue down the long hallway for ten feet. Then you are prompted to stop and turn around again. When you do so, you hear the recording of the inside of a plane while it is taking of. In effect, by listening to my disembodied voice and the sounds of dislocated places, I encouraged my ‘spect-actors’ to see the space with new eyes.

To juxtapose the public and the private, I included field recordings as well as recordings done in the studio. By close micing my narration of the space, I intensified the closeness in the tone of my voice. And by playing these recordings through headphones, I succeeded in connecting my voice with the listener’s inner monologue. To contrast the intimacy of this experience, I included interviews with various individuals. By featuring my voice less prominently in the recordings of the interviews, I communicated the distance shared in public spaces. Throughout the months of collecting field recordings, I grew fond of the imperfections within the improvisatory narration of the space, the interviews, and the field recordings. I saw these mistakes as testaments of the ‘reality’
and intimacy that I wished to convey. Furthermore, the recordings captured at Woodwards were dotted with instructions of traveling within building thus relating the recordings heard as records of the recent past. To contrast the groundedness of the untouched field recordings, I captured personal anecdotes in the studio.

Another way in which I communicated intimacy was through telling personal stories. These stories of my distant past were written and revised through multiples drafts, and some were recorded in the isolation of a soundproofed studio. By using these pristine recordings, the stories I told were unencumbered by reality portrayed in the noisy hallways of SFU Woodward’s. At 50 minutes and 20 seconds in here I am, a studio recording of the scripted text reference above comes into the recording while the ambience of the field recording fades out. In doing so, I presented a story, rather than a recount of a memory. In the track out back, I recorded the scripted material in the ‘performance space’, which gave the impression of me recounting a memory while walking with the listener. Recording the scripted material in this way, allowed me to integrate the narrative more organically into the spatialization of the text within the site. For example, at 40 minutes and 45 seconds in out front, I ask my ‘spect-actor’ to follow the series of exit signs that he sees in front of him. In doing so, the ‘spect-actor’ embodies the performance of exiting as he listens to the recount of me leaving home. Within my audio tour, the spatialization of text necessitated the careful planning of routes between one stop to the next.

In Hallways, my ‘spect-actors’ follow a pseudo narrative interjected by mobilizing instructions. These instructions document of the dialogue between the site and me. In my project, the architecture of SFU Woodward’s creates what Michel de Certeaux regards as “strategies”, built infrastructure in mobilizing traffic within a site, ie. staircases, and hallways (de Certeaux, xix). While creating my audio tour, I responded to these “strategies” with “tactics”, the imagined routes of how I would mobilize my ‘spect-actors’ (ibid.). These “tactics” took many forms throughout the creative process, which were presented as pen marks on the floor plans of the site, then as many takes of recording (ibid.). Like in any relationship, the roles of “strategy” and “tactic” in Hallways were subject to change. For example, from the perspectives of my ‘spect-actors’, the instructions heard in the audio tour are the “strategies”, as is the building itself, so the actualization of the ‘spect-actors’ steps within these given ‘strategies’ become the “tactics” (ibid.). For examples, the metronomic sounds of footsteps in the recordings as
“strategy” suggests the speed at which the ‘spect-actors’ should travel, however, the actual speed at which the ‘spect-actors’ traveled was the “tactic”. Furthermore, the variations of “tactics” proliferate with the difference in each ‘spect-actor’s’ stride. In Hallways, the integration of the site is further developed when I contextualize field recordings within the negotiation between personal anecdotes and instructions.

How did you choose the site?

Comparable to a performer within a devising process, site-specificity and site-responsiveness directly affected the creative process and the presentation of Hallways. At times the site revealed limitations to the project, and at other times, it offered possibilities. In Cardiff’s site-specific audio walk, Her Long Black Hair, the listener follows a pseudo narrative while walking in Central Park in New York City. In her audio walk, Cardiff places her audience in her proverbial shoes by leading them to where she stood while making the audio walk. Likewise I put my ‘spect-actor’ in my proverbial shoes in Hallways. At 31 minutes and 37 seconds of run, I described the scene of a man dressed in a black t-shirt, feeding seagulls from his windowsill in the building opposite to where I was standing. My ‘spect-actor’, would be standing where I once stood, looking at the same window while listening to the scenario described above. The desire to see the described unfold in real time makes the experience of listening to a mundane scenario found in the everyday exciting. The same desire when fulfilled makes the experience of being in the ‘right place’ at the ‘right time’ more powerful because these serendipitous happenings would be purely coincidental. The example above describes my treatment of site-specificity in Hallways. These moments highlighted the sense of the present and of the recent past, however, as I venture further into history, the spatial and temporal disconnect was experienced as a visual and aural disjunct. To highlight the distance created in space and in time, I turned toward the site again for triggers in leading me to reflect on the past.

