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## **Remote Encounters:**

**Connecting bodies, collapsing  
spaces and temporal ubiquity in  
networked performance**

<http://remote-encounters.tumblr.com/>

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## Networked Migrations: Listening to and performing the in-between space<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

Two internet-based sonic performances, Letters and Bridges (between Leicester and Mexico City), and Migratory Dreams (between London and Bogotá), were developed by the artist with the leading question of what the ‘in-between’ space (Bhaba 1994; Ortega 2008) sounds like in the context of migration. Drawing on a Deep Listening (Oliveros 2005) practice, the artist undertook pre-performance workshops as a way to engage participants in the possibilities of travelling in time and space, and expressing through voice and other sounds feelings that arise when they migrate. The sharing of these sounds through the Internet in real time opened the idea of *territory* and allowed participants to express feelings towards place, identity and belonging, and to create mixed-reality narratives, within a supportive sound space free from geographical and cultural constraints. High quality bi-directional streaming audio software such as SoundJack and Tube Plug were used, adapted to the performance needs. This paper describes the process of the creation of each performance, considering its sonic, narrative, mediatised and performative aspects, offering a reflection on new auditoriums created for migrants’ expression of their experiences in the ‘in-between’. It argues that this specific approach helps migrants to expand their sense of space and develop an awareness of their multidimensional condition through sound.

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<sup>1</sup> Presented at the Remote Encounters Conference in Cardiff, 11-12 April 2013, this paper reports and reflects on a series of performances that occurred beforehand. In order to facilitate engagement with the work there is a range of images, film clips, and sound files embedded in the publication.

## 1. Introduction

When we migrate between geographies, our idea of space expands. As Edward Said suggests, people in exile have a vision that is “contrapuntal”, showing “an awareness of simultaneous dimensions” (2003, 8). Our mind seems to be ‘in-between’ cultural or geographical borders. Homi Bhaba (1994) describes the process of symbolic interaction ‘in-between’ cultures and identities as “the connective tissue...[the] interstitial passage between fixed identifications” (4), which also “innovates and interrupts the performance of the present” (7).

The ‘in-between’, as described by Mariana Ortega (2008), is a place where the self, a “multiplicitous subject” (71), negotiates with the external space, but also with her/his internal space. She suggests that it reflects one’s existential spatiality: “identity, nationality, gender, color and history are spatial and space is of us” (2004, 27).

What does the in-between space sound like in different migratory contexts, and how can we experience this?

Inspired by Pauline Oliveros’ Deep Listening practice, which invites us to expand our “perception of sounds to include the whole space/time continuum of sound—encountering the vastness and complexities as much as possible” (2005, xxiii), the artist initially explored the expression of the ‘in-between’ space through the creation of works to be performed by the Migratory Band<sup>2</sup>. Through inner and outer listening, global and focal listening, listening to our bodies and listening to our dreams, the Migratory Band engaged in experimental improvisatory performance. The resulting pieces<sup>3</sup> included sound environments, sonic perceptions of body, memories, and dreams; and also our voices, which reflect our sonic identities with traces of what Janette El Haouli (2006) calls “nomadic voice”, vibrating between native and second languages and a multiplicity of accents, a voice without fixed territories, “a bridge for the overcoming of pre-established values and inherited questionings.”<sup>4</sup> (106).

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<sup>2</sup> This is a Deep Listening study group that the artist created to explore listening to migrations. Composed of four members (Ximena Alarcón, Deniz Ertan, Ron Herrema and Sally Hossack), the band experimented in 2011 with 10 compositions created to explore improvisatory sonic routines.

<sup>3</sup> See sound file of Control and Chaos, including commentary, within Sharon Stewart’s paper “Listening to Deep Listening: Reflection on the 1988 Recording and the Lifework of Pauline Oliveros”, in the *Journal of Sonic Studies*, Vol 2 (1), May 2012, Accessed June 12 2012, <http://journal.sonicstudies.org/vol02/nr01/a12>.

<sup>4</sup> Artist's translation.

Deep Listening is also called “quantum listening” by Oliveros (cited in Juett 2010, 2), implying that, because of the depth of this practice and its stimulation of full awareness of sound in our body and mind, the exchange of sounds could instantly reach any corner of the universe and influence it.

