

SOUNDSCAPE RESEARCH PUT INTO PRACTICE: THE EXPLORATION OF SOUNDWALKS IN THE CITY OF BERN*

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the possibilities and broader communal impact of applied ethnomusicological work related to soundscape research in a university-based context. Focusing on a seminar in which the findings of urban soundscape research in the city of Bern (Switzerland) were transformed into six different sound tours, the article analyses the different strategies and layers of impact within the broader community.

KEYWORDS: soundscape, Bern, urban fieldwork, applied ethnomusicology, affective economies

It is a cold late November morning in 2015. Together with the participants in a seminar on "The Sound of Bern," I am standing with Cristina Urchueguía, my historical musicology colleague at the University of Bern, on a small, hidden terrace that belongs to the violin workshop of Daniel Kunzmann and Andreas Kürzi in the Old Town. First noticing a family of sparrows in the ivy-covered house wall, we focus our attention back to the workshop's window. We have just touched and tried the string instruments, heard stories about violin building and are now listening to one of the students who, encouraged by Kunzmann, plays a small piece on one of the violins. The music thus allows us to explore the angled interior and outdoor space that might be described, in Murray Schafer's words (1977) as a hi-fi sound

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in which all components can be differentiated. It almost seems surreal, because the workshop's street side opens onto one of the busiest spaces in the Old Town around the Zytglogge clock tower with its numerous tourist groups and heavy public traffic. Yet, on this back terrace, these sounds are almost completely damped. As the group later agrees, this very intimate and emotional soundscape experience that was designed by two students as part of a longer tour might not be ideal for first-time visitors, but rather addresses Bern residents who want to cherish and value its hidden treasures through sound.

As outlined by Titon (2005: 4), “Applied ethnomusicology puts ethnomusicological scholarship, knowledge, and understanding into practical use.” On the surface, the musicology seminar on *The Sound of Bern*, which Urchueguía and I conducted at the University of Bern during the autumn semester of 2015, might thus appear as an applied business project on designing acoustic city tours, based on research findings for touristic purposes. While also presenting an insight into the acoustic specifics of the soundscape of Bern and their integration into soundwalks, this article, by focusing on this specific seminar approach and the student’s project reflections realizations, particularly discusses the possibilities and broader communal impact of applied ethnomusicological work in a university-based context.

As Titon specified further, “applied ethnomusicology is best regarded as a music-centered intervention in a particular community, whose purpose is to benefit that community – for example, a social improvement, a musical benefit, a cultural good, an economic advantage, or a combination of these and other benefits” (ibid.). Accordingly, this seminar was a realization of and reflection on various related principles of applied ethnomusicology. This includes (a) the transformation of research knowledge; (b) the implementation of a development towards a different sensual perception of a local space, as well as (c) the involvement of a community who cares about the place to develop strategies for the valorization of the specifics of this place (also by setting up a dialogue that includes the empowerment of various groups). At the same time (d), the student tours added further research data on the soundscape of Bern, while, in turn, the seminar provided the students – who not only developed a city tour, but also served as a reflective audience for each tour – with additional skills for working in the cultural sector.

INTRODUCING BERN

The seminar was interconnected with the broader international research SCOPES project on *City Sonic Ecology: The Soundscape of Bern, Ljubljana, and Belgrade* (2014–2017). Funded by the Swiss National Foundation, the project explores urban soundscapes and their role in shaping what has been described by Sara Ahmed (2004) as “affective economies” by investigating how emotions work to align subjects with each other. This issue – here in a positive sense – not only became apparent during the tour designs, but also during subsequent lectures for the local communities in Bern.

Contrary to the SCOPES project's two other urban examples, Ljubljana and Belgrade, Switzerland's federal capital Bern, with 137,937 inhabitants and approximately 338,000 in the larger agglomeration, is relatively small. As the federal capital, Bern is strongly shaped by its administrative and political function, but likewise counts as a regional economic center, featuring mainly "clean" – and, thus, relatively quiet – economies, including the administrations of the *Post*, *Schweizer Bundesbahn*, or *Swiss Medic*. It also includes headquarters of the Swiss energy market, factories of international brand names, such as *Ovomaltine* and *Toblerone*.²

The Old City – as a focal part of the location – with its characteristic *Laubengängen* ["roofed pergolas"] has been UNESCO world cultural heritage since 1983, which conveys the image of a fixed historical site. This part of the city especially has attracted many tourist visitors who travel the nearby scenic Bernese Oberland with its famous mountain range of Eiger (3970 meters), Mönch (4107 meters), and Jungfrau (4158 meters) that are also visible from central Bern. This rather picturesque image of a city that has likewise been strongly shaped by the Bernese Burger, a patrician upper class that has been strongly engaged in many social and cultural projects, easily conceals other features. Bern's population includes a share of 23.8% migrants, yet contrary to Belgrade or Ljubljana, it is less affected by the current (2017) European refugee situation. It nevertheless reflects a further history of recent migration with its large portion of West European migrants and communities from Eritrea, the former Yugoslavia, Tibet, and Tamils from Sri Lanka. This mix of migrant cultures found also an unusual expression in the foundation of the House of Religions in 2002. Having been moved to an own architectural site in 2014, it currently (2017) hosts eight different religious groups under one roof.³

