

## Exercise 5: Musique Concrete

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**Musique concrète** (French; literally, "concrete music"), is a form of electroacoustic music that utilizes acousmatic sound\* as a compositional resource. - Wikipedia

(\*Acousmatic sound is sound one hears without seeing an originating cause.)

**This exercise extends the practice of sound production by introducing level metering, microphone placement, audio abstraction, audio editing, and sonic collage composition. It is broken into two parts:**

1. **Collection of sonic source materials using the Zoom field audio recorders (do NOT use an iPhone, camera, etc., you must use the field audio recorders specified).**
2. **Manipulation and editing of the *Musique Concrete* composition.**

**Using the open source sound editing application *Audacity*, create a 2-minute audio composition using only your original recorded sounds. Your composition MUST use only your own recorded materials and Audacity.**

In preparation for the assignment, you will need to read two essays, which you will find linked at the bottom of this page. Try to think about your sound in the ways proposed by Schaeffer in his essay *Acousmatic Listening* and Lopez in his essay *Environmental Sound Matter*. You are not trying to re-present the particular event or environment you recorded the audio in, but rather to use that recording as a raw material that you will sculpt using audio processing and editing techniques.

This assignment is meant to emulate the ways that early tape musicians/composers worked with audiotape. To keep in that spirit, your project should not use multi-tracking (no layering/stacking), only the left and right channels of one stereo file. In addition, the Effects should not be used. No individual sound clip should exceed ten seconds in length and no audio segment used should be longer than 5 seconds. Do not use understandable spoken words/conversation.

Techniques to explore:

- removing the beginning/middle/end of sounds
- reversing sounds
- slowing down or speeding up sounds

**Refer to syllabus for subject matters that will not be accepted for projects in this class.**

**In addition, DO NOT use:** song/tune/melody (in any shape or form), and avoid recognizable sounds.

**Prepare to present your work to the class in a 5-minute presentation.**

**Save your completed audio file (named: yourlastname\_concrete.wav). Create a folder (yourlastname\_concrete) with:**

- 1) High quality file of your completed audio walk, 2 min. (AIFF or WAV, 48k, 16bit or higher)
- 2) Statement of Creative Work (what was the intention of your chosen sounds and manipulation techniques)
- 3) The spreadsheet of sounds you recorded with a brief description of the microphone placement for each sound, and a list of all sounds used in the final sound file.

**Essays:**

Francisco Lopez, *Environmental Sound Matter*

Pierre Schaeffer, *Acousmatic Listening*

For a greater historical context: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musique\\_concre%CC%80te](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musique_concre%CC%80te)