

# Brian Eno

Please do not distribute

Please do not distribute

# Brian Eno

**Oblique Music**

**EDITED BY SEAN ALBIEZ  
AND DAVID PATTIE**

Bloomsbury Academic  
An imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

**B L O O M S B U R Y**  
LONDON • OXFORD • NEW YORK • NEW DELHI • SYDNEY

**Bloomsbury Academic**

An imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

50 Bedford Square  
London  
WC1B 3DP  
UK

1385 Broadway  
New York  
NY 10018  
USA

**www.bloomsbury.com**

**BLOOMSBURY and the Diana logo are trademarks of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc**

First published 2016

© Sean Albiez, David Pattie and contributors, 2016

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publishers.

No responsibility for loss caused to any individual or organization acting on or refraining from action as a result of the material in this publication can be accepted by Bloomsbury or the author.

**British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data**

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: HB: 978-1-4411-1745-8

PB: 978-1-4411-2912-3

ePDF: 978-1-4411-5534-4

ePub: 978-1-4411-4806-3

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Names: Albiez, Sean, editor. | Pattie, David, 1963– editor.

Title: Brian Eno : oblique music / edited by Sean Albiez and David Pattie.

Description: New York : Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. | Includes index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2016003576 (print) | LCCN 2016006402 (ebook) |

ISBN 9781441117458 (hardcover : alk. paper) | ISBN 9781441148063 (ePub) |

ISBN 9781441155344 (ePDF)

Subjects: LCSH: Eno, Brian, 1948—Criticism and interpretation. |

Electronica (Music)—History and criticism. | Ambient music—History

and criticism. | Glam rock music—History and criticism.

Classification: LCC ML410.E58 B75 2016 (print) | LCC ML410.E58 (ebook) |

DDC 780.92—dc23

LC record available at <http://lccn.loc.gov/2016003576>

Cover design: [Clareturner.co.uk](http://Clareturner.co.uk)

Cover image © Henk Badenhorst/Getty

Typeset by Newgen Knowledge Works (P) Ltd., Chennai, India

Printed and bound in the United States of America

*For Jacqui, Cameron, Celie, Joe and Ben O'Rian*

Please do not distribute

Please do not distribute

# CONTENTS

*Contributors* ix

Introduction: Brian Eno: A problem of organization 1  
*David Pattie and Sean Albiez*

## **PART ONE** Eno: Composer, musician and theorist 9

- 1 The Bogus Men: Eno, Ferry and Roxy Music 11  
*David Pattie*
- 2 Brian Eno, non-musicianship and the experimental tradition 29  
*Cecilia Sun*
- 3 Taking the studio by strategy 49  
*David Pattie*
- 4 Between the avant-garde and the popular: The discursive economy of Brian Eno's musical practices 69  
*Chris Atton*
- 5 Yes, but is it music? Brian Eno and the definition of ambient music 85  
*Mark Edward Achtermann*
- 6 The lovely bones: Music from beyond 105  
*Hillegonda C. Rietveld*
- 7 The voice and/of Brian Eno 119  
*Sean Albiez*

**PART TWO** The University of Eno: Production and collaborations 137

- 8 Before and after Eno: Situating ‘The Recording Studio as Compositional Tool’ 139  
*Sean Albiez and Ruth Dockwray*
- 9 Control and surrender: Eno remixed – collaboration and *Oblique Strategies* 175  
*Kingsley Marshall and Rupert Loydell*
- 10 Avant-gardism, ‘Africa’ and appropriation in *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* 193  
*Elizabeth Ann Lindau*
- 11 Eno and Devo 211  
*Jonathan Stewart*
- 12 Another Green World? Eno, Ireland and U2 235  
*Noel McLaughlin*
- 13 Documenting no wave: Brian Eno as urban ethnographer 257  
*Martin James*

*Select Discography* 269

*Index* 275



## CHAPTER SIX

# The lovely bones: Music from beyond

*Hillegonda C. Rietveld*

*'2.014 ... Objects contain the possibility of all situations'.  
(Wittgenstein, 1975: 7)*

This chapter will explore links between ambient and cinematic music through the use of Brian Eno's music in film, with a particular focus on the Peter Jackson directed 2009 feature film *The Lovely Bones*. Set in 1973–1975, the story is narrated from the perspective of a fourteen-year-old teenage girl, Susie Salmon who, after being violently murdered by neighbour Mr. Harvey, lingers on in limbo, where her consciousness shifts between dream and reality. As she and her family slowly come to terms with her death, her abject fate is set in sharp contrast to her teenage fantasies of fun and love that are played out in her personal heaven. Eno's contribution to the musical sound track is noteworthy; in addition to a set of existing songs, by Eno and other artists, ambient musical components (simple memorable melodies, complex sonic textures) affectively enhance the story's hyper-real spiritual realm from which Susie's disembodied voice speaks.