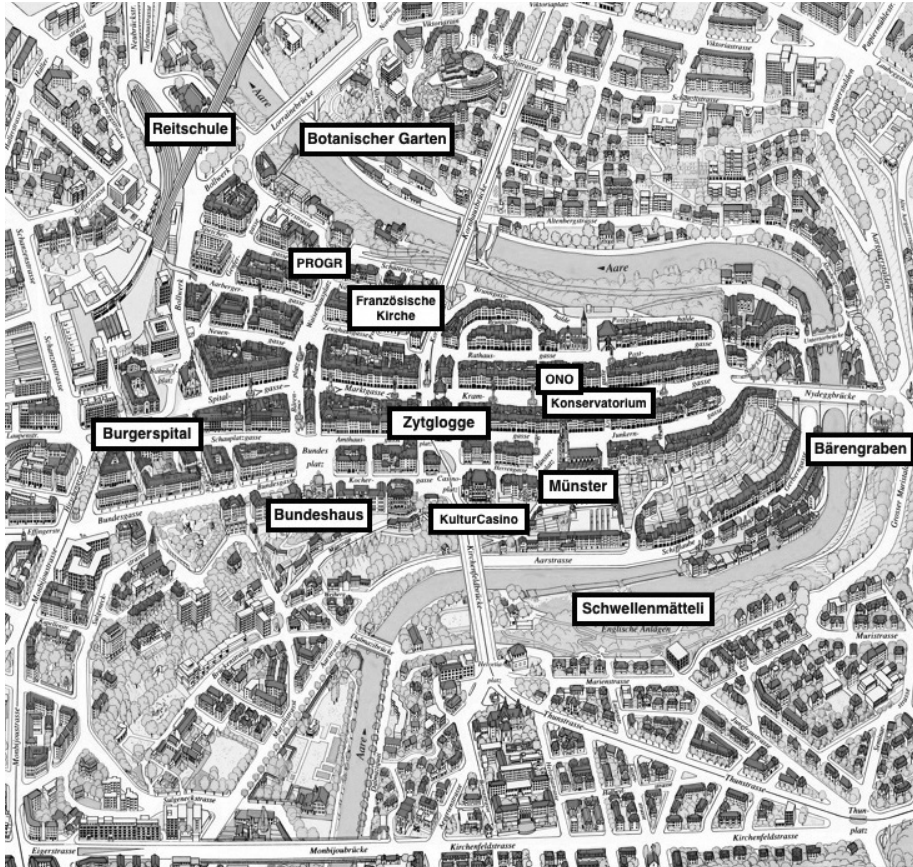
However, the seemingly controlled, clean – and, again, quiet – appearance of the city has been shaped by more critical and, partly, louder socio-political undercurrents. This includes, on the one side, student groups, as well as leftist alternative cultures that have been interconnected with the Swiss Youth Riots and the transformation of the – repeatedly vacated – *Reitschule*⁴ – into an often-debated cultural center in 1981 due to recurring riots. On the other hand, even the picturesque and seemingly static Old City was affected by broader social problems, having become one central site of the formerly Zürich-based open drug scene from 1982-85 with shifting locations between the Old City, *Bundesterrasse* (a platform underneath the Parliament Building), *Kleine Schanze* (a historic defense platform adjacent to the Parliament Building) and *Grosse*

2 Cf. webpage of Wirtschaftsraum Bern, <http://www.wirtschaftsraum.bern.ch/de/startseite/?oid=1854&lang=de>. The Philosophical-historical Faculty is located at the former Toblerone Factory in the Länggasse area right above the central train station, and has been transformed from factory production to education.

3 This includes spaces for Alevites, Baha, Buddhists, Christian, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, and Sikh communities. Cf. <https://www.haus-der-religionen.ch/religionsgemeinschaften/>.

4 "Riding school;" a former roofed parking space for horse-drawn carriages from the late 19th century. For further details see Bänninger et al. 2014.

Schanze (another historic defense platform in front of the main University Building above the central train station). And yet, compared to other locations, even these features seem to be much more strongly controlled – as evident with the success of the state-monitored drug distribution in Bern.⁵ The issue of control is also apparent in that the soundscape, for example, street music – that requires official permits – is clearly regulated in terms of performance durations, days, and location.⁶



Map of Bern's Old Town

⁵ Cf. Wietlisbach 2013.

⁶ Stadt Bern, "Strassenaktivitäten "Strassenmusik " Strassenperformanz," <http://www.bern.ch/themen/freizeit-und-sport/veranstaltungen/strassenaktivitaeten>.



Bus No. 12 at the Zytglogge Tower (pic. author)

BERN AS A TOURIST PLACE

None of these problematic features are evident to tourist visitors at first sight. Bern counts as one of the three large tourism cantons of Switzerland – together with the above-mentioned Jungfrau-Region (with the historic tourist side of Interlaken as one center), Gstaad, Emmental, or the Bernse Jura. Featuring a growing guest frequency, tourism – that increasingly also transgresses the strong day tourism of many Asian travel groups – has played a central economic role in the city of Bern as well. In this context, the UNESCO status is significant for the advertised image, alongside with further factors and keywords, such as arts, festivals, environmental living quality, including “urban river swimming,” and serving as the gateway to the Berner Oberland.⁷

The central economic role of tourism is also evident in the formation of various tourist organizations [“Vereine”] that feature many local employees. The best-known example in the case of Bern is *Bern Tourism* that maintains a strong presence on the Internet.⁸ According to the website, “Bern Tourismus is a politically and confessionally independent *Verein* with approximately 600 members from economics, culture, service providers and private persons” (ibid.). As a marketing organization *Bern Tourism* is interrelated with many cultural and public institutions.⁹ Employing 80 full- and part-time workers in fields such as city guides, guest counseling, marketing and public relations, it is likewise significant for dual education in the area of tourism. Central key words emphasized on the website are “quality,” “school projects,” as well as the issue of “sustainability” that has also been shaping the city walks, for instance:

Bern Tourism is committed in emphasizing a sustainable tourism. The UNESCO world heritage site Bern should also be experienced by future generations. Bern Tourism, with the rejection of bus tours and the adherence to sustainable locomotion by walking, bike or pedal scooter, helps to reduce the CO₂ emissions. For this reason, Bern Tourism also carries the CO₂ compensation contribution for all city tours in which a tour guide of Bern Tourism is involved.¹⁰

⁷ E.g. <http://www.bern.com/de/>.

⁸ Bern Tourismus, <http://www.bern.com>.

⁹ “Bern Tourismus ist ein politisch und konfessionell unabhängiger Verein mit rund 600 Mitgliedern aus Wirtschaft, Kultur, Dienstleistungsbetrieben und Privatpersonen. Als die Berner Marketingorganisation im Tourismus ist Bern Tourismus Partner verschiedener Kultur-, Sport- und öffentlicher Organisationen sowie tourismusrelevanten Institutionen und Mitglied der Touristischen Kooperation der Unesco Welterben Schweiz.” <http://www.bern.com/de/ueber-bern-tourismus>.

¹⁰ “Engagiert setzt sich Bern Tourismus für einen nachhaltigen Tourismus ein. Das UNESCO-Welterbe Bern soll auch für zukünftige Generationen erlebbar bleiben. Mit dem Verzicht auf das Angebot von Stadtführungen im Bus und dem Bekenntnis zu einer nachhaltigen Fortbewegung zu Fuss, per Velo

Given the Old City's size, this is not only easily manageable, but has also resulted in a variety of themes, such as "Burger Bern," "Ghost Stories in Bern," "The Zytglogge Tower," "A Female Tour," "Stairs of Bern," "Bern for Bernese" (in dialect).¹¹ While Bern Tourism already offered "smell tours," the list still lacked a sound experience of the city.

