Reconstituting Experience A Place For Experimental Electro-Acoustic Music
by
Michael Bryant Gibson
Bachelor of Arts in Architecture,
Portland State University, 1997

Submitted to the Department of Architecture in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. February 2002.

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Signature of Author Michael Bryant Gibson
January 18, 2002

Certified by Fernando Domeyko
Senior Lecturer in Architecture
Thesis Advisor

Accepted by Andrew Scott
Associate Professor of Architecture
Chair, Department Committee of Graduate Students
Thesis Readers

Clive R. Knights
Associate Professor of Architecture
Portland State University
Portland, Oregon
-----
Master of Philosophy 1988, University of Cambridge (U.K.)
Diploma in Architecture 1984, Portsmouth Polytechnic (U.K.)
Bachelor of Arts 1981, Portsmouth Polytechnic

Ann M. Pendleton-Jullian
Associate Professor of Architecture
MIT
Cambridge, Massachusetts
-----
M. Arch Princeton University 1983
B. Arch Cornell University 1979
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Abstract

This thesis explores alternative ways in which architecture can be designed. Designing architecture is not about designing new forms, but is about designing new experiences. Current standardized methods of architectural design seem too abstract, that is, they find meaning within their own structures. The new modes of design engaged during this thesis are thought of as "exploratory". These exploratory tasks are manifested from an intention, but remain ambiguous in nature so that they always remain open to further discovery and interpretation. A notion of a building has manifested as residual evidence from these exploratory tasks, but every gesture or action is not merely intended for representation of a fully constructible architectural proposal. What is important is that every last gesture remains in the form of a question and not an answer. The work should always be thought of as temporary or as a "projection".

Architecture has become valued purely by its visual aesthetics. We have come to believe that it is sufficient to appreciate architecture as an image as opposed to actually being there. This has lead to typical design methods that subjugate the other senses, thus not requiring the body and experience to be involved with the act of making. This thesis looked at ways in which I could see beyond typology in order to suggest other possible spatial relationships, allowing myself to concentrate my imagination on the sensual qualities of built space and exploring material possibilities.

Thesis Advisor: Fernando Domeyko
Title: Senior Lecturer in Architecture, MIT
I would like to thank

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**Tod Machover** for sharing the world of electro-acoustic music composition and the contemporary orchestra

**Priscilla Polley** for all her support
Perception is our primary form of knowing and does not exist apart from the a priori of the body’s structure and its engagement in the world.

-Alberto Perez-Gomez Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science

Any connection with place is first and foremost corporeal in character . . . and place is always on the agenda at the first level of human experience . . .

-Edward S. Casey Getting Back Into Place

The body is a phenomenon that offers and guarantees commonality or inter-subjectivity amongst humans, so trust what it tells you about place, site, location, predicament and situation.

-Clive Knights

The best way to reveal the true nature of any representation is through dialogue with the concrete reality of a particular space.

- Dalibor Veseley Architecture and the Ambiguity of the Fragment
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Architecture: The Haptic Way

Architecture embodies structures that constitute our existence, aiding us in dealing with the transcendent predicament in which we find ourselves. It is critical that one articulates space based on an understanding of the world, obtained at a primary level, through corporeal experience. In turn, the concretizing of this ever-changing understanding further reveals that which is fundamental about us; it is a direct engagement with the greater narrative that transcends us. Careful place-making, which assumes a dialogue between the body/memory/experience/imagination and methods of design, concerns itself with the quality of space over the abstraction of form-making.

"Architecture, perhaps more than any other discipline, is deeply embedded in the stereotypes of conventional thinking. Our culture has been shaped for too long by instrumental thinking, as a result of which we associate a great deal of positive meaning with realities which are in themselves alienating and sterile."1

Typically, architectural design is initiated primarily through Acad and 3d programs that render axonometric forms where commonly, formal consideration prevails over spatial considerations; as a two dimensional representation, it becomes an exercise in abstraction and intellectualization; gravity is ignored; usage of details and elements with little consideration is recurrent; materiality is subjugated as a veneer to be pasted; and the body is physically disengaged from the design process.

"Buildings that are "geometry-bent and conceptual" are constituted on a very different basis. Here the guiding principle is the disposition of space in accordance with previous ideation rather than in terms of immediate sensuousness."2

It is our responsibility when designing places to dwell that we do not make form outside of context. When one says meaningful architecture is site-specific it seems obvious and seemingly goes without saying. But perhaps this statement often goes without truly understanding its implications. It seems a site is qualified as unique mostly by its geometry, and other quantifiable aspects that can be rationalized.
The things, tangible and intangible, that truly qualify every place as unique, cannot be neatly rationalized and categorized. A place is not an object that we can wrap our minds around but rather is a phenomena that wraps itself around us in time and space.

It is suggested that, to ensure that the validity of one’s response to a given situation when creating place in a particular site, one must experience it at a primary level.

