

Agricola Extended Play.
Mark Pilkington.

One)	Nail Bell
Two)	Dull metal
Three)	Splash
Four)	Voices

>> The Agricola suite consist of four electro acoustic pieces in an acoustomatic genre concerned with the abstraction of sounds recorded from the Castlefield area of Manchester UK. All around us objects and shapes are continually transforming, which in real time, we are quite oblivious to. By the manipulation of these sources, observations can arise that give us a glimpse into this continual flux of the world. Observations that produce questions about the historical, philosophical and cultural divergences of the world around us. The Agricola pieces are abstract sound worlds created to entice the listener to observe the changes against the passing of time. The form that is presented within the original sound sources has seemingly vanished with manipulation, putting one outside of its original context thus making one reconsider space and time. Experiments in interruption are carried out throughout the pieces isolating the original sound from its context, manipulating it, and thus creating new sound phenomena. The experiments enable the texture to become central to my work – it is no way a by-product of the music.

>> My interest in composing this work is a moving between abstract sound structures and the use of sounds to evoke memories and landscapes. Imagine a journey through time but not in one particular direction but to approach all time scales. Interjected echoes of the past and the future combining in an audio montage. The removal of historical reference to the object enables the listener to be placed into a kind of limbo with only the listener's imagination left to stimulate their thinking and vision. 'What you cannot see is all you can see' – Mark Pilkington. Don't go searching for the answer elsewhere look within oneself for the answers. The unknown is always beyond your grasp and this can be a source of inspiration. Castlefield is an area with a strong historical significance positioned within the city of Manchester. Once the home of a Roman fort hence the name 'castle in a field'. Nowadays the Castlefield area is designated Britain's first heritage park with a wealth of Manchester's industrial heritage – railway viaducts, canal systems and museums. The recordings were originally taken in 1994 as part of a piece of music I wrote called Arch No. 22 for an architectural event called Manchester a Renaissance.

>> **Nail Bell** The piece derives its source material from the striking of a nail with a hammer within a Victorian railway arch and other surrounding environmental sounds within the vicinity of the arch. Throughout the piece tantalising suggestions of the source material appear, with developments, which always manage to remain on the abstract of the aural divide. The piece starts with a burst of sound particles falling, rising and morphing into fragments of randomly pulsing grains. Enter a call and response of metal calling metal. Steamy sinuses arise to reveal clashing strikes. A swinging pendulum marks shifting transactions between different states of timbre. Echoing call of the impacts. Whistle tones – mixed with sine waves. Birdcalls and distance trains like sounds cross our path. The micro tonal sawing motion of construction descend to a plethora of long drawn out tones counterpoint with strange bell like melodies of the nail bell. A living landscape of sounds drives the imagination on into unknown areas. Recapitulating the original sound source appears in the middle of the piece. Bell-like tones cross a steady plateau of spatially placed textures. Different time scales are approached and assessed. Impacts penetrate the time scale. Finally the piece settles to metallic drones with sweet birds calls.

>> **Dull Metal** Metal is struck...textures are constructed. Periodic rhythmic grains emerge from the source material. Throughout the piece material is pulled and whipped into different rhythmic and textural pulses revealing the voice drawn from within the material. A torrent of shards suddenly ended with the chopping and panning of metallic impacts. Sub harmonic rumbles add a distance depth and power to the piece. Sounds are constructed and torn apart giving one the feeling of the actual sound being alive, growing as we listen. Sound objects are created making gestures that combine to add momentum to the music. Impacts. Cold. Frozen ice cracking. Interspersed analog synth blips and subtle filtered white noise enters at around the 4m30s mark. An artificial weather front approaches across the landscape revealing a rising storm.

>> **Splash** (Originally for sound diffusion on 8 channels) – The object's motion is transferred to the water. The water breaks and makes a sound...splash!

>> **Voices** Imagine a column of roman legionaries singing a chant as they move forward in time. The language they use is already being forgotten as time moves forward. Their utterances become an indistinguishable sound which echoes a forgotten meaning.