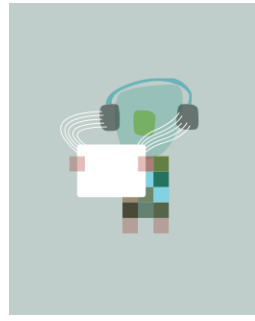


LimerickSoundscapes

Dr. Aileen Dillane, Irish World Academy, UL



Purpose of today

1. To Introduce the *LimerickSoundscapes* Project
2. To account for its interdisciplinary and theoretical underpinnings which inform its design, practice, and documentation.
3. To explore how the project may be conceived as 'activist' through the model of 'Critical Citizenship'
4. To open up dialogue on the project's efficacy (including challenges faced and current and projected outcomes)

What is a City?

- The city is...an economic organisation, and institutional process, a theater of social actions, and an aesthetic symbol of collective unity. The city fosters art and is art; the city creates the theater and is the theater. It is in the city, the city as theater, that mans' most purposive activities are focussed, and worked out, through conflicting and cooperating personalities, events, groups, into more significant culminations



(Mumford cited in LeGates 1996: 185)



LimerickSoundscapes at a glance

- *LimerickSoundscapes* explore how we can deploy sound collection as a means of mobilizing civic engagement, in order to create a participatory and creative citizenship for the diverse array of people living in cities.
- In taking a practical, applied approach, the *LimerickSoundscapes* project proposes that *sound collection* is a democratic tool for activating critical citizenship in dense, urban spaces which are 'shared' by citizens from all walks of life.
- A variety of people from different socio-economic, religious, ethnic, etc. backgrounds record sounds on an easy-to-use a mobile device.
- These sounds are uploaded onto an interactive website.
- Ideally, people engage with this process of recording in mixed groups in order to create a sense of social inclusion and a shared 'doing' (Dillane & Langlois, 2015)

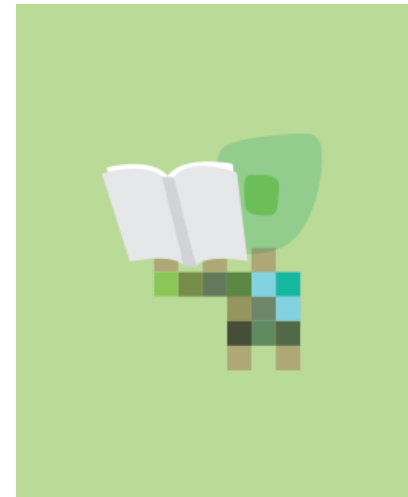
'The People's Soundscape'

- The project brings to the fore the agentive capacities of Limerick's people in engaging their sonic environment through active listening and the making of sound recordings.
- The 'citizen collector' is viewed as a critical partner (not simply *participant* or *informant*) in the research process (applied, reflexive methodology).
- This is an applied project and a research project.



Interdisciplinary Approach @ UL

- ▣ URBAN ETHNOMUSICOLOGY/ APPLIED ETHNO - and Soundscape Studies and Acoustic Ecology - (Drs **Aileen Dillane**, Irish World Academy, **Dr. Tony Langlois**, and **Ciaran Ryan**, Mary Immaculate College)
- ▣ URBAN REGENERATION, SOCIAL EXCLUSION, MIGRANT STUDIES (Drs **Martin Power** and **Eoin Devereux**, Dept. of Sociology)
- ▣ DIGITAL MEDIA/REPRESENTATION/COMPOSITION (Dr. **Mikael Fernstrom**, Computer Science and Information Systems,)



Soundscape: Genealogy of the Term

- The term was coined by Canadian composer and author Murray Schafer to describe ‘the sonic environment’ in its totality (1994 [1977a]: 274-5). This encompassed the whole aural spectrum: from natural, to human and mechanical sounds, from sound to ‘noise’ and ‘music’, and from consciously to unconsciously produced sounds. Schafer’s declared goal in studying soundscapes was to determine in what significant ways individuals and societies of various historical eras listened differently (ibid: 151).
- Application in LimerickSoundscapes is extended and it is a tool for social inclusion and exchange as opposed to an end in an of itself.

