

Prisoner of Noise

(an interview with Hiroshi Hasegawa)

When did you first realize that music can be noise?

When I was a small child, there was an open reel tape recorder that my father owned. I really liked taking field recordings around my home by the tape recorder, and then I was totally absorbed in listening the field recordings materials. I now know that this was my first experience of kind of Noise.

More than a hundred years after Luigi Russolo published his revolutionary manifesto The Art of Noise, we are still waiting in vain for acceptance of this radical step by broad public. How do listeners in the 21st century react to noise music?

Noise is still not close to general listeners. Because Noise is very different from general music. But if general listeners can open their ears for Noise, they will realize Noise are the richest, deepest and most sensational sounds ever.

What instruments do you use at present during your solo or cooperative performances?

Recently my main instrument is a modular synthesizer.

Have the new technologies of the last few years brought any new possibilities in the creation of music to you (the topic of digitalization)?

My main instruments in my live performances are analogue equipments, therefore I do not get a lot of benefit from digitalization. But when I use DAW for my sound editing in my studio, it is more easy and convenient for my editing works than before.

What is the contemporary noise scene in Japan like? Are there any young authors who bring new perspectives and approaches?

There are many young Noise artists in Japan, but most artists are influenced by old school harsh noise style.

How often do you give performances - solo or in a group and at what places?

Usually I play 2 or 3 performances in a month, and most places are live clubs or art galleries in Tokyo.

A few years ago there were several performances of the legendary C.C.C.C. What is the situation with them now - are there any activities of C.C.C.C., and if so, do they work on any new material or recording at the moment?

New C.C.C.C. have changed their name to Cosmic Coincidence. And there were some concerts in Tokyo some time ago, but not so often, because one of the members lives in Vienna.

At present noise music is termed to include music that works with noise used only marginally (glitch, clit and cuts etc.). How do you feel about these tendencies?

I was disappointed by the music that used Noise only partially. Noise should be total and excesses, not only partial.

During the last years in Europe, noise performances are often held as part of modern art exhibitions, at previews etc. Is that the case in Japan, too?

It seems only a few Japanese noise artists are close to modern art scene. But it's a very rare case in Japan, because Japanese modern art scene is still conservative.

Where do you draw inspiration from for your works and what is your opinion on the great boom of field recordings? Do you use natural field recordings as an inspiration or even as sound sources in your works?

I mentioned my field recordings experience in childhood before; the origin of my Noise is a kind of nature field sounds. I can feel electronics Noise sounds from nature sounds, and I like the Noise sounds which I can feel nature field sounds in.

Many authors of noise music have a close relationship to modern art. How do you see the relation between sound and picture, and how is it reflected in your works?

I'm interested in the link between sounds and visuals. Recently digital technologies can facilitate the link between sounds and visuals. But I much prefer audiences imagine their own images by themselves from my live electronics sound.

How do you actually say "noise music" in Japanese?

"Noise music" in Japanese as literal translation is 「騒音音楽」 (Souon-Ongaku) or 「雑音音楽」 (Zatsuon-Ongaku). 騒音 (Souon) or 雑音 (Zatsuon) means Noise. But my interpretation of "Noise music" in Japanese is 「観念音楽」 (Kannen-Ongaku). 観念 (Kannen) means idea, concept, sense and ideal. Or just simple "noise music".