SOUND, MEMORY AND THE SENSES CONFERENCE
THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
24 JULY - 25 JULY 2014

Babel Building (building no. 139)
Room106 (Middle Theatrette)
The University of Melbourne
THURSDAY 24 JULY

9.30am-10.30am: Sound and the Disciplines

Sound Studies Today: where are we going?
Bruce Johnson (Macquarie University, Australia; University of Turku, Finland; Glasgow University, UK)

The arrival of formal sound studies may be dated from the 1960s with the World Soundscape Project involving R. Murray Schafer and his colleagues, including Barry Truax whose Handbook of Acoustic Ecology of 1978 was the first of its kind. The recently published Oxford Handbook of Sound Studies announces three developments. First, that the field has now been fully institutionalised; second, some of its streams seem oddly unaware of the history and extent of the main current; thirdly, that it is a field whose ownership is contested.

This paper presents commentary on the current state of sound studies. It urges a rapprochement between culturalist, philosophical and scientific approaches in our exploration of the role and function of the acoustic order in the emergence of modernity. The dominant discourses of academic scholarship, even when deployed in the study of sound, remain colonies in the empire of the visual, which generates conceptual models that deform our understanding of sonicity. Even the distinction between memory and the senses, which is built on mind/body, leads us away from the distinctive features of sonic experience. It will only be by a radical and transdisciplinary questioning of such models that sound studies will find its proper voice.

Commentator: Paula Hamilton
Chair: Joy Damousi

10.30-11.00am: Morning tea

11.00-12.30pm: Colonial senses

‘Startling Reports: Gunfire as Social Soundscape in Colonial Australia’
Diane Collins (Independent Scholar)

Gunfire is a sound frequently linked, through violence, to colonization and frontier societies. This paper moves from such customary associations to listen to some of the ways in which gunfire sounded positive social relations and, less affirmatively, revealed conflict over acceptable behaviours between and within social groups. Building on my earlier work on the relationship between gunfire and shifting social identities in the Australian goldfields, I seek here to take the analysis back in time. While the paper traverses such broad areas as the use of gunfire as celebratory sound and the phenomenon of random town gunfire in early colonial Australia, the analysis concentrates on the meaning of mid-nineteenth century attempts to control private recreational gunfire. Using a specific aural encounter in Sydney’s Cooks River region, the paper examines the way in which acoustic interactions were shaped by an interplay of physical, sectional, legislative and intellectual influences. In concluding, the analysis reflects on longer terms issues of listening and forgetting in relation to gunfire and soundscape in Australia.
The Cosmopoligraphicon in Melbourne in 1855: Dissolving views, place, memory and sensory experience
Tanya Luckins (Deakin University)

In May 1855 the curiously named Cosmopoligraphicon opened at the Hall of the Criterion Hotel, Melbourne. The public was promised a unique blend of music, art and science - instruction and entertainment afforded by dissolving views of scenes from around the world, accompanied by music, sound effects and spoken narrative. Historians have typically examined dissolving views within the context of technology - the magic lantern, and through the primacy of the gaze - the visual pleasure of armchair travel. This paper analyses how the sensory experience was intrinsic to the Cosmopoligraphicon’s mix of instruction and entertainment. Newspaper commentary suggests that evoking a range of senses gave intellectual and emotional meanings to the dissolving views otherwise hidden by the visual alone. The residents of gold rush Melbourne appear to have delighted immersing themselves in the Cosmopoligraphicon, both learning about the world and re-acquainting themselves with parts of the (old) world they had left behind.

Malice overheard: incrimination and recrimination in colonial New South Wales
Penny Russell (University of Sydney)

This paper explores the significance of overhearing in the instigation and resolution of interpersonal disputes in the early decades of the colony of New South Wales. It considers, for example, the role of rumour and report in stirring up trouble between individuals, the role of witnesses to quarrels in establishing who initiated, and who escalated, a disagreement, and the significance of confessions to wrongdoing, especially when overheard by a third party. As evidence from court records, media and personal papers attests, crime, politics and personal relationships became ‘everybody’s business’ in a tiny colony. Whether passed on through gossip or physically overheard, whether by accident or design, the reported speech of others could prove vital in sparking new conflicts, or assisting the resolution of old ones.

