



Yutaka Hirose
Trace: Sound Design Works 1986-1989

Interview by Matt Robidoux

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<https://wereleasewhateverthefuckwewantrecords.bandcamp.com/album/trace-sound-design-works-1986-1989>

Explanation of Trace by Yutaka Hirose

The editorial concept of *Nova+4* is "harmony with the field," *Nostalghia* is "space and fusion," and the editorial theme of *Trace* is "space guided by and in response to the traces of time." LP(CD)1 captures the shifting changes from morning to night outside oneself, while LP(CD)2 represents a journey within an inner dream.

[*Trace*] CD1 follows the development of *Nova+4* and *Nostalghia*, while [*Trace*] CD2 uses the same technique, but with a completely different sound input structure. The two CDs were created to question the trend of ambient music, healing, and new age music, and to construct a three-dimensional soundscape of the cyberpunk landscape of science fiction ([Philip K.] Dick and [William] Gibson) that I prefer.

[*Trace*] CD2 was produced mainly as a stereophonic soundtrack for a science museum, which may have been reckless at the time (and impossible today). The last part of the *Nostalghia* LP represents [my] assimilation into new age music. And the last part of *Trace* is structured in contrast to that vector. The title "Sound Design" was purposely chosen to indicate the range of possibilities for designing sound, rather than the category of ambient music.

Nova+4, *Nostalghia*, and *Trace* are a trilogy of [my] 80s works that were being edited concurrently in 2017 when *Nova+4* was scheduled for reissue. Initially, *Trace* was scheduled to be released after *Nova+4*, but the Corona fiasco shut down all European functions and put a stop to the mastering status. This is why *Nostalghia* was released in Japan first. As a result, *Trace* became the last in the trilogy, which I consider a good thing.

Traceの解説

*Nova+4*の編集コンセプトが「フィールドとの調和」、*Nostalghia*が「空間と融合」、そして *Trace*の編集テーマ「時の痕跡に導かれ呼応する空間」としてLP(CD)1は自分の外側の朝から夜の移り変わる変化を捉え、LP(CD)2は内面の夢の中の旅を表現しています。

CD 1については、NovaからNostalgiaを踏襲した形の展開とし、CD 2は手法は同じですがインプットする音を全く変えた構造になってます。この時期に自分の中にあったの アンビエント=環境音楽→ヒーリング（癒し）→ニューエイジの流れに対する疑問と、自分の好みSF（ディック、ギブソン）のサイバーパンクの風景の立体音場構築でした。CD 2については主に科学館の立体音響として制作した内容で当時としても（今なら不可能）無謀なことだったかもしれません。NostalgiaのLPのラストが広瀬なりのニューエイジミュージックへの同化を表しています。そしてTraceのラストはそのベクトルとは対照的な構造になっています。あえてサウンドデザインと言うタイトルを付けたのはアンビエント（環境音楽）の範疇ではなく音をデザインする可能性の幅を示すためのタイトルです。

Nova+4、Nostalgia、TraceはNovaの再発が決まった2017年に同時進行するように編集作業を行っていた広瀬80年代3部作です。当初はNova+4の後にTraceの発売が決まってましたが、コロナ騒ぎで欧州の全ての機能が停止しマスタリングの状態でストップになりました。そのためNostalgiaが先に日本で発売されました。結果的にTraceが3部作のラストになったの自分では良かったと思っています。



MR: It was exciting to learn how informed your work is by free improvisation. Pauline Oliveros has said her improvisations “center on reflections, in both senses of the word: acoustic reflections as well as visual reflections from a mirror or surface, and then reflecting on the material in a contemplative way.” How does memory space factor into your process for creating “sculpture of time by sound” as you’ve called it?

YH: In "Time Sculpture by Sound," the moment the concept of sound is determined, the process of replacing the flow of air and time with sound becomes a process. In this process, I believe that my original experiences are expressed as sound memories. The original experience is the soundscape of the countryside where I spent my early childhood when I was still young. I improvised on various electronic instruments and created this soundscape through the process of cutting up and reconstructing the accumulation of these sounds.

音による時間の彫刻」は、音のコンセプトが決定した瞬間に、空気の流れ時間の流れを音に置換していく作業になります。その過程で自分の原体験が音の記憶として表現されていると思います。その原体験は物心がつく幼い頃に過ごした田舎の音風景であると思います。その音風景を様々なエレクトロニクス楽器を即興で演奏しその積み重ねを切り刻み、再構成するプロセスで作成しています。

MR: How linked to architecture were your compositions for Sound Process Design? Did you collaborate with architects and designers directly, or were your site-specific compositional choices more informed by spending time in these spaces?