What would the 'in-between' space sound like when performers are interacting from distant locations and are mediated by the Internet?

To expand the reach and manifestation of the 'in-between' space, the artist created two telematic improvisatory sonic performances<sup>5</sup> (using voice and pre-recorded sounds): Letters and Bridges, between migrants who live in Leicester and Mexico City, and Migratory Dreams, between Colombian migrants who live in London and Colombians who live in Bogotá and have had migratory experiences.

For the performances the artist used software for bi-directional high quality audio, streaming on the internet<sup>6</sup>. The medium reinforced the fact of being distant and the possibilities of traveling in time and space. Brandon LaBelle (2006) suggests that both listening and interacting in new media encourage “a process of finding home, making connections, creating space across digital networks – a listening that builds architectures out of interaction” (248). Similarly, Bhabha (1994) introduces the term “unhomeliness”, referring to the “condition of extra-territorial and cross cultural initiations” (9). This condition can be innate to networked listening in sonic performance in which, as Franzisca Schroeder (2013) suggests, the body is performing as if it was “in an in-between state” (224). For her there is a de-centering of performers’ attention, “resisting one’s self-preoccupation in order to allow for the essential unselfing, a state of moving from oneself to the other” (223). Thus the sonic, spatial, mediatised, cultural and performative possibilities of networked interaction nurture a virtual territory to experience the ‘in-between’ in the migratory context.

In this paper the artist will explore how this approach to creating performance specifically addresses issues of displacement, and the loss of the sense of self and place brought about by migration. The artist suggests that by combining Deep Listening practice and telematics in an improvisatory sonic performance between migrants, the performance experience allows the emergence of feelings that arise in migration, thus acting as a catalyst of the ongoing process of identity and sense of belonging.

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<sup>5</sup> To listen to the full performances visit <http://networkedmigrations.org/>.

<sup>6</sup> Open source and open access software for exclusive audio performances are Jacktrip, Soundjack and TubePlug. The last two were used in the performances due to bandwidth limitations.

## 2. Letters and Bridges – Echoing ‘in-between’ spaces

a palavra que emigra, e imigra, a palavra... enraizada e de raiz que se rediz... que se dobra e desdobra... que beija e abraça... se contrai e expande... se modifica, solidifica... ou flui e se desfaz... (Inês Amado performing 'Un petit mô't' in 'Letters and Bridges')	the word that emigrates, and immigrates, the word... rooted and from root that retells... that folds and unfolds... that kisses and hugs... contracts and expands... is modified, solidified... or flows and dissolves...
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In Letters and Bridges, my intention was to echo personal letters in order to create a space for listening to and sounding the 'in-between' space formed by different languages, transits and stories around the world; to establish the commonalities of multiple migrations; also to listen to this space as a form of meditation about place, ourselves and the place we inhabit.

Three migrants living in Leicester and three migrants living in Mexico City<sup>7</sup> were invited in each city to engage in a collaborative process of creatively sounding letters sent by their loved ones, establishing symbolic bridges of access and contact with them, with the help of their co-performer in the other city. Additionally, they wrote letters to one another, expressing feelings towards the place where they currently live:

In my letter to Ron, I describe the house where I lived in Mexico, how it sounds when it rains. I write about the relationship with the street and the soil in Mexico, which I feel unstable, and alive, sometimes it disappears or emerges as a snake. The word I repeated more in my letter was: 'roto' (broken). I also wrote about the speed of time and my children growing up. About the fruits and the vibrant city. About its buzzing. (Neli)

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<sup>7</sup> To be precise, one of the Migrants works in Leicester and lives in St Albans; in Mexico, one lives in Pachuca, Hidalgo - Mexico. The locations of the performance were Leicester and Mexico City.

My letter to Neli expresses in a very honest way [in Spanish] my sadness at living in a city in which my soul does not feel at home, and that does not edify me in the ways that I wish to be edified by a city. (Ron)

To work on this exchange, two encounters prior to the performance took place via Skype, from their homes, first with video and sound, and then with only sound. Also, they were introduced to Deep Listening practice through physical energy-flow exercises (Chi Kung) and meditations to open the whole body to the listening experience.

