

Pacific Slope is the third of three works comprising a cycle titled *Epiphany Sequence*. While the three works are very much concerned with musical textures and gestures, they are also quite taken with turning out and hearing the inside of musical sounds. Much of the musical material is often merely a re-voicing horizontally, in time, or vertically, in frequency, of these 'insides.'

Along with this, the *Epiphany Sequence* is also concerned with representations of performance and explores the opportunities and paradoxes the acousmatic form, particularly those presented by its absent performer. And, as the works of the cycle are composed in full 3-D Ambisonic surround sound, the pieces explore spatial attributes as a compositional dynamic. Much of the work may be heard as a series of anecdotal periods detailing musical failures and successes, moving between narrative diegesis and musical abstraction.

Eventually, the composer/performer reverts from the role of a dynamic agent and instead returns to the position of the absent instigator found within most of the literature of acousmatic music; becoming, then very much motivated by seemingly environmental forces.

Regarding technique, while a number of composers have used Ambisonic technologies to create abstract musical works, the majority of these are limited to the placement of monophonic point sources, or occasionally two channel stereo sources, in a resulting periphonic soundfield. Due to the nature of the art, one would expect a composer of acousmatic music to require a "native Ambisonic" technique to capture natural, periphonic soundfields appropriately. For first order Ambisonics, this *is* possible through the use of the Soundfield microphone. Additionally, by applying appropriate image warping techniques to a fully periphonic soundfield, it is possible to control a wide variety of spatial attributes for artistic aims. With *Pacific Slope* a set of soundfield warping techniques, named as the Ambisonic Toolkit (ATK), have been applied to this end—using only fully first order soundfield source recordings. The intention is to explore artistic possibilities enabled through Ambisonic recording, synthesis and signal processing technologies.

I would propose the acousmatic to be an art of shadows and phantoms summoned from the darkness: apparitions manifest and unrestrained by laws of nature. The acousmatic art becomes the supernatural art—of and beyond all music.

That's the hope, anyway.

JA

Pacific Slope

*Assuming form, it reveals shapes half-seen and then half-hid.
In dark half-hid, a likening; in light half-dark, shapes visible. . . .*

—Lao Tzu

The region of the North American continent that drains into the Pacific Ocean is referred to as the ***Pacific Slope***.

The wave—unending, unyielding; powerful, yet intangible.

The bell—ancient call to transcendence. At once an attempt to stay the wave.

The slope—dark green boreal forest, between sky and sea, touched by both.

Yet masses move unheeding. Realizations, regardless . . .

Pacific Slope was first performed in 2002 at the *Transparent Tape Music Festival 2* in Berkeley, California. A number of people assisted in gathering sounds—Jeff Silberman engineered the recording of bells in his studio just north of San Francisco, Matt Ingalls stood in icy Pacific waters at the Marin Headlands with Jeff's Nagra strapped to him, and Juan Pampin and Mirta Wyrnzberg broke fallen trees in the Oregon Coast Range.

Pacific Slope was composed in the artist's personal studio in Corvallis, Oregon during a sabbatical from Analog Devices (ARTC). Special thanks go to David Malham for his guidance and instruction regarding Ambisonic theory and practice, and to Sean Costello for his advice on DSP technique. Additional thanks to Jeff Silberman for the generous loan of a Nagra D digital tape recorder and an Audio Design Ambisonic decoder, and to Juan Pampin and the University of Washington for the loan of a Dēva location hard disk recorder.

Pacific Slope is recently published by Sargasso Records, London on a disc titled *Epiphanie Sequence* (SCD28056).

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