



photo: Kuniya Oyamada

THE WAY I HEAR, Lake Towada 2013 "a composition for the lake and its excursion boat"

cruising/performance, a part of the Towada Oirase Art Festival, Aomori, Japan, 2013.Sep.21st-Nov.24th

During the 1-hour-cruise, the audience is mostly left in silence with the breathtaking view of the Lake Towada, the third largest volcanic lake in Japan. The text, which gradually tune the audience into the imaginary soundscapes, structures the cruise; several brief pre-recorded announcements are played and a series of printed texts on a folded paper is given as a program. These short narratives are to be heard/read with specific scenery of the lake, and all of them are based on the listening research on and around the lake, myth, historical accounts of the region, and interviews with the local historian, fisherman, tour-guides, meteorologist, and others. For example, the volcanic explosion took place in 915.Aug.7th that shaped the deepest bottom/crater of the lake was transcribed into a soundscape-text, and it was introduced as an announcement through loud speakers while the boat floats over the site.

The engine gear operation also plays the central role to frame the composition; not only speeding up, down, or floating the boat to make the designated route, but also to highlight the ambience of the lake, and to play/introduce the texts and/or scenery with certain level of noise of the engine at the specific locations. Other sound source such as the live announcement with a microphone by the crew, and a ship horn are also inquired as the different tonoe color for the composition as well.

The last page of the program is sealed with a sticker, has a longer text titled "silence on the lake"; it is suggested to be read after the cruise around the lake as an afterwards. The piece ends when the audience put the stamp, prepared specially for this cruising, on the back of the program.

The piece was performed 17 times, and 423 passengers had been on board.

for more images and the documentation of the work
URL: http://www.afewnotes.com/TWIH_Towada2013_cmpstn_e.html





<the first announcement / boat: moving / engine noise: gearing from low to top, soft to loud>

"When I visited here in June, there were spring-cicada, and I saw sparrows flying around.

How is it today?

Is it sunny?

Is it windy?

Do you hear anything from the lakeside?

Someone talking? A bus or a car?

birds

What about the sound in the ship?

feel any vibration of the engine?

the engine becomes louder

splash in the back of the ship

you can't hear me anymore.

Now begins the cruise"



<the second page of the program / boat: slowly moving/ engine noise: minimum>

2013.6.26. I interviewed an old fisherman

*"You know, this is before GPS.
When I get lost in the morning fog,
I wonder where I am, then I become silent and listen to what's around.
If you keep yourself quiet, the birds will start to make a noise.
Or you might hear the stream of river.
Then I can guess where I am heading and get closer to the shore.
Listen again, and get closer to the shore.
What a relief when you actually made it to the shore.
You can't see anything, you know, it's foggy until 10am or so."*

That morning, there must have been fog over the lake.



<the second announcement / boat: still or floating, engine noise: none or minimum>

*"On that day 1100 years ago, there was a strong easterly wind around here,
and it was a chilly day for August.*

*915.Aug.7th
out of nowhere, the rumbling of the earth
and all of a sudden, huge eruption with the thundering noise
volcanic fumes rising into the sky, higher and higher
massive amount of stones are falling from above
and a destructive stream of heated rocks and ashes are blown towards west
with the strong wind, going over the mountain, further and further away*

*Into the bottom of the hollowed crater,
indescribable silence went down.
The stillness and the blue water has kept it covered since."*

<after more than 1m30s of silence, a shiphorn for 3 seconds, then turn the engine on>