

Volcano

Listening guide

To give us your feedback on this listening guide, please visit: <https://forms.gle/SBeLtpZPe4sb9Fv9>.

Essential information:

- **Frequency range:** 20Hz to 20 kHz.
- **Dynamics** range from extremely quiet to moderately loud. All changes are very gradual, and there are no sudden loud sounds.
- **Potential misophonia triggers:** the piece does not contain any human sounds (no eating or chewing sounds, no breathing sounds, no spoken or sung words, no whispers). However, as misophonia triggers vary immensely from person to person, please check the description of sonic textures below to check that none of these are triggering to you.
- **Instrumentation:** sounds used in this piece are based on different cello playing techniques, some used as they have been played, and others modified digitally. In certain sections, low pulsating synth notes have been added to the cello-generated sounds.
- **Textures:** the various textures encountered in the piece could be described as tactile, raspy, airy, misty, busy, pulsating, grainy, bubbly, metallic, soft, rough.
- **Structure:** the piece could be divided into six sections. Transitions between sections are smooth and gradual, there are no abrupt changes. The majority of the piece consists of layers of sounds, varying in density, with three sections containing more melodic material. In two of these, different melodic and rhythmic patterns overlap. In one section, a solo cello playing a melody is at the foreground.
- **Tempo:** the piece is generally slow, but the last part of the piece is slightly more agitated.

Longer description:

You can experience *Volcano* in three ways:

- Online, at the following link: <https://on.soundcloud.com/C1QdM>
- As a sound installation for loudspeakers and vibrating floor at the Aural Diversity Workshop 5.
- At a listening station at the Aural Diversity Workshop 5

For more information on the Aural Diversity Workshop 5, please follow this link:

<https://auraldiversity.org/workshop5.html>

The description of *Volcano* below is a description of the piece in linear order, which is what you will experience if listening from start to finish (**total duration: 21 minutes and 49 seconds**) at a listening station or online.

The sound installation, on the other hand, does not have a beginning or end: the piece is playing in a loop, with no interruptions, so you might enter the installation at any point from the description below.

Section 1:

The music starts with a soft low pulsating drone and a raspy windy sound. From this, a distant misty atmosphere emerges, with a mysterious three notes motif hidden between different layers of airy string sounds. These gradually become rougher, and tremolos and trills at different speeds enter the mix, agitating the texture. Brushy sounds from the cello bow contribute to create a tactile sensation that amplifies the internal perceptions of tremolos.

Sections 2, 3 and 4:

We are now surrounded by melodic fragments, in the key of D minor, played on the cello. They are juxtaposed to form different layers, reminiscent of the way a melody feels when still in the mind of the musician, when it hasn't yet fully taken a definite shape. The fragments swirl around each other, until a low pulse interrupts them.

We now enter a dense and busy texture with a pulsating low frequency drone, a dark rumbling sound which vibrates and evolves very slowly.

This thick wall of sound opens up and dissipates, leaving room for an expressive cello solo, weaving the melodic fragments heard earlier into a linear melodic line. The solo alternates fast patterns with a slow melody with large intervals, a sinuous contour with a lot of resistance between notes, pulling the melody up and down. The melody is surrounded by a soft and grainy atmosphere.

Sections 5 and 6:

The next section is a dense layer of sounds that evolves very slowly. Its backbone is composed of slow cello glissando gestures tracing different shapes that have been slowed down and transposed to a lower range, and the textures encountered here have sinuous and floating qualities, reminiscent of an underwater world. Low rumbling sounds and brighter higher pitched metallic ones answer each other, with sandy and scratchy elements adding to the soundscape.

Towards the end of this sequence, airy melodic fragments can be heard in the rumble. It is the same motif that appeared in the introduction, and a low stretched and transposed cello melody can be now heard playing it in full in a low register. This is a gentle and calmer melody. More optimistic than the previous one, its shape is a caress made of smaller intervals like gentle waves.

The dense texture of the underwater world gives room to faster cello patterns in a mid and high range, overlaid to create the impression of water currents and waves. They play against each other, creating aleatoric polyrhythms, unintended gestures. The fully fledged melody can now be heard as a soft distant echo. As the watery texture gets more agitated and bubbly, the melody, now played in octaves, becomes more prominent. A low drone accentuates the harmonies, as fast trills and tremolos agitate the texture and rise the intensity in a slow crescendo. This culminates in the melody now being played at a higher octave, and the pedal note changing to create a more suspended feeling.

The sea of sounds calms down and makes way to a suspended airy chord made out of cello harmonics. Distant echoes of the melody can be heard, as the chord gradually dissolves into silence.

We hope you will enjoy ***Volcano!***

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