

SOUND IN SPACE

14 JUNE 2025

19:00

THEATER HALL
BILKENT UNIVERSITY

Program

Jonty Harrison | Klang (1982) 9"

Tolga Yayalar | Impulse Impromptu (2025) 11"
IV. Musical Box

Enrique Mendoza | aural allure (2025) 16"

Alperen Demirkaya | The Pools Beneath the Crater (2025) 9"

Åke Parmerud | Les flûtes en feu (1999) 11"

Jonty Harrison, "Klang" (1982)

The title ('Klang' is the German for 'sound') reflects the onomatopoeic nature of the family of sounds providing the raw material for the piece – sharp, metallic attacks with interesting resonances rich in harmonics. The real starting point for "Klang" was the discovery (in Denis Smalley's kitchen!) of two earthenware casseroles, the sounds of which were recorded in the Electroacoustic Music Studio of the University of East Anglia (Norwich, UK) during the summer of 1981. Material of two kinds was recorded – attack/resonance sounds made by tapping the lids on or in the bowls, and continuous rolling sounds made by running the lids around the insides of the bowls. Different pitches resulted from the various combinations of lids and bowls, and different qualities of resonance emerged according to the attack position. The microphones were placed very close to the bowls to maximize the movement within the stereophonic image. Other related material, accumulated over the previous three or four years, was also used. This included both real-world sounds, such as cow-bells, metal rods and aluminum bars, and electronically generated sounds, both analog and digital. The final impetus to compose the piece came in June 1981 when I was invited by János Décsenyi to work in the Electronic Music Studio of Magyar Rádió in Budapest. As studio time would be limited I was advised to take a certain amount of taped material with me; the two weeks prior to the visit were therefore spent in preliminary work in the Electroacoustic Music Studio of The University of Birmingham. Much of the opening two sections of the piece were composed before going to Hungary.

Although continuous, "Klang" falls into six short, fairly clearly defined sections: "Introduction"; "Development 1": duet; "Development 2": interruption of duet and increase in complexity towards the first climax; "Development 3": relatively static section; "Development 4": proliferation of material from the previous section into glissando structures, build-up to the second (main) climax; and slow release to the final "Coda".

The listener can trace the development of the material from raw statements of casserole sounds in the "Introduction", through more complex, highly transformed events in the four sections, back to the opening sound-world in the "Coda". The most obvious transformation technique is mixing, using multiple but only slightly transposed versions of simple sounds. Besides mixing and transposition with tape recorders and a harmonizer, the main modifications were achieved by filtering and, most important of all, montage. This last technique is the principal means of controlling the timing and rhythmic articulation of the material and its organisation into phrases (which may be a single line or a mix of many layers, edited together into the desired sequence).

"Klang" [Timbre] was realized in 1982 in the Electronic Music Studio of Magyar Rádió (HEAR) in Budapest (Hungary) and premiered later that year at the University of Birmingham (UK). The piece was commissioned by MAFILM. It was awarded Second Prize in the Analogue Category of the 1983 Bourges International Electroacoustic Music Awards (France) and it was awarded a 1992 Euphonie d'or "as one of the twenty most significant works from two decades of the Bourges Awards."

Tolga Yayalar, "Impulse Impromptu IV: Musical Box" (2025)

The fourth installment in the Impulse Impromptu series explores the sonic world of the musical box—an object both delicate and mechanical, nostalgic and uncanny. This piece is built entirely from the sounds of two different musical boxes, recorded in detail and pushed beyond their traditional musical function.

True to the series' core idea of improvisation and instrument-centered exploration, the initial stage involved extensive acoustic improvisations: tapping, winding, scraping, and playing the boxes in both conventional and unconventional ways. These recordings served not only as inspiration but also as raw material. Through sampling and electronic manipulation, new virtual instruments were created from these recordings, allowing a second phase of improvisation—this time in the electroacoustic space.

Impulse Impromptu IV draws on the full sonic potential of the musical box, from its iconic timbre to its mechanical creaks and clicks. The result is a piece that evokes the sensation of being inside the instrument itself—as if the listener has been miniaturized and transported into the inner workings of a musical box, experiencing its intimate, mechanical and often eerie sound world from within.

My very first fixed media piece, composed in 2000, was also based on the sounds of a musical box. A quarter century later, Impulse Impromptu IV revisits that early fascination, making this not only an exploration of sound, but a personal nostalgic journey.

Alperen Demirkaya, "The Pools Beneath the Crater" (2025)

This piece tells the fragmented, surreal journey of a soldier at the frontlines—where fear, memory, and hallucination merge into a single, collapsing reality.

It begins in the thick fog of war: cold, tense, disoriented. As the frontline rumbles with explosions, hums of war machines, and nearby gunfire. Sometimes momentary warmth of the memories eases the pain, but they disperses quickly as the war returns with force. Orders are shouted. Adrenaline rushes. In the chaos of attack, the soldier takes a wrong path, and a shell explodes.

What follows is not death, but something stranger.

From the wreckage, he descends into what seems like another world: a misty field, a hidden cave, a pool that glows with stillness. Sound begins to shift—textures stretch, voices dissolve, reality softens. This is no battlefield, not anymore. Here, sound becomes a hallucinated cinema. Time unravels.

But bliss is brief. The cave is a crater. The pool is blood. The journey ends where it began: in the snow, in silence.

“Call of the Pools” invites the listener to step into the collapsing psyche of a dying mind—blurring war with dream, noise with memory, and body with landscape.

Åke Parmerud, “Les flûtes en feu” (1999)

Les flûtes en feu is based on the concept of the composer as an alchemist. With the use of computers and modern studio facilities, the composer of acousmatic music or sonic art, is able to treat the acoustic material as if it was a substance with a constantly re-definable morphology. In the piece the basic sonic “substance” is some simple sounds of flutes. They are transformed and recomposed in various ways as to give a glimpse of their virtual potential. As the piece evolves, the relatively simple structures reveals new and sometimes surprising sides of their original gestures.

There is also another element reoccurring throughout the composition. A short metallic sound, reminiscent of the sledge hitting the anvil, signals the presence of a force that is about to change the shape of things. Finally, in the end of the piece, the sound of fire, representing the catalysing process of the four elements present as the basis of all alchemy, briefly enters the sonic stage to confirm the process that has been taking place. As in many other instances where the ambitions of art touches upon the old idea of metamorphosis, working with this piece definitely made me realise that “all that glitters ain’t gold”. However, as usual when working closely with some sound material, my relation to the flute as a source of sound and as an instrument in general got a lot deeper, with in itself is a golden experience.

“Les flûtes en feu” was commissioned by IMEB, and was finalised in the studio Circe at GMEB in September 1999. The piece had it’s world premiere in Bourges the summer of 2000.

It was awarded first prize in the “Metamorphosis” festival 2000.