12.30-1.30pm: Lunch

1.30-3.00pm: Radio and Voice
Voices from marginal space- radio archives in northern British Columbia
Maureen Atkinson (University of Northern British Columbia)

In remote radio archives there remains lost or hidden voices, that through the intimacy of radio, transcend the temporal and emotional limitations of the written word. In one such collection in northern BC Canada, there are several examples of powerful counter narratives to the monolithic nation building narrative that arts institutions such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, were mandated to promote in the post WW2 industrial expansion.

These are voices of dissent, but more importantly they are voices of marginalised populations who, at a time of active political change of the 1960s and 70s transcend the peripheral audio spaces to become a dominant force in changing the media and regional and new cultural identities. In my paper and presentation, (through the use of audio clips),
I will contrast the voices of two individuals (Indigenous activist and broadcaster Valerie Dudoward, and CBC music and arts producer Norman Newton) to illustrate their differing approaches and vested interests in Indigenous cultural and artistic expression.

**Charles Lindbergh's Voice**  
**David Goodman (University of Melbourne)**

Acknowledged on both sides as the most charismatic public speaker in the bitter public debates about US entry into World War 2 in 1940 and 41, Lindbergh’s broadcast speeches attracted a very large fan mail, the most ardent of which read as love letters to a brave patriot. These letter writers had generally heard a Lindbergh speech once on radio and were writing from their memory of his voice and message. Today the recordings of Lindbergh’s major public speeches sound flat, unemotional, even hesitant at times. How do we reconcile the sound we can still hear today with the undoubted star power his speeches garnered him at the time? The paper thus discusses issues of sound, memory and emotion.

**‘The World Wanderings of a Voice’: Exhibiting the Phonograph in Australia, 1877-1901**  
**Henry Reese (University of Melbourne)**

Recent studies of sound reproduction have emphasised the importance of the phonograph, or ‘talking machine,’ as a charged thinking device. As a novel means of dividing sounds from their sources, the phonograph has been interpreted as a key site in the emergence of ‘modern’ aurality. This paper seeks to broaden extant work on phonographic encounters in Britain and North America by charting the device’s exhibition across the Australian landscape — from Melbourne to Warrnambool to Launceston — in the late nineteenth century. The work of such figures as English impresario Douglas Archibald and Warrnambool showman Thomas Rome is used to illustrate the sonic character of exhibitionary spectacle in the colonial city.

**Afternoon Tea: 3.00-3.30pm**

**3.30-5.00pm: Institutions, Technologies and the Senses**

**Detention of the Senses**  
**Masha Mikola (RMIT)**

Migrants often talk about sensual experiences of their migration; many migrant memories are connected to unfamiliar and utterly strange landscapes, people, languages, sounds, smells, and tastes. But, what about when a person’s journey ends up in a Detention Centre? What happens to your senses in a locked up and isolated space, where the only other people you come in contact with are lawyers and guards and your fellow detainees with uncertain futures. What kind of sensual, emotional imprint does such a space leave with asylum seekers? What is the Australian sensual landscape like for them if and when they are released? How do they remember their time spent in processing and detention centres? The paper explores recorded memories of postwar migrants from Bonegilla processing centre, and those living in migrant hostels in Melbourne in the 1960s and 1970s, which are linked and compared to sensual experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in Australia’s detention facilities today.
The Screech of Fingernails on the Blackboard: Memories of School, Sound and the Senses
Kate Darian-Smith (University of Melbourne)

The sensory world of the historical classroom — from the ‘screech of fingernails on blackboard’ to the smell of dampness or the taste of tepid milk— is an important feature within the many written and oral accounts by adults recalling their childhood experiences of school. Yet it has not been until recently, including in the pioneering work of scholars such as Catherine Burke and Ian Grosvenor, that histories of education and of children have begun to acknowledge the sensory dimensions of everyday school experiences and pedagogical practices.

