# coyote party line

Leanna Barwick

Exploration 1: "coyote party line"

reality captured and translated into digital

I am inspired by jazz as a conceptual approach to creative expression; for me that means following a stream of consciousness and building on it. I use Reaper to experiment using spatial audio with a jazz mentality. When I watched Hector's tutorial his approach appealed to me; he listens and responds creatively as he translates his intuition through technical editing choices, such as use of reverb and positioning of 3D sound channels.
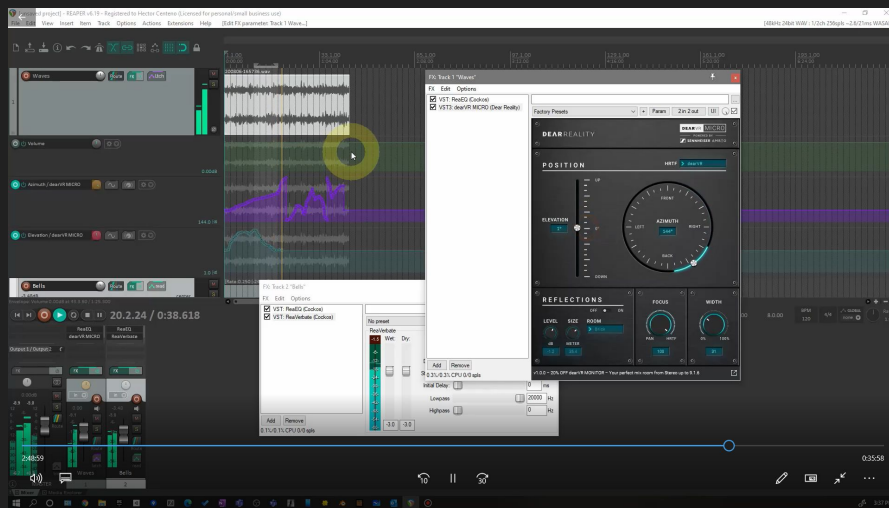
One of the recordings Hector uses in his tutorial is a bell sound. It reminds me of a piece of music I like, Weird Nightmares, a musical meditation by singer-songwriter Elvis Costello (1992) on the same composition originally by Charlie Mingus (1946), an "experimental" jazz musician and proponent of collective improvisation. The energetic vibe in Costello's version; bells, sombre vocals and reverberating acoustics, evoke a haunted sense of longing that reminds me of an experience I had during the pandemic summer of 2020 and sounds I recorded during this time.
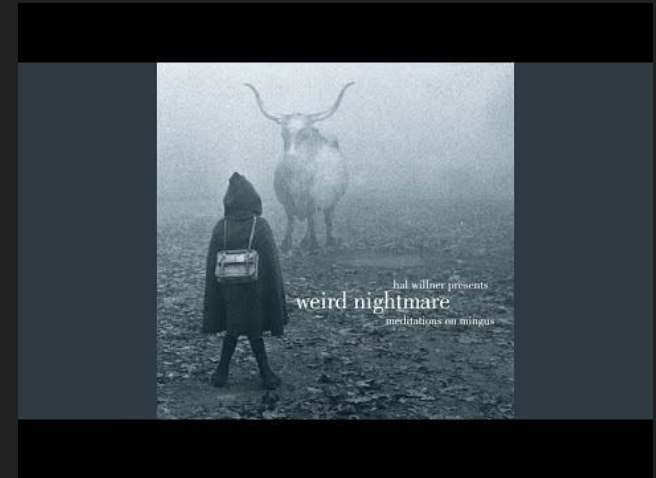
Some recordings I took are from when the coyotes were triangulated and howling out communication with each other. Using the DearVR 3D sound plugin for Reaper, I recreated that sense of the coyotes triangulated and surrounding the listener. I copied the track x3 and synchronized the playback. I increased the volume on each track to isolate and highlight each of the three coyotes and positioned the direction of their sound as they were spatially in relation to me when I captured the recording.
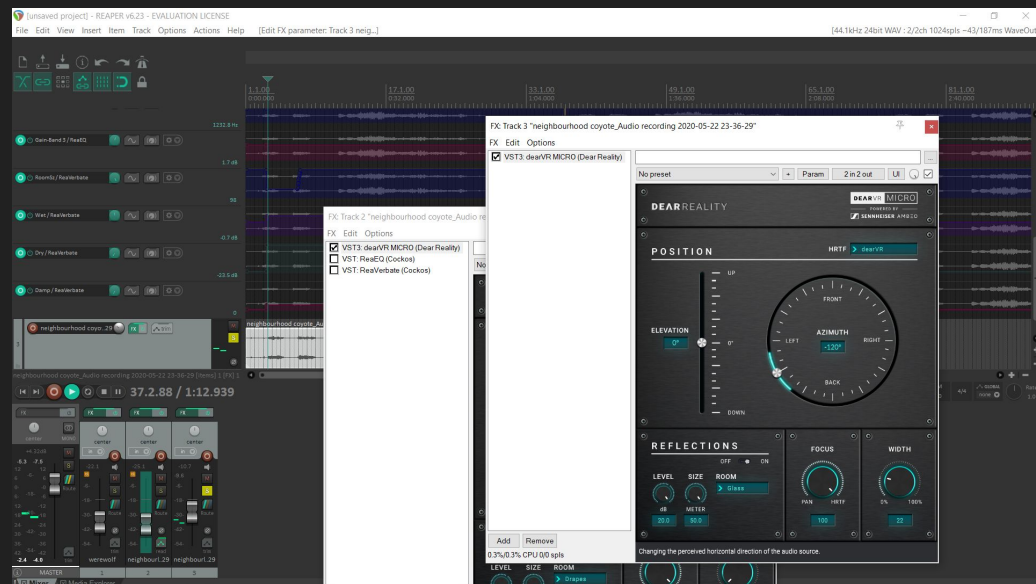
The overall tone of the coyotes in communication reminded me of a phone conversation. I liked the playful visual of a "coyote party line". I found a public educational film produced by the Bell telephone company in the 1950s about party lines and sampled some dialogue from that. Staying with that aesthetic, I found some sound effects of a rotary phone dialing and an old telephone bell ringing, which I ran through various effect plugins in Reaper, such as speed, direction, pitch, band and frequency of the sound wave until I isolate a sample to create a loop to use as a percussive track for the piece.