### **Ambient film music**

Brian Eno's recordings appear in a wide range of over 160 films, documentaries and television programmes (IMBd, 2014). Some are

ready-made songs such as the ever-popular ‘Heroes’ (a 1977 collaboration with David Bowie), but most are selected from existing recordings that are characterized by a meandering ambience, such as ‘An Ending (Ascent)’ from his 1983 *Apollo: Atmospheres and Soundtracks* album. Their seemingly random melodies create a sense of suspense in ears trained towards tonal resolution, such as the bleak suspense of ‘The Lost Day’ and ‘Lizard Point’ (from the album *Ambient 4: On Land* [1982]) in *Shutter Island* (Scorsese, 2010). Other tracks provide a psychedelic sense of flow, such as ‘Deep Blue Day’ (from the *Apollo* album) in *Trainspotting* (Boyle, 1996).

On occasion, Eno is more involved in the creation of a bespoke sound track, and *The Lovely Bones* is an example of this. As Eno found film compositions to be a source of inspiration, this may not come as a surprise. On the occasion of the release of the 2010 album *Small Craft on a Milk Sea*, which contains elements from the original sound track of *The Lovely Bones*, Eno commented in the album press release that:

In the early seventies I found myself preferring film soundtracks to most other types of records. What drew me to them was their sensuality and unfinished-ness – in the absence of the film they invited you, the listener, to complete them in your mind. If you hadn’t even seen the film, the music remained evocative – like the lingering perfume of somebody who’s just left a room you’ve entered. (qtd. in *The Quietus*, 2010)

He illustrates this by relaying the occasion on which he heard Nino Rota’s Fellini soundtracks:

... in listening to them I found I could imagine a whole movie in advance: and though it usually turned out to be nothing much like Fellini’s version, it left me with the idea that a music which left itself in some way unresolved engaged the listener in a particularly creative way. (qtd. in *The Quietus*, 2010)

The aim to create participatory music lies deep within Eno’s art practice. Discussing Eno’s visual and musical work, his art college tutor, Roy Ascott (2013: 12) underlines ‘the recognition that attempting to measure cultural location is relative, viewer dependent, unstable, shifting, and open-ended’. As a result, ‘a distinction has to be drawn between the old order of music and art in which there are listeners and viewers, and the situation that now demands an active perception, what might be called *proception*, in the participatory process’ (original italics). In this context, Ascott quotes Henri Bergson’s insight that ‘the act of perception, (is) something which outruns perception itself’ (2013: 12), and refers to McLuhan’s 1964 notion of ‘cold’, or ‘cool’ media, in which ambiguity requires active engagement by the viewer and listener in order to make sense.

Eno's fascination with cinematic sound became explicit in his 1978 album *Music for Films*, of which he states that, '[s]ome of it was made specifically for use as soundtrack material, some of it was made for other reasons but found its way into films' (qtd. in Bracewell, 2005). The 1976 recordings, some co-produced, were first intended as a limited edition show reel for filmmakers. This intention succeeded with the music-making appearances in films, such as 'Slow Water' in Derek Jarman's 1978 glam-punk movie *Jubilee*. In its final expanded release the album's tracks function as short image-less films. A sequel followed in 1983, *Music for Films, Volume 2* (re-released in 2005 in an expanded version as *More Music for Films*), which was the result of a collaboration with his brother Roger Eno and Daniel Lanois.

