

20 minutes
4 hrs

PAULINE OLIVEROS

Why do you do what you doing?

Music composition became very strong and compelling and strong desire when I was about sixteen, the reason was because I began to hear sounds, hear music in my mind. I felt compelled ^{to compose} to write these ^{things} down make them accessible and I guess it took quite awhile to develop the skill to get music down on paper so it could be performed by other people ~~and~~ after my initial success in doing that - the feeling I got from hearing from what I struggled to write down was so exciting that a I didn't want to do anything else but compose and so that was the initiating impulse and as I went on - it wasn't very easy for me it was very difficult. I had to just bit by bit learn ^{how to} get down what I was hearing and also I became exposed to new music, newer forms later in my life ^{I mean} I was already 20 years before I heard the Bartok ^{ok} ~~ach~~ quartets but as I began to hear new music it pushed me on and made me ^{want} to do more but still the main thing just the thrill of hearing of what I had managed to write down to hear other people do this and that was always a revelation and an exciting thing, and so I would endure and struggle to get the work down simply for the reward of hearing what it was like and then there came a time when ^{I began}

I got to work with electronic music and began to have a more immediate relationship with sound and that I could make music on the spot

and the delay time of waiting was eliminated by that I mean I didn't have ^{to wait} to write down, struggle write down, get into rehearsal and hear my work but I could go to the studio and directly make my music on tape and that was a period that was also exciting to me ^{just} the constant work with sound, manipulating sound on the spot and then later becoming very very interested in working with people in finding ways of making these relationships result in the sounds that I wanted to the point of now being more interested in the result with working with people - the interactions.

^{There} It seems ^{to be} that you have moved from hearing sound to writing it down to producing it electronically, to working with people and those are three ^{ways} of working. What would be a consistent attitude that ^{you could see that was} ~~would be~~ running through of all three ways of working?

^{Well,} There's always ^a point of concentration and a I think what's consistent is the the feeling that I have when ^a it works - when the music works so I guess continue to do what I do because of that.

When did you become aware of your attitude?

Well as I described in the beginning - hearing one of my pieces for the first time being played by someone else and then that was the initiation and a recognition.

What changes have you experienced in ^{your} emotional states during your music making?

Well when I would want to compose very often I would turn on a particular feeling in order to begin to compose and I don't know how to describe that feeling ~~so~~ it was an emotional state it seemed. I can only describe it as being a fairly open state looking for and waiting for impulses and sounds to come maybe it was ^{kind of} like a welcoming feeling ~~whichever~~ welcoming whatever might come to work with but it was a state that was different from say my ordinarily ^{moving around} ~~daily~~ness kind of feelings. ^{and a} Any changes that I might feel are from the result from a completed work and there were feelings of struggle, frustration, elation - I think probably a real gamut of emotional states - ^{but} the key one ^{were} those of welcoming.

Is that the same emotional state operating ^{from note, writing down to} when your working with people, do you feel?

Yes, probably I think the kind of high feeling of accomplishment, satisfaction, ^{whatever,} however I can describe it that I would receive ^{simply} /from getting the music written or getting down what I was hearing transferred to working with people and ^{so} I think its a consistent state thats been with me and part of my work.

What changes have occurred in your philosophy about music making?

When I began to ^{try to} compose I mean my attitude was just focused on trying to do what I was doing and a I don't know about whether I

had a philosophy except that I should be true to what I was hearing and feeling and I think that's probably been consistent throughout my career even though my material ^{has} changed from or style has changed I think that's mainly what it is being true to what I hear.

Is your work public or private?

For the most part it's public but what ^{much of what I} I go through is private although I'm willing to make that public at the appropriate times.

What skills are important or central to your work?

Well in the beginning the important thing was to be able to notate what I was hearing and I had to acquire that very gradually had to do it with the aid of the piano to look for what I was hearing ^{and then} and identify it and write it down and when I went through that skill although it's still useful but it's essential in my work as being able to conceptualize the overall rules or that will produce the ^{kinds of} sounds that I want so what I think I have is ^{stirred} a great deal of experience with sound partly came through the working as I did in the beginning and ^{then} through working with electronic and tape music - paying attention to sound in various ways / the other is the paying attention to people and what ^{they do + what} they're able to do so that I can make ensemble works that come out of the relationships ^{of the} with people ^{in the} ensembles.