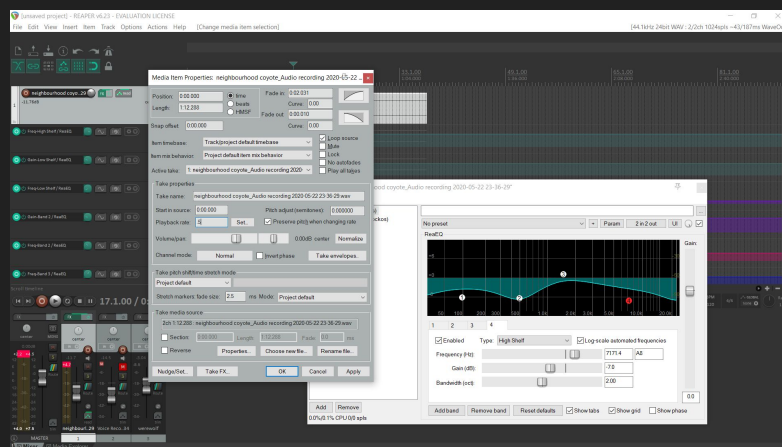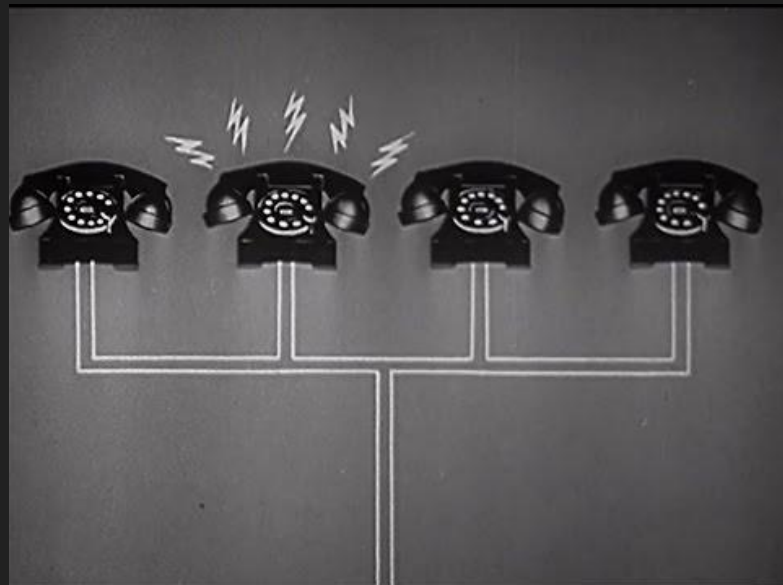
Mingus' original begins with a flight of instrumental sounds that evoke chaotic animals noise which also reminds me of the coyotes. Like Mingus, I wanted to play with the larger composition as a mix of styles. I felt I could do this by beginning with the coyote vocals and breaking the crescendo of this sound, with a different track I recorded in that same time, me on the ukulele and vocals, playing Werewolf by Cat Power (2003).

I used the reverb and equalizer plugins in Reaper to control band and frequency of sound waves, in order to manipulate the audio spatial dimensions and create a particular effect similar to Costello's and Cat Power's song.

During this period I recorded a composition which my father was practicing on piano by Sergei Rachmaninoff, Prelude in C-sharp minor. The intro reproduces the Kremlin's carillon chimes (bronze bells in fixed suspension, tuned in chromatic order so they sound harmonious together). I find the effect and translation to piano dark, heavy and ominous and another way to interpret the bells that ring throughout this exploration.

Going forward

What worked well for this exploration was getting a new headset that would support 3D sound. I would like to further explore spatial audio technology and learn about binaural microphone hardware and electronics. I am not happy with the input sound quality on my new headset mic; this is a huge disappointment, which also caused issues recording audio for my process video.

Regardless of that having a binaural microphone, I have some ideas about creating 3D audio capture that I'd like to try; I have a number of devices that are capable of digitally recording sound. I can geolocate these in the cardinal directions around and a central POV within the area I'm recording, and ultimately, I would like to plot that audio capture in a digital environment capture of the same space.