



HALLUCINOGENIC/ ECSTATIC SOUND ENVIRONMENTS PROGRAM NOTES

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Written in New York, 1979, on the occasion of the presentation of *Hallucinogenic/Ecstatic Sound Environments* by Henry Flynt and Catherine Christer Hennix at The Kitchen, New York, February 7, 1979. Previously unpublished.

HENRY FLYNT & CATHERINE CHRISTER HENNIX
Hallucinogenic/Ecstatic Sound Environments

February 7, 1979 8:30 pm

Program Notes

To communicate a generating idea for a superior life-world is like making a revolution after a hundred years of repressive peace. The odds are all against it. It requires more energy than mainstream contemporary culture to achieve half the public availability and a fraction of the acceptance. And beyond the idea's luminosity and our need for deliverance, the resources to support the idea are nonexistent. It survives like a beleaguered brigade, sporadically making successful forays, but always threatened with retreat and rout. Its defeat is far more likely than general disillusionment with mainstream culture, since the latter is not only buttressed by complacency but also propelled by degradation (which is anything but bashful).

The idea may thrive for a while on its surprise value and independence from institutions. But if it loses, it loses everything. Unlike mainstream culture, there are no reserve troops, no stockpiles, no headquarters, and no institutional legitimation to fall back on. The idea cannot be kept going by old familiar lies or truths. To survive, the authors of this dream of an exalted existence must periodically change direction and surface in another place.

Strategy, persistence, imagination, patience, loyalty during fallow periods—the ability to bring everything to bear in a sudden, short moment of engagement, to slip away without loss, to survive through long hiatuses without complaint or murmur: this is the field manual of the idea's authors. **Because visionary proposals must succeed if we are to have a future worth living for, we must adopt a dedication commensurate with that imperative. To comprehend the idea at all is to have one's loyalties altered decisively, to betray the institutions of mainstream culture to make the superior life-world possible.**

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REVISED AFTER 1979



THE ILLUMINATORY SOUND ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM NOTES

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Written in Berlin, 2013, on the occasion of the presentation of
The Illuminatory Sound Environment by Flynt and Hennix at ZKM,
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THE ILLUMINATORY SOUND ENVIRONMENT
ZKM SUBRAUM VERSION
21 III 13 – 12 V 13

By an *Illuminatory Sound Environment* (ISE) is meant a *psychotropically working sonic agency* which transports the listener to an alternate state of mind, the portals to which are closed without the sound as guide and input. ISE works on more than one level of mind, and the priming of all these levels increases the listening subject's receptivity to the ramified lamina of "sheets of sounds," which build up the integral sound defining the sonic space engaged.

ISE needs a dedicated acoustic space which provides the listener unlimited access to its sound, which is often continuous and frequently cyclic, as all pitches are fixed in accordance with standards of just intonation. The repeated exposure to this sound environment exerts a *priming* of the attentive listening subject consisting in an activation of neural plasticity dynamics, which lays down new signal paths connected with neural sound processing sites. As a function of this neural priming activity, the listening subject acquires a heightening sensibility to present threshold acoustical events by cultivating new neural tissue—the innervation of which provides the portals to hitherto unvisited and unmapped sonically mediated sites and regions of mind.

ISE is intended as a *new paradigm* for experimental electronic music which introduces a new purpose for the attentive listening subject consisting in a reorientation of auditory driven consummation and behavior. It is therefore useless to compare our paradigm with any past or contemporary form of music—the listener is encouraged to forget about other paradigms in order to be able to choose the appropriate *tactic(s) of attention* required to engage with our new paradigm. With regard(s) to the latter, in spite of our use of traditional sound sources, traditional tactics of attention are inapplicable as the electronic sound processing (analog, digital) forges *new composite sound waveforms hitherto never produced*. Hence, in order to experience and appreciate the novelty of the latter, the listener needs to choose *ever novel* tactics of attention in order to probe all levels of this sound paradigm. With this listener-interactive aspect for the sounds of ISE, we offer a new purpose for the listening subject.

The ZKM SUBRAUM VERSION of ISE comes in three "flavors" (rasas), two by Flynt (*Celestial Power/Glissando No. 1*) and one by Hennix (*Rag Infinity/Rag Cosmosis*), the three flavors alternating daily in accordance with the schema: Flynt, Hennix, Flynt, Hennix...