• Paper / Proposal Title:
Light and Dark Sound: Public Sound Art, Acoustic Design and the Heritage of Leeds, UK

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• Presentation Method. I would like to:
  i. present in person (with a written paper)

• Abstract (300 words):
Over the last two decades, the city of Leeds, UK has supported a significant number of works of public sound art. The majority of these works have taken the form of site-specific sound installations erected in the public spaces explored by these works. These works include two permanent sound installations: Bill Fontana’s Primal Soundings (2004) and Hans Peter Kuhn’s Sound and Light Transit (2009). Fontana’s work regards Dark Neville Street, a historic street running beneath Leeds Train Station that adjoins the Dark Arches, a Victorian architecture holding the train station afloat of the River Aire. Through sound recording and projection, Primal Soundings brings to the exterior of Leeds Art Gallery the sounds of Dark Neville Street. Kuhn’s installation was an outcome of an urban development project called ‘Light’ Neville Street that concerned the regeneration of a second passageway beneath Leeds Train Station.
through which a busy road runs. Kuhn’s installation is a highly contemporary work comprising algorithmically-controlled abstract sound and light projections.

The paper provides a review of the installations of Fontana and Kuhn with a focus upon how the two works regard the heritage of Leeds: Fontana’s installation spotlights and explores the intangible heritage of the Dark Neville Street soundscape whilst Kuhn’s installation makes tangible a longstanding culture of creative experimentation in Leeds, especially musical experimentation.

The paper concludes by proposing that all cities contain soundscapes of heritage value that public sound art can reveal, examine and accent, and that through public sound art, a city’s culture can be expressed. The paper appeals to architecture and urban planning to better consider the urban soundscape for which they are responsible, and engage musicians and sound artists in their work.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Matt Green is a practice-based researcher concerned with the application of sound and music practices in site-specific endeavour. Matt has collaborated and worked as a solo artist equally. The form of Matt’s practice has varied: Lyre Bird (2005) is a permanent interactive sound installation in the entrance space of Perth Concert Hall, Scotland; whilst Tolka Nights (2015) was event-based and included unconventional art modes such as a pub quiz. The subject, form and content of each work is the outcome of an extensive programme of situated activity that includes field recording; social practice; and onsite research, design and development.

Underpinning Matt’s practice is academic study addressing sound and music technologies, the histories of sound art and electroacoustic composition, critical urban theory, art and the everyday and architecture. Matt’s PhD research, which he completed in 2011 at the Sonic Arts Research Centre, Queen’s University, Belfast, UK, was funded by Hewlett-Packard Media Labs, Bristol, UK and addressed how pervasive and mobile sound technologies can have a positive effect upon our everyday experiences and our attitude towards, and interest in, the urban environment.