They read their letters, ‘amplifying’<sup>8</sup> the sounding whenever a meaningful aspect of the letter was felt. Their co-performer was able then to identify when a connection had been established and supported it by amplifying the sounding. By ‘crossing bridges’ they changed a moment of perception of their own place (Video 1, Pre-performance workshops Letters and Bridges).

Sally (S) and César (C) reflected together about the pre-performance process:

S: You actually feel closer than maybe my friends here right now because I am talking to you about these problems and sharing something of my work and my day... So it's exciting to know where you are. It sounds like we are having a similar day even in different places. Maybe [there is] a world consciousness today.

C: It's interesting because I can feel more than the place and the person... the place is in my mind, imagination or something, I have the connection with the person... I can feel very warm inside of the place of Sally, I don't know if I can feel also Charlie [Sally's dog], but I can feel a sense of home there. We were increasingly with different rhythms when we were reading more and more the letters, we had more understanding in some way.

S: I think you found a rhythm for each place, like yours is a very calm place and, I don't know, I felt that my place was very frantic... Thank you César, you have brightened my day with the purple.

C: Thank you so much and I will think of the orange color.

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<sup>8</sup> By amplifying the artist refers to the improvisatory sonic extension of a highlighted sound, opening new sonorities and meanings.

A narrative thus evolved from the pre-performance encounters, and each pair then created two improvisatory pieces<sup>9</sup>.

## 2.2. Performance

The public performance took place between the National Centre for the Arts in Mexico (CENART)<sup>10</sup> and Interact Gallery<sup>11</sup> in Leicester<sup>12</sup>. To provide a context of location, the artist invited a group of people in each city (who had met in pre-performance Deep Listening workshops in both locations) to send and receive abstract sounds, and also words, that respond to the questions: how does Leicester sound? and how do you sound in Leicester?, how does Mexico sound? and how do you sound in Mexico?. The artist called these groups the 'active audience' and they performed during the interval.

For the bi-directional streaming of sound, Soundjack<sup>13</sup> was used. A spatialisation of four loudspeakers, two for the sound that is created locally and two for sounds coming from the distant location, was proposed for each venue (Fig. 1); in this manner the sound could mix and emulate physically the existence of an 'in-between' space. In Mexico, the setting was adjusted to function with two loudspeakers that mixed the signal coming from both cities; this helped to avoid sound feedback that was generated by the telematic transmission. In Leicester, three directional microphones were used for the three performers; in Mexico the three performers used wireless microphones. A silent video<sup>14</sup> made with images provided by the performers related to the letters, and with words used by the 'active audience', was

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<sup>9</sup> The pieces were: Espacios para volar – Lotus flower and The sleepless horse of dreams – The Avenue by Sally Hossack and César Damián; Snow and Ice and Un petit môt by Inês Amado and Marie Christine Camus; Tragando Polvo and Zwaaaa de Veeeeeevre by Ron Herrema and Neli Ruzic.

<sup>10</sup> The performance logistics were organised by the Subdirección de Estudios Académicos del Centro Nacional de las Artes. They led an interdisciplinary postgraduate programme called Tránsitos, and the performance was linked to their activity. The Department of Informatics and Foro Canal 23, a television studio, were key collaborators to support the performance technically.

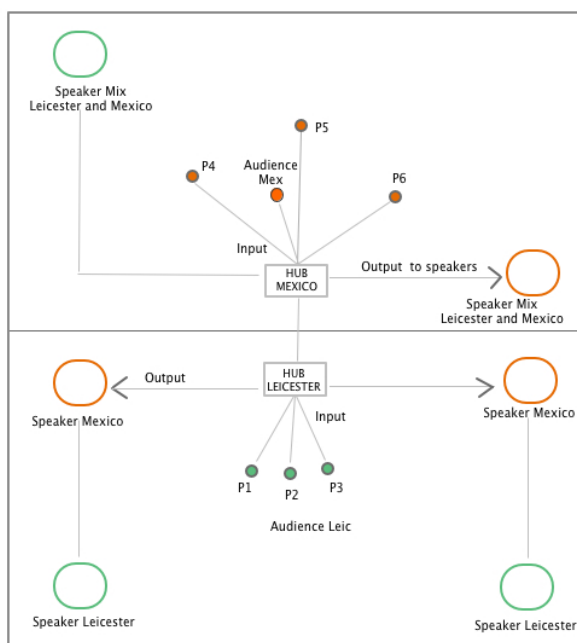
<sup>11</sup> Interact Gallery, the first of its kind in Leicester, was located in the Centre for Independent Arts Fabrika. Now Interact Gallery is working as Interact Lab, and resides in the Phoenix Digital Arts Centre, Leicester.

