

## 41. Ambient Sound Engineering

Pardon the tangent, but the topic of religion and spirituality triggered a personal fascination with ambient sound engineering, applied technology that is raising consciousness, improving environments, and making human beings feel better, unconsciously for most. I just think it's really cool!

In the 2020s, a group of friends, who had escaped the big city madness of Kong King for Guaylin, China, got interested in how sound interacts with human spirit. They had been totally overwhelmed with the noise, busyness, traffic, chaos, pollution and hustle of big city life and moved to a beautiful countryside, where water buffalo bathed in the rivers, beside rice paddies and surreal limestone karst mountains.

As time passed, they started feeling so much better. Twitches, health issues and anxieties melted away. They felt at peace inside. They woke up to nature and beauty. They enjoyed silence, feeling balanced.

Two were musicians, and one was a sound engineer. They were interested in how music affects moods. Music as a universal language conveys emotion, not just as intellectual concepts, but also by causing us to feel it. Music has the power to engage directly with human energies, beings, emotions and spirits.

One of them got hold of a medieval European codex, which had been copied and passed on by monks, originating from ancient Greece. It attempted to document musical tones and combinations of tones, capturing not only what could be translated mathematically into audio frequencies and wavelengths, but also consensus subjective experiences associated with them in human beings.

As a simple example, major chords in music are universally associated with happy or positive feelings, and minor chords are associated with sad or negative feelings. Each tone and combination had a name, a description of how to produce the tone(s), and its human subjective associations, with a name for that. The subjective associations could be organized into a spectrum, from really bad to really good.

The worst tones and combination of sounds were like fingernails on a chalkboard, evoking strong negative reactions in humans, and had names like the devil flaying his mother alive. The best tones and combinations of sounds were like therapeutic ear massages, and had names like angels making love.

The friends geeked out on that, finding it fascinating, and they found a modern translation of the codex, which made it more user friendly, providing better tools for identifying sounds and modern language. They speculated that sound had a big role in how they were feeling after the move to the country, and how they had been feeling while living in the city, and they decided to experiment with that.

They got devices that measured frequencies and wavelengths of sounds, and took them to the river. They measured and identified the ambient sounds there, and looked them up in the modern codex. They found virtually all of the natural sounds there were associated with positive subjective experiences. That meant, like with music, those sounds were evoking positive subjective feelings in humans. Nice!

They took the devices and codex back to Kong King. Wow, virtually all of the outdoor ambient sounds, everywhere, were tied to negative human subjective experiences; so, they evoked negative feelings. They then experimented in indoor city environments, and they discovered the same thing. The sounds people were surrounding themselves with, outdoors and indoors, were creating negative feelings in us.

They were surprised and excited to be discovering all of this. It was new information, and fascinating. Intuitively, it all rang true to them. They couldn't believe they had never figured this out before. Why?

They realized that we squelch or tune out ambient sounds. When we first walk into a new apartment, we become aware of sounds: the refrigerator buzzing, the fan whirring, the A/C sounds, water moving around through pipes, motors running in the building, and outside sounds coming through the walls... Maybe we're even irritated by the sounds. Soon, though, our brains tune those sounds out. We realize it's not important or not beneficial and we stop paying attention to it. We stop hearing it in our heads.

However, they realized, the sounds are still there, and they are still creating reactions in our beings, causing us to have negative subjective feelings and emotions. Sounds we create in our environments are making us feel bad. It's like someone is playing music we hate all the time, and we try to ignore it.

Whoa, so humans in manmade environments are feeling bad because of ugly sounds we're making, and people do not even know it's going on, because we tune all of that out of our conscious awareness, trying to prevent harm that we're realizing anyway subconsciously. We feel bad and don't know why.

They realized that, while they had been making lots of amazing music together in the countryside, they'd hardly been listening to recorded music, preferring silence or the sounds of nature, instead, and hypothesized that people use recorded music in their lives to mask or drown out unpleasant sounds, even if they're not consciously aware of that being the reason they play music or TVs in the background.

These were heady realizations, and they were excited about it all, so they decided to share their news. They were talking about how to get the word out, so people would realize what we've been doing.

Suddenly, one of them smacked herself in the forehead and said, *"My God, what an opportunity! There's an obvious application of this knowledge that can create real wealth and help billions of people! Now that we realize ambient human-made sounds produce subjective experiences in human beings, people could start consciously tuning things that make ambient sounds, so they have positive impacts! Say we now have three appliances in a home setting that are producing ugly and painful vicious sounds. What's to prevent us from making one hum in C and the others in E and G, to create a C-major chord, which is producing positive subjective feelings instead, for example? We could totally turn this around!"* After a few minutes of staring into space, pondering, they all lit up. Absolutely, we can do this stuff!

These people initiated an effort to raise awareness of these relationships between sound and feeling, and they organized a human-made ambient sounds standards body. It creates and coordinates specifications for sound volumes, tones and combinations from human activities, creating opportunities to engineer ambient human soundscapes to improve human beings, states, energies and feelings.

Today, in 2060, humans benefit, first and foremost, from radically reduced volumes of harmful noise, because we no longer have combustion engines and vehicles blasting us from all directions, always, but also because we can tune our environmental soundscapes to produce virtuous reactions in human life. Outdoors, municipal sound engineering teams coordinate sounds produced by trains, motors and tools. Indoors, people can order and tune appliances to virtuous sound tones and combinations. Together, these changes engineer better energies and feelings in human beings, helping us feel better. So cool!