

Sonic Meditations and Text Scores

A presentation by Jane Rigler

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“Remember to remember to listen...and remind yourself when you’re not listening.”

~Pauline Oliveros

Deep Listening®, developed by the US composer Pauline Oliveros (1932-2016), is a practice that offers creative, communal musical exploration through sounding activities and multi-sensorial experiences. This practice promotes listening attentively to all sounds in the space-time continuum. Pauline has inspired people of all disciplines to collectively explore listening through our bodies, dreaming, memories and imagination. The results are wondrous musical performances in which all people are welcomed into the unfolding of sounds. All sounds are encouraged, even if a person is non-vocal or unable to produce sounds aloud: in fact, even the sounds of one’s imagination are embraced.

Key points:

- ❖ Ways of Listening / Modes of Attention
 - Hearing vs. Listening
 - Attention and Awareness
 - Internal vs. External Listening
 - Exclusive or Focal Listening
 - Inclusive or Global Listening
 - sending/receiving

- ❖ Sonic Meditations are text scores. That is, using prose, they invite the committed participants to engage in some imaginative usually communal but also individual way of imagining and/or producing sounds, either with the body, the voice and/or some kind of object.
 - Group work over a long period of time (regular meetings)
 - No special skills are necessary
 - Willing to explore heightened states of awareness through listening and non-verbal communication
 - Erase subject/object or performer/audience dichotomies
 - Humanitarian purposes
 - Non-religious meditation

- ❖ Each Sonic Meditation is a special procedure for the following:
 1. Actually making sounds
 2. Actively imagining sounds
 3. Listening to present sounds
 4. Remembering sounds

Sonic Meditations by Pauline Oliveros

Imaginary Meditation by Pauline Oliveros

Can you imagine your own resonance?

Can you imagine listening beyond the edge of your own imagination?

Can you imagine that every cell in your body is vibrating all the time?

Can you imagine the tuning of the universe?

Can you imagine the echoes of all the footsteps you have ever taken?

Breathe In/Breathe Out by Pauline Oliveros

Begin by listening to your own breathing. Amplify the sound of your breath by placing the palms of your hands over your ears. Listen as the sound of your breath turns into the sound of wind.

It might be a gentle wind, a gusty wind, a howling wind, or some other kind of wind. Make the wind sounds audible.

Open your ears gradually as your wind sounds join others' wind sounds until one prevailing beneficial wind sounds.

Afterwards, listen for the calm.

One word by Pauline Oliveros

Choose one word. Dwell silently on this word. When you are ready explore every sound in this word extremely slowly, repeatedly. Gradually, imperceptibly, bring the word up to normal speed, then continue until you are repeating the word as fast as possible. Continue at top speed until "it stops."

Variation: When the top speed has been reached and maintained, reverse the process by slowing down again as imperceptibly as possible until the original utterance returns.

Cross Overs by Pauline Oliveros

Sound a word or a sound.

Listen – surprise.

Sound a word as a sound.

Sound a sound as a word

Sound a sound until it is a word.

Sound a word until it is a sound.

Sound a sentence of sounds.

Sounds a phrase of words.

tumbling Song by Pauline Oliveros

Make any sound vocal sound but always go downward from the initial attack. The initial attack may begin at any pitch level. Go downward in a glissando or in discrete steps continuously. Go any distance in range, at any speed, dynamic, or quality but the breath determines the maximum time length of any downward gesture.

Tuning Meditation by Pauline Oliveros

Short version

Using any vowel sound, sing a tone that you hear in your imagination. After contributing your tone, listen for someone else's tone and tune to it's pitch as exactly as possible. Continue by alternating between singing a tone of your own and tuning to the tone of another voice. Introduce new tones at will and tune to as many different voices as are present. Sing warmly.

Calling (forth) by Jane Rigler

- Write (perhaps on an index card) the name of an ancestor, a year (that is associated to this person, perhaps the year of birth, death, or approximation of either) and a place (city, country, town) where she/he is from. If you don't know the name, date and/or place of an ancestor, imagine and give an ancestor a name, date and place. Participants may write down these three bits of information for more than one ancestor, but each ancestor has their own separate index card or paper.

For a predetermined or undetermined amount of time,

- Walk throughout the space,
- Share and Pass cards amongst the participants who simultaneously
- Read out loud (clearly, slowly and with esteem) the names, years and places
- Listen (internally, externally, focally and globally) to all the sounds of names, dates and places being pronounced and traveling in the room/space
- Acknowledge the people, memories, imaginations and resonating sounds with reverence.

Listening Questions by Pauline Oliveros

Some listening questions created by Pauline Oliveros

- What is your earliest memory of sound? How do you feel about it?
- Do you listen for sound in your dreams? What do you hear? How does it affect you?
- What sounds remind you of home?
- How many sounds can you hear all at once?
- What are you hearing right now? How is it changing?
- Are you sure that you are hearing everything that there is to hear?
- What is your favorite sound?

Can you create your own Listening Questions?

A selection of Deep Listening® books:

- Oliveros, Pauline, *Deep Listening: A Composer's Sound Practice*, iUniverse (2003). An exciting guide to ways of listening and sounding. This book provides unique insights and perspectives for artists, students, teachers, meditators and anyone interested in how consciousness may be affected by profound attention to the sonic environment.
- Oliveros, Pauline (2013) *Anthology of Text Scores*. Edited by Samuel Golter and Lawton Hall. Kingston, NY: Deep Listening Publications
- Oliveros, Pauline (1974) *Sonic Meditations*. Smith Publications, American Music. (Available to download [here](#) free for Online Certificate Students)
- Oliveros, Pauline, *The Roots of the Moment: Essays from 1981-1991*, Drogue Press (1992). This new volume of collected writings by Pauline Oliveros is presented in an unique polytextural format includes essays and scores along with a CD.
- Oliveros, Pauline, *Software for People: Essays from 1963-1980*, Smith Publications (1984). Includes articles on new music, women as composers, sonic meditation, attention and awareness, and technique.
- Oliveros, Pauline, *Sounding the Margins*, Deep Listening Publications (2010). In these collected writings from 1992-2009, Pauline Oliveros document her activity over this period and the many recent advances that have taken place in the fields of electronic and telematic musical performance, improvisation, artificial intelligence, and the role of women in contemporary music.

Links

Deep Listening Institute - Books, DVD's, CD's, Scores, Digital Downloads, Recordings:
<http://paulineoliveros.us/store.html>

The Center for Deep Listening: <https://www.deeplisting.rpi.edu/>

Deep Listening Institute: <http://deeplisting.org>

The Founders of Deep Listening

Pauline Oliveros <http://paulineoliveros.us>

IONE <http://www.ionedreams.us/>

Heloise Gold <http://www.heloisegold.com/>