

John Kefla Kerr: W.A.L.K. SYNOPSIS

I began my W.A.L.K. presentation by outlining an important 'enabling condition' for my work as a composer, namely that music and sound are always already subjectively immersive, omnipresent and interpenetrative. In attending to such aspects of music's ontology (what Caroline Abbate calls its "drastic ineffability") I look for ways of eliding distinctions between sacred and secular, thereby posing questions about the nature and status of the everyday. My method involves engineering encounters (performances etc.) that attempt to shed light upon such questions.

I presented two brief extracts at the seminar. The first was from *Triptych Antwerp*, a multimedia installation created in response to several walks I took in the city of Antwerp. The piece adopts the 17th century, triple meter form of the Passacaglia (literally "street walk")—a 'genre' that formalises the idea of the urban-walk-as-music. *Triptych Antwerp's* musical component presents a derivative of a ground bass, with 'variations' in the form of surround-sound location recordings. A question I ask in the piece is 'to what extent might the Passacaglia yield to or accommodate the contemporary experience of city-centre walking?'

The second extract was from my Sports Centre Opera, *Passion*, in which a walking audience traverses the five-a-side football pitches of a large sports hall, encountering en route a variety of musically/sonically-inflected scenes derived from observations I made during a two-year artist residency I undertook in Cumbria in the aftermath of the foot and mouth crisis. Much of *Passion* is concerned with bringing the outdoors inside. Salient features of the rural and urban environment (from cars and sheep to bells and low flying aircraft) are visited upon the promenading audience.

Musical representations of walking and the transcendent/spiritual inflection brought to bear upon them by means of a certain handling of audio materials evokes the idea of walking as a sacramental or devotional act—a kind of pilgrimage.