



Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, RAS
Institute of Russian Literature (Pushkin House), RAS

International academic and practical conference

FIELD SOUND RECORDINGS: MUSIC, SPEECH, LANDSCAPE

October 5–8, 2021 online

*October 5–15, 2021 offline
Moscow, Saint Petersburg*

Sound is a physical, psychological and cultural phenomenon, which first and foremost provides information about events, processes, momentary changes in the environment — in other words, about what is happening here-and-now. In this connection, recording of the sound phenomena, playback or precise imitation of sounds that once took place somewhere else in the past is a certain attempt to outsmart time, to make reality more controllable.

We may consider that the beginning of the history of sound recording takes place at the same time as the advent of writing — mostly because speech is primarily a sound phenomenon. In the history of European music culture, the methods of sound recording/notation have been heading for a long time towards the maximum accuracy of the instructions for musical performances. Standardization of musical instrument constructions and performing techniques has also contributed to better accuracy in playing music and ensured that it sounds relatively constant in different performances. And only in the 20th century, after the invention and spread of such sound recording and reproduction technologies that do not require human efforts to extract sounds here-and-now, the history of European academic music has visibly shifted its course towards an exemption (sometimes quite radical) from standards of notation, interpretation, performing techniques and principles of composition. The responsibility for the accuracy of sound recording and playback can be considered, to some extent, to have been shifted from human to mechanical/digital devices. And indeed, the technology and industry of sound recording develop first of all in the direction of increasing the relevance of recorded sound to the real one, or rather, in the direction of strengthening of psychophysiological effect, which sound has on human beings — the effect of co-presence with the event.

When we talk about describing and studying the sound picture of the world, we inevitably come to the concept of "humanly organized sound". It includes both complementing everyday sound landscapes with "favourable" sounds and rejecting uncomfortable sources, interpreted as "noise". One way or another, we deal with selectively perceived sound in our daily lives, with both cultural and physiological justifications. The range of the "unheard" is as important for sound studies as the "audible" model of the world.

Another important emphasis in the above formulation is the concept of man as a listener and as a producer of sounds. The sound reality is much broader than the conditioned human perception: the modern approach of anthropology "on the other side of the human being" proposes to break away from the doctrine of anthropocentrism and to perceive many entities such as "plant", "mineral" or "animal" as hearing, listening to and reproducing sound.

Even though recording technologies are actively used by cultural researchers (ethnologists, ethnomusicologists, folklorists, linguists, etc.), questions about what role the phenomenon of sound recording itself plays in culture are rarely discussed. Our academic and practical interdisciplinary conference on field sound recordings is devoted to these questions. The main task of the conference is to organize an exchange of experience with sound phenomena between language and culture researchers, musicians, composers and sound artists, technologists, engineers and programmers, sound designers and other specialists involved in the practice of recording, analysis and reconstruction of sound.

During the conference we plan to discuss the following topics:

- Sound in traditional culture: acoustics and semantics
- Sound recordings in folklore expeditions: from phonograph to digital technology
- Anthropology and sound ecology: theory, perspectives
- Fixation, analysis, sound transformation: research practice
- Recorded sound representation and re-contextualization
- Artificial hearing, artificial intelligence.
- History of sound recording and interpretation
- Real field recordings VS it desired (?) results
- Position and role of recorders and "recorded"

The conference will include lectures by leading scientists and the following events:

round tables:

- Musical ethnography and ethnomusicology in higher education
- Creation of up-to-date educational and information resources based on folklore and ethnographic funds
- Retention and publication of field records: archives, labels, web resources
- Inter-institutional cooperation: science, music, film, museums, schools

master classes and workshops:

- Tactics and technologies for field sound recording
- Modern technology for the restoration of field records
- Working methods with folklore archives and databases

experimental programmes:

- Acoustic walks in two cities
- Installation (focused on the physical media of the recorded sound, playback modes and the bodily experience of the person listening to the recording)
- Listening sessions: concert listening to the recordings

Specialists in ethnomusicology, musicology, anthropology/ethnology, folklore, linguistics, sound art, sound engineering, IT-technologies, AI-systems, programming, museology, philosophy, sociology, art studies and cultural studies are invited to participate.

Conference working languages: Russian and English.

To participate in the conference, you should fill in the electronic form: <https://forms.gle/XXNfiwevHyFKAbK68> by **March 25, 2021**.

The Program Committee reserves the right to select applications received.

Conference proceedings will be published online. Based on the results of the conference, participants' articles may be published in a special issue of a peer-reviewed journal.

For all questions related to participation in the Conference, please contact: fieldsoundrecordings@gmail.com

No organization fee is expected or charged for participation in the conference.

Catering and travel to and from Moscow or St. Petersburg are paid for either by the sending party or by participants' funds.

Program Committee

Dmitry Funk, D.Sc. in Historical Sciences (*Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, RAS*) – head of the Committee

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