Preface

The twentieth century was one that celebrated artistic innovation of all sorts. In music an extremely radical innovation was undoubtedly the introduction of any sound as potential material. This broadening of material accompanied the equally radical developments in music technology allowing, for example, individual sounds to be generated *ex nihilo* or recorded and then manipulated and subsequently placed into an audio or audiovisual musical context. The emancipation of the sound in music is the climax of a list of developments that includes the earlier freeing of dissonance, pitch (including tuning systems), dynamics, structure, timbre, and space from traditional practices and restrictions.

Of course, replacing the note with the sound as unit measure of a work did not imply that artists using new materials were obligated to ignore the rich diversity of music history. All notes are sounds, after all. Still, the rapid and diverse developments of sound-based artistic work have been remarkable, comprising creative manifestations currently ranging from electroacoustic art music to turntable composition, music in club culture, microsound, both acoustic and digital sound installations, and computer games. New means of composition, listening, presentation, and participation have all come into existence.

Yet as with other forms of liberation in society, a move forward raises all sorts of questions and will not be found acceptable or appreciable by everyone. One reason that this book has been written is to suggest a means to make at least some of this work more accessible to those who might have difficulty finding it and also appreciating it. Its key goal, however, is to create a framework for this body of music's field of studies. These two areas, access (or accessibility)[1] and scholarship, might be seen

as better subjects for two separate publications. But it is my view that scholarship in the arts, in particular the innovative arts, serves both understanding as well as more fundamental functions such as facilitating access for potentially interested inexperienced participants and audiences.

Two issues that will appear and reappear in the following chapters are the categorization of works of organized sound and terminology associated with categorization. Clear classification systems are an obvious aid in terms of accessibility. Do artistic works of organized sound all belong to specific traditional categories of music such as art or popular music? If not, where do they belong, in new musical categories or eventually even nonmusical ones? Must there always be but one answer to these questions? Are the terms we use currently to assist in their placement commonly accepted and accurate? Established categorization systems will act as our point of departure but will also be challenged; suggestions for renewal will be made and current terminology will be found to be responsible for a good deal of confusion.

Scholarship has to deal with the quantum leap that works of organized sound represent. Fortunately there has been a great deal written on this, including a number of very important theses. This book offers the view, however, that the research so far is fragmentary and that far too little foundational work has been done. It is proposed that one needs to build a foundation in a given architecture before the diversity of upper floor rooms and suites can be fully valued. The foundation should also be of use in terms of facilitating and developing appreciation. It is for this reason that I attempt to create a general framework for the study of works of organized sound. It is intended to complement historical and technical surveys that are generally available. Consequently some basic knowledge of the relevant repertoire, pioneers, and theorists as well as of the associated technology is assumed.

Understanding the Art of Sound Organization is structured as follows. The remainder of the preface introduces the ElectroAcoustic Resource Site (EARS). EARS serves as a glossary, bibliographic and general information reference within the field of studies that this book represents. The structure of the book has been designed to parallel the site's architecture,

which in turn has been created to serve as the foundational framework for sound-based music's field of studies. As the site is updated regularly, it offers bibliographic and other relevant information that will remain up to date after the publication of this volume. EARS is therefore the book's dynamic annotated bibliographic presence.

The introduction begins by investigating one of the many opportunities that have arisen through the growth of the sound-based musical repertoire, namely the ability to make clear links with our day-to-day experience, something a good deal of music, in particular contemporary art music, has often avoided. It continues by introducing the two returning subjects, classification and terminology.

Chapter 1 focuses primarily on questions of accessibility related to sound-based music, in particular those genres of music involving sound organization that have been relatively marginalized. Accessibility can be enhanced using basic tools such as a concept called the "something to hold on to" factor in timbral composition that will form a starting point for the discussion. This particular notion is based on the listening experience. Another aspect relevant to accessibility that can be something to hold on to is extrinsic to the listening experience, namely the dramaturgy of sound-based works. Musical dramaturgy concerns the "why" and the context of a given work more than the traditional aspects of the "what" and the "how." The investigation of a work's dramaturgy is where the subject of artistic intention is introduced.

A tendency in the artistic scholarship of the latter half of the twentieth century concerns the step away from the study of an artwork's construction and, where articulated, an art maker's intention toward the experience of the recipient, that is, from *poiesis* to *aesthesis* (to follow Jean Molino; see, e.g., Nattiez 1990). The source of this radical, much needed development can be found in both reception theory and critical theory. In a sense this step represents a move from Hegelian thesis to antithesis. The final subsection of chapter 1's section B, on communication, focuses on the third of Hegel's triad, the synthesis involving the ideal of triangulating artists' intentions and listener reception, where artists' visions meet up with the listening experience. Through the introduction of the Intention/Reception project, an example of recent research involving sound-based works is offered in which data have been collected

that demonstrate that the potential audience for certain works of sound organization is much larger than one might imagine. This chapter is distinctly different from the following two owing to its rather specific focus. It combines more of my own research with personal comments than found elsewhere in order to contextualize access-based research and support its importance. Chapter 1 is thus potentially more provocative than the following two chapters, which are more general and offer the character of musical and scholarly surveys.