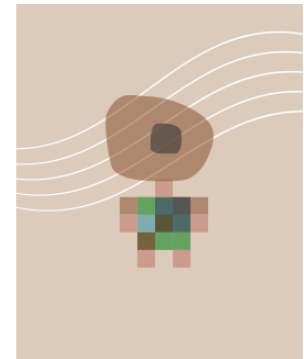


Urban Sociology

- Devereux et al. (2012; 2011) have documented the manner in which media constructions of stigmatised localities also contribute to the creation of segregated and marginalised social spaces in Limerick City.
 - International research literature (Greer and Jewkes 2005; Bauder 2002; Blokland 2008; Hastings 2004; Kelleher et al. 2010) continues to demonstrate that negative reputations of such places can, in themselves, have a profound effect upon the life chances, experiences and self-image of those who live in neighbourhoods which carry a stigma.
-

Feeling Culture

- Culture contributes to how cities feel and how we experience them. As a consequence of the deindustrialisation and the remaking of global economies, the analysis of culture within urban studies has acquired a more prominent position (see for example Harvey 1989, Harvey 2000, Harvey 2008, Castells 1977, Castells 2000, Lefebvre 1991), with urban space now being understood as “symbolic and imaginary” (Watson 2002: 55). Indeed, Henri Lefebvre (1991: 87) argues that “space should be interpreted not as some dead, inert object or passive surface but as organic and alive”.



Socio-Economic Context for LimerickSoundscapes

- Limerick City is “socially and spatially uneven... with a distinctive, and highly differentiated social geography” (McCafferty 2011: 3-9; see also Humphries 2010) which subsequently finds form in “marked spatial differences in socio-economic wellbeing” (McCafferty and Humphries 2014: 132).
- Local authority estates such as Southill, Ballinacurra Weston, Moyross and St. Marys Park have exceptionally high unemployment rates, and the highest concentrations of unskilled and semi-skilled manual social classes in the city (McCafferty 2011: 3-9).



Regeneration

- Limerick has experienced very significant social, economic, cultural and physical change over the last number of decades.
- Limerick city is one of the most socially deprived urban areas in Ireland, with the Pobal HP Index of Affluence and Deprivation highlighting that the city is the most deprived of all 34 local authority areas in the Republic of Ireland (Haase and Pratschke 2012). Based on data from the 2011 census.
- State-sponsored Urban Regeneration focused on buildings rather than on social relations; on creation of spaces for further commercial consumption rather than nurturing bonds of citizenship



Limerick City of Culture 2014

www.limerick.ie/cityofculture/



S U R P R I S E
Y O U R S E L F B E
I N S P I R E D J U M P
U P D A N C E P A I N T
D A U B S I N G A C T
D O A H A N D S T A N D
B E P O E T I C R E A D
A B O O K E N J O Y B E
H A P P Y S A D
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Urban Ethnomusicology

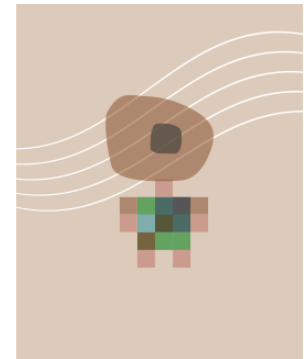
Sounds of People in the City:

- 2012 special issue of *Urban People: Theory and Method in Ethnomusicology*, ed. Zuzana Jurková
- Bohlman, Klotz and Loch – *A Tale of Three Cities: Berlin, Chicago and Kolkata at the Metropolitan Musical Crossroads* (2007).
- SoundscapesRostock (Barbara Alge and Frances Wilkins) www.soundscapesrostock.de



Hearing Culture

- Hearing Culture suggests that it is possible to conceptualize new ways of knowing a culture and of gaining a deepened understanding of how the members of a society know each other. It is not only by accumulating a body of interrelated texts, signifiers, and symbols that we get a sense of the relationships and tensions making up a society. The ways in which people relate to each other through the sense of hearing also provide important insights into a wide range of issues confronting societies around the world as they grapple with the massive changes wrought by modernization, technologization, and globalization. (Erlmann 2004: 3)



Limerick Soundscapes

summary of theoretical underpinnings

- a citizen-led, bottom up approach to social regeneration and integration by adapting traditional sound mapping practices from acoustic ecology (Schafer 1977; Traux 1978).
- further shaped by urban ethnomusicology's focus on human creativity and agency (Hemetek and Reyes 2007), especially within soundscapes (Jurková 2012; Shelemay 2006).
- influenced by sociological understandings of the cultural restructuring of urban spaces (Fainstein and Campbell 2011; LeGates 2011)
- and by the sensuous ways in which cities can be musically/sonically mapped and understood (Cohen 1995, 2012; Krims 2007), with identity configured by and through sound and place-making (Stokes 1994; Tuan 2004), especially in urban centres (Nettl 1983).