To engage “reflective nostalgia” of the distant past in Hallways, I found commonalities between the present and the past within the site, thus my project became both site-specific and site-responsive (Boym, 49). In Hallways, I explore thematic ideas based on the notions of familial relationships and home. As an “adult third culture kid”, a person whose ethnic identity does not match her passport country, my idea of home is
defined by the sense of being constantly displaced (Van Reken, xi). Complicated by frequent relocations, I learnt that home is not bound to a “space”, but is a familiar sense of a “place” that I intimately know (de Certeaux, 177). Due to my complex understanding of home, I captured fragments of memories and experiences of my past in the recordings of my former homes. Throughout the months of December 2012 to April 2013, I visited various locations in Ontario and Hong Kong. With the help of my family and friends, I was able to return to the buildings, and in some cases, inside the flats and studios of where the described events within Hallways took place. By situating myself in these places, I was in the present watching my past playback in my memory. As I stood facing the palm trees in front of the building in which I had lived, a school bus arrived. Little kids with yellow backpacks ran past me and into their mothers’ arms. I slipped into the past, remembering myself as a little kid running into the arms of my grandfather after school, and then the sound of a commercial jet intruded my daydream to remind me that although some things stayed the same, lots of things have changed. These poignant moments of lapsing time is further problematized when I was reminded of being inside the SFU Woodward’s building while being thousands of miles away from it. This revelation made certain to me that Hallways should be placed within the SFU Woodward’s building. By doing so, I could translate to my audience the poignant moments of the past lapsing into the present.

Conclusion

In creating my audio tour, I combined my interests in musical composition, and site-specific/site-responsive theatre performance, to investigate the triangulation of sound body and space. In doing so, I found ways of transferring my compositional skills as methodology in creating an artistic experience that crosses disciplinary borders.

7 “Space” and “place” are de Certeauxian dialectics that are defined by each other. As such, “space” is a “place” where the meaning associated with it is defamiliarized. “Place”, contrary to “space” is a “space” that is familiarized by personal associations or appointed meanings (de Certeaux, 177).

8 These are just a few places that I had time to revisit. But there are many more places that I regretfully could not pay tribute to in the making of Hallways.
Works Cited


2. Illustrating the Creative Process

Figure 2.1. An image from the 1st draft of Hallways on the 2nd floor of SFU Woodward's building plan

Note. In the first draft, I identified spaces where staging of narrative could take place.
Figure 2.2. An image from the 2nd draft of Hallways on the 3rd floor of SFU Woodward's building plan

Note. In the second draft, I marked where the security cameras are located within the SFU building. These architectural landmarks became a returning theme within Hallways.
Note. In the third draft, I started to consider categories of spaces with greater intention. Notions of void, nooks, arrival and departure became guiding principles in creating the narrative throughout *Hallways*. 

*Figure 2.3. An image from the 3rd draft of Hallways on the 4th floor of SFU Woodward’s building plan*
Figure 2.4. An image from the 4th draft of Hallways on the 2nd floor of SFU Woodward’s building plan

Note. In the fourth draft, I began conceptualizing the mobilization of participants. The pink markings shows a possible route of one participant.
Figure 2.5. An image from the 6th draft of Hallways on the 4th floor of SFU Woodward’s building plan

Note. In draft six, I had much clearer ideas of both the placement of sonic material as well as the routes to be taken by the participants. The three different colours show the different routes to be taken by each participant following the departure from room 4945.
Note. In draft seven, I timed the distance traveled from one point to the next. As well, the complexity of the Hallways grew exponentially as I added more parts to be performed at once.
Figure 2.7. An image from the 7th draft of Hallways on the 2nd floor of SFU Woodward’s building plan

Note. All of these routes become parts of the final presentation of Hallways. Draft seven was at a pivotal point of my process, a moment where I rearranged what was neatly organized in previous drafts. It is here, that I found the most rewarding discoveries within my process and the collaboration with my dramaturges. After this draft, I began fervently generate written material for the Hallways followed by weeks of tirelessly creating the sonic environment within Hallways.
Note. In draft eight, I was able to neaten up my scattered thoughts. It was a time for me to trace back each theme to its origin and examine its potency within the production of *Hallways*. 