THE SOUNDSCAPE OF BERN

Briefly returning to the SCOPES project, the Bern subproject had, in a first step, explored the broader physical conditions and architectural specifics of the Old Town. In this process, not only three broader environmentally shaped sound layers became apparent, but also exceptional sound marks and points of rapid sound change. As is evident from the following wording, Murray Schafer (1977) still plays a significant role in the process of sound localization and cartography, as he provided a highly useful terminology with expressions such as keynote sound or soundscape.

The modern characteristic keynote sound of Bern has been shaped by an intersection of specific physical-geographical and historical layers. First mentioned in a document in 1208, the Old City is located on a peninsula in a hilly valley formed by the glacial river Aare with 3-4 larger distinct sound areas that also reflect the different height levels of the region. As specifically apparent at the waterfalls of the dammed river at the *Schwellenmätteli* the lower Aare regions are strongly shaped by the keynote sound of the river. The Old Town with its surrounding urban sound and historic mixture is located on the middle level. Particularly the Old Town also reveals the impact of architectural-historical sound layers by still conveying older historical sound impressions: not only is this area shaped by the ringing bells and the crowing rooster of the former medieval gate tower *Zytglogge*, also the numerous fountainheads, cobbled stone streets, and wooden stairways shape the soundscape of Old Town, that however also features characteristic modern sounds like the beeping of the bus line No. 12 that transgresses – as the main related local public transportation – the Old City in a slow tempo. Yet the ringing of the church bells of the *Münster* cathedral and other significant Christian churches in particular still shape the urban keynote, also marking specific hours and religious days and events. The higher areas represent the third layer. This can be further divided into Bern's "house mountain," the Gurten (858 metres), and the surrounding living quarters. The latter are not only shaped by a car-dominated keynote, but also contribute sound signals that are very unusual for a capital city: animal sounds and bells of nearby farming houses.

oder Trottinett (Tretroller) hilft Bern Tourismus mit, die CO₂-Emissionen zu reduzieren. Daher übernimmt Bern Tourismus den CO₂-Kompensationsbeitrag für alle Stadtrundfahrten bei welchem eine Stadtführerin/ein Stadtführer von Bern Tourismus zusteigt," Bern Tourismus, "Stadtführungen von Bern Tourismus," <http://www.bern.com/de/ueber-bern-tourismus/nachhaltigkeit-bern/stadtfuehrungen-bern-tourismus>.

¹¹ Ibid.

While many of these features likewise occur in other cities, Bern's audible clash of historic architectural and modern, particularly public traffic sounds, further augmented by the narrow streets, is unusual in this audible clarity. The related sound signals are discernible, because despite the urban background sound, Bern – lacking, as outlined above, heavy industry – has a less heavy low-fi environment. This overall keynote is further shaped by the denseness of historic sounds, such as the water fountains, as well as the – often rapid – change of highly contrasting keynote sounds. Based on these general observations, Bern's characteristic features can thus be summarized as follows:

- *An intersection of modern and historic urban sounds.* This is particularly evident within the old city where the old bell of the *Zytglogge* mixes with the Bus No. 12 beeping trying to chase away tourist crowds fixed on the historic sound performance.
- *Historic urban versus natural soundscape:* Descending to the river area, a listener very quickly moves from an (historical) urban to a nature-based soundscape. The latter is so strongly dominated by the river that – except for the church bells and the *Kirchenfeld Bridge* traffic – any other urban keynote sounds are blocked, although the city is in direct sight.
- *The close intersection of urban and rural spaces:* Traversing the Aare on the *Nydeggbrücke* [“Nydegg Bridge”] to the *Bärengaben* [“Bear’s Pit”], another tourist hot spot, the bell sound of grazing sheep on the hilly meadows facing the city immediately becomes a dominant keynote during the summer. This close intersection of urban and rural spaces (particularly represented by the sound of dangling animal bells) is apparent at many other locations as well. As the Bern-based Swiss folk music researcher Brigitte Bachmann-Geiser outlined during a personal conversation in 2015, one of the unusual features of Bern has been the presence of rural culture (farm houses) within the city limits. This is likewise evident with Bern's house mountain, the Gurten. Accessible by public transportation within twenty minutes from the noisy central station, the Gurten features a quick change from urban to rural farming-based and, at the top, an almost nature-dominated hi-fi soundscape.
- *A density of spots with a rapid alteration of different sound spheres,* e.g. from car traffic to the cobbled street soundscape in the higher quarters. This is further supported by the hilly (glacially formed) area, which contributes to sudden blockings or appearances of specific sound signals, as also evident with the animal bells at the Bear's Pit.

Going beyond this descriptive basis, this project subsequently explored the deeper meaning of sound in everyday life. Particularly Feld and his central study *Sound and Sentiment* (1990 [1983]) has been a significant discursive reference point in recent soundscape study. Having outlined that sound – and its interrelation to musical practice – plays a significant role in how humans ground themselves in place and time,

Feld described sound as a complex system of symbolic meaning. For example, during the first mapping process, I asked our employees and students what they would associate with the “authentic sound” of Bern. Our secretary pointed the historic *Zytglocke* clock and the waterfalls of the *Schwellenmätteli* – which related the perception of “authenticity” to the concept of provenience, i.e. being of (historical) origin or, in Dutton’s (2003) words, of “nominal” authenticity. In contrast, the much younger students particularly emphasized traffic sounds and the sound of dialect in the streets, thus pointing to what Dutton (ibid.) called “expressive” authenticity, which perceives artefacts, etc. as genuine – mostly contemporary – expressions of an individual or a society’s values and beliefs. As is evident here, sound thus also appears as a symbolic marker in local identity construction that is likewise tied to emotional layers, as apparent in a recurring reference of the students who pointed to the nostalgia of the museum steam tram’s sound that can be heard in Bern on Sundays.

As Feld (ibid.) demonstrated further, human (emotional) interaction patterns can be approached or decoded by the simultaneous analysis of sound (in this case bird sounds) and music (songs). The role of yodeling in a Swiss-alpine context notwithstanding, music played a less central role during the actual sound mapping, yet was brought back in within the applied context of the tours designs. Rather, in terms of a theoretical framework, more recent studies, in particular the relation to affect studies (e.g. Ahmed 2004) became highly significant for the broader analysis, investigating how humans interact with their environment and how they create an environment interconnected by shared emotions through sound. Of similar importance for the actual fieldwork, as well as for the applied perspectives, became studies that added often-overlooked aspects in soundscape studies. This includes the role of language and spoken word in an urban soundscape (Kanngieser 2012), while Goodman (2010), who pointed to the more violent and hidden aspects of sound, became useful for the deeper understanding of hidden sociopolitical issues. For example, while Bern has featured a high migration rate (22.4% in 2012), it is not reflected in the public soundscape as evident with the House of Religions that secludes the different denominations in a closed space.