This paper explores, in an Australian context, how we might understand the historical and cultural significance of the senses in determining how the learning and social interactions within the school classroom are experienced and remembered. In particular, it looks at the evolution of school architecture and design in Australia and how the built environment of the classroom has contributed to the sensory (and especially aural) context of schooling. Drawing on a broad range of sources, this paper will explore the intersections between the histories of education and architectural design and memory studies.

Soundscapes of childhood: material memories of Australian children’s music recordings
Mathew Holmes (University of Melbourne)

This paper intends to explore previously overlooked and unacknowledged sounds of childhood, with an examination of both broadcast soundscapes and early recordings produced specifically for Australian children.

While Australian children’s musical cultures have been examined within educational, ethnomusicological and folklore perspectives, little attention has been paid to the broader material culture of the broadcast and commercial sound worlds made for children and those artists that crafted them.

Questions explored will include: do home grown recordings have a distinctive aural ‘Australian-ness’? How have these commercialised sounds formed the experience of a specific Australian childhood and characterised the consumption of children’s music media beginning with the postwar years? How might we understand Australian children’s music culture in relation to international influences, in particular the exponential globalised growth in the last decades of children’s media? And, how have Australian adults’ recollections forged a re-engagement with the music and sounds from their own childhood?

This paper will attempt to contextualise the growth of consumable media designed for Australian childhoods by examining the beginnings of commercially available recordings through to the diverse and stratified contemporary media scene. It will demonstrate the significance of children’s recordings and broadcast soundscapes and their repackaging of older oral traditions which – when combined with a material culture perspective alongside a historical overview of consumption practices – can reveal much about the sounds of Australian childhood.
5.30pm: Drinks, University House, University of Melbourne

7.00pm: Dinner, TBC

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FRIDAY 25 JULY

9.00-11.00am: Violence and Sound

‘Hell Sounds’: The Soundscape of War, 1914-1945
Joy Damousi, (University of Melbourne)

‘Hell Sounds’ will explore how the experience of war is mediated by sound. Drawing on diaries, memoirs and contemporary accounts, this project will explore how war sounds of the battlefield and the home-front during the First and Second World War have shaped the experience and memory of these events by civilians and combatants. Through a history of the technology of modern warfare during the twentieth century such as bombings, shelling, explosives and air sirens, this project aims to re-conceptualise the history of the two world wars through the auditory landscape created by inflicting violence on the senses. This paper will explore case-studies of the two world wars as a way of charting change over time of the impact of violence, technology and sound.

Soundscapes and the Experience of the Great War
Amanda Laugesen, (ANU)

Many pages have been devoted to writing histories of the First World War, but relatively little scholarship has been devoted to exploring the soundscapes of the war. Yet a study of the aural experiences of soldiers can reveal much about the day-to-day existence of soldiers, how they experienced war, and how they coped or did not cope with the realities and horrors of trench warfare. This paper forms part of a larger project exploring the experience of sound during the Great War. I will draw on previous research on soldiers’ experiences of music in the war, and expand on this to explore the varied soundscapes of war from the sounds of shelling and bombardment to language to the profound impact of silence. I am particularly interested in exploring how soldiers experienced and interpreted sound in the context of war, and how they translated these sensory experiences into written form.

Hearing but not seeing: magnifying terror in the Indonesian repression of 1965-66
Vannessa Hearman, (University of Sydney)

In recalling the Indonesian mass killings and violence of 1965-66 that claimed some half a million lives, the sounds of the violence often constitute the sharpest memories. Following what is often dubbed a failed communist coup in Indonesia, members and sympathisers of the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI) were targeted for killing and arrest from October 1965. I argue that the shape of the Army-led repression, with its combination of media blackouts, misinformation, curfews, checkpoints and night time raids worked effectively in limiting the visuality of the repression. Limiting visuality
magnified the state of unknowing and therefore the extent of the terror. Research and popular literature about the killings often raise the visual aspects of the aftermath of the killings, such as the bodies left in the street and in the waterways of Java for their shock value. There is however still little research on the sounds of the time and their effects on the population, such as sounds of army trucks, people marching, the rain falling and knife sharpening. In turn, I explore how sounds conditioned responses to the repression.

