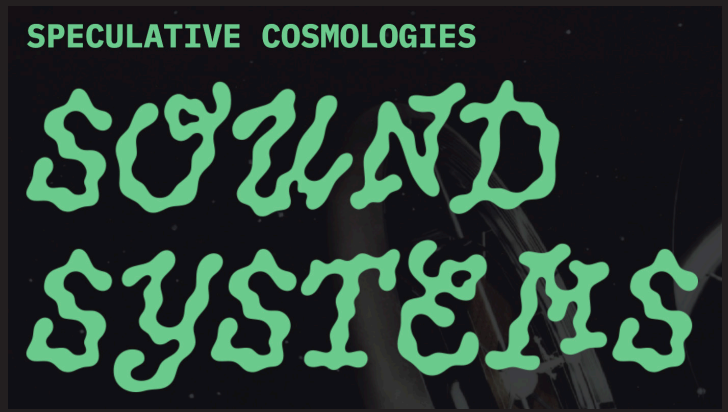


WORLDS OF SOUND

Tracklist/Reader/Additional information

Act 2 – Myths: Realised & Imagined



Ursula K Le Guin: Music of the Kesh

Ursula Le Guin's novel always coming home told of a mythical future culture, complete with language, poetry and music – a speculative ethnography – which was realised with Todd Barton in an album – bringing the fiction to life through poem, sound design, song and specially made electro-acoustic instruments.

What levels of speculative social or cultural myth can be explored through voice or song?

N Mortimer & K Rittberger – (ICO Bass)

My own work includes an experimental play titled Real Time is getting realer all the time, a conversation about cybernetic socialist utopias held between historic and imagined characters on a mainframe computer radio show as a form of future parable or social document. I designed and operated the ICO bass, an experimental musical instrument and prop (based on Stafford Beers' fascination with the icosahedron), to accompany its performance, which was improvised collaboratively by all performers to access a higher state of consciousness during the culmination of the narrative.

How does collaborative playing change the dynamic of an instrument and its performance?

Karl-Birger Blomdahl – Aniara

Aniara is an epic poem by Harry Martinson which narrates the tragedy of a large passenger spacecraft carrying a cargo of colonists escaping destruction on Earth veering off course, leaving the Solar System and entering into an existential struggle – turned into an opera in 1959 – a clash of past forms and future speculations

How might you reimagine new stories for existing, more classical modes of music or sound?

Magma

Magma were a prog rock band formed in 1969 who first album, Magma or Kobaïa), told a story of refugees fleeing a future Earth and settling on a fictional planet called Kobaïa – the band designed Kobaïan a lyrical language, the language of Kobaïa, a fictional planet which is the setting for a musical “space opera” sung in Kobaïan by Magma on fifteen concept albums

How does language inform or describe larger universes when sung and performed?

Figrin D’an & The Modal Nodes (Star Wars)

You may know this band from the Star wars universe – the modal nodes among other fictionalised musicians show the opportunity for imagination and detail when world building cosmic mythologies. As with the entire Star Wars worldbuilding complex the detail provided for Figrin D’an is designed to a cosmic level and the band offers greater understanding to a future myth of music making in a galaxy far away.

What fictional musical groups could offer a gateway to invented instruments or rituals?

Corvus Nebulus

The Dungeon Synth genre was born out of black metal music by producers wanting to explore more synthesised, dark ambient sonic space evoking images of mediaeval times, castles, dungeons, and fantasy themes. Predominantly instrumental the layered designed worlds created by soundtracking fictive ideas from authors such as Tolkien presents atmospheric and mythic contexts that blur the boundaries of game soundtracks and epic realities.

“When you listen to dungeon synth you are making a conscious choice to spend your time in a graveyard, to stare, by candle-light, into an obscure tome that holds subtle secrets about places that all sane men avoid.” – (Tv tropes)

How can sonic atmospheres become an engine for mythic context?

King Geedorah

Hip hop has so many examples of story telling, – MF DOOM who also uses King Geedoroah as a pseudonym is perhaps one of the late great masters of this. Fusing a comic book mythology of godzilla characters and a sonic mosaic of cartoon tropes and samples to accompany a multi faced fictional world building in rap.

What pop cultural characters could be co-opted to form new sonic fictions?

Invisible Skratch Pikles

A super group of turntablists, led by Dj Qbert who wraps many of his experimental hip hop albums within mythical stories of the planet Xectar, quite rightly proclaiming that the Dj crew are sorts of aliens from another planet, able to manipulate and harness the sounds of vinyl into an entirely different form of communication.

