



Curatorial > INTERRUPTIONS

This section proposes a line of programmes devoted to exploring the complex map of sound art from different points of view organised in curatorial series.

With **INTERRUPTIONS** we make the most of the vast musical knowledge of the artists and curators involved in the **Ràdio Web MACBA** project, to create a series of 'breaks' or 'interruptions' in our Curatorial programming. In à-la-carte-music format, our regular curators have carte blanche to create a purely musical experience with only one guiding parameter: the thread that runs through each session must be original and surprising. Anna Friz's mix presents a collage exploring the environment, morphology and taxonomy of the little people inside the radio.

Curated by Anna Friz

PDF Contents:

- 01. Summary
- 02. Playlist
- 03. Notes
- 04. Credits
- 05. Acknowledgments
- 06. Copyright note

Anna Friz is a Canadian audio and radio artist, and media studies scholar who found her way into the sonic arts via independent community radio. She specializes in multi-channel transmission systems for installation, performance, and broadcast, where radio is the source, subject and medium of the work. She also creates dynamic, atmospheric compositions and sound design for theatre, dance, film, and solo performance that are equally able to reflect upon public media culture or to reveal expressive interior landscapes. She has performed and exhibited extensively across North America, South America, and Europe. Her radio art/works have been commissioned by national public radio in Canada, Australia, Austria, Finland, Germany, and Mexico, and have been heard on licensed and clandestine airwaves in more than 30 countries. Anna is Assistant Professor of Sound in the Film and Digital Media Department of the University of California, Santa Cruz. She has been affiliated with Wave Farm (formerly free103point9.org) since 2002, and is a steering member of the artist collective Skálar | Sound Art | Experimental Music based in East Iceland. nicelittlestatic.com

INTERRUPTIONS #20

The Little People In The Radio present...

A show riffing on the anachronistic childhood fantasy of the little people who live inside the radio and perform all the voices and sounds heard. Turn on the radio, the little people begin to talk; change the station, and they change their voices. Most basically an exploration of the uses and misuses of the trope of the radio host, taken from archival material, scans of the dial and excerpts of works by radio artists, mixed into a landscape of radiophonic interceptions and interfrequency radio sounds. The result is an investigative bricolage that considers the environment, morphology and taxonomy of the little people inside the radio.

01. Summary

As a small child I didn't exactly believe that there were little people who lived in the radio or the television. Better to say I was agnostic; and that I liked the idea that there could be more to radio than the squeaky transistor receiver that played in our house most days. I returned to the myth of the little radio people as an adult, after nearly a decade of making radio at a volunteer-run non-commercial radio station in Vancouver. My experiences inside and outside the studio –on both sides of the dial as listener and maker –began to reveal a complex series of relationships between people invisible to one another. The little people in the radio became a fascinating animistic twist on the socio-technical state of the medium, and revealed much about the tenacious if often frustrated human desire for communication and union across any distance.

The little people in the radio are the mythical offspring of early radio technology, traditionally housed in the relatively spacious tabletop radio receiver in the family home. They perform at the whim of the listening Ears, springing into action at the flick of the switch and a twist of the dial, providing all voices, music, sound effects and ambiences. This scene provides an intriguing set of comforts and tensions for experiencing wirelessness, reflecting more than a naivety around technology. In the framework of the little people in the radio, the radio receiver doesn't just transport the live experience of broadcast into the comfort of your home, the studio is actually inside your home, and inside *each* radio. The radio has always been a paradox of intimacy and promiscuity, of imminence and immanence. What does it mean to 'call into a show' if the show is literally taking place in the radio beside your bed?

The intimacy of radio has a dark side in this scenario too: the little people are hardly enjoying a worker's paradise if they are literally stuck living inside clock radios or car radios, available around the clock to inform or entertain. Overwork could as easily be replaced by sudden obsolescence when a radio receiver is retired to the basement or the attic; what happens to the little people inside when the radio is turned off, or thrown away?