During the same year, in 1983, this collaborative production team produced *Apollo: Atmospheres and Soundtracks*, the music to Al Reinert's film *For All of Mankind*, eventually released in 1989. Some of the tracks appear on other films; for example, 'An Ending (Ascent)' in films such as *28 Days Later ...* (Boyle, 2002), *Traffic* (Soderberg, 2000) as well as in *The Lovely Bones*. Because the *Apollo* album preceded the film by some years, new tracks were added to the soundtrack of *For All of Mankind*, featuring a range of additional artists, a selection of which can be heard on Eno's 1988 album *Music for Films III*. An original Eno-produced soundtrack can also be heard in the Hollywood sci-fi epic *Dune* (Lynch, 1984), scored by rock band Toto, with Eno authoring the ambient composition 'Prophesy Theme'. Its melody is stretched in long notes across several bars, developing slowly, with raspy overtones that seem to suggest a never-ending scorching sandy wind. In a review by *filmtracks.com* (2008), the 'Prophesy Theme' is described as 'a dreary, boring, and minimal contribution to the film'. And yet, this 'dreary' minimalism is characteristic of Eno's approach to the creation of an ambience that wraps its ambivalence around the listener and through the scene.

In film production terminology, 'ambience' is a term that, like 'atmos', normally indicates the background sound that suggests the location or immediate surroundings of a scene. In this context, Eno's ambient music functions as a type of underscore, music that has the ability to subjectively melt with the diegetic sounds of a narrative setting. In the liner notes of *Ambient 1: Music for Airports* Eno (1978) defines ambience, 'as an atmosphere, or a surrounding influence: a tint' and that, '[a]mbient Music must be able to accommodate many levels of listening attention without enforcing one in particular; it must be as ignorable as it is interesting'. This recalls notion of *musique d'ameublement* ('furniture music') articulated during the early twentieth century by French composer Erik Satie: 'a music, that is, which will be part of the noises of the environment ... I think of it as melodious, softening the noises of the knives and forks at dinner, not dominating them, not imposing itself' (Satie, qtd. by Scoates, 2013: 121). An open space is created for the listener to add their own impressions – in other words, a subjective space between fantasy and reality.

Addressing a range of moods, Eno's ambient compositions tend to shift through repetition of various sonic layers, in which structural elements of melody and rhythm are pushed aside in favour of an emphasis on spatial effects and sonic texture.<sup>1</sup> Partly, this was a result of the ubiquity of the hi-fi listening experience and the development of studio technology during the early 1970s: 'I realized that this was what the recording studio was for: to change the texture of sound, to make it more malleable. That (. . .) was what I wanted to concentrate on (. . .) It was the background that interested me' (Eno, qtd. by Mallet, 2001). Through this approach, in which the medium of sound is emphasized over a musical message, ambient music enables multiple listening perspectives.

Eno explains in the liner notes of *Discreet Music* (1975) he became especially aware of ambient sound and music when recuperating from an accident:

... I put on the record. Having laid down, I realized that the amplifier was set at an extremely low level, and that one channel of the stereo had failed completely. Since I hadn't the energy to get up and improve matters, the record played on almost inaudibly. This presented what was for me a new way of hearing music – as part of the ambience of the environment just as the colour of the light and the sound of the rain were parts of that ambience. It is for this reason that I suggest listening to the piece at comparatively low levels, even to the extent that it frequently falls below the threshold of audibility.

Such understanding of the interaction between music and sonic environment can be especially effective as film music; although non-diegetic, ambient music subconsciously intertwines with environmental diegetic ambience. In this process, the boundary between objective and subjective perception becomes blurred. Although a sense of place is important to Eno's ambient compositions, his approach to music as a type of abstract painting simultaneously destabilizes a centred sense of being. Ambient music, especially when used as film music, thereby enters an uncanny mode, which can cause a deep sense of *jouissance* and anxiety. Disregarding conventional Western tonality in addition to the highly processed hyper-real space of many of Eno's ambient tracks give them an unanchored otherworldly 'feel', which can work well as the underscore for psychological thrillers.

## Call of the bones

*The Lovely Bones* is a 2009 film adaptation of a novel of the same name, by American writer Alice Sebold (2002), with a screenplay by New Zealanders Fran Walsh, Philippa Boyens and director Peter Jackson. The story is

narrated from the perspective of Susie Salmon, a young teenage girl who was murdered in a specially created den under an empty cornfield by her obsessive neighbour on a cold December night in 1973. It happened on the same day she had been asked out on a date by the boy she had fallen in love with. Both her fear for Mr. Harvey, her killer, and the desire for Ray Singh, the boy, keep her closely tied to the world she so suddenly left behind, preventing her to let go and move to 'high heaven'. Instead, she lingers on, partially connected to those who live on and partially in a dream-like personal heaven, based on the metaphorical world of her emotional subconscious.