What hyper specific skill set of sonic manipulation could persuade an otherworldly presence?

Readings:

"Orpheus, is that you? I was confounded. "No" replied Andre, Orpheus is not I. Orpheus was not a man, nor a being, living or dead. "I can imagine how the allegory I have just offered you bursts against your classical recollections. I believe it to be true, however to the exclusions of those teachings. Orpheus? It is in our evolving humanity, the desire to hear and be heard: the power to live and create in sonority; it is the ideal symbol of our escape from the dank and crude score or our Archean sensations rendered through base visions, wrought from staring, kneading, groping. "Theres no evidence any Orpheus ever was, as a being; only Orphic powers, whos apogee, in our present humanity, allows us to conceive of the world in this way: a sonic essence from which proceeds a whole series of attributes which once dominated the extent of things, the movement!

Victor Sagalen: In A Sound World

THE STORY BEGINS SOMETIME in the late 1980s, with a drilling expedition led by Russian engineers in an unknown location in Siberia. The team had drilled nine miles deep into the Earth's crust when they broke through to a cavity. Surprised and excited by their discovery, the engineers dropped a variety of heat-sensitive monitors (including a microphone) down through the hole. When they pulled their devices back up, they found that temperatures inside the open well reached a searing 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit.

It was what the engineers found on the microphone, though, that was truly shocking: about 20 seconds' worth of tortured, terrifying screaming.

Many of the engineers were said to be so disturbed by what they heard that they left the site immediately; the few who made the mistake of staying were visited by a gigantic, demon-shaped plume of gaseous smoke that erupted from the hole later that night. Some versions of the story held that the remaining engineers were visited soon afterward by mysterious medics who administered a drug that erased their short-term memory.

The Well to Hell: Katie Heaney / Pacific Standard

"Need every word be translated? Sometimes the untranslated word might serve to remind us that language is not meaning, that intelligibility is an element of it only, a function. The untranslated word or name is not functional. It sits there. Written, it is a row of letters, which spoken with a more or less wild guess at the pronunciation produces a complex of phonemes, a more or less musical and interesting sound, a noise, a thing. The untranslated word is like a rock, a piece of wood. Its use, its meaning, is not rational, definite, and limited, but concrete, potential, and infinite. To start with, all the words we say are untranslated words."

Ursula K Le Guin: Always Coming Home

Readings:

A wild boar was wreaking havoc throughout the country. No one dared venture into the forest where it ran about. With its tusks it ripped to pieces anyone who was bold enough to pursue it and attempt to kill it. Then the king proclaimed that anyone who could kill the boar would receive his daughter for a wife.

There were three brothers in the kingdom. The oldest was sly and clever; the second was of ordinary intelligence; but the third and youngest was innocent and slow witted. They wanted to win the princess, so they set forth to seek out the wild boar and kill it.

The two oldest ones went together, while the youngest one went by himself. When he entered the woods an old man approached him. He was holding a black lance in his hand, and said to him, "Take this lance and fearlessly attack the boar with it, and you will kill it." And that is what happened. He struck the boar with the lance, and it fell dead to the earth. Then he lifted it onto his shoulder, and cheerfully set off toward home.

On the way he came to a house where his brothers were making merry and drinking wine. When they saw him with the boar on his back, they called to him, "Come in and have a drink with us. You must be tired." The innocent simpleton, not thinking about any danger, went inside and told them how he had killed the boar with the black lance, and rejoiced in his good fortune. That evening they returned home together. The two oldest ones plotted to kill their brother. They let him walk ahead of them, and when they came to a bridge just outside the city, they attacked him, striking him dead. They buried him beneath the bridge. Then the oldest one took the boar, carried it to the king, claimed that he had killed it, and received the princess for a wife.

Many years passed, but it was not to remain hidden. One day a shepherd was crossing the bridge when he saw a little bone beneath him in the sand. It was so pure and snow-white that he wanted it to make a mouthpiece from, so he climbed down and picked it up. Afterward he made a mouthpiece from it for his horn, and when he put it to his lips to play, the little bone began to sing by itself:

Oh, dear shepherd
You are blowing on my bone.
My brothers struck me dead,
And buried me beneath the bridge,
To get the wild boar
For the daughter of the king.

The shepherd took the horn to the king, and once again it sang the same words. After hearing this, the king had his people dig under the bridge, and they soon uncovered the skeleton. The two wicked brothers confessed their crime and were thrown into the water. The murdered brother's bones were laid to rest in a beautiful grave in the churchyard.

The Brothers Grimm: The Singing Bones