*Figure 2.8. An image from the 8th draft of Hallways on the 3rd floor of SFU Woodward’s building plan*
Figure 2.9. Time codes of events within each track of Hallways (page 1)

Note. This page of time code is the most detailed, complete from the very beginning to the very ending.
Figure 2.10. Time codes of events within each track of Hallways (page 2)

Note. These time codes show where and when each section of text is placed within the SFU Woodward’s building.
Note. Since Hallways begins with the first 20 minutes as a collective walking and listening experience, the time codes documents events of each part after the divergence of each participant.
Figure 2.12. Choreographic interactions of all ten tracks in Hallways

Note. Visualized representation of all ten parts throughout the duration of Hallways.
Figure 2.13. Formal organization of Perpetual Commotion

Note. An example of formal organization within my compositional process.
Figure 2.14. First Peircean mind-map in conceptualizing Hallways

Note. This is the first mind map leading from my reading on Lefebvre and de Certeaux to making Hallways.
3. Appendices

Appendix A.

The Triangulation of Sound, Space and Body as Exemplified in Sound Art

Introduction

To investigate my research interest in the triangulation between sound, body and space, I will discuss look at how space is an important element in two categories of sound art that use field recordings as source material. In doing so, I will discuss how space is a determining composition condition in sound art in the first section. In the following section, I will look at examine the importance of body in relation to the production of space through ideas in spatial discourse put forth by seminal theorist, Henrik Lefebvre, who authored the formative book, *The Production of Space* (1974). In examine how space is produced through sound art; I will concretize the theories about the production of space with examples found in sound art in the last section.

*Space As A Determining Compositional Condition In Soundscape Composition And Audiowalk*

Soundscape consists of both the background ambience and the foreground sounds in a space, it is all the sounds that exist in space. What we choose to hear in an environment is a sonic reflection of our relationship to that environment. For example, as I am sitting in my room writing this paper, my soundscape consists of the clicking of computer keys, the repetitive short buzzes of the space heater, my breathing and reverberant pops from the ventilation system. In the city, urbanites are exposed to a large range of different sounds, some sounds in the soundscape are favoured over others, and in listening to our soundscape closely, we can begin to understand which sounds we would like to preserve in our soundscape. For the composer, careful listening to a soundscape creates an impetus for her to source environmental sounds as instruments for compositions.
Composition is an organization of ideas. The composer creates musical works by defining parameters in choosing what, when, why and how sounds are organized and presented in performance. In soundscape composition, the composer combines both ideas of soundscape and of composition by using environmental sounds captured in field recordings. In successful soundscape compositions, the composer records and preserves the most characteristic sounds of a space in a collection of field recordings captured within a specific geographical area. By referencing sounds that are specific to a site, the composer places the referenced environment onto the performance space, where the audience is. This environment has the potential to raise questions about the relationships the listener experiences within the environment; for example, social, political, economic, physical, and emotional relations. In a successful soundscape composition, the composer and the space respond to each other. The composer listens to the field recordings not only to learn about the many relationships that exist within the recorded environment, but also to select which sounds she will highlight within her composition to emphasize these relations. Because a soundscape is inherently an aural illustration of a space, the listener is implicated within the network of relations in the environment.

