

The Museum of Modern Art

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MAX NEUHAUS: A NEW WORK (UNDERGROUND)

A new work by Max Neuhaus will generate sound in the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden from within a ventilation chamber running along the east wing of The Museum of Modern Art from June 8 through September 1978 as part of the continuing PROJECTS series exploring new directions in contemporary art.

This sound installation is the second in a series which began with an installation beneath a subway grating on the pedestrian island between Broadway and Seventh Avenue at 46th Street. The new installation, as with many Neuhaus works, has taken its form from the specific acoustical and social characteristics of the site. Like a work of visual art, it exists in a constant state which can be explored by the listener at his own pace.

Neuhaus prefers to generate sounds primarily through electronics. "It's malleable," he says, "it's a tool--the systems are close to being models of my mind, in that they make it possible to produce the sounds I want." But he is also concerned with an awareness of voices, city noises, the ongoing, natural sounds of any environment.

Some of the places Neuhaus has realized works include the Customs House at the Battery; the Brooklyn Transit Authority (in front of which small speakers broadcast high, short, rhythmic, computer-generated sounds that fade in and out of the street noise); National Public Radio's Radio Net (for which the sounds of 10,000 people whistling over the telephone were altered electronically, mixed and redistributed from a central location in Washington); and under water. "A lot of people still seem to be locked into the idea that whatever happens in a concert hall is music, and whatever happens outside the concert hall is not. I'm trying to change all that."

(more)

Max Neuhaus (born in 1939 in Beaumont, Texas) is a composer whose work includes permanent and temporary sound installations, sound objects, and sound events, utilizing radio and telephone networks, transportation systems, hydroacoustics and architectural structures.

After receiving his B.M. and M.M. degrees from Manhattan School of Music, he toured North America and Europe first with the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble conducted by Pierre Boulez, then as percussion soloist with Karlheinz Stockhausen, and finally alone performing numerous solo recitals of the virtuoso repertoire he had developed. He culminated his activities as a performing musician with the recording "Electronics and Percussion: Five Realizations by Max Neuhaus" for Columbia Masterworks.

For the past decade he has worked outside the realm of conventional instrumentation and concert hall situations, focusing his attention on new situations, sound sources, and a broad spectrum of people. He has effectively expanded the concert forum, encouraging active participation and creative listening on the part of the audience and changed many preconceived notions of when and where music can occur. He has received grants and awards from numerous organizations. He has also been an artist in residence at the University of Chicago, Bell Telephone Laboratories, the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis and Research Fellow in the DAAD Kunstler Program in Berlin.

This sound installation, MAX NEUHAUS: A NEW WORK (UNDERGROUND), has been made possible through the support of Tobacco Pink, Inc., a unit of the New York Community Trust, and has been produced by Hear, Inc. The engineering consultants were Frederick Reinagel and Jack Weisberg.

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