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## New Sources & New Sounds – Vertical limits: altitude, buildings, the air & the sky

### Abstract: Artist Talk

The work involved using altitude data as a data source within a city topology. The piece submitted involved collecting numerous data readings from elevators within Sydney city buildings, both high rise and low and old and new. The objective was to build an aural landscape representing the journeys people make in the city. Journeys of the everyday, the working day. The equipment used for this was a Flytec Variometer, which is equipment more usually used in aerospots. These data streams were then extracted as comma separated data and processed through Audacity, Sound Forge and Acid programs.

The effects that I experimented with was first a sense of dislocation. Of individual trips being taken around the quieter times of the day for travel. This then evolved into a multilayered approach whereby I wanted to add layer upon layer, emulating what happens in the morning, lunch and at the end of the day. Elevators packed, continually stopping but involved in continual movement. People waiting glassy eyed, waiting, waiting, impatience, expectation. The first steps of the journey taken, not moving in the horizontal plane, only vertically.

This is the first exploration of an extended study I intend on making on altitude, sound and experience.

Further work being planned is to incorporate altitude readings while cross country paragliding. Paragliding as a sport is one that is incredibly aurally based. Much of the decision making is based on aural information as beyond a certain height (generally about 1000 feet above the nearest hill/mountain) it is very difficult to tell whether you are going up or down without instrumentation. Often what you see and what you feel are not consistent with what is actually happening. Moving through heavily sinking air into air that is still going down but at a lesser rate often feels like going up. Your eyes are no help and most of your senses, while attuned to what is happening are unable to provide you with accurate information of your position in the vertical plane. The information you need to tell rising air (which is the objective) from less sinky air is aural. The vario beeps with altitude changes, turning into an electronic scream when you

hit a really big thermal and fast, hot rising air. The faster the beeps the faster you are going up (or down).

Additionally I will be tracking this against GPS data so I can accurately describe my path through three dimensional space.

The first step in this series of intended compositions is to analyse what the data sounds like when the only focus is flying. The goal of cross country flying is generally to get height and go far. Following these experiments greater attention will be brought to what it sounds like when I am flying consciously determining what my path through a vertical plane will sound like and whether these differences can be identified.

Additional work will explore collecting heart rate data during acrobatic manoeuvres and air speed data. With acrobatic flying manoeuvres such as spiral dives (where rather than the canopy being above the pilot they are both parallel to the ground, winding around each other, dropping like a stone) the G force placed on the pilot can render them unconscious. Thus getting this data would not only be interesting but may also lead to some insights into pressure, heart rate and altitude.

In tracking and recording cardio data the intention is to examine the relationship between these two data streams. While it is difficult to collect data that accurately reflects the human experience the initial approach is to collect and analyse heart rate data during the collection of altitude and geographic data.

I am interested in blurring the division between composition/art and experience. That is moving closer towards the human body and experience being an integral part of the composition process. So by tracking and interpreting human response to stimulus, as well as the stimulus itself and then using this as a basis for music composition I hope to create a unique body of work.