



Mexico Conference Observations By Eric Leonardson

Attending the Sound Megalopolis conference was an unforgettable experience that marked the end of my sixteen-year hiatus from active involvement with the WFAE. What I learned in the founding conference has infused my art and teaching practices with a broad awareness of sound, its perception, and use in a variety of contexts. My hiatus provides perspective on what has changed in the fields of art, sound, and acoustic ecology, and what hasn't.



One surprising change was apparent on my arrival at the Fonoteca Nacional. The scene was comprised of a large, beautiful garden where more than a dozen TV news cameras and numerous press reporters

were massed for the inaugural ceremony. This scene emphasized the important of several things: the role the Fonoteca serves in preserving Mexico's cultural heritage in recorded sound, a role that is highly valued, and that a significant opportunity was upon us in holding the WFAE conference here thanks to the newly founded Mexican Forum for Acoustic Ecology. This level of attention raises hope that acoustic ecology will finally catch on. Personally, the unforgettable scene harkened back to the unforgettable grandeur of the Banff Centre of the Arts, where the WFAE's founding conference took place in 1993.



Concern was expressed about whether acoustic ecology speaks to a younger generation. I observed a significant number of young local people attending from the local area, and chatted some of the young folk in that small contingent of Sabine Breitsameter's students. They were fortunate enough to receive funding to fly over from Germany and seemed fully aware of the significance of technology in affecting how we experience the soundscape. With the newly founded Mexican Forum for Acoustic Ecology I expect a different attitude toward acoustic ecology to emerge: one that can re-energize the established members and affiliates, and draw in a new generation.

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