<sup>12</sup> On March 12, 2012, at 11am in Mexico, and 5pm in Leicester.

<sup>13</sup> Soundjack is a bi-directional streaming audio software developed by Alexander Carôt, and works with a user-friendly interface. <http://www.carot.de/soundjack/> Accessed July 28, 2013.

<sup>14</sup> Watch the silent video at <https://vimeo.com/42614278> Accessed July 28, 2013.

playing in both locations to offer an atmosphere of the locations and times in their narratives.



**Fig. 1:** Technical Setting Letters and Bridges.

Technology strongly mediated the 'in-between' adding more layers to performers' experience: e.g. performers' voices travel and are heard as a feedback. The local voice can also be heard acoustically, the distant voice only electroacoustically. The sonic architecture created by the echoing, performers' connections and wonderings about home and other places are heard between the different levels of mediation, and in their sonic improvisations, as they negotiate the space and the words to create a narrative.

### 2.3 Narratives - Encounters

Marie Christine in Mexico (performing in French and Spanish) and Inês in Leicester (performing in Portuguese and English) developed encounters that evoked,



amongst other themes, the importance given to nature and the pace of everyday life by the loved people who sent the letters: *“you should come and see the river! .... the snow and ice stay even until sometime in March...”*

In the letters sent to one another they reflected on European colonisations, and their feelings of rejection and acceptance towards their own and the host countries:

“He cambiado mucho, ha cambiado mi mirada, ha cambiado mi historia, cambiado mi memoria” (Marie Christine), (I have changed a lot, my way of seeing has changed, my history has changed, my memory has changed)  
“...My country is not this country” (Inês)

They also played with the semantics of their different languages: a sudden amplification of the word LINGUA (which means language and tongue in Portuguese, Spanish, and French) dissolved its meaning during the performance with a playful exchange that echoed non-coded territories, a path for a ‘nomadic voice’ (Video 2, Excerpt from ‘Un petit mô’).

For Marie Christine, the experience allowed her to “open new sensations”, and she noted how important it was to communicate with sound only. The collective and collaborative experience with Inês created for her a “displacement”, which helped to explore options of communicating in different spaces, and of exploring the body. For Inês, the experience enabled her “to ‘hold hands’ with others in another continent. It fused thoughts and expressions, moments of energies and synergies - connections through time and space” (Inês).

These experiences evoke the reach of a “quantum listening”, as a synergetic result produced by the profound sonic exchange, and as a consequence, the “de-centering” of the body with their voices, the condition of “unhomeliness”.

Ron in Leicester (performing in English and Spanish) and Neli in Mexico (performing in Croatian and Spanish), experienced the places created by language. Here the boundaries of meaning are crossed to engage with the poetics of the sounds that are offered by the unknown language (Video 3, Excerpt from ‘Tragando Polvo’).

For César in Mexico (performing in Spanish and English) and Sally in Leicester (performing in English and Italian), the opportunity of literally crossing bridges and arriving to each other’s geographical location is full of desire for experiencing that quotidian context, in which the perceived as ‘mundane’ problems in Leicester contrast with unstable security and politics in Mexico. César invited Sally to cross the bridge (Audio 1, Excerpt from ‘The sleepless horse of dreams - The Avenue’):

“I tried to create a letter based on poetry that is at once an entrance door for Sally. The letter is about dignity of life, or further, the challenge of living in any circumstance.” (César)



**Fig 2:** Performers Sally (left), in Leicester, and César (right), in Mexico City, performing in Letters and Bridges.

Crossing ‘pre-established’ boundaries and modifying the feeling of single routines in contrasting cities are a driving force that enriches the ‘in-between’, and the ‘negotiation’ established between the inner and the outer world. In a post-performance questionnaire César states that this experience helped him to cross his “own bridge”.

In the interval, the ‘active audience’ created a spoken soundscape about the place where they live and how they sound in this place, using languages from all over the world, (Swedish, Russian, Spanish, English, Tama) and playfully evoking the geographical location of the performances (Video 4, Excerpt from Active Audience).