I've made several radio art works that addressed some of these uneasy details in the life of the little radio people—including *The Clandestine Transmissions of Pirate Jenny*, a pirate radio intervention and experimental radio play. For this podcast, however, my aim was to reveal more of the subversive potential that the little radio people could bring to adventurous Ears. The politics of independent micro-radio apply here on the most intimate scale possible: no institutional or commercial approach, no claims to universal reach; these unreliable hosts could as easily be speaking to your unconscious. These are the transmissions of the little radio people when they are most creative and critical, applying all their extended sonic techniques and vocal prowess and their twists and treatments of the regularly scheduled programming to reveal the radio askew. The spaces in between stations are also audible and not considered interference or dead air zones but uncharted airwaves rich in meaning and potential; interfrequency



[Xentos 'Fray' Bentos with Knut Aufermann, Lepke B., Tryphena Mulford, and Sarah Washington for Resonance FM]

noises that, along with the hums and hisses of the radio receiver itself, constitute the natural habitat of the little radio people.

In his liner notes accompanying his work *The Radio*, Steve Roden includes a poem wherein a boy opens a radio receiver to discover tiny people with amazing instruments inside:

one of the miniature women picked up a strange thing
an instrument
that looked like a small flute
with hundreds of tiny pieces
of newspaper dangling from its end

when she blew it
the sound of static appeared¹

Likewise, the artists chosen for this podcast inhabit and explore all corners of the radio band, and manifest in stations and sets internationally. They tamper with format, deconstruct and remix the detritus and expectations of media culture, they sense electro-magnetic fields, they measure and propagate radio spaces, and sometimes fall asleep in the studio with the lights on. Listeners call in, the hosts call in to themselves, they perform all the voices. They live inside your radio, and this show is made especially for you.

Anna Friz

¹ Roden, Steve. From liner notes to *The Radio*. Sonoris, 1999.

02. Playlist

Radio recorded in a barn near McCreary, Manitoba, 2006
 Absolute Value of Noise, from 'rurban power lines', *Magnetic Focus*, self-released, 2008
 Miranda July, 'WSNO', *The Binet-Simon Test*, Kill Rock Stars, 1998.
 Negativland, 'The Worst Programming Ever, Mind Jamming', *Negativland Presents Over the Edge, Vol 1: Jam Con '84*, Seeland Records, 1994
 Nina Hagen, 'Born in Xixax', *NunSexMonkRock*, CBS Records, 1982
 Knut Aufermann, from *Feedback Siesta*, Radio LoRa, Zürich, 2007
 William S. Burroughs, 'Present Time Exercise', *Breakthrough in the Grey Room*. Ubu Web, recorded ca. 1971
 Xentos 'Fray' Bentos with Knut Aufermann, Lepke B., Tryphena Mulford, and Sarah Washington.
 Myke Dodge Weiskopf, from 'All Night Flight'. *ShortWaveMusic*, Radius, Chicago, 2013
 The Conet Project, '2 voices in one transmission', *Recordings of Shortwave Numbers Stations*, Irdial, 1999
 Kode9, 'The Last 3 Digits', *Radio Territories*, Errant Bodies Press, 2006
 Jean-Philippe Renoult & DinahBird, from *Snoring By Numbers*. 2013
 Xentos 'Fray' Bentos et al, from 'Album 4: Failure Rate (notes from an electronic dungheap)', *The Harmon e. Phraisyer Show*, produced for ORF Kunstradio, Austria by Resonance FM, London, 2006
 Gregory Whitehead, from *American Heavy*. BBC, 2002
 Jeff Kolar, 'Outro', *Other Voices*, self-released, 2010
 Absolute Value of Noise, from 'tripream: HV diodes', *Magnetic Focus*. Self-released, 2008
 'You're My Dream', *Behind the Mike*, Blue Network/NBC, 1941
 Anna Friz, 'Episode 10', *M.O.L.E.C.A.S.T.* A broadcast, A/V Festival Radio, 2008
 Steve Roden, from *The Radio*. Sonoris, 1999

03. Notes

A number of the works selected are actually full-length radio shows. Like many of the artists themselves, I have exercised the radio DJs prerogative of sampling to best serve the mix, which of course does some disservice to the artists' original



[Gregory Whitehead]

intentions. I encourage you to consult the playlist and give a full listen to any of the works or programs that were only glimpsed on this podcast—most are available in full online.

04. Credits

Curated and mixed by Anna Friz at Skálar | Sound Art | Experimental Music, Seyðisfjörður, East Iceland.

05. Acknowledgements

Many thanks to all the featured artists, and to the little people in the radio toiling anonymously all these years.

06. Copyright note

2015. All rights reserved. © by the respective authors and publishers.

Ràdio Web MACBA is a non-profit research and transmission project. Every effort has been made to trace copyright holders; any errors or omissions are inadvertent, and will be corrected whenever possible upon notification in writing to the Publisher.