

Donlan: Donlan Soundscape

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To capture the soundscape, I spent some time on the patio behind my apartment building and was able to identify a number of sounds, both natural and manmade. The location I was at sits right along the Blackstone River however, so the sound of the running water generates lots of white noise. While not changing in rhythm or pitch, the water produced a smooth and subtle tone that slightly masks the other sounds.

The most prominent sound I heard was the chirping from crickets. Their sound has a very fast paced rhythm that occurs in a steady pattern, however the high quantity of crickets in the area causes their patterns to overlap and harmonize. They all produce a sharp, high-pitched sound, but not every single one is at the same pitch. I was able to occasionally focus in on the sound of a single nearby cricket and compare its rhythm and pitch with the others, and sometimes a cricket would slow down and stand out. However, the whole time I was outside, basically all of the crickets maintained their rhythm and produced a constant sound.

In addition to the crickets, there was the occasional sound of a cicada. These insects created a high-pitched rattling sound, similar to maracas or a rattlesnake. Unlike the crickets' constant noise, the cicada only made sound occasionally and I was unable to notice any pattern in when it went off. The sound itself starts as a steady rhythmic shaking, and after a few seconds begins to fade away and increase in tempo simultaneously. (0:02-0:08 in video)

Next was the two separate dog sounds I heard. First, a woman walked by me with her dog on a leash, and the sound of the dogs collar produced a jingle. Since the sound of the river and the insects was so loud, I couldn't hear them approaching at first until I noticed the high pitched

jingling of the metal pieces on the dog's collar. Since the dog was walking at its owner's pace and in a straight line, the collar produced a steady pattern of quick, high pitched jingles each time the dog took a step. The second dog sound I heard was a bark from inside the building near me, and I think the apartment's window was open since it was very loud and clear. The dog barked twice in a row, but both of them sounded like the same note. It was a brash, low-pitched bark meaning it probably came from a large dog.

Another sound that stood out to me was the loud engine roar of a muscle car or motorcycle that accelerated nearby. The vehicle made a loud, metallic, deep sound, three consecutive times, that lasted for approximately three seconds each. Each sound started at a lower pitch and slowly increased, and overall pitch from the first sound it made to the third one decreased. Whatever the vehicle was, its engine made a three very distinct sound as it sped up and shifted.

I also heard the sound of truck tires going down the nearby highway on 6 different occasions. This produced a very subtle, but very low pitched drone that would fade in and fade out over a few seconds. The sound had a steady humming rhythm, and was very smooth in nature. Each time it happened, the pitch was slightly different probably due to the size of the truck or the speed at which its tires were moving to produce the humming noise.

Finally, I heard two different people enter the building behind me. I couldn't hear their footsteps due to the background noises, but I could hear the single high-pitched electronic beep of the reader when they scanned their key, followed a few moments later by the sharp thud of the door closing behind them.

Overall, it was interesting to closely observe all of the sounds that constantly play right outside my door, but I never pay attention to because of closed windows and air conditioning. While it was difficult to hear much over the crickets' constant chirping, the few sounds I did hear were very identifiable and align with the typical soundscape where I spend most of my time.