THE SEMINAR

Set against this background, the joint seminar on the *Soundscape of Berne* was conducted by Cristina Urchueguía and me together with Bern Tourism during the autumn semester of 2015. It was consciously designed an experimental discourse between ethnomusicology and historical musicology, evident in that we constantly negotiated our different perspectives on the question of what the “soundscape” concept actually constituted. For example, my ethnomusicological approach more strongly addressed the different environmental sound layers. In contrast, the historical perspective aimed at uncovering Bern as a place of historical music making and sounding (research that is still highly incomplete, with only a few extant monographs on this topic (e.g. Feller 1946–60, de Capitani 1993)). Urchueguía thus focused more on the under-researched historic sites of music performance that had likewise been

strongly shaped by private bourgeois activities and societies. For instance, the Burger were significant in establishing the first sites for professional performances, such as the *Hôtel de Musique* (1770) and the *Kultur Casino* (1906–8). In contrast, church music had been, due to 16th/17th century Calvinist and Reformationist influences, less extensive than in other European Christian Protestant places. Yet, and here we arrived at a combined perspective of historical and soundscape studies, the churches, former monastic sites, as well as the small bars, restaurants, a former school building and the above-mentioned *Reitschule* – each has likewise formed a patchwork of different socio-cultural and, partly, political sites in a rich field of *contemporary* music making and other cultural activities.

However, going beyond sound and music-related cartographic work, the seminar was predominantly aimed at providing the students with applied working experiences. While, on an academic level, it reflected the joint work of historical musicology and ethnomusicology, it was also a collaboration with city guides from Bern Tourism that had been strongly interested in new ways of exploring the city beyond the regular classical visual tours. How strongly private local interconnections had been significant for this work (Sweers 2015) is also evident in that the seminar, as well as a subsequent newspaper article (Bürgi 2016) partly emerged out of local contacts. The starting point had been a brief talk in the house floor between Cristina Urchueguía and neighbor Beatrice Lang, who has been working as a tour guide for Bern Tourism.

During the course of the seminar, six student teams thus developed different ways of soundscape walks through the city of Bern, each requiring comprehensive historical and soundscape-related research. The tours described below ranged from 90-minute group walks to individual downloadable audio walks and were framed by a constant exchange with the three tour guides from Bern Tourism who visited the seminar three times. The scope of the walks thus developed – and also practically explored – included the sound-based exploration of historical places, as well as alternative tours that provided access to interior spaces of local communities. Yet the students also had to face interrelated practical challenges of how, for instance, local instrument makers, marginalized music communities and audiences could benefit from these tours within the context of a strong tourism industry. Given that several tours also included interaction with locals, this application of scientific knowledge can be described as an interplay of different factors, players, institutions, while the scientists (musicologist and ethnomusicologist) acted as representative of an institution, academic person, as well as private persons, such as local citizens (Sweers 2015: 524).

The seminar started out with an example of a classic city tour that set the historic Zytglogge Tower as a specific focus of interest. Built around 1218–20, this tower is an unusual sound-related display of secular power during the medieval period when audible time-perception was dominated by religious contexts and the average population did not own watches, for instance. One of the oldest tower clocks in Switzerland, the Zytglogge Tower features an astrolabe clock, constructed in 1405–6, which still reflects a geocentric world-view and has represented an extraordinary sound-historical symbol of power (Bellwald 1983). And it is indeed particularly the hourly outdoor sound spectacle, brief though it is, that attracts large tourist groups:

Four minutes before the hour, the tourists crowded in front of the tower, thus blocking Bus No. 12 – that, in turn, tries to chase the groups out of its way a constant beeping – hear the golden metal rooster crowing (an imitative four-note musical figure), with the Fool ringing two bells right above him. This sets the cyclic march of little bears in motion. A minute later (it is clearly evident who has previously been instructed by the tour guide about the order of events and keeps waiting), the rooster crows again, raising its wings with the figure of Chronos counting the hourly bell chimes (those standing further from the tower can actually see the golden male figure, called Hans von Thann, hitting the bells with a hammer). The short spectacle is concluded by the final crowing of the rooster, after which the crowd quickly disbands (personal field notes; November 2015).

During this tour, the seminar had the opportunity to experience the complex mechanism and mechanical sound spectacle from the inside at noon. The students were thus able to observe, for instance, how the rooster's crowing is generated by a large bag bellow tied to the clock mechanism. As also became apparent, while these tourist hot spots are avoided by locals, the (sound-related) experience of the interior, access to which is limited, was nevertheless a highly cherished memory for many citizens of Bern; further enhanced by the knowledge of the spatial proximity of Albert Einstein's flat (Kramgasse 49) in which he lived from 1903–1905 and developed his relativity theory (1905) that also deals with time-related questions. This first tour also made students aware of central pragmatic issues – for example, weather conditions (it was quite cold) and the speed of a walking group (one student in particular contributed to this awareness, as she had a broken foot).

After having set up theoretical soundscape foundations and research questions from the perspective of both disciplines in the subsequent seminar sessions, we then requested the students to build teams and to undertake an initial brainstorming. These first rough ideas were presented to the tourist guides, who each commented critically on the concepts being developed from their practical experiences. This fed into the further development of the tours. Over the course of five seminar sessions, we tested all tours practically, particularly with regard to the realization of the set time frame. In the last two sessions we first developed further strategies with the students, which included the actual writing of project and funding applications. And, finally, the students discussed their experiences with Bern Tourism again, who then also received a summary and description of all approaches that are now subject to discussion for further development. As a written examination, the students were asked to develop a paper that, on the one hand, included a historical and theoretical reflection on the topic, and, on the other hand, the actual tour with brief texts that could be further explored by Bern Tourism.

THE TOURS

The most amazing aspect of the seminar's outcome was the huge variety the students had developed without any further influence from our side, with each idea reflecting a different concept of soundscape and of what was considered significant in terms of

sound. In particular, the latter aspect also added further insights into the SCOPES project, as each tour presented a highly personal – and emotional – insight into the students' relation to the place through sound (with 2/3 coming to Bern). In order to provide an insight into applied possibilities and interactions with the different groups involved here, I will briefly sketch the general design of the tours.

I. The first tour can be described as a *representation of Bern through sound for tourists and/or outsiders* – designed as a contrast to the established Bern tours by focusing on significant environmental sounds, unusual or remarkable sound spots, and concert locations.