In Letters and Bridges, the ‘in-betweenness’ is heard in the diversity of languages and their dissolution; in the mixture between letters from the past and from the present, which resonates with Bhabha’s idea of an ‘in-between’ that is renewing the past, that “innovates and interrupts the performance of the present” (1994, 7). The improvisation makes the ‘in-between’ present, and the mediated real-time sound interaction, de-centered. Deep Listening practice aids the process of exchange, and the creation of a profound connection.

### **3. Migratory Dreams: a natural in-between**

Migratory Dreams was a sonic exploration of dreams made by a group of four Colombians who had migrated to London, and a group of four Colombians residing in Bogotá who had various experiences of migration, some of whom had previ-

ously migrated geographically and returned to Colombia, and others whose families and friends have left the country.

In this performance, my intention was to open a space to heal<sup>15</sup> feelings left by the experience of Colombian migration to the UK, by establishing a virtual contact with dreamers in their native land. Working in dreams is encouraged by dreamwork teacher and author Carole Ione Lewis (IONE) (2005) as a creative source for connecting with ourselves, going beyond traditional dream interpretation, allowing the dreamer to discover the essence of the dream and its meaning for that moment in her/his life. Dreams allow one to freely cross cultural and social boundaries that wouldn't be easily crossed in the waking state.

### 3.1 Pre-performance process

Four participants in each city gathered by a public call in London and Bogotá<sup>16</sup>, engaged in Deep Listening workshops, exploring their sonic experiences in dreams. Each of them worked on one remembered dream, focusing on the space where it took place; the other dreamers helped to amplify sonically aspects of these dreams (e.g. repeating, questioning, opening meanings, adding sonorities). They were then asked to incubate a dream and to record some sounds that somehow belonged to it. Incubation of dreams is described by IONE as:

a millennia old way of gathering information from our dreams. Dreaming on a question, a problem or a creative concept can bring rewarding solutions. Many composers, writers, painters and other artists rely upon their dreams for guidance. (Lewis 2005, 48)

Initially, when recording sounds, participants were focusing on distinctions between waking reality and dream reality, but we realised during the process that perception of a sound's location and identity is sometimes as volatile as the sense of reality, and as clear and structured as the dream reality sometimes is. An example of this mixed reality of dream and physical space took place when Sandra and Diana, in Colombia, lived this experience:

we were at Tota lake...I asked her to join me with a red string; there were two wood docks by the white beach of the lake, and we each

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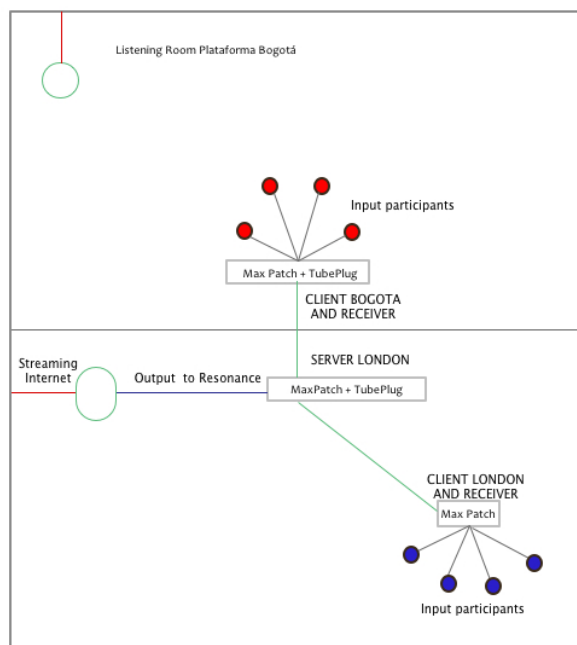
<sup>15</sup> 'Healing' understood here as Thomas Egnew suggests: "an intensely personal, subjective experience involving a reconciliation of the meaning an individual ascribes to distressing events with his or her perception of wholeness as a person" (2005, 255).