Some Soundscapes Projects

- World Soundscapes Project
<http://www.sfu.ca/~truax/wsp.html>
- Salford Soundscapes: Exploring people's auditory appreciation of our environment, (**Citizen scientist**: a non-professional participant in scientific research)
<http://www.salford.ac.uk/research/perspectives-magazine/volume-1/issue-1/exploring-soundscapes>



Underpinned by Critical Citizenship

- “Critical citizenship is based on the promotion of a common set of shared values such as tolerance, diversity, human rights and democracy...As an education pedagogy, it encourages critical reflection on the past and the imagining of a possible future shaped by social justice, in order to prepare people to live together in harmony in diverse societies”

Nell et al 2012, Stellenboch (adapted from Johnson and Morris 2010; 77-78)



Critical Citizenship

- Nell et al's definition has been adapted from Johnson and Morris' work on *critical pedagogy*, which places reflection and the opportunity to learn at the centre of any engagement (Johnson and Morris, 2010).
- Critical Citizenship: a “framework for finding strategies to develop awareness amongst individuals and groups to enable them to combat complacency, and go beyond simple obedient cosmopolitan ways of thinking-acting-and-being, in order to forge a way of living life” (WynScully).

LimerickSoundscapes

The Pilot 2013

Set up and run by

Dr. Aileen Dillane (ethnomusicologist and founder)

Dr. Tony Langlois (ethnomusicologist, seed funding recipient)

Ciaran Ryan, PhD student, (facilitator and technician),
Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick.

(with initial assistance from **Dr. Mikael Fernstrom**, CSIS)

www.limericksoundscapes.ie

SOUNDCLOUD PAGE:

▣ <https://soundcloud.com/limericksoundscapes>

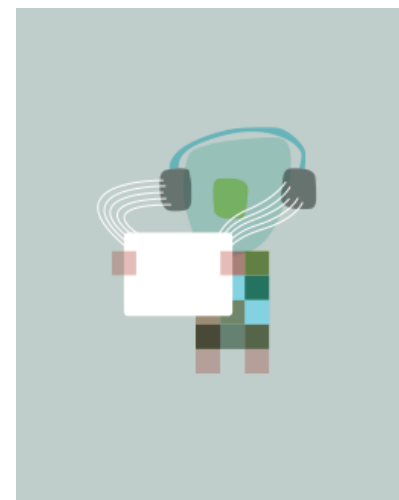
(Ethical clearance secured from UL)



Limerick City Pilot Groups Approached

- Headway Ireland (Brain Injury)
- Active Retired Citizens Group
- UL Access campus (adult education)
- Limerick Vocational Educational Committee
- St. Mary's Adult Education Centre
- *Doras Luimní* (for migrants and asylum seekers)

<http://www.dorasluimni.org>



Underpinning the Project Design...

- to task collaborators from all neighbourhoods with the same purpose – to go anywhere in the city and record sounds that they find compelling. (CREATIVE)
- Approach pre-existing organisations/pathways to seek interested groups/parties (COLLABORATIVE)
- In bringing diverse groups from different parts of the city together to compare approaches and sound practices, the hope is that people learn from each other through this shared task, but also learn *about* each other's sonic environments and, therefore, about each other's lives too. (SHARING)
- This is particularly important for the project, as **certain neighbourhoods have been stigmatised in particular ways and either left out of the narrative of the city locally, or dominate the narrative of the city nationally.** (GIVING EQUAL VOICE)



The basic objectives of the project

- To work with diverse local communities to facilitate their collection of good quality recordings.
 - To edit, categorise and store recordings on an online database.
 - To develop media interfaces so that sounds might be easily accessed.
 - An important longer-term ambition is for recordings to be continually updated by contributors, who, ideally, will have control over the archive of sounds and their usage.
-

Areas of technical practice

Although limited in scale, the pilot was established to test three areas of technical practice before these were expanded to a wider community of participants:

- selection and optimum size of group and style of engagement with them
- technical specifications in terms of most appropriate recording equipment for the purpose.
- Database infrastructure and interface development.