The oldest seminar participants (a doctor and a lawyer, both already retired) were the most modern with regard to technology: targeting visiting tourists wanting to explore Bern individually as the key audience, Hans Peter Friedli and Marianne Hofer designed the tour as a downloadable app that allowed a flexible time-setting. In terms of content, the tour serves as an example of how historical information, soundscape exercises and locally relevant music can constitute a meaningful framework of experience for visitors. For example, starting at the central train station, the app asked the user to take off headphones in order to experience the train station as a sonic linguistic soundscape (in the sense of Kanngieser 2012) and to explore the specific acoustics of the space. The walk continued to the nearby *Burgerspital* from 1742, a former hospital and Old People's Home of the Burger families that was initially founded in the 14th century and constitutes a good example of the combination of historical and soundscape experiences. Having given historical background data, the app then requests a stop at the inner courtyard, asking the user to explore the inner area as a quiet zone: only a few meters away from the low-fi urban main traffic noise, the secluded courtyard is shaped by a distinct hi-fi environment, in which individual sounds, including water fountains and different birds can be clearly identified and located.

Furthermore, inspired by Feld's (1990 [1983]) description of the Kaluli who had interconnected environment, sociocultural acting with specific pieces of music, the students had also decided to interrelate the tour experience with a recurring piece of music connected to Bern. They thus included the "Berner Marsch" ["Bernese March"], locally well-known as the hymn of the Canton Bern, that was played in different versions at the main stops, such as the *Burgerspital*. At the suggestion of the whole seminar group the interconnection with the local through language sound (Kanngieser 2012) was further intensified by having the students speaking the app texts themselves in High German with Bernese coloring, rather than by having a neutral speaker utilizing strict High German.

II. The second group (Marco Ackermann and Martina Lisik) had focused on *indoors soundscapes*. In this tour, that was entitled "Versteckte Klänge in öffentlichen Innenräumen Berns" ["Hidden Sounds in Public Indoor Spaces of Bern"], local indoor spaces could be experienced through music performance, sound, and instrument building. While the students had to face the challenge of providing room experi-

ences through sound, their choices also reflected – most clearly of out of all tours – how personal experiences and memories can be shared through sound.

First stopping at the Französische Kirche [“French Church”], Ackermann and Lisick provided an acoustic experience of the interior space, as well as of its actual (religious) function by having persuaded the organist to play the organ for the tour group. As the students observed in their paper, “The high and mostly smooth walls of a church also offer a good reflection for silent sounds. Each step and each throat-clearing is reflected by the walls and contributes to the church’s typical sound characteristics.”¹² At the same time, the choice of repertoire – e.g. by selecting French compositions – contributed to the historical dimension of this location: as the students – of French-Swiss background – added in their description, the Französische Kirche, a remnant of the Dominican Order, counts as the oldest church in Bern. Built in the late 13th century, it later served as the location of the Protestant francophone community in Bern from 1623 on, and, in 1685, became a refugee site of the Huguenots who had fled persecution in France (Furrer et al. 1997).

Ackermann and Lisick had selected the small souvenir shop Ordana, adjacent to the Zytglogge tower, as a second stop. A point of interest for tourist customer groups, the shop had never been visited by the students in their everyday lives. Yet, as all later agreed, the shop’s interior added an alternative time-measuring related soundscape experience in the form of a polyphonic concert of Black Forest cuckoo clocks. As Ackermann and Lisick found out in an interview with the shop owners, Ordona started purely as a watch shop thirty years ago, but then adapted to the growing tourism, while the sales assistants adapted to the increasingly loud soundscape of the clocks. As further indicated in the interview, they even found the sound of the ticking clocks relaxing – in contrast to the visitors, who experienced the shop’s soundscape as almost noisy. The third stop led to the Music Conservatory¹³ – that had likewise been attended by the students. Here, Ackermann and Lisick provided an experience of the location through the sound of the rehearsal rooms by a walk along the corridors. This reflects a further dimension of change, due to the thinning of the traditional instrumental and vocal rehearsal cacophony, as the Conservatory has been switching to digital pianos. The tour ended at a violin builder’s workshop in the first floor of an old building at Marktgasse 36, described in the introduction to this article.¹⁴ During this tour, we particularly noticed how strongly the personal experience

12 “Die hohen und meist relativ glatten Gemäuer einer Kirche bieten auch für leise Geräusche eine gute Angriffsfläche. Jeder Schritt und jedes Räuspern hallt an den Wänden wider und gibt der Kirche ihren typischen Klangcharakter.”

13 Founded in 1858, the „Konsi Bern” counts as one of the earliest music educational institutions. See also N.A., “Geschichte des Konservatoriums,” <http://www.konsibern.ch/ueber-uns/organisation/geschichte/>.

14 Founded in 1998 and run by violin builders Daniel Kunzmann and Andreas Kürzi, the workshop is a sub-segment of the Sprenger Geigenbau company based in St Gallen, which counts the first violin building atelier in Switzerland, <http://www.geigen.ch/de/information.htm#Bern>.

of place was memorized through acoustic-practical experiences (cf. Ahmed 2004). In the subsequent discussion the group agreed that this tour – which requires complex coordination of all participants – might not be regularly offered, yet ought to be with of special local events as a product from locals for locals, like the annual Museum's Night in the spring.

III. Combining these first two approaches, the third tour (Martina Hunziker and Sabrina Lutz) was designed as a *general city tour that combines central historical performance spaces and outdoor soundscape spots*.

Hunziker and Lutz had developed a modular structure of segments that could be flexibly applied. Out of all the tours, this one most strongly related to historical research (e.g. Capitani 1993, Feller 1946–60, plus individual publication of the locations). The students proceeded in four systematic steps, by a) summarizing the historical dates; b) establishing a summary of the architectural history; c) localizing significant acoustic spaces, and, most significantly, d) by connecting the different stations with individual sound mottoes:

- 1) *The venue PROGR as a sounding space of creativity*. The architecture of the former gymnasium and primary school was initially established and built in 1885. After the schools had been moved to different premises, the location was transformed into a venue that currently hosts more than 150 artists of all areas together with cultural institutions and event organizers and two different restaurants, while the public zone in the basement provides space for exhibitions and concerts. The PROGR idea started in 2004 and was fully implemented in 2009.¹⁵ Hunziker and Lutz had chosen this location as a starting point of their tour, as “the inner courtyard can be regarded as the resonance body of the creative life of Bern.” Directing the group's attention to the sound, both specifically emphasized the location as an intersection of opposing sound experiences, because “the courtyard is located in the centre of the building and is simultaneously public and hidden, silent and loud.”¹⁶
- 2) *The Laubengänge as acoustic spaces of meeting and intersection*. Again, Hunziker and Lutz had decided to focus on the issue of intersection on multiple levels. As they pointed out, “The bearing arches under the pergolas create a closed space, in which these acoustic encounters occur. Different walking styles and tempos, as well as dialects mix with the street noise that invades from the outside or with time- and place-shifting sounds of street musicians.”¹⁷

¹⁵ PROGR Zentrum für Kulturproduktion, “Geschichte”. <http://www.progr.ch/de/geschichte/>.

