Experimental Electroacoustic Music is Dead. Long Live Experimental Electroacoustic Music (working title)

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The history of Electroacoustic Music is still to be written, and while Pierre Schaeffer (and his school) remain the iconic creators of concrete and electroacoustic experimentation, the history of electronic music did not start with them nor did it end with the coming of the DX 7. The experimental nature of electronics in music is alive and well as evidenced in the numerous 'techno' events, underground movements, genres and subgenera based on the use of particular elements of emanating from electroacoustic techniques (grunge, garage, dub step, trap, etc.). The use of experimental electronics proliferate in the places we might not expect to hear them. The use of granular synthesis in a wide variety of dance music, the use of Max for algorithmic composition by *Autechre* and *Aphex Twin*, the experiments of the group *Matmos*, and the more recent developments based on field recordings tracing its origins to both Schaeffer and Foley, the growing interest in found sound, and the place of sound design in popular forms and film (Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross) all point to a continue d interest, and development of our electroacoustic inheritance.

(Re)defining Electroacoustic Music – There is nothing in the name that implies or infers experimental. Hostroically, describing it as experimental would take away some of the heat this work received from the establishment (acoustic music). While not necessarily an apology, calling electroacoustic music "experimental" is putting it in a niche much as Babbitt did with academic music in his essay *Who cares if you listen*: it is music that is based on quasi (or not so quasi) scientific research and thus not fit for general public consumption.

The newness of the techniques and the material demanded, de facto, an exploratory approach to the creative act (splicing tape, looping vinyl, new sound projection techniques). The world of Delia Derbyshire and Hugh Le Caine, as well as Schaeffer and Henry, was new and all paths needed to be

created. Anything was possible. The iconic, masterpieces were yet to be written. It was easy, in a way, to experiment while creating. This untrammelled paradise no longer exists, but experimentation did not disappear once all the tourists arrived. Experimentation went public (with small and easy to use devices, ubiquitous tape recorders) and popular (Beatles, Beach Boys), for a while, then reappeared in a somewhat revised form in what we now call live electronics. Derived, in part, from the work dating from the early experiments in electronic music, especially in the States (Pauline Oliveros, David Tudor, John Cage), then down a certain path with the development of computers and epitomised (while often under-utilised) in the work made at IRCAM with the ISPW workstation before taking a turn back to hardware based synthesis and treatments (from guitar pedals to Moog remakes), experimental electroacoustic music is more easily found in live electronic concerts than it is coming out of the more traditional centres where is was born. There are remarkable examples of this kind of work that include improvisation with extremely complex setups harking back to Morton Subtonic's early work.

There is an ease of use issue that tends to cover the experimentalists in the crowd. There is also, however, a movement away from presets and loop libraries demanding reissues of original Korg and Moog mono synths as well as new instruments from Arturia that eschew presets, and there has been a renewed interest in Buchla synthesis systems and approach. While it is possible to make some very nice sounds at the push of a button, it is even more easy, today, to experiment and explore sound making in ways that are still being discovered.

Examples will include the works I have cited as well as photos and diagrams of the synthesisers and equipment in the context of the paper.