<sup>16</sup> The call was organised by the host venues (Creative Research into Sound Arts Practice - CRiSAP, Resonance FM in London, and Plataforma Bogotá- Fundación Gilberto Alzate Avendaño in Bogotá).

walked on our dock with the string, which linked us through a long distance ... When we started to rewind the string to go back and meet again we realised we were inside of the dreams [laugh], the experience had lots of elements of the dream incubated by her and by me: the sound of the wood which was exactly the sound that I wanted, a weathered wood, the water sounding under the bridge...the shiny white stones, and it was an incredible moment because we shared two territories of dreams in a physical space, in daylight, and we realised it at the same time, we hugged each other and were astonished for some minutes. (Sandra)

Thus, before the performance, participants were weaving their dreams. These were perceived as an experience that is shared in an unexpected space. Traveling collectively with our minds sparks new spaces to inhabit.

### 3.2 Performance



**Fig. 3:** Technical Setting Migratory Dreams.

In each venue, the technological setting needed was minimal (Fig. 3): one computer connected to the Internet using the plugin TubePlug<sup>17</sup>, sounds mixed in a Max Patch, one Zoom microphone, and headphones for each participant. The Max patch (Fig. 4) allowed the mixing of pre-recorded sounds and the voices of the four participants on each side, as well as the auditioning of the incoming signal of the mix for the distant location<sup>18</sup>. Without this development, the encounter could not have happened, particularly the immersion into the pre-recorded sounds that supported their voices and aided the sonification of the dream world. With the gathered material, all participants tested the software and improvised locally. Two days before the performance, the two groups met briefly via Skype, and made a short improvisation voicing their names.

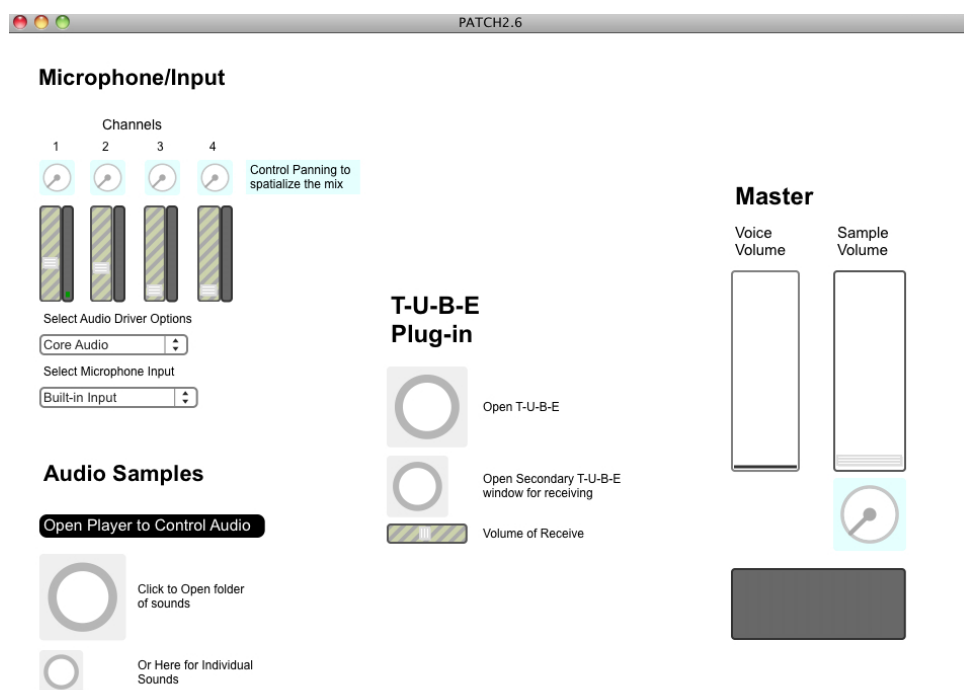


Fig. 4: Max Patch created by Emmet Glynn.

<sup>17</sup> TubePlug is a VST plugin created by Jörg Stelkness <http://www.t-u-b-e.de/iplug.htm> Accessed July 30, 2013.

<sup>18</sup> This was developed in collaboration with Emmet Glynn.

In the performance<sup>19</sup> participants engaged in the ritual of dreaming. In the Bogotá venue, Plataforma Bogotá, they used flowers and aromatic essences, and sat on the floor to perform and bring their dreams to the conscious state. In London, the performance took place in Resonance FM, a radio station, from which the performance was streamed online for radio and Internet audiences. Participants were immersed there in the radio studio space.