¹⁶ “Der Hof liegt im Zentrum des Gebäudes und ist gleichzeitig öffentlich und versteckt, still und laut. Der Innenhof kann in seiner Klangarchitektur als Resonanzkörper des kreativen Lebens in Bern erfasst werden.”

¹⁷ “Durch die tragenden Bögen entsteht unter den Lauben ein geschlossener Raum, in dem sich diese

- 3) The Conservatory (see also tour 2) as a *sounding space of musical education*.
- 4) The ONO as a *space of creatively renewed usage*. The ONO is a former storage cellar that is today used as a cultural pub. As Hunziker and Lutz outlined, this space reveals a great deal about alternative ideas regarding the creative usage of the many cellar rooms in the historic UNESCO location. Yet they also provide acoustic challenges: “The possibilities are not unlimited; for instance, form, equipment and acoustics of the stone-based walls provide difficulties for a transformation”¹⁸ – issues that could also be further explored during the tour.
- 5) The Münster as a *space of historical musical performance and education*. Bern’s major (Protestant Christian) cathedral was started in 1421, although its construction was obstructed due to the Reformation (already-painted frescos and sculpted divine images had to be removed according to the reformatory thinking of Huldrych Zwingli in 1529). As Hunziker and Lutz outlined, the cathedral was not only significant for their tour as a major concert venue for choir and organ, but also as a significant historical music location. Until the occupation of Napoleon’s troops, music making was forbidden in public spaces in Bern, with church music being the only possibility for audible public music making.
- 6) The *Kultur Casino as a space of musical high culture and the Bernese upper class*. Built in only two years (1907-1909) by Paul Lindt and Max Hofmann as a concert hall for the public, the Kultur Casino that is still owned and maintained by the Burger remains a central performance site for art music in Bern – and reflects another socio-cultural layer of music making in Bern.

For the demonstration of the different modules, Hunziker’s and Lutz’s test tour had integrating practical sounding elements, such as a visit of a concert dress rehearsal of the symphony orchestra in the *Kultur Casino* and a sound explorations through listening to talks (e.g. instructing the group to listen to the walking movements of the *Laubengänge* or the specifics of the inner courtyard of the ONO).

IV. While each tour also tried to move beyond the tourist highlights of the Old Town by including “alternative spaces”, particularly tour no. 4 (Christina Galli and Milena Geiser) was designed as *an alternative Bern-related sound-experience*.

As Galli and Geiser pointed out in retrospect, “It was our intention to address a new audience with this tour, with which we could also identify. The target group is thus a

akustischen Begegnungen ereignen. Verschiedene Gangarten und Lauf tempi und unterschiedliche Dialekte mischen sich mit dem von aussen eindringenden Strassenlärm oder zeit- und ortsweise auch mit den Klängen eines Strassenmusiker.”

¹⁸ “Die Möglichkeiten sind dabei nicht uneingeschränkt; so sind Form, Ausstattung und Akustik der steinwandigen Gewölbekeller häufig Schwierigkeiten für die Umgestaltung.”

young and alternative audience: adventurous tourists, journalists, music performers, artists, etc.”¹⁹ Thus aiming more strongly at a younger audience or local insiders familiar with Bern, it first led to student and alternative clubs (e.g. the Dead End and ISC), followed by the leftist and highly-debated culture center of the so-called *Reitschule*, but also included places with alternative music management (by visiting the café hosting the management of the Bern-based Early Music group *Les Passions de L’Ame*). While the interaction with local music makers and organizers was central here, this tour also most strongly integrated the above-mentioned rapid sound keynote alterations into the program (as evident in the contrast between *Lorraine-Brücke* with its loud traffic and the adjacent quiet area of the *Botanische Garten* [botanic garden]). The latter stop also included a demonstration of the metallic steelpan-like instrument *Hang* that was designed in Bern in 2000 (Rohner & Schärer 2008). The tour was rounded up by the exploration of a sound bridge (*Max-Neuhaus-Brücke*) and a visit to the open radio RaBe. Particularly the inclusion of the sound-experience of the Lorraine-Brücke constituted a challenge:

We first had to be aware that traffic sound on the bridge was, on the one hand, an opportunity to listen. On the other hand, it also provided an obstacle, as instructions were impossible on the bridge. The explanations of the tour guide should be evident for the audience already in a traffic-calmed zone. Construction zones (...) could also be a problem for the maintaining time management.²⁰

In contrast, the private radio RaBe in particular exemplifies the thickness – but also the challenges – of human interaction in these processes:

We had envisioned a small tour through the studio with Radio RaBe, and perhaps it would also have been possible for the (tour) participants to select a song. I thus telephoned with the editorial board and described our plans within the context of the seminar. They were interested in general, but still had to discuss this in their collective. (...). ...and we agreed with the editorial board that (...) they would do a “normal” tour of 15 minutes through the studio.²¹

19 “Unser Anliegen war, dass die Stadtführung ein neues Publikum anspricht, mit dem wir uns selbst auch identifizieren können. Die Zielgruppe ist somit ein junges und alternatives Publikum: Abenteuerliche TouristInnen, JournalistInnen, Musikschaffende, KünstlerInnen u.v.m.”

20 “Zudem mussten wir uns darüber im Klaren sein, dass der Verkehrslärm auf der Brücke einerseits eine Chance zum Hinhören ist, andererseits natürlich auch ein Hindernis für die Führung, da auf der Brücke keine Anweisungen mehr gemacht werden können. Die Erklärungen des Stadtführers oder der Stadtführerin sollten für das Publikum bereits vor einer verkehrsstarken Zone klar sein. Des Weiteren können Baustellen (...) ein Hindernis für das Einhalten des Zeitmanagements sein.”

