

## Menemsha Village

Dedicated to Ori Epstein

The sonic environment of the buoy's bell arrives to us as the meditation bell in the temple does for all monks, the bell that rings between classes for schoolchildren, and the bell that signals each beginning and finality of each round of the boxer's fight.

I first heard the sound of the buoy's bell on the water off the beach of the small village of Menemsha as an irregular rhythm and discrete sound event but soon realized that the sounds of the sonic environment surrounding the clear and beautiful ringing of the buoy's bell was essential to my experience of hearing the *music* in the buoy's bell.

In arranging this music, I found myself asking what it was that drew me to the harmonies of voices talking and the water lapping up on the shore, punctuated and punctured aperiodically by a single tone, repeating, over and over again, hypnotically. I watched the water heave the buoy back and forth, and with each toss, the music changed.

I thought long and hard about composing little variations on this music, modulating individual sounds, and taking on other ordinary technical tasks of conventional sound design and composition, but in the end this music simply wanted to be heard unvarnished, as vulnerable and direct as the water and the wind that played it.

Perhaps we compose our environment by hearing in a certain way, and in this way, each listener will hear the music differently than another. Is the object what you hear or the sound? Do you hear a memory, or an image, or a reflection of expectation or disappointment?

I added several repetitions of the original recording (made using the iTalk application for the iPhone) for emphasis and spent time in Audacity cleaning things up, but in all cases no other modifications to the music have been made.

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Martha's Vineyard