To maintain the sense of intimacy, the audience was separated from the performers: in a room close by in Bogotá, and otherwise on the radio, and on the Internet. Thus the setting manifested three different spaces for listening: for the performers who were wearing headphones, the voices and sounds were perceived mostly electronically; for the audience in Bogotá, the space was electroacoustic, heard through a 5.1 Home Theatre system. And probably, for radio and Internet listeners all over the world, there were many other spaces for listening.

The structure of the performance allowed participants to interweave eight dreams: each participant ended with the sentence ‘This dream is woven of...’ to signal the turn of the next dreamer, who was in the distant location.

### **3.3 Narratives - Weaving**

In Amaru’s dream we can hear what he is missing of nature in London, and the questioning of the notion of destination; he is searching for freedom within a hard urban environment. The dream is woven of freedom.

In El Abrazo (The Hug) Diana invites us to hear a dream woven of caresses between two people; the difficulties of meeting over the distance. A bridge is the setting that makes possible the encounter.

In Gestación (Pregnancy) many pregnant women prepare to give birth. They are really all one person: fetus inside another fetus. The environment is involved through its tense silence and then through the sonic and poly-rhythmical texture of inhalations and exhalations. This dream is woven of pores.

In La Casa Grande (The Big House), Nelly is in Colombia making efforts to clean a dirty house, but it’s a difficult job. There is anxiety because guests are coming, amongst them a very organised man. The dream is woven of hope.

In Fuerza (Strength) Joela is on stage and there is the feeling of embarrassment. The dreamer decides to take control of her dream, to make decisions, and to migrate to a beautiful Japanese garden. She becomes Water, Air, Fire and Earth. She transforms anger into strength.

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<sup>19</sup> The performance took place on August 2, 2012, at 2pm in Bogotá and 8pm in London.

In *Estamos en un juego?* (Are we in a game?) Sebastián looks for answers about the path his life should take. Two beings are in a white world. One, masculine, dictates to the other, feminine, verses about his life. A strong wind makes the dreamer fly to sounds of life. Noisy Colombian colour and happiness involve the dreamer, helping him to deal with doubts born in the white world. The dream is woven of *happiness*.

In Steve's dream five spacecraft appear from the south, on a motorway close to London. Then, in a shopping centre people are scared because of the presence of a giant creature. The dreamer uses his courage and a magic gesture to make the creature disappear along with the walls of the shopping centre under construction. The dream is woven of *courage*.

In *Territorios* (Territories) Sandra takes us, through a beautiful ritual with dancers, joy and water, to a journey of poetic and mystical territories. For rebirth, the path is performative, transformative; the strength of the body becomes a powerful weapon. The dream is woven of territories (Video 5, Listening spaces and excerpts from the eight dreams).

At the end of the sharing, they engaged in voicing words and abstract sounds, feeling the essences of dreams as if in a lullaby (Audio 2, Excerpt from *Essences*).



**Fig. 5:** Participants from Bogotá (left) and London (right) improvising.

Are dreams, by nature, 'in-between' spaces of our migratory condition? In the performance, dreams<sup>20</sup> become metaphors and vehicles of participants' migrations:

<sup>20</sup> All dreams' transcriptions are available with translation into English at <http://ximenaalarcon.net/networkedmigrations/dreamstranslation.pdf> Accessed on July 31, 2013. This document was part of the exhibition *Migratory Dreams* supported by Furtherfield Gallery, London March 3, 2013.

“That part of being lost becomes repetitive in my dreams, also staying in a messy place; it’s like the meaning of the migration because we don’t feel we are from here or from there, so it’s like a loss, being lost in those spaces.” (Nelly)

“Most of the time, one could immerse in the experience and arrive to the state of dreaming... as we had in common the migratory context, we had many things in common in the dreams...the desire of going back for us, the desire of leaving for them, the idea of searching paths that are the right ones for us, whatever it is, I could feel it in the sounds that we were making.” (Sebastián)

What is given and received during the interaction offers something beyond performance in this context. Joela noticed how the performance was “*a powerful process for healing the dreams of eight people both here and there, it was like giving them back that primary essence of nature, the green space*”.