21 “Beim Radio RaBe stellten wir uns eine kleine Führung durch das Studio vor und vielleicht wäre es möglich, dass die TeilnehmerInnen ein Lied für eine Musiksending wünschen könnten. Ich telefonierte also an die

V. The relation of soundscape and language/dialect that had long been overlooked in soundscape research (cf Kanngieser 2012), was addressed by Tour 5 that focused on *the dialect of Bern* (Marina Marthaler and Mridina Muchtadi).

As dialect has been central for identity formation especially in the German-speaking parts of Switzerland, the students first researched the different forms of dialect in Bern, such as *Burger-* and *Patrizierdeutsch*; *Mattendialekt* and *Mattenenglisch*, but also the history of Bernese sociolects. Realized as a film, this project added insights into the dialects of the different city quarters, socially-shaped dialects and historical transformations (upper class: nowadays an old-fashioned dialect). As Marthaler and Muchtadi pointed out in their paper,

We wanted to ask different people about their concept of “Berndeutsch,” what dialect means to them and which emotions they relate to dialect. At the same time, teenagers, recent settlers, Secondos [second-generation migrants without Swiss citizenship], long established Bernese should be heard. The aim was to portray as many perspectives as possible.

During the filming process, the students asked their interlocutors three questions (“Which meaning does Bernese German have for you?”, “What is your favorite Bernese word?”, “Can you describe the sound of Bernese German”), with the answers serving as the basis of a film collage. As Marthaler and Muchtadi added in their paper, “The aim of the interview was to have the interviewees reflecting on language in everyday situations and its sound,”²² while the variety of examples should be as broad as possible: “We also wanted to include aspects, such as favorite dirty words, clichés, and specifics of the dialect. Likewise, language in everyday situations should not be forgotten – e.g. at farmers’ markets.”²³ Given the tight time-frame of the seminar, Marthaler and Muchtadi chose the Bernese *Zibelemärit* (the historical onion market, which originated either in the 15th or the 19th century) that takes place on the fourth Monday of November. In order to bring out the sound of language even further,

Redaktion und erklärte unser Vorhaben und den Rahmen unserer Arbeit des Seminars. Sie waren grundsätzlich interessiert, müssten es aber noch im Kollektiv besprechen. (...) ...und mit der Redaktion einigten wir uns, dass (...) sie dann eine ‚normale‘ Führung von etwa einer Viertelstunde durch das Studio durchführte.”

22 “Ziel der Interviews war, dass sich die Interviewten Gedanken zur Sprache im Alltag und deren Klänge machen.”

23 “In unserem Video wollen wir verschiedene Leute dazu befragen, was für sie „Berndeutsch“ ist, was ihnen der Dialekt bedeutet, welche Emotionen sie damit verbinden. Dabei sollen u.a. Jugendliche, Zugezogene, Secondos, alteingesessene Berner, Personen aus Dialektvereinen zu Wort kommen. Ziel ist, möglichst viele Sichtweisen zu zeigen. Wir wollen auch Dinge wie Lieblings-Schimpfwörter, Klischees, Besonderheiten des Dialekts erfragen. Dabei darf auch die Sprache in Alltagssituationen nicht vergessen werden – beispielsweise auf Wochenmärkten.”

Marthaler and Muchtadi included the short story *Totemügerli* (1967) of cabaret artist Franz Hohler, interpreted by the Bernese artist Stefan Grosjean. As they elaborated, “The story is Bernese-German chattering with many freely invented words, which, however, make sense when interconnected and sound like Bernese German.”²⁴ Given its mediatized form, this project was discussed in the seminar as a permanent film display at the Bern Tourism Information Center.

VI. The final tour, conceptualized by Andrin Uetz, focused on *the church bells of Bern*. While the chiming of the Zytglogge tower might be the most spectacular event from a visual side, the soundscape of the Old Town and its surroundings has also been shaped by a polyphonic interplay of various church bell ringings.

The most prominent bells belong to the above-mentioned *Münster*.²⁵ The cathedral’s nine-part set of bells is a reminder that bells long represented local knowledge in form of symbolized sound. This is not only apparent in the “Armesünderglocke” [“Poor Sinner’s Bell”] that was rung during executions, but also in the two fire bells (late 13th century and 1503) that – since they are not needed anymore – are now kept in storage. Yet the symbolic knowledge encoded in bells is still evident in that the seven remaining bells are still rung in different patterns and colors to specific weekly times (Saturday and Sunday evening), services (Sunday morning), and annual events (e.g. *Altjahresläuten* [“Old Year Ringing”] on Dec. 31 and on New Year), as fixed in a “Läuteordnung” [“Bell Ringing Regulation”].²⁶ Particular peaks of bell sounds are not only the introduction of the services (e.g. Sundays between 9–10; by 15 Protestant-Reformed Churches in 2004), but also with the hourly time chimes and, partly quarterly rings).

While this can be viewed as a distinct sound mark of Bern, a related tour constitutes, as Uetz soon realized, various challenges, e.g. regarding the timing, as well as the localization and reachability of locations for a best sound perception. Uetz thus decided to design a website with listening recommendations. This not only includes recommended listening spots and timing, but also the history and background of the various bells and/or bell chimes.

Returning to Ahmed’s (2004) affective economies, the process of the tour designs has been clearly revealing the central role of sound for an interrelation with the local. Many students had integrated favorite locations or sounds that had been playing a

24 “Die im Trailer gezeigte “Totemügerli“-Geschichte von Franz Hohler wurde von Stefan Grosjean, einem Berner Künstler, interpretiert. Die Geschichte ist ein berndeutsches Geschnatter mit vielen völlig frei erfundenen Wörtern, die jedoch im Zusammenhang einen Sinn ergeben und wie Berndeutsch klingen sollen.”

25 See also: Berner Münster, “Das Münsterengeläut” <http://www.bernermuenster.ch/de/berner-muenster/muensterbau/glocken.php>.

26 N. A. “Läuteordnung des Berner Münsters und anderer Kirchen der Stadt Bern.” N.d. http://www.frieden.refbern.ch/fileadmin/frieden/pdfs/Glocken/Glocken_IV.pdf.

significant – and emotional role in their biographies. This also revealed that each student had a different sound-related connection to the place, going far beyond the



Tour 1: In the inner courtyard of the Burgerspital (pic.: author)



Tour 3: Martina Hunziker giving listening instructions in the Laubengänge (pic.: author)

traffic recollections initially outlined, that was shared with the whole tour community during the presentations. Returning to issues of infrastructural interrelations within applied ethnomusicological projects (Sweers 2015:528), while each of these examples reflects issues of representation and selection (which is also strongly determined

by practical issues), the power interplay was rather flat in this specific case. One could almost speak of a playful interaction with the different interest groups, as there existed a mutual acceptance of authorities. Given this complex interconnection of research and applied-pragmatic issues, we also set the students to develop financial plans. I would thus describe the applied side – also with regard to the practical integration into the university teaching curriculum – of the soundscape research as highly successful, although we also experienced drawbacks: at the time of writing (2017), the practical realization has been slow, partly also on account of the Bologna educational system that, strongly focused on obtaining credit points rather than content as it is, only allows students to undertake projects within the semester, while project realizations mostly require a flexible time calculation.

