



Hearing Infinity; The Significance of Space in the Work of Pauline Oliveros

presented by J. Andrew Smith

For some twentieth and twenty-first century musician, space is regarded as a component of music and sound itself with equal importance to traditionally fundamental considerations of pitch, amplitude, and rhythm. Many composers regard space itself as a primary concern around which their musical thinking as well as their principal soundworld revolve. This is true of especially true of composer Pauline Oliveros. Even her earliest musical experiments and her later work as an electroacoustic pioneer was centered on a deep understanding of, and fascination with, space. Her works largely concern themselves with the perception and manipulation of spaces, and her practice of Deep Listening is founded upon an understanding of musical space. Deep Listening itself was borne from Oliveros's improvisational experiences in the Dan Harpole Cistern at Fort Worden in Townsend, Washington, an underground reservoir with unique acoustic properties that blur the lines between a sound's source and its sounding in the space. These experiences reinforced concepts she explored in her groundbreaking work in electronic music, and the idea of acoustic spaces, both virtual and real, cemented themselves as a fundamental pillar of her sound practice. Through the evolution of Deep Listening and Oliveros's electronic music practice, she developed the Expanded Instrument System, which deepened her exploration of musical space and allowed her to incorporate the manipulation of virtual acoustic spaces as a changeable component in real time performances and improvisations. Oliveros's entire oeuvre revolves around musical space and its importance as a fundamental dimension of sound itself.



J. Andrew Smith is a graduate of Bowling Green State University, where he studied composition with Dr. Elaine Lillios, Dr. Mikel Kuehn, and Dr. Christopher Dietz. His works have

been performed at the SPLICE Institute, Third Practice Electroacoustic Music Festival, New Music on the Point, and the Southeastern Composers' Symposium. His recent works include a piece inspired by Peter Balakian's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Ozone Journal* for Lisa Kaplan and Matt Duvall of Eighth Blackbird. He has presented in masterclasses with Paula Matthusen, Augusta Reed Thomas, Lewis Spratlan, Paul Coleman, Charles Halka, and Matthew Welch. His primary interests lie in exploring chamber works with live electronics and large ensemble pieces as well as the intersection between literature and electronic music.