The Blindfolds of Pinochet's Chile
Peter Read (University of Sydney)

Probably every one of the three thousand victims put to death by Pinochet's military coup was blindfolded during his or her incarceration. Survivors have stressed how often they were able to identify their location and communicate with their fellow prisoners despite their loss of direct sight. Prisoners at an infamous site of torture and execution Londred 38 suspected where they were when they recognised the floor tiles they could see through the bottom of the blindfolds, suspicions confirmed when they heard the bells of the nearby church of St Francisco. Although tied up, some managed to creep round the floor at night to whisper and touch their companeros or companeras. They heard the footsteps of guards coming down the stairs to fetch another victim; the screams echoing around the stairwell. At another centre, Villa Grimaldi, prisoners heard planes taking off and landing and the children of the guards frolicking in the pool. They smelled the roses in the garden. It is the senses of hearing, touch and smell so absorbed in the detention and torture cells that trigger the most vivid of emotions whenever survivors return to the sites of sorrow.

11.00-11.30am: Morning tea

11.30am-1.00pm: Sensory Urban

Sensory Dissonance: a clash of cultures in the urban landscape
Paula Hamilton (UTS)

How might the history of the city and suburbs be different if we remembered the experience through a multisensorial landscape of the past? This paper addresses the limitations and possibilities of memory sources such as oral history by drawing on people's sensual memories of inner city Balmain, Sydney, as a place of everyday life and work at a time of great change from the 1960s-1990s. A new perspective on the meaning and impact of gentrification emerges in this process.

A sensory urban history of Redfern, Alexandria and Waterloo
Lisa Murray (Sydney City Historian)

Redfern, Alexandria and Waterloo were once industrial working class suburbs that were in the mid 20th century the manufacturing and economic powerhouse of NSW. Today the southern industrial area is undergoing radical urban renewal through planning re-zoning and state government intervention, with large apartment blocks being built on former industrial sites. As these sleek modern apartments attract a high-income population that wish to live close to the city, gentrification of the suburbs emerges placing further pressure on the few remaining industries. With the industrial landscape largely obliterated and the working class residents dislocated and dwindling, how can we recapture the sights, sounds and smells of this place to tell the history of what it was like to live and work in these
Botanical Histories in Urban Environments: Connecting Memory and the Senses Through Plants in Perth, Western Australia
John Charles Ryan (Edith Cowan University)

In 2013, I began work on the initiative “FloraCultures: Conserving Perth’s Botanical Heritage through a Digital Repository” (www.FloraCultures.org.au). This digital environmental humanities project aims to develop an open-access, multimedia model for conserving botanical heritage. When released later in 2014, the online archive will promote the overlays between cultural heritage and indigenous plants through a spectrum of content, including oral histories, which are a form of endangered intangible cultural heritage (ICH). The oral histories intrinsically probe memory and the senses. People recollect personal or family experiences of Western Australia’s flora and, in the process, reveal empirical knowledge of plants (e.g., former floristic distributions or ecological transactions between plants and other species) gained through long-term observation. Their memories are not exclusively in the form of scientific observation, but often carry intimate sensory dimensions: the pungent smell of Boronia in the CBD, the sound of wind through Sheaoaks in the swamps, the taste of Quandong jam made from their mother’s recipe or the sensation of prickly Hakeas on their skin as they crawled through the bush in their youth. Drawing from theories of affect and sensory memory, this paper will theorise the concept of “botanical memory” through an analysis of a cross-section of oral histories conducted with botanists, conservationists and wildflower enthusiasts in Perth.