"My body continually takes me into place. It is at once agent and vehicle, articulator and witness of being-in-place. Our living-moving bodies serve to structure and to configurate entire scenarios of place." 3

Not only is one’s body in place but also dwells in said place. It is difficult to gain a valid understanding by attempting to “witness from outside” from within a context without participation.

"Apart from foreshadowings in myths, where better to look for a renewed appreciation of place than in our own bodily enactments? Where else can we look for it, given that all human experience emerges from the facticity of being a body-in-the-world?" 4

Given that a "site" transcends us we can believe that an architectural intervention which is at first an interpretation and elaborator of a given site (although fragmentary) becomes part of the situation, that is, in the act of creativity or dwelling the story teller and his/her story becomes part of a larger narrative.

"In creating built place, we transform not only the local landscape but ourselves as subjects: body subjects become fabricating agents. These same agents are social subjects and no longer individual pathfinders." 5

How do we reconstitute experience in architecture? If we want to make places with a certain intentionality for people to experience, is it not important that we engage the body and all its senses during the design process as a means of testing a proposal? Is it not important that we allow the very thing (the body) that is necessary to meaningfully experience a place to become the very thing that influences the conception of that place?
Electro-Acoustic Music

The action I chose to make a place for was something that I have personally experienced through years of participation. There are a few composers such as Trevor Wishart and Tristan Murail that have shown me that one can create music through an experiential agenda. What better creative activity to make a place for than one that presents me with composers intentionally reconstitute experience in music.

As with architecture the classical and contemporary music scene has produced composers, that constitute the mainstream, who compose using formal methods. This type of theory, which I consider abstract and is mostly appreciated on an intellectual level, is the predominante way that is taught in most schools today.

This standard theory considers the primary aspects of sound and composition to be such things as fixed pitch, duration of pitches, and the relationship of these fixed pitches in time (counterpoint). To oversimplify, alternative attitudes subjugated these "primary" aspects of sound and composition, to concentrate on the "secondary" qualities such as timbre and space. Tristan Murail posits....

"Our conception of music is held prisoner by tradition and by our education. All has been cut into slices, put into categories, classified, limited. There is a conceptual error from the very beginning: the composer does not work with twelve notes, x rhythmic figures, x dynamic markings, all infinitely permutable - he works with sound and time." ⁶

Trevor Wishart has also written that we can move beyond the pitch/duration paradigm by showing us the significance of gesture, sound landscape, sound image as metaphor, and understanding morphology in sound, on composition and experience.
1 Pierre Schaefer - Musique Concret
2 Edgard Varese
3 Karlheinz Stockhausen
4 Rehearsal of Stockhausen's Mikrophonie
In addition to bringing my understanding of electro-acoustic composition and performance to inform the initial intent, further participation and exploration into the scene has allowed me to evolve a creative agenda founded on discovering and understanding the current problems and potential of combining electronics with the traditional orchestra. From attending a week long American Composers Orchestra conference in New York City during the thesis period, to meeting with Tod Machover (composer) who not only shared with me his expertise on the history of the orchestra and electronics but also acted as critic for my own evolving music piece that I have composed during thesis period.

After speaking with numerous composers and performers, I found that there is no such place that exclusively accommodates performances for small ensembles and electronics. Most often these performances in Boston are held in various places such as at First Church in Back Bay or various school auditoriums, most of which, are inadequate in accommodating the needs of a typical electro-acoustic music performance. Larger performances that use full orchestras with electronics occur at places such as Boston Symphony Hall.

The biggest problem with the electro-acoustic music scene is its current lack of accessibility to the street. Notices of performances are disseminated mostly through school institution channels and misconceptions about the nature of the genre and assumptions of new music as being comparable to traditional classicism deter potential audiences from inquiry into contemporary classical music. In general, new music mostly goes unheard by the general art public in relation to other contemporary experimental arts.

As a response to this and the discovered site, I imagine a place for composers, performers and audience “on the street”. More specifically, I imagine a small performance space, two studios where short-term visiting composers could create music and teach seminars, and two separate housing units for the two composers. There could be a public outdoor area connected to the street where people could meet or have lunch or just pass through, and where street musicians and more formal performances could take place. There could also be a cafe that offers further engagement with the outdoor area. This range of very public and very private activities to be accommodated would allow me to question the nature between these activities and their relationship.
5 ACO Conference Program 2001

6 Laurie Spiegel at Bell Labs

7 Merce Cunningham & John Cage

8 One of many variations of a performance set up.

9 My own music studio
Site

Along with Ircam/Paris, Mills/Oakland, Columbia/NYC, Stanford, Dartmouth/NH, Toronto, Cologne; Boston (including MIT, Harvard, Brandeis) happens to be one of the centers of the electro-acoustic music scene in composition, performance and technology. In developing a methodology for choosing a site, I felt it would be better if