An analysis of Westerkamp’s *A Walk Through The City* we can begin to imagine these abstract relations and how they exist through sound. In Westerkamp’s *A Walk Through The City*, she sets Norbert Reubsaat’s poem “A Walk Through The City” within field recordings captured in Vancouver’s downtown east side to create a soundscape composition that documents both the sonic environment of the area and its complicated social, political, and economic relations. Listening to *A Walk Through The City*, the audience hears that Reubsaat’s voice is closely mic-ed. As he says “with a lethal instrument,” and with that, the sounds of a pinball machine stop, a slight pause in silence cleans the sound palette before crystalline sounds of car breaks float from left to right, then right to left before we hear Reubsaat whisper “the whole city staked out, with eyes, like a giant crystal.” Bringing us back to reality of Vancouver’s downtown east side, we hear field recordings of people talking, a man coughing, another man singing a few lines of blues, a man slurring his lament about alcoholism, and a voice speaking a dialect of the First Nation’s people. The collection of voices is accompanied by the crescendo of a rhythmic yet muffled beat of slowed down recordings of propellers, and music played on
the harmonica. What we hear in the collective of voices are moments of the everyday that take place in Vancouver’s downtown east side. By conscientiously listening to these everyday interactions, Westerkamp’s audience observes these social relations that are specific Vancouver’s downtown east side.

Another element integral to soundscape composition besides the untouched field recordings is sound manipulation. Effects on sounds from field recordings are employed most successfully when those sounds relate to specific events that happened in space. For example, Westerkamp contextualizes the slowed down sounds of propellers with the recordings of those sounds in its original form (as it exists and is heard in the recorded space). It is important to note that soundscape compositions necessitate the composer to manipulate the field recordings in differentiating soundscape a space to soundscape compositions. In *A Walk Through The City*, Westerkamp both locates her audience within the recorded space and communicates how she relate to the recorded space by finding the balance between manipulation and contextualization of sounds from field recordings. The first few minutes of *A Walk Through The City* situates the audience in a particular location that exists outdoors. A slow, low rumble emerges mostly from the right, and then from the left a slightly higher pitch of the same rumble emerges, both crossing to fill the space in the middle of the sonic space. By then, it is a recording of biplane propellers. This sonic experience evokes the image of two aircrafts crossing in the sky observed from the ground. Slowly, a canon of these rumbles, now pitched paints a tonal picture. A few bird chirps are heard, which then fade and are followed by sonorous calls in a Major-7th chord. The sound of birds reminds the audience of massive murders of crows that roost in the Vancouver area. The recordings of biplanes then fade out of the sound world as they are interrupted by pockets car horns, then returns to the Major-7th chord that we heard, then again the horns, then back to the Major-7th chords, this back and forth happens a few times. The juxtaposition of the harmonious sounds of bird and the clashes of traffic noise mimics the tuning into and out of the city, which is a common experience that city dwellers share. By clearly contextualizing the careful manipulations of characteristic sounds to their original form, Westerkamp paints a vivid mental picture of Vancouver’s downtown east side through sound.

When setting up the soundscape composition for public performance, the composer must consider how the soundscape is reproduced in the performance setting. How the audience receives the soundscape can be manipulated through attention to the
placement of loudspeakers. Most soundscape compositions are performed in a concert hall setting, which creates a communal listening experience. The performance space technically effects (or even determines) the number and the placement of loudspeakers within the space, which create interesting compositional conditions for the composer, and facilitate different listening experiences for the audience. Different configurations of loudspeakers in a space necessitate different spatialization of a particular soundscape composition. The most common speaker configurations facilitate stereophonic, quadraphonic and octophonic spatializations. Stereo placement of loudspeakers entails the use of two speakers, with one speaker at front-right and the other at front-left of the audience, indicating directionality. Quadraphonic configuration makes use of four speakers placed at the four corners of a room, and octophonic set-up provides full coverage to the concert space creating the effect of surround sound using eight speakers. A successful spatialization of sound informs the audience’s relationship with the sound source. For example, in the octophonic version of A Walk In the City, Westerkamp envelops the audience within her soundscape composition by creating an immersive soundscape in the performance space, which contrasts with the stereophonic spatialization of the same composition because the audience can only relate the sound source to two speakers within the space.