1.00-2.00pm: Lunch

2.00-3.30pm: Listening and Overhearing

Mass-Observation and ‘Overheard’
Murray Goot (Macquarie University)

Eavesdropping as a form of intelligence gathering has a long history. In the social sciences it is most readily associated with anthropology. Less well known is the part it played in the repertoire of techniques developed in Britain from 1937 and applied until 1945 by Mass-Observation (M-O), an extraordinary intervention in the life of civil society designed by Tom Harrisson an amateur anthropologist, and Charles Madge subsequently a sociologist, as a kind of social science of the demos – of the people, for the people, and by the people. This paper outlines the way eavesdropping, or the recording of ‘overheards’ as they were called, was adopted by Mass-Observation, a movement organised around the idea of applying anthropological techniques to knowing and understanding the citizens of the metropole at a time in Britain when empirical sociology had yet to embrace such tasks. It discusses the debate about both the efficacy and the ethics of eavesdropping conducted within the organisation and by critics outside, especially in relation to the work undertaken by Mass-Observation during the war for the Ministry of Information. And it shows how eavesdropping came to be taken up after the war in cognate disciplines, including consumer research.
Abberent Adventures in Auditory Geographies: Learning from Listening
Sarah Barns (UTS)

About ten years ago I had a strange idea. What if I could travel the city, listening in to its past environments, as they were once recorded? Create a version of time travel perhaps, enabling listeners to connect to the sounds of a past space as they walked the streets today, earbuds close to the historical ground? Might this even be a sort of memorialising practice, notating and amplifying places lost but still loved, events passed but still in a sense lived, in the mind? Sound historians, practitioners and geographers, working hard to correct the neglected place of sound in contemporary culture have long argued for more sensory, and situated accounts of the city, of modernity, of technology and the self, valuing the lessons that listening can offer. But take this task on practically, and what do you learn about the auditory geographies of our past places? This paper will present a set of challenges and opportunities that have shaped my abberent adventures in the city’s archives, from mundane issues like copyright and access, to the challenges of working with audiences in the public domain, and will address the evolving potentials of a listening-based practice for the fields of public history and interpretation.

A city in a book, a city in the ear: Reader response, listener response and encounter with Greater Sydney
Cleo Mees (Macquarie University)

Researchers are increasingly exploring audiovisual methods as ways of facilitating a multi-sensory and pre-literary engagement with their research terrain. My doctoral project investigates such audiovisual methods in relation to reader response – specifically, my reader response to Peter Carey’s 30 Days in Sydney (2001). Writing can provoke potent imaginative and sensory encounters with a city; I am interested in how audiovisual media can do the same, and how they diverge and converge with writing in this regard. My presentation will examine the relationship between ‘listener response’ and reader response – or, between sound and the written word – and the ways in which these foster sensory, imaginative engagement with Sydney. I will reflect on my reader response to Peter Carey’s literary account, and on my own attempts to mediate parts of Sydney through audio and video, offering excerpts of my recordings and edits to illustrate. Drawing on the work of Wolfgang Iser, Walter J. Ong, Virginia Madsen and others, I will suggest that reading and listening have important things in common – in particular, the reader/listener’s ability to generate rich personal, internal imagery in the absence of prescribed images. I will also point out ways in which reading and listening might differ. Through a discussion grounded in both theory and praxis my paper hopes to begin to approximate the distances (or dances) between listener and reader experience.

3.30-4.00pm: Afternoon tea

4.00-5.00pm: Place and Sound

Embodied imagination: understanding place through sound and movement
Eva Rodriguez Riestra (City of Sydney)

This paper investigates the relationship between sound and space through embodiment and imagination by examining ephemeral, sound-based, site-specific artistic practices. It will focus on the work of Canadian sound artist Janet Cardiff, paying close attention to the audio walk The Missing Voice: (Case Study B), which takes the listener through the streets
and lanes of London's East End and combines pre-recorded ambient sounds of the location with descriptions, comments, fragments of overheard conversation, loosely-structured narrative, snatches of music and references to the past. Fragmented and incomplete, the walk leaves space for the imagination, memory and emotion of the listener. The terrain for the exploration is the internal experience of the individual in the city and uses sound, memory and imagination to create a deep connection to place. The individual, unrepeatable, whole-body experience of place is created by a combination of sound, walking, and the fragmented nature of the narrative. Each of these requires active effort from the listener which in turn results in heightened awareness of the space through which they are led by the art work. The ambiguous and elusive narrative of the work simultaneously evokes a real, an imagined, a collective, and a personal past; and the emotional response it elicits is complex: not just a nostalgic association with a version of history, but an active and shifting emotional reaction to things experienced, remembered, and imagined.