The animation of Susie's surreal dreamworld was produced by the visual effects team of Weta Digital, which also made possible Peter Jackson's *The Lord of Rings* trilogy (2001–2003) and his remake of *King Kong* (2005). The film's dream imagery includes fantastically idyllic landscapes of forests and fields; life-size versions of her father's bottled model ships, crashing onto a large deserted beach; a gazebo similar to the one where Susie had arranged to meet Ray; Mr. Harvey's blood-stained bathroom; and the resuscitation of a red rose, symbolizing Susie's life force. The imagery further includes a tree set in the middle of an open field in a mountainous region, a portal to heaven – yet when Susie decides she still has some unfinished business in the mortal world, the tree's leaves turn into a flock of birds that fly off to expose its barren branches (an emblematic image used on the film's publicity materials). When Susie finds the tree again, a little girl, one of Mr. Harvey's victims, tells Susie that she is there often, because she likes 'to listen to the sounds' (1:46) – she does not elaborate further on this, seemingly pointing to the role of sound to this particular film.

Peter Jackson's partner Fran Walsh suggested using music by Brian Eno to underpin the story's historical setting; in particular, the 1973 song 'Baby's On Fire' from *Here Come the Warm Jets*, seemed right for a scene in which Susie inspires her father to take revenge on Mr. Harvey, eventually chasing after him with a baseball bat in a ripe cornfield, with disastrous results, as her father is beaten up as result of mistaken identity. Indeed, elements from this song, such as Robert Fripp and Paul Rudolph's psychedelic rock guitar, as well as its recognizable rhythmic components have been woven through this dark chaotically violent scene (1:26). Another track the director had in mind was 'The Big Ship', from the 1975 album *Another Green World* (Roberts, 2009); this track appears near the end of the film, to celebrate a triumphant release of Susie's spirit as her corpse is dumped in a sinkhole while her soul kisses Ray, the boy of her dreams. These tracks appear among music from other artists, ranging from the diegetic use of Paul and Linda McCartney's happy 'Another Day' (1971) on the radio within the family sphere before the murder, to the non-diegetic use of soaring songs such as 'Alice' by The Cocteau Twins' (1996) and 'Song to the Siren' by

This *Mortal Coil* (1983) to accompany Susie's liberating experience of her sweet teenage girl fantasy in the afterlife.

Eno became more involved in the sound track of *The Lovely Bones* than was initially envisaged though. Director Peter Jackson explains that:

We got to the point pretty much at the beginning of post production where we had to start to ask permission to use these tracks and we contacted Brian and explained what we were doing and could we use these couple of songs of his and he asked us about the film and he rushed out and grabbed the book to read it. He was curious. He said to us, have you got a composer to do the soundtrack? And we said no, not really. We didn't think maybe we might not use one and then he said he would be really interested in doing it. If we wanted to go that way, he sort of volunteered, which was amazing to us. (qtd. in Roberts, 2009)

Brian Eno's existing work was used from a range of albums, interspersed with original composition and music from other sources. The introductory section of the film illustrates this well. *The Lovely Bones* opens in the departure lounge of *Ambient 1: Music for Airports* (1978). Co-composed by engineer producer Rhett Davies and musician Robert Wyatt, '1/1' has an air of quiet anticipation. Within an ambient music background, a simple monophonic piano melody improvises on a mix of an announcement chime and the final 'ding dong' church-clock phrase of wake-up lullaby 'Frère Jacques'. During this scene, a little girl watches a whirling snow globe on her father's desk, while a young female *acousmètre* (disembodied narrator's voice; see Chion, 1999) observes how she worried for the lone penguin inside, but her father reassures her: 'don't worry Susie; he has a nice life. He's trapped in a perfect world'. Here an important theme is set up for the story, as the main characters each live out a lonely perfection: Susie's dreamy afterlife; her father's tenacious 'closet-scale modeler' hobby, as Susie puts it, (13:27) of creating delicate ship models in bottles; her mother's perfect maintenance of Susie's old bedroom; and Mr. Harvey's perfectly scheduled life, making detailed dolls houses and scheming his undetectable violent murders of women. 'I Hear You Knockin', by Dave Edmunds (1970), loudly disrupts this initial moment of quiet contemplation and captures the passing of twelve years in which the parent bedroom shifts from young countercultural to comfortable family life, bringing Susie a younger sister and brother, and showing Susie as a budding photographer. This rush of real-world events melts into further reflection of Susie's life and imminent disaster as the narrative turns to an accident of her little brother, as well as to Ruth, a psychic girl that lives near an ominous sinkhole/rubbish tip. This almost nostalgic introductory overview of events and characters is accompanied by 'First Light' from *Ambient 2: The Plateaux of Mirror* (1980, with Harold Budd), again featuring a simple piano line, played in