Recording, Editing, Sharing

- Workshops were set up to introduce people to the concept and the equipment, including doing soundwalks.
 - Edirol 09 hand-held digital recorders with windjammers proved easy to use, with internal storage and long battery life.
 - Headphones were also provided (best way to record outdoors, especially)
 - Recorders were distributed to people for approx. 3 weeks at a time.
 - Follow up workshops were held to listen and compare sounds and download for editing
 - Editing of recordings from the pilot was carried out using *Pro-Tools* or *Logic* software. Further meetings (social) were held to listen to final products
-

Supports for workshop

RECORDING



- 1. POWER ON**
Hold the power slider in place for 2 seconds. The LS-12 will turn on and present the standby screen. Return to this at any time by pressing STOP.
- 2. SET THE MODE**
Set the mode dial to "SMART".
- 3. PRESS REC TO BEGIN**
The red REC button starts a 10 second countdown. During this time, the recorder will listen and set the ideal recording levels. The sound during this time should be similar to what you wish to record. When the countdown finishes, recording begins.
- 4. PRESS STOP TO END**
A timer will show you how long you are recording. When you are ready to finish, press STOP.

IT'S THAT SIMPLE!
You can now PLAY your recording to see how it turned out. You can also LIST all of the previous recordings you may have made, edit them, and so on. With experience you will learn how to do even more.

Check out our website for other helpful info.

HAVE FUN!

HOW TO RECORD SOUNDS WITH YOUR OLYMPUS LS-12




- 1 With these step-by-step instructions, you can record the birds by the Shannon, the local match, your grandmother's stories... or anything else you want.
- 2 All you need is the recorder we provide, a set of batteries, and your own imagination!
- 3

Check out our website where we provide further help and ideas.

Explore our Limerick sound map to hear what other people have recorded. You are also invited to share your favourite sounds!

www.limericksoundscapes.ie



LIMERICKSOUNDSCAPES

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Support website:
www.limericksounds.wordpress.com

Documentation/Ethics

Soundscape Limerick

Consent Form

Date:

Location:

GPS:

Recordist:

Number:

Category/ Field

Title:

Brief description of location: (20 words)

I hereby consent to allow this recording, and information regarding it, to be edited and archived online by Soundscape Limerick. I understand that this will be digitally stored and used for purposes of research and as part of a sound record of the city.

I understand that whilst my personal details will not be made public, the recording itself may be accessed, published and re-edited for non-profit making purposes within the remit of the Soundscape Limerick sound archive project.

I reserve the right to withdraw permission to use the recording at any time in the future.

Signed:

Name: (Printed)

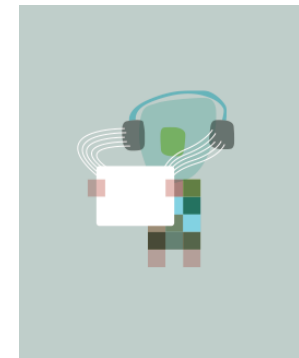
Address:

Email address:

Phone number:

OUTCOMES (current and projected)

- On-going creative collaboration between groups in the city
- permanent DIGITAL ARCHIVE
- Web-based SOUNDSCAPES INTERACTIVE MAP owned by the people
- SOUND WALK APPS
- COMMISSIONED WORKS with input by citizens of Limerick
- EDUCATION RESOURCES for Schools, community centres, language centres.
- PUBLICATIONS for University-based Partners and integrated modules in this research area.
- International Partnerships/funding opportunities



Reflection and assessment

- **LimerickSoundscapes** seeks to critically engage **all** citizens of a multi-cultural, socially and economically divided, post-industrial city, in a soundscapes project that is as much focussed on engagement as it is in sonically representing the city. We have located the project in the city of its origins, in terms of history, geography, economics and, in particular, the politics of 'regeneration'.
- *LimerickSoundscapes* has received mixed success in terms of funding, particularly in relation to its practical, applied dimensions (i.e. buying recording equipment and creating time for volunteer facilitators from the university to train community leaders and other interested collaborators)
- Aspiration that community groups and other non-for-profit organisations across the city recognise the potential of soundscapes generation and will partner with each other and ultimately own the project. Latest tranche of recordings from **Men's Shed, King's Island**

Recent developments

- NATIONAL LEARNING NETWORK **AONTAS AWARD** Dublin, Feb 2016 (Aontas Star and First Place in Munster)



SOUNDSCAPES & CREATIVE, CRITICAL CITIZENSHIP

- “Creativity is not just mapping or ‘representing’ but creating, engaging; dialogue. It’s about ambience; between civility and public sociability. New civility emerges through analogical thinking and the simple processes of **collaboration**, **discovery**, **improvisation**...in the dialectic between action and reaction...focusing on production *rather than representation* - production and reflection as a way of conceiving of place.”

- **Personal interview with Paul Carter, 2012** -





*Limerick*Soundscapes



THANK YOU

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