**Cachupa on the Plate and Portuguese Wine in a Glass: Music, Cuisine, and Sensory Landscapes in Postcolonial Lisbon**

Mark E. Kehren (Loras College Dubuque, Iowa, USA)

This paper will investigate how transformations within the sensory landscape of Lisbon since the Portuguese Revolution of 1974 can be explored through cuisine and music. Based on ethnographic fieldwork and archival research, this study aims to demonstrate how particular flavors, aromas, sounds, and rhythms contextualize the changes to Lisbon's socio-cultural geography as two million African immigrants and Portuguese citizens returning from Angola and Mozambique have settled in the city since the mid-1970s. This work examines how particular Luso-African dishes and musical expressions ranging from the Cape Verdean Cachupa and Morna to the Angolan Moamba and Semba play a pivotal role in understanding neighborhood dynamics and in keeping homeland memories alive, imagined, and re-created for the African immigrants and Portuguese returnees. This text will also consider how these same sounds, flavors, aromas, and rhythms contribute to a geographic imagination of the former African colonies for Lisboners and Afro-descendants who have never “experienced” Africa firsthand. The analysis of sensory landscapes shaped through food and music seeks to contribute to a broader understanding of a variety of transnational and historical issues related to cultural identity and nationhood, immigration and return migration, and the dynamics of postcolonial societies.

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**5.00pm-6.00pm: Music and Memory**

**Music and Autobiographical Memory: The Soundtracks of Space and Place**

Lauren Istvandity (Griffith University)

Each individual possesses a collection of autobiographical memories that captures their personal experiences to date. Essential to the recollection and reframing of these memories in the present is the contextualisation of their occurrence in space and place. Through research for my doctoral project on musically-triggered autobiographical memory in individuals in South East Queensland, it was found that music has the ability to aid in the capture and recollection not only of specific memories, but also an affected sense of time and location within defined temporal boundaries. I asserted that the metaphorical collection of this music is comparable to film score that accompanies visions of our life, proposing the term “lifetime soundtrack” to describe such music.
In this paper I will show how personal memories for space and place can effectively be captured through the lifetime soundtrack. Analysis of interview extracts will aid the investigation into connections between music and space or place in memory, and the ability for music to evoke broad senses of experience, representing feelings, attitudes and interactions as a collective. In doing this, the paper will emphasise the role of music in shaping autobiographical memory, whilst questioning the fluid interplay between space, place and music within recollections of life experiences.

**Listening Back: All Tomorrow's Parties’ ‘Don't Look Back’ and Nostalgia for the Album**

Ben Byrne (UTS)

In *Listening Back: All Tomorrow’s Parties’ ‘Don't Look Back’ and Nostalgia for the Album* I analyse the significance of All Tomorrow’s Parties’ ‘Don’t Look Back’ concert series. Staged in various locations around the world, including Australia, the series features bands performing ‘classic’ albums in full, the conception and popularity of the series demonstrating the existence of nostalgic impulses, not only for particular albums but for the album as a form. Sound’s mnemonic qualities are well documented and help to explain the attachment frequently felt towards specific music. Still, the privileging of albums in particular is notable. Sound recording and playback technologies are marketed for their high fidelity to original sounds and based on this rhetoric there exists an assumption that all recordings of music are copies of some form of original (historically presumed to be a live performance of some sort). However, interest in bands playing albums in full, and indeed particular hits more generally, demonstrates that with regard to contemporary popular music listeners typically treat recordings themselves as originals. Moreover, I find that the format of the series demonstrates the existence of nostalgia for the album as a form because its format privileges the album as the original, now arguably increasingly overlooked, form of presentation of the music performed.

**6pm: Drinks**

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