

## From Soundscapes to Soundscape Design: Report on a Sound Program at the Omi Hachiman Arts Festival

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This paper reports on a program of sound-related activities carried out by the author at the Biwako Biennale 2004, a month-long arts festival held in Omi Hachiman, on the eastern shore of Lake Biwa, in August 2004.

Specifically, the activities consisted of a soundscape study, a sound workshop, the making of a sound installation, and a meeting to exchange views with residents.

In the soundscape study, observations were made at seven sites, mainly in the older built-up areas of Omi Hachiman City, and local residents were then surveyed with a questionnaire and interviews. The fixed-point observations showed that ambient sound had a distinctly different character at each location, depending on seasonal, temporal and spatial factors. Residents of the city's old districts were found to be highly aware of ambient sound; they assign detailed meanings to particular sounds, extract a wide range of information from them, and use sound as an indicator in daily life.

The author next discusses the workshop he held on making sound maps. This experience suggested that a collaboration of this kind, with local residents and outsiders sharing their impressions of particular sounds, renews the participants' sensitivity to ambient sound.

The paper then describes a collaborative sound installation created by three artists – a spatial designer, a photographer, and the author (a soundscape artist) – and notes the importance of conveying traces of an ambience which transcends time and space.

With regard to soundscape design, the paper focuses on three aspects: the spatial context, the specific features of the environment, and the design process, and discusses the importance of publishing and proposing concrete designs that optimize the unique local features of the sound environment. In detail, this work consists of: (1) on the macro level, choosing the site, conducting a study of the acoustic environment and identifying the issues; (2) preparing a meso-scale sound-space plan; (3) preparing a micro-scale sound-space plan. Examples are given of buildings for which the author has prepared soundscape designs: a *konyaku* factory, a local public facility, and a guesthouse.

This report suggests that an outsider's perceptions and soundscape work can alter residents' awareness of their sound environment and catalyze changes in their habits and behavior, and that soundscape activities of this kind provide an essential perspective in local community development.