YH: The sound creation process at Sound Process Design involves participation from the basic design of the building. First, we understand and absorb the concept of the building, and then, while considering the image of the sound, we put the speaker positions for the multi-speakers into the building drawings. This was followed by the sound design based on the drawings. Once the tones were determined, we improvised on the multi-tape while inputting the tones, then decided which tracks to delete and which to keep alive, created the sound field, and decided on three to four sound groups to be combined.

サウンド・プロセス・デザインでの音作りは、建物の基本設計から参加します。まず建物が持つコンセプトを理解し吸収し、音のイメージを考えながらマルチのスピーカー位置を建物の図面に落とし込みます。それを図面に基づく音の設計を行いました。音については、音色を決定することを第一とし、音色が決定するとマルチテープに即興で演奏しながら入力をしてその後削除するトラック、生かすトラックを決め音場を作り3~4の音のグループを決め、組み合わせで行きました。

MR: When composing soundscapes for museum exhibitions, what were some surprising ways you found yourself responding to that thematic content?

YH: Sound design for a museum— first a sound concept is determined. I then simplify that concept further in my mind and choose various sound sources to build up. Then, when the build-up is maxed out, I eliminate the unwanted sounds. By simplifying the concept without complicating it, I was able to increase the degree of freedom in sound design.

美術館の博物館のサウンドデザイン、最初に音のコンセプトが決められます。そのコンセプトをさらに自分の中で単純化して、様々な音のソースを選びビルトアップしていきます。その後ビルドアップがマックスになった時に要らない音を消去していきます。コンセプトを複雑化せず単純化することでサウンドデザインの自由度をあげて行きました。

MR: I noticed that "Fluctuation" hovers closely around a tonal center of D. There are numerous and varied shifting textures within the piece that create a kind of dispersed pointillism with this tone. Experiencing a multichannel version of this

could sound like a kind of tuning of the space. How does tuning, or using resonant frequencies as a compositional tool figure into your practice?

YH: No acoustic instruments are used, but the following concrete sounds are sampled and used: blowing bottles, tapping various materials, digging holes with shovels, rubbing metal together, singing bowls, voice material, etc.

アコースティック楽器は使用してませんが、具体音として、ビン吹いた音、様々な素材を叩く音、シャベルで穴掘る音、金属をすり合わせる音、シンギングボウル、声の素材等をサンプリングして使用しています。

MR: There is renewed interest in some of the earlier digital FM synthesizers used in the 80s and 90s. What about these sounds has aged well?

YH: The more you work with early digital FM synthesizers, the more attractive their sounds become. The first song on Trace, reflection, was created using only the FM synthesizer, and the sound flow was created by recording one note through an effects pedal, recording it through another effects pedal, and mixing it by shifting the pitch slightly.

初期のデジタルFMシンセサイザーの音色は作りこめば作りこむほど魅力が出ます。Traceの最初の曲reflectionはFMシンセサイザーのみで作られています。ただし一つの音をエフェクターを通して録音し、また別のエフェクターを通し録音しピッチを微妙にずらしたりしてミキシングし音の流れを作っています。

MR: What role does melody have in your work?

YH: As for sound design, my main focus is on composing sounds as dots or groups of sounds. I am not particularly conscious of melody. They emerged derivatively from time to time.

私は、サウンドデザインとして、音を点して、または音群として構成することに主眼を置いています。メロディーについては特に意識せず。その時々で派生的に出現していました。

MR: In “Looking Back at the Past”, a voice is introduced, sounding like what could be a train announcement. How often do you incorporate field recordings in your work, and what are some ways you process this raw material?

YH: At that time, I used to record while walking around with my recordable Walkman whenever I went on a trip. Looking Back consists of sounds from the city of Kathmandu. Nova+4 is made up of sounds from a fishing village in Japan. There are others, but I think only about 20% of them are realized as a work of art.

当時の私は、旅行に行くたびに録音可能なウォークマンで歩きながら録音していました。Looking Backはカトマンズの市内のサウンドで構成されています。このNova+4では日本の漁村の音等入れています。他にもありますが、作品として具現化しているのは全体の20%くらいだと思います。

MR: Mixing these sounds for stereo seems like a challenge! How did you approach arranging for the stereo field after conceiving the piece for multichannel site-specificity?

YH: In order to replace this work in stereo, I once erased from my memory the free combination of sounds in the multitrack, imagined the story of the composition of the sounds, and determined and arranged the localization and time axis of each track. Therefore, I consider multi and stereo as two different dimensions.

今回の作品をステレオに置き換えるために、私は一旦マルチトラックの自由な音の組み合わせを記憶から消し、音が構成される物語を想像し、それぞれのトラックの定位と時間軸を決定しアレンジしました。ですからマルチとステレオは別の次元のものと考えています。



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