a slow arpeggio, reminiscent of the melancholic atmosphere of Erik Satie's minimalist compositional work for piano. The section ends with the young narrator introducing herself: 'My name is Salmon, like the fish; first name, Susie. I was fourteen when I was murdered on December 6, 1973.'

## Collaboratively produced leitmotifs

In addition to selections from existing recordings, new sound tracks were created to support characterization, leitmotifs and a coherent 'feel' to the film. Eno's particular art approach was unconventional within the context of film composition – Director Jackson illustrates this as follows:

Brian didn't want to see the rough cut of the film. He didn't want to read the script. He wanted to see conceptual art. He wanted to see imagery. He wanted to be inspired by the emotion. He wanted to see photographs of the set and then he started to compose and ... He started to send us these long pieces of music – beautiful, instrumental, emotional pieces which might be 7 or 8 minutes long and would have all sorts of interesting shapes to them. He said that we should edit these pieces of music as we saw fit and combine them and blend them and that's how we worked. It was a completely different way to how we've ever worked with a composer before. But, for this particular movie, both the sound and the style of working really ended up suiting the film great. (qtd. in Roberts, 2009)

The resulting incidental musical elements (such as Susie's leitmotif, '5m4', which starts with: F# E D B A, F# A B D – and appears to be in the key of D)<sup>22</sup> were embedded as extra-diegetic underscore into the film's sound track (including a mix of diegetic music, ambient atmos and Foley sound effects) under supervision of John Neill, head of sound, and music executive Jennifer Hawks. Additional music was composed by the music editorial team, consisting of Nigel Scott, Stephen Gallagher, David Long and Chris Winter, as well as by Victoria Kelly who provided music orchestration and arrangements, played by the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra with conductor Kenneth Young. The psychological sound design of Susie's trips into Mr. Harvey's criminal mind could stand alone as sound art, while the musical collaboration melds Eno's work into more conventional orchestral stingers and underscore elements.

Team work is audible in tracks such as '3m5', with its dreamy strings and echoing sound of a wooden toy piano, which is heard, for example, when Susie realizes her connection to an earthly existence slips away into a magical dream world. Or in '8m1', the film track's overture, aka 'The Lovely Bones Suite' – its single leitmotif melody line, played on guitar, is

placed in a wide reverbing space, together with additional echoing guitar accompaniment; the resulting waves of sound are accompanied by the suggestion of a ticking watch through the use of a closed high-hat that is played in sixteenths in a drier acoustic space when the duration of Susie's earthly time comes to an end. Mr. Harvey's theme is more clearly electronic, utilizing drones in low frequency synthesizer pads to provide an ominous effect, as well as high pitch dissonance that seem to resemble audible high-anxiety nerves, interwoven with a single guitar string melody in a melancholic minor key. Throughout these bespoke tracks, the ensemble of professional musicians and technicians maintain Eno's minimalist melody lines and intricately resonating sonic textures. This seems characteristic of Eno's creative practice, which regularly involves collaborations and teamwork: 'like any great director of the cinema, everything Eno touches bears his subtle but unmistakable fingerprints, regardless of who the stars in the foreground happen to be' (Dayal, 2009: xx).