Another compositional use of soundscape is the audiowalk. An audiowalk differs from soundscape composition because it requires the listener to walk in the space of where the soundscape was sourced. Cardiff’s audiowalks are made in close collaboration with George Bures Miller, her long-time partner who contributes a mix of field recordings, recorded voices and other anachronistic sound effects. The result is an immersive, fictitious sound world imposed upon the listener’s sonic reality through headphones worn during the audiowalk. Much of the material is recorded using a binaural recording technique, which makes use of an omni-directional microphone in each ear of a dummy’s head. This technique produces recordings that accurately reproduce directionality and distance from an audio source. For example in her work, Her Long Black Hair, the sound of constant footsteps are heard from below, a voice of a child passes on the left saying, “looks like a goldfish,” the ambience of a city teeming with chaos of sirens and city buses, birds chirping from high above, and the clicking of horses' huffs on the pavement passes on the right. Cardiff choreographs her listener’s walking pace by using the sound of her footstep, which clicks metronomically beneath
the listener’s every step. Using elements of soundscape compositions as background sound effect, Cardiff constructs and narrates a tour through Central Park in New York City in her audiowalk, *Her Long Black Hair*.

Inspired by the site’s history, Cardiff makes reference to landmarks around Central Park through the use of photographs and in the accompanying story presented through headphones. Also featured in some of the photographs is a woman with long black hair, who becomes a figure that Cardiff builds a pseudo-narrative around. By presenting an audiowalk within the sourced location, Cardiff creates a conscious self-reflexivity in the listener, effectively synthesizing the listener’s reality (actions and sounds happening beyond the headphones) and Cardiff’s sonic world (a place and time within her audiowalk). By synthesizing these two realities, Cardiff orient her listener simultaneously in the past and the present, the real and the imaginary. The privacy of listening through headphones allow Cardiff’s immersive sound world to exist inconspicuously in the physical space. Using the mediation of headphones, Cardiff blurs the line between the listener’s internality (self) and externality (other) by switching the locality of her voice within the spatialization in the recording. In all her audiowalks, Cardiff’s voice is often closely mic-ed and usually placed in the center of the spatialization, between the listener’s left and right ear, which is to say that her voice is placed inside the listener’s head.

In Cardiff’s audiowalks, she responds to a specific location through a loose narrative, and animates these responses by requiring the listener to walk, I will call this person “the listening walker.” By prompting, “turn left onto the main road” in *Her Long Black Hair*, Cardiff requires the listening walker to respond by both listening and walking. To connect the relationship between sight and sound, Cardiff uses photographs to address the presence of space through the absence of things in space, for instance, when Cardiff asks the *listening walker* to look at the Trump Building in the background of a black and white photo. The Trump Building, an existing landmark locates Cardiff’s sonic world in proximity to the *listening walker*. The dated photograph depicts a crowd of people seated on chairs facing slightly to the right of where the *listening walker* is looking; it is as though the *listening walker* is observing a crowd of people watching a performance. At this moment, Cardiff introduces a recording of a marching band only
heard from the right ear of the headphones, placing fictitious meaning of the past onto an otherwise mundane happening of the present in Central Park New York.

**The Importance Of Body In Relation To The Production Of Space**

In Lefebvre’s *Production of Space*, he describes the production of space as a complex relation between space and “things in space” (Lefebvre, 170). Lefebvre confronts the complication of addressing the discourse of the production of space through an understanding of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz’s idea that, “space ‘in itself,’’… is neither ‘nothing’ nor ‘something’” (Lefebvre 169-170). Lefebvre uses the concept of “things in space” to exemplify Leibniz’s idea that the production of space is constituted of a relation between what is and what is not (Lefebvre, 170). “Things in space” creates “the body” that both “demarcates and orients” placements in space (ibid). For example, the Trump Building in Cardiff’s audiowalk exists as “a thing in space” (ibid). By comparing the listener’s position to the Trump building, the listener can refer to direction, left and right, as well as orientation, up and down, in relation to the building. According to Lefebvre, “things in space” and space cannot be theorized apart from one another, thus an understanding of the production of space is based on the connections among things and among living bodies in space (Lefebvre, 170).