OUTLOOK – THE PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF SOUNDSCAPE RESEARCH AND OPEN CHALLENGES

While these tours reflected an interaction of university, students, local individuals, and tourism, the seminar likewise had a long-term impact with regard to the broader local public: After the seminar had been featured in newspapers (e.g. Bürgi 2016, Matti 2016) and radio documentaries (Marti 2016), I was soon not only contacted by various public and private radio stations, but requested to give a public lecture in the series *Buch am Mittag* [“book during lunchtime”]. Organized by the University Library, it was attended by a large Bernese audience. Again, the strong emotional reactions of the audience to my descriptions were quite striking, adding many more examples of affective sound perception with regard to the locality, yet also to main sound hot spots, such as the Zytglogge tower and the Bundesplatz [“Parliament Square”]. Yet, and this response came particularly from the older audience, it likewise seems that auditory recollections were also strongly interconnected with other sensory memorizations, most particularly smell, and also haptic sensations. How far do we therefore need, as requested by Ingold (2011) to bring these sides closer together rather than merely focusing on isolated sound?

This specific lecture also resulted in a request for collaboration by the *Amt für Umweltkoordination und Energie AUE* [“Department of Environmental Coordination and Energy”] during summer 2016. Employing approximately 12 engineers, chemists, etc., this public-governmental institution focuses on a wide range of noise and sound protective regulations (including industrial noise restrictions and architectural regulations) based on fixed decibel measurement values. Yet, as Samuel Hinden from the Department outlined to me, while it was easy to measure noise and sound according to medically and physically determined standards, the engineers had reached a problematic point, as the perception of sound and noise likewise seemed to be shaped by highly subjective human factors that could not be tackled physically. Thus, falling back on the seminar’s findings, we developed an excursion through so-called quiet zones in Bern, thereby focusing on the question of what actually constituted a quiet zone, such as the *Burgerspital* (approximately 48 decibels). That this went beyond the mere physical noise level became apparent with the so-called *PostParc* area – the second quietest area in the inner city – that was avoided by many passengers, much to the

despair of nearby restaurants' owners. Having just been built (2015) as a segment of the newly renovated central train station complex, this parking, restaurant, and shop area was extremely quiet, but lacked any plants, for instance.

In contrast, the most popular relaxation zones within the city – a local park area adjacent to the *Kleine Schanze* – did not block much of the nearby street noise (58-60 decibel), yet locals preferred to meet here during lunch breaks. Likewise – and this was also apparent in the natural environment of the Bernese Oberland – some relaxation zones, such as the *Münsterplattform* were, because of the nearby waterfall of the *Schwellenmätteli*, too loud for conversation, but still highly appreciated on account of their closeness to nature, which is rarely ever quiet.

When I presented the findings of this walk to the Architekturforum [Architect's Forum] (again a group that had difficulties with dealing with the non-measurable side of sound), the city planners who had likewise attended the lecture immediately responded by admitting that the train station renovation had been problematic in some sections. It would seem, then that this seemingly subjective and irrational side is a point where ethnomusicology and cultural studies can contribute strongly to the environmental dialogue.

APPENDIX

The Seminar "The Sound of Bern" (autumn semester 2015), Institute of Musicology, University of Bern, Switzerland

Prof. Dr. Britta Sweers, Cultural Anthropology of Music

Prof. Dr. Cristina Urchueguía, Historical Musicology

The Bern Tourismus team:

Gabriella Bartholdi, Andrea Michel, Beatrice Lang

The student teams:

Hans Peter Friedli, Marianne Hofer: App tour through Bern

Martina Hunziker, Sabrina Lutz: *Bern akustisch: was wo und wie, früher und heute* [Acoustic Bern: What, Where, and How: Previously and Nowadays]

Milena Geiser, Christina Galli: *Alternative Bern Tour* [Alternative Tour through Bern]

Marco Ackermann, Martina Lisik: *Versteckte Klänge in öffentlichen Innenräumen Berns* [Hidden Sounds in Public Indoor Spaces of Bern]

Mirdina Muchtadi, Marina Marthaler: *Der Dialekt von Bern* [The Dialect of Bern]

Andrin Uetz: *Die Glocken von Bern* [The Bells of Bern]

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Бриџа Сверс

ПРОУЧАВАЊЕ ЗВУЧНИХ ПЕЈЗАЖА У ПРАКСИ: ЗВУЧНА ИСТРАЖИВАЊА ГРАДА БЕРНА

(САЖЕТАК)

У овом чланку разматрам практичну употребљивост и шири друштвени утицај примењене етномузикологије, а у вези са проучавањима звучног пејзажа (*саундскејџа*) у универзитетском контексту. У склопу ширег истраживачког пројекта, који се бави урбаним звучним пејзажима Берна, Љубљане и Београда, пројекат примењене етномузикологије, представљен у овом тексту, настао је из семинара спроведеног у сарадњи са Одељењем за историјску музикологију Универзитета у Берну и Туристичке организације Берна. Наслањајући се на претходно успостављене оквирне податке у вези са физичко-историјским специфичностима локалног звучног пејзажа, затим, на шире друштвенополитичко и културно наслеђе, као и на међусобни однос ова два нивоа, учесници семинара осмислили су шест различитих обилазака града Берна, који су у вези са звуком. Док су учесници семинара интегрисали у своје истраживање теоријске дискурсе које су успоставили Мари Шефер (1977) и Фелд (1990 [1983]), овакав приступ је укључио и перспективе преузете из, релативно скорашњих, написа аутора као што је Ахмед (2004), која је истраживала емоционалне механизме, или Кангизер (2012), која је усмерила пажњу на, дуго запостављен, утицај језика на звучни пејзаж. Поред истицања концепта семинара, који би могао да буде узорни за будућа размишљања у овом правцу, анализирам и различите појединачне стратегије конципирања обилазака. На крају осветљавам дубљи утицај оваквих примењених истраживања звучних пејзажа на ширу локалну заједницу.

Кључне речи: звучни пејзаж, Берн, теренско истраживање у граду, примењена етномузикологија, афективне економије