Although it is not explicitly referenced in the film credits, fragments from the customized sound track can be heard on the 2010 album *Small Craft on a Milk Sea*, which Brian Eno created with Jon Hopkins and Leo Abrahams. Some of these fragments are segued into and layered onto musemes from older Eno recordings. When Susie's sister investigates Mr. Harvey's house and finds his sketchbook of Susie's death-trap (an underground den that became the location of Susie's violent murder) hidden under the bedroom floor, the slowly developing metallic sounds of 'The Secret Place' from *Apollo: Atmospheres & Soundtracks*, echo like a far-away deep belly-rumble of a lonely spaceship, effectively enhancing an almost unbearably tense atmosphere. When Mr. Harvey realizes what is happening and runs up the stairs to catch her out (approximately 1 hour, 40 minutes into the film), the soundtrack changes abruptly to the adrenaline-shot fast rhythm of '2 Forms of Anger' from *Small Craft on a Milk Sea* that continues as Susie's sister jumps from a first floor bedroom window and, after a heavy fall, runs away with the evidence of Mr. Harvey's crime.

The 2010 album offers one of the film's main leitmotifs, 'Small Craft on a Milk Sea'. A slow-paced melancholic monophonic guitar melody helps reflect on the dark energy that un-anchors Susie from her earthly existence. It first appears as Mr. Harvey digs a hole in the frozen ground of a wintery dead cornfield, to build his underground trap-den for Susie. It reappears when Susie crosses a wintery field that she uses as a short cut after school, while her family is starting dinner without her and when Dr. Harvey invites her into the underground trap underneath the field. After the murder, this leitmotif briefly returns when Mr. Harvey cleans Susie's blood from his bath and sink, and hides his blood-soaked clothes. The melody is heard again when Mr. Harvey plots to hunt down Susie's younger sister, and also when Susie's father has been beaten up in the cornfield as result of mistaken identity, and Susie realizes she has to let go. A dramatically orchestrated



version of this leitmotif is heard when Mr. Harvey packs his bags and leaves his house and the neighbourhood, after Susie's sister acquired evidence against him. Finally, when Mr. Harvey arrives at the rubbish-filled sinkhole to dump his big old safe containing remains, the leitmotif returns as a simple melody on the low register of a toy piano, accompanied by the sound of a regular piano.

## Paradoxical proception

The process of composition becomes clearer when Eno explains to Michaels (2010) that the pieces for *Small Craft on a Milk Sea* were mostly improvised, not in an attempt 'to end up with a song, but rather with a landscape, a feeling of a place and perhaps the suggestion of an event'. Fellow producer-composer Hopkins adds to this that the method of composition followed a system that includes a set of random elements:

"Brian [asked] Leo and myself to write down a series of random chords, which he would then write on a white board, along with a number – the number of bars we should stay on that chord for," he said. "Brian would then stand and point to chords at random, not knowing how (and if) they will link to each other, and Leo and I would lay down parts in the corresponding keys for the written number of bars." (Hopkins, qtd. in Michaels, 2010)

This snap shot of compositional practice, reveals the strong influence of Eno's art studies at Ipswich Civic College during the mid-1960s. At Roy Ascott's Groundcourse, the creative process was emphasized over the actual end-product. Ascott set his students instructions to reflect and experiment that in turn would set a range of actions in motion. This approach effectively deconstructed Eno's romantic idea of the individualized expressive artist and made him aware of the 'connection between the intellect and intuition' (qtd. in Scoates, 2013: 26) in conceptual art.

Running a system as part of the creative process and enabling the element of chance, is characteristic in Eno's compositional approach. His art tutor Tom Phillips introduced Eno to conceptual music, such as, the meditative silence of John Cage's *4'33"* (1952), which made a deep impression. In particular, this inspired Eno to use a set of instructions as a creative starting point: Cage set up a situation in which 'he chose not to interfere. But the approach I have chosen was different from his ... although I don't interfere with the completion of a system, the end result is not good, I'll ditch it and do something else' (Eno, qtd. in Scoates, 2013: 27). Rather than the random use of circumstantial sounds, in Eno's ambient music, 'the environment could be created in the music' (Scoates, 2013: 118).

Also Steve Reich's hypnotic *It's Gonna Rain* (1965) was influential in the development of Eno's approach to system-based production. In this audio work, a sentence from Reich's field recording of African-American Pentecostal preacher Brother Walker was played on two synced tape recorders, which accidentally ran out of sync, creating a complex phase-shifting sound work from simple ingredients. As early as 1970, Brian Eno experimented with tape loops to create the sound track for Malcolm le Grice's experimental short film *Berlin Horse*, which investigates perception of repetition, a theme that lingers throughout Eno's ambient music work. One can hear a gentle return of this principle in repetition of leitmotifs in *The Lovely Bones*.