Chapter 2 delineates the types of works that are relevant to this study. It also introduces several existent theories pertinent to the proposed delineation. This is done as an attempt to commence the creation of cohesion between thought and deed. It is therefore the lengthiest of the three chapters. It is here where a first step is made toward the discovery of how major theoretical contributions might fit within a greater structure, where the framework proposed in chapter 3 begins to take shape. Chapter 2 also touches upon some of the means of construction of works; it investigates how difficult it is to place many sonic artworks into genres and how (in)consistently these works are categorized.

This book seeks to discover some sense of coherence among works and, similarly, among theoretical treatments of works of organized sound. It will be demonstrated in chapter 2 that some pieces will fit comfortably into more than one particular category. This part of the delineation is intended to allow for further studies to be written investigating aesthetic cohesion, something that is by no means necessarily genre-dependent. Studies focusing on aesthetics are a bit of a rarity currently, as most scholarship tends to focus on technical or technological cohesion more than content and valorization.

One of the subjects investigated in chapter 2, namely the decades-old split between works that end up recorded in a fixed medium (such as tape, CD, hard disk, and the like) and works involving technology that are presented live, represents a typical area that has contributed both to ongoing terminology problems as well as placement issues. It will be demonstrated that this is one of many areas in which convergence has been taking place in recent years, and thus that presentation may be a less important factor in terms of seeking musical cohesion than the aural

reception of works. The chapter concludes with another look at the subject of placement, this time from a specific angle. It is here where current classifications are questioned and a potential new paradigm is proposed. The word *paradigm* is sometimes criticized as an overused, somewhat unclear term. It has been found to be appropriate in this book when used in the sense of a "supergenre," that is, a class bringing together a cluster of genres and categories often considered as being separate that have been converging in recent years owing to their use of materials and the knowledge concerning the artistic use of those materials.

Chapter 3 involves processing all of the information presented thus far and defining patterns that have emerged leading toward the introduction of the framework for the scholarly area of research that is being proposed for the field. It begins by placing the studies of sound-based music into interdisciplinary contexts, that is, contexts involving musical study in combination with the other arts as well as with other subject areas ranging from acoustics and acoustic ecology to semiotics; furthermore, a holistic approach to research is proposed concerning the interconnectedness of a given work's history, theory, technological aspects, and social impact.

The chapter's heart is its proposal of a framework for the study of sound-based music. This is presented in such a way as to suggest an architecture where the theories introduced in chapter 2 find a logical place in the structure of this new domain. It is interesting to note how the further down chapter 3's subject list one goes, the more interrelated theory, practice, and technology become. Section B of chapter 3, the subject list, relates this framework to the architecture of the EARS site.

The short closing word at the end of chapter 3 has a dual purpose. It commences by tying together the main ideas proposed in the book and then moves on to consider what the study of musicianship might consist of that best serves this artistic corpus. It is intended to leave the reader with food for thought and, ideally, the desire to help fill in one or more of the many gaps within the field's framework proposed in this final chapter. It is therefore an invitation for others to pick up where the current volume leaves off.

Introducing the EARS Project

One of the great advances in the publishing world in recent years is the availability of dynamic websites that support an increasing number of new books. This allows not only for supplementary information, but also any relevant corrections or addenda that may become available. This book is related to a website, albeit in a manner slightly different from the one just described.

The ElectroAcoustic Resource Site (EARS—http://www.ears.dmu.ac.uk)[2] offers pertinent information and useful pointers in any given area of the field to its growing community. To achieve this, a glossary of terms relevant to works of sound-based music has been created.[3] All glossary entries can be found on the EARS index to help users find scholarly work related to their subject of interest, whether published, posted on the Internet, or available by any other means.

The EARS project is clearly rather ambitious; yet we are realists. It is not our goal to provide site visitors with every definition ever written for each glossary item or to have sound, image, or movie files to illustrate all relevant listed terms. EARS is particularly focused on the arts and humanities—as opposed to the audio engineering–based technological development—aspects of the field. There are sufficient ways of finding out about the more technical subjects through reference publications and numerous users groups.

What the site offers is as complete a list of relevant terms as we have been able to compile with information that we discover or that our international users provide us with.[4] Therefore the bibliography of this book forms a modest subset of the one that can be discovered by working one's way through the website.

Currently there are six main categories within the EARS project:

1. Disciplines of Study (primarily chapter 3)
2. Genres and Categories of Electroacoustic Music (chapter 2)
3. Musicology of Electroacoustic Music (all chapters)
4. Performance Practice and Presentation (primarily chapter 3)
5. Sound Production and Manipulation (primarily chapter 3)
6. Structure, Musical (primarily chapter 3)

   Granted the fourth to sixth categories usually concern processes of composition and dissemination more than theoretical studies concerning the artworks themselves. Still, the link between some of these practices and the analysis of new tendencies in music making are clear; a modest number of publications reflect this. As these subject areas are often treated in technology-based publications in the field, they will only be called upon here to support the top three categories.

   The category of the musicology of electroacoustic music receives the greatest amount of attention throughout the book. This is because it forms the heart of the field of studies presented here.[5] The EARS team's hope is to support the creation of scholarly cohesion in this area by offering those interested a chance to discover who has been working in the subjects of their choice and what has been achieved, thereby permitting new networks and communities to be formed. The remainder of this book is not subservient to the EARS project. It is therefore not intended to act as "the EARS book"; the book is certainly influenced by the site's structure and uses this as a basis for discussions which culminate in the description of that architectural foundation which has thus far been missing in terms of the study of works of organized sound.