How do you figure the skill of meditation into your work?

on one level
Its simply ^{is} a way/of listening which is to try to listen ^{to} to include everything that I hear and to be able to shift my focus from ^{very} very open states, to very sharp ^{clear} ~~detailed~~ states and to formulate these techniques so other people can do them.

How did you acquire the skills ^{that} you use and ^{you} have now?

Well I have been talking about that a little bit since the beginning of the interview and I think ^{that} the skills I have acquired have come through ^{simply} the need to have them to realize the inner auditory imagination /so that I have acquired my skills through doing.

What has been and what is now a creative ^{musical} event in your work?
and how do you produce such an event?

Well of course the creative event for me is the imagination of a new work and it usually occurs in a waking dream like state where a number of elements that I may have been thinking about from time to time suddenly ^{coalesce} ~~coless~~ come together in a relationship which is the new work and a the way ^{that} I produce ^{this is} it varies but generally paying attention to my environment and what comes into it and a allowing myself to notice the interplay ^{of these} in things and then giving myself a program which allow me to produce the work and the program maybe ^{as something} as simple as someone asking me to do something and ^{my} responding taking in the situation of taking in the context of the ^{out} commission and what would be appropriate for it then the program begins ^{then} the things I've been thinking about or stood out in some way eventually come together then.

Are you aware of your attention processes^{as} distinguished from the content of your work while you engaged in your creative musical activity?

Yes I think that I've been aware of that as I describedⁱⁿ at the beginning of the interview the kind of^{the} feeling state^{state} wanted to be in - kind of a mixture/^{emotional}state an attention state of being open - open for what might come in and then using various techniques like for instance when I first began to compose and I would here^{as} things and then I would use the piano^{as a tool} to focus in on what I was trying to locate and I would go from an open state into searching, focusing and then back and forth until I could get my piece notated and working/a when I was working with so much with improvisation and I worked with group improvisation with Terry Riley and Loren Rush and we discovered very soon^{that} not to pre-program ourselves or talk about what we were going to do^{but try to respond} on spontaneously whatever sounds were in the air and then talk about it and analyze it after the fact - and then as I began to what I call meditation and at the end of the 60's I became very aware of how I was listening and how I was playing and it was then when that I became interested in pursuing what how I was attending to the material.

Have you been able to apply the same attention processes to other medium/^{or}forms of activity?

Yes I think that I have carried away the way I listen into all my daily life activities and into my teaching and I try to listen to^{the} my students,^{and would listen to} a piece of music if I'm cooking a meal in the

kitchen I listen to all the sounds ^{that is making} and a like an orchestration/
so I feel very much like its all one thing what I do - not
separate.

Doing your work and learning these things in your work carry
over into your life - the aspect of creativity ^{kind of} carry over to
other aspects in your life?

Yes if I have problems to solve I think that I can work on those
problems very much like I work on a composition through ^{stringing} daydreaming
and allowing a solution to come together ^{also} so that I
can work factually.

Are you doing what you ^s say your doing?

^{Well} What I say ~~is~~ comes ^{from} the observation of what I do so I can
only hope ^{that} what I say is an accurate version of what I do

Freely interact with specific examples from the above questions
then attempt to illicit a history of your work ^{in terms} of the evolution
of your attention processees - How did you acquire your skills
and what changes have occurred in the way that you use them
how do these skills interact with your creativity.

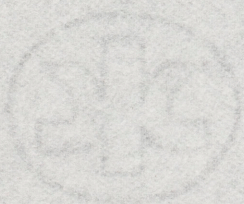
Well its almost as though as my ability to attend to more ^{at once} has
grown that my seeming skills have disappeared and so that some-
times I feel that I don't have any skills There's an effort-
lessness in my work of course that may be the essence of skill ^{note}
to make it disappear so that it seems to acquire none. so I would
say that there's an awareness on my part

of how I'm learning or

of how I'm working or how I'm learning but how I moved from
shear struggle to gain skill to the other end ^{which} is to loose it

Or maybe you have just incorporated it so in different ways so
there's an effortlessness that looks like no skill

Well that's possible.



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