Lefebvre uses the term, “the law of space” to extrapolate on the idea of the existence of “the body” and the existence of space being defined in the relations of each other (Lefebvre, 169-170). “The law of space” is that which “govern(s) the living body and the deployment of its energy” (Lefebvre, 170-171). It is the idea of “deployment of energy”, which is the crux of the production of space (Lefebvre, 170). It is important to note that relations existing in space can be understood as the “deployment of energy” (ibid). In Part II of *Spatial Architectonics*, Lefebvre builds on his idea of energy in relation to production of space by theorizing on “the living body” as an “apparatus” (Lefebvre, 176). Lefebvre illustrates the flow of energy between the “living body” and its environment to show how space is produced (ibid):

From a dynamic standpoint the living organism may be defined as an apparatus, which by a variety of means captures energies active in its vicinity. It absorbs heat, performs respiration, nourishes itself and so on. It also, as a ‘normal’ thing, retains and stocks a surplus of available energy over and above what it needs for dealing with immediate demands and attacks… The release of energy always gives rise to an effect, to
damage, to a change in reality. It modifies space or generates a new space. (Lefebvre, 176, 177)

I suggest that energy entails action, which establishes relationships, and in analyzing the relationships in space and of space one observes the production of space.

To investigate the spaces produced in Cardiff and Westerkamp’s work, I will first examine how relationships are formed in both *Her Long Black Hair*, and *A Walk Through The City*. In the text of *Her Long Black Hair*, Cardiff establishes relationships between herself and the history of the space in both the form and the content of the audiowalk. She does this in the content by highlighting her presence in both the sonic space and in Central Park through narrating the audiowalk using first person pronoun. To further intertwine the audience’s relationship with the space, Cardiff displaces her established network of relationships that exists/existed in Central Park through the construction of her own personal real and the fictitious memories. Also in the content, Cardiff makes reference to the woman with long black hair shown in some of the accompanying photographs, thus drawing the audience’s attention to noticing the absence of the same female figure in the performance space. By placing the audience in the site, Cardiff uses the presence of the space to confront her audience’s embodied existence, and relationship with(in)the site. Through Cardiff’s first person narration, layers of relationships in the artistic, personal, experiential, existential, social realms unfold throughout her audiowalk.

In *A Walk Through The City*, Westerkamp problematizes the notion of a fixed space through the mediation of loudspeakers, and the manipulation and composition of field recordings, text, and the use of voice. In doing so, she establishes layers of relationships that address the performance space, the recorded space, the audience, and her role as the composer. Using sound as the demarcating and orienting body, Westerkamp activates the concert hall by drawing her audience’s attention to how sounds travel and exist in space through communal listening experience. In her treatment of field recordings, Westerkamp sonically exhibits her interpretation of the site. The many layers of relationships created in both *Her Long Black Hair*, and *A Walk Through The City* generate different ways of experiencing the spaces are equally specific to each relationship established.
Three fundamental elements that make up social space: “spatial practice,” “representations of space,” and “representational space” (33, Lefebvre). Cardiff and Westerkamp produce “social spaces” by engaging with each of the three constituting elements (190, Lefebvre). Each members of society observes social norms by performing “spatial practice”, which manifest themselves in action as social behavior (ibid). An example of action as a “spatial practice” is sitting as an audience member in a concert hall (ibid). Cardiff and Westerkamp address the presence of the audience through “spatial practices,” observed within the performance space, furthermore, the engagement of bodies in space through “spatial practices” addresses the audience’s bodies as bodies that “demarcate and orient,” leading us to the discussion of the next fundamental element of social space--“representations of space” (Lefebvre, 33, 169).

“Representations of space,” which Lefebvre categorizes as “conceived space,” are the space where members of society, particularly scientists, architects, and city planners conceive of space in drafts, maps, and plans (Lefebvre, 33). Lefebvre explains that representations of space identifies how one thinks of space, thus having a practical impact on the production of space that might manifest itself in drafts on paper, in architecture or in language (Lefebvre, 38). Using the audience member’s bodies as a point of reference in Central Park, Cardiff is able to verbalize “representations of space” through the instructions in the text that she speaks in the recording of the audiowalk (Lefebvre, 33). For example, when she refers to the Trump building in front of her audience by saying, “that’s the Trump building over there,” she is positioning the audience which is over here as oppose to over there, where the Trump building is. To extrapolate from the demarcation of here versus there, Cardiff addresses the relationship between self and others, private and public.