A tension between audiences’ expectations of a performance, and the needs that are stated for the interaction between participants, is an aspect to consider for future experimental performances. For instance, Pilar Santamaría, coordinator in Bogotá, says: “*it was very pretty to see how they [the participants] arranged the space, with their cushions, and objects, like a ritual; it would have been nice if the audience could see this too, as they created expectations.*”

A member of the audience in Bogotá commented to a performer that “*many people thought it was a visual performance, so they said: “hey I cannot see anything”, but when they closed their eyes, they let themselves go into the dream...she felt it as a complete and long dream...and she saw images, she liked it a lot... It was a tool...pure medicine*”. (Joela)

In Migratory Dreams the 'in-between-ness' was felt to be realised by the dreams themselves, acting as vehicles and metaphors of migrations. The expression of migrants who were born in the same country creates an interesting opening of space to new territories. The sound amplification technology used created different spaces for listening, bringing restrictions but also extensions of the performance space.

#### 4. Conclusions/inferences

These two performances could be understood as ways of ‘negotiating’ (Ortega 2008) the inner space (expressed sometimes as a ‘nomadic’ voice), and the outer space (real and imagined environments that surrounded the participants): catalysts of the ongoing process of the creation of identity and sense of belonging (Bhabha 1994) for migrants.



The pre-performance process of listening and sounding helped participants to connect with others and with other spaces, developing awareness of body and mind by engaging in the Deep Listening practice. The original artistic intentions of the performances expanded through the multilayered process, which involved each participant in free improvisation of their personal story.

Thus, the resulting narratives offered an authentic and deep departure for understanding migratory contexts. For instance, letters allowed participants to remember and express current feelings of location, while dreams allowed them to detach from a sense of a known reality. The metaphors of ‘bridges’ and ‘weaving’ aided powerfully the creation of narratives, facilitating the engagement of, in most cases, first-time performers.

The possibilities of different auditoriums for networked listening were opened, emphasizing the de-centering and the ‘unselfing’ while listening and sounding, which, interweaved with the narratives, strengthened the expression and perception of the ‘in-between’ space in the migratory context.

An open question regarding what roles audiences might play in these types of performances emerged here; their participation and engagement varied, as in the first performance they become performers, while in the second they are part of a distributed form of listening. In future performances the relationship between performers and audiences needs to be further explored.

This approach to making telematic sonic performance invited migrants to expand their sense of space by opening possibilities of traveling in time and space through sound, challenged by the distance of the online communication, the singularity and intimacy produced by a sound-only performance, and the sharing of commonalities left by the migratory experience; and thereby reinforced their sense of identity as multidimensional beings.

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## List of Figures and Captions

- Fig. 1 Technical setting 'Letters and Bridges'.
- Fig. 2 Technical setting 'Migratory Dreams'.
- Fig. 3 Max Interface designed by Emmet Glynn.

Video 1. Pre-performance workshops 'Letters and Bridges'.

*Ximena Alarcón*

*Networked Migrations: Listening to  
and performing the in-between space*

Video 2. Excerpt from 'Un petit mô't.

Video 3. Excerpt from 'Tragando Polvo'.

Video 4. Excerpt from Active Audience.

Video 5. Listening spaces and excerpts from the eight dreams.

Audio 1. Excerpt from 'The sleepless horse of dreams - The Avenue'.

Audio 2. Excerpt from 'Essences'.

### **About the Author**

Ximena Alarcón is a new media artist who focuses on listening to social context related sound, connecting it to individual and collective memories. Her practice involves ethnography, deep listening practice, and sonic improvisation, and her tools include networking technologies and multimedia interfaces. She completed a PhD in Music, Technology and Innovation at De Montfort University and was awarded with The Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellowship 2007-2009 to develop “Sounding Underground” at the Institute of Creative Technologies. There, in 2010, she worked as a Programme Leader for the Masters in Creative Technologies. She has studied with Pauline Oliveros, Carole IONE Lewis and Heloise Gold, the Deep Listening practice and in May 2012 she gained a Deep Listening certificate. Dreams and telematic musical performance are current interests that expand both the connections to other territories and the social and aesthetic possibilities of working with the migratory experience. Since October 2011, she works in Creative Research in Sound Arts Practice - CRiSAP, at the University of the Arts London, as a Research Fellow, developing her project “Networked Migrations - listening to and performing the in-between space”.



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