As the world of cybernetics dawned, visual artists like Roy Ascott were looking for new directions. In 1964, when Eno entered his art course, media theorist McLuhan published the influential book *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. This text introduces the notions of hot and cold media that helped thinking through the different levels of engagement by the viewer and listener (Scoates, 2013). Significantly, it argues that the medium in itself, regardless of content, can affect the participant, leading to the conclusion that 'the medium is the message'. For McLuhan, within the context of electronic media, the complex interrelationships brought about in what he calls an 'acoustic space' are of more relevance than the linearity of 'visual space'. In music, 'blocks of sound can overlap and interpenetrate without necessarily collapsing into harmonic unity or consonance, thereby maintaining the paradox of "simultaneous difference"' (Davis, 2005). A conceptual turn to music seems a logical step forward for a contemporary artist, which initially led Eno to turn to the ambience of film music.

The paradoxical simultaneity of acoustic space is also played out, symbolically, in the narration of *The Lovely Bones*. The lively voice, the self-awareness of Susie, and her experience of magical afterlife, stands in sharp contrast to the knowledge that her dead decomposing body simultaneously resides in Mr. Harvey's safe as this disappears between discarded domestic utensils and other rubbish into a dark muddy sinkhole. Superficially, Susie's core character seems unchangeable, held together by the symbols of her surreal dream world. Yet her memories sustain the story, reflecting on current events through her insights from the past, and eventually help her to move on. Philosopher Henri Bergson was an important influence on Roy Ascott, Eno's tutor. For Bergson, the experience of time, 'duration', is 'the continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances' (Bergson, 1998: 5) and it is irreversible: 'We could not live over again a single moment, for we have to begin effacing the memory of all that had followed' (Bergson, 1998: 6).

A similar process occurs in the repetition of musical elements (musemes) in Eno's ambient music, as well as in his contribution to the sound track

of *The Lovely Bones*. The experience of these musemes is never the same as they are combined into a flexible acoustic space and into the narrative development of the film. Affected by the memory of having heard these elements, during the participatory process of proception, the audience hears these musemes in slightly different ways on each utterance, regardless of willed or random order. As a result, the flexible experience of narrative time is at once disorienting and believable – as is the paradox of Susie Salmon’s existence within acoustic space.

### ‘It’s a Wrap’

The sound track of *The Lovely Bones* has enabled a discussion of Brian Eno’s conceptual approach to the creation of ambient music elements in relation to a specific film project. The use of system-based creative processes enables teamwork without losing track of Eno as organizing principle framing the compositional procedures. The outcomes can be unexpected and paradoxical, working against the grain of conventional music structures, especially where audio textures and artificial sonic space are emphasized as musemes repeat. This approach to composing ‘cool’ music enables proception, active participatory listening, and may also result in a certain *jouissance* or a decentering of a sense of self. In turn, this can be particularly effective in enhancing the experience of narrative suspense. Echoing the realm from which the main character of *The Lovely Bones* speaks, Eno’s oblique music seems like a ghostly call from beyond the ‘in-between’.

### Notes

- 1 There was a parallel development in Brian Eno’s visual work, which in effect subverts the message by emphasizing the medium; for example, the use of ‘TVs as light sources rather than as image sources’ (Eno qtd. in Scoates, 2013: 121).
- 2 Please note that the film’s sound track on the DVD used on my computer plays at about half a note higher than related music material found in other sources, such as YouTube extracts and CDs.

### References

- Ascott, R. (2013), ‘Foreword: Extending Aesthetics’, in C. Scoates, ed., *Brian Eno: Visual Music*, 12–14, San Francisco: Chronicle Books.
- Bergson, H. (1998), *Creative Evolution*, trans. A. Mitchell, Mineola NY: Dover Publications.