Similarly, by using her audience’s body to “demarcate and orient,” Westerkamp foregrounds directionality and distance in the performance space through the spatialization of her soundscape composition (Lefebvre, 169). Different from the private listening experience through headphones, hearing sounds amplified in space immediately communicates the listener’s position in relation the sound source. In the stereo version of A Walk Through The City, “representations of space” manifest themselves sonically when the audience hears sounds from the speaker on the right
move to the speaker on the left, which also corresponds directly to the right and left, up and down in the performance space (Lefebvre, 33). Through aural perception, Cardiff and Westerkamp’s audiences perceive the site abstractly with directionality and distance by using their body as a concrete point of reference in the space. Furthermore, the manipulation of sounds conjures imaged places, which also exists abstractly within the performance space.

Lastly, “representational space,” similar to “representations of space,” is an abstract construct, though its product exists only in the symbolic (ibid). “Representational space” is where imagination is communicated, and directly lived through associations to physical places and objects (Lefebvre, 33, 39) Lefebvre explains that artists often produce “representational space” through non-verbal descriptions (Lefebvre, 33). Cardiff and Westerkamp produce “representational space” in their manipulations and abstractions of field recordings (ibid). For example, in Her Long Black Hair, Cardiff plays a slowed down snippet of the soundscape of her audiowalk in reverse, convincing the audience that they are walking backwards in slow motion. By comparing the speed of movement in her sonic world to the speed of movement in Central Park, Cardiff exaggerates the slowness of the slow motion that she conveys in the recording, thus differentiating the “representational space” in her narrative from the everyday (ibid).

In A Walk Through The City, Westerkamp creates “representational space” through the manipulation of field recordings, and the use of poetry (ibid). By slowing the sound of aircrafts beyond the recognition of its source for parts of A Walk Through The City, Westerkamp leaves the manipulated sounds up for interpretation, which makes the listener wonder what these abstracted sounds are representational of. To address this question, Westerkamp uses poetic content in establishing context for the altered recordings. In the composition, the line, “a single robbery” is repeated three times, each captured and manipulated in a different way to convey three shifts in mood and in space. The most distinct repetition sounds like it is from a small, enclosed space—perhaps an interrogation room. Through the creative interpretation of the line, “a single robbery,” the listener experiences the space as representational because of how their imagination associates the sounds heard with the poetic text.
**Conclusion**

Relationships are established through bodies in space in many way; for example, within social, political, cultural, and physical realms. These relationships can be communicated through sound in verbal and non-verbal means, through the use of text and the use of soundscape as exemplified in the analysis of Westerkamp’s soundscape composition, *A Walk Through The City*, and Cardiff’s audiowalk, *Her Long Black Hair*. Sound is energy moving through space. Lefebvre explains that energy in space produces space, which entails established relationships in space, in the chapter titled *Spatial Architectonics* in Lefebvre’s book, *The Production of Space*. Furthermore, Lefebvre outlines three constituting elements of “social space”, which are “spatial practice”, “representations of space” and “representational space” (Lefebvre 33, 190).

With the concept of “spatial practice” as actions in space, Lefebvre suggests that space is produced and experienced through the body in relations to other “things in space” (Lefebvre, 33, 169). In concretizing Lefebvre’s idea of the production of space, I examined how Westerkamp and Cardiff highlight the audience’s relationship with the performance space through “spatial practice” in producing “representations of space” through bodies occupying space, and in producing “representational space” by engaging the audience’s imagination (Lefebvre, 33).
Works Cited


Appendix B.

DVD: *Short clips of Some Hallways Lead to Other Hallways and Some Lead to Dead Ends*

Creator/Director:

Nancy Tam (creator), Daniel O’Shea (videographer)

Description:

These are two short video documentation of what is experienced within the audio track *Out Front.*
Appendix C.

DVDs: Audio Files of Some Hallways Lead to Other Hallways and Some Lead to Dead Ends

Description:

This is the complete collection of all ten audio tracks of Hallways. To successfully remount and experience Hallways, ten audience members are required to synchronized with each other at the start and all tracks are designed to be played simultaneously. Hallways will also run with nine audience members, and in that case, omit the audio track 8 (Out Back). If this is remounted, the temporal disjunct will be especially apparent since the sculptural and performative aspects in room 4945 will not be present. As well, the time-specific nature of the piece will be lost.

Filenames:

Disc 1
1. Wait
2. Sign
3. Run
4. Retrace
5. You
6. Me
7. Out Front

Disc 2
1. Out Back
2. Listen
3. Here