

025:250 COMPOSITION: ELECTRONIC MEDIA I

Fall 2013

Non-instrument recording sources

1. Doors.
 - a. Slowly open, slowly close, rapidly open, rapidly close.
 - b. If you only have one or two doors, then create variety by changing mic placement.
2. Drawers.
 - a. In the mic cabinet, there are some small drawers holding mic clips and stuff.
 - b. In your office, you have quite a number of drawers. However, the air handling might be a huge problem. Noise reduction with iZotope might help, as well as high-pass.
3. Scissors
 - a. Each motion should be isolated for slowly close, slowly open, quickly close, quickly open.
 - b. Rapid, continuous opening and closing. Imagine multiple tracks of this, both with one particular scissor, as well as with much scissor variability.
4. Whirly things.
 - a. These would be spun around and around, creating a whirring sound.
 - b. These are sometimes sold as cheap toys. These are plastic tubes about 1.5" diameter and 6 feet long. When whirled, a pitched sound emerges.
 - c. Solid material, such as an electrical cord, guitar cable, string with a heavy washer tied to the end, etc. can be highly effective, but potentially dangerous. Be sure that the spin path won't send a washer to someone's face if it breaks. Belt would be very good.
5. Wooden clothespins.
 - a. These are good when dropped together. The resultant clatter will have a rhythmic and harmonic character.
 - b. 20-40 would be enough to create interesting micro-rhythms that can be soundmined.
 - c. For richer, more complex textures, combine these with wooden pencils, discussed below.
6. Wooden pencils.
 - a. 20-40 are enough to produce interesting rhythms and sound-masses.
 - b. These can be all the same length, to create a uniform texture, or of different lengths, for more variety.
 - c. These can be combined with wooden clothes.
7. Paper of different sizes and thickness. The following actions will be used:
 - a. Waves (with heavier, larger paper, such as 8.5 x 11)
 - b. Fold
 - c. Tap with finger, as if flecking off a bug.
 - d. Crumpling, but start and stop; crumpling as if to toss in trash; crumpling as if to make a sound effect of a fire.
 - e. 8.5 x 11 is too large and thick. Smaller and thinner, like a store receipt will be more nuanced.
8. Shaker objects.
 - a. Use a thin sock holding a cup or two of uncooked rice, popcorn kernels, dried peas, etc.
 - b. Bottles of pills are very good.
 - c. Try different containers, metal, plastic, wooden, and glass, and at different sizes.
 - d. Try two modes of playing: 1) one, single swish or chicccckkk; 2) continuous swirling.
 - e. These sounds are very useful when slowed down and/or pitch-shifted down.
9. Sheets of metal.
 - a. Baking sheets are good.
 - b. Any other thin, flexible sheet of metal is good.
 - c. Focus on recording single hits, with each landing on a different area of the sheet.
 - d. The upper harmonics are usually very interesting, but you may need to pitch-shift down, then apply a high-pass filter at 200-400 hz. You can also fade in to create a more ethereal kind of sound.