- Boyle, D. dir. (1996), *Trainspotting*, [Film], UK: Channel Four Films / Figment Films / The Noel Gay Motion Picture Company.
- Boyle, D. dir. (2002), *28 Days Later ...*, [Film], UK: DNA Films / UK Film Council.
- Bracewell, M. (2005), 'Liner notes', in B. Eno, [1983], *More Music for Films*, [CD], 7243 5 63649 2 9, Virgin Records.
- Chion, M. (1999), *The Voice in Cinema*, trans. C. Gorbman, New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Davis, E. (2005), 'Roots and Wires: Polyrhythmic Cyberspace and the Black Electronic', *Eric Davis' figments*. <http://www.levity.com/figment/cyberconf.html> (accessed 6 January 2016).
- Dayal, G. (2009), *Another Green World*, New York: Continuum.
- Eno, B. ([1975] 2004), 'Liner Notes', *Discreet Music*, [CD], Obscure no. 3, Obscure.
- filmtracks.com ([1997] 2008), 'Editorial Review', written 12 December 1997, revised 6 September 2008. <http://www.filmtracks.com/titles/dune.html> (accessed 6 January 2016)
- Jackson, P., dir. (2001), *The Lord of Rings: Fellowship of the Ring*, [Film], USA / New Zealand: New Line Cinema / WingNut Films / The Saul Zaentz Company.
- Jackson, P., dir. (2002), *The Lord of the Rings: Two Towers*, [Film], USA / New Zealand: New Line Cinema / WingNut Films / The Saul Zaentz Company.
- Jackson, P., dir. (2003), *The Lord of the Rings: Return of the King*, [Film], USA / New Zealand: New Line Cinema / WingNut Films / The Saul Zaentz Company.
- Jackson, P., dir. (2005), *King Kong*, [Film], New Zealand / USA / Germany: Universal Pictures / WingNut Films / Big Primate Pictures / MFPV Film.
- Jackson, P., dir. (2009), *The Lovely Bones*, [Film], USA / UK / New Zealand: DreamWorks SKG / Film4 / WingNut Films.
- Jarman, D., dir. (1978), *Jubilee*, [Film], UK: Whaley-Malin Productions / Megalovision.
- Le Grice, M. (1970), *Berlin Horse*, [Film], UK: Malcolm le Grice.
- Lynch, D. dir. (1984), *Dune*, [Film], USA: De Laurentiis.
- Mallet, F. (2001), 'Redefining Musical Space: In the Enosphere', *Artpress*, 271, September. [http://music.hyperreal.org/artists/brian\\_eno/interviews/artpress01.html](http://music.hyperreal.org/artists/brian_eno/interviews/artpress01.html) (accessed 6 January 2016).
- Michaels, S. (2010), 'Brian Eno describes new album as anthology of "sound-only movies"', *The Guardian*, 14 September. <http://www.theguardian.com/music/2010/sep/14/brian-eno-album-milk-sea/print> (accessed 6 January 2016).
- McLuhan, M. (1964), *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, New York: New American Library.
- Reinert, A. dir. (1989), *For All of Mankind*, [Film], USA: Apollo Associates / FAM Productions.
- Roberts, S. (2009), 'Peter Jackson Interview, *The Lovely Bones*', *MoviesOnline*. [http://www.moviesonline.ca/movienews\\_17538.html](http://www.moviesonline.ca/movienews_17538.html) (last accessed 4 July 2014).
- The Quietus (editorial) (2010), 'Brian Eno & Collaborators on *Small Craft On A Milk Sea*', *The Quietus*, September. <http://thequietus.com/articles/>

- 04944-brian-eno-collaborators-talk-small-craft-on-a-milk-seaplane (accessed 10 Aug 2014).
- Scoates, C. (2013) 'The Aesthetics of Time. Process over Product: The Art School Years', in C. Scoates, ed., *Brian Eno: Visual Music*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.
- Scorsese, M., dir. (2010), *Shutter Island*, [Film], USA: Paramount Pictures / Phoenix Pictures / Sikelia Productions / Appian Way.
- Sebold, A. (2002), *The Lovely Bones*, New York: Little, Brown and Company.
- Soderberg, S. (2000), *Traffic*, [Film], USA / Germany: The Bedford Falls Company / Compulsion Inc. / Initial Entertainment Group (IEG) / Splendid Medien AG / USA Films.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1975), *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness, London and New York: Routledge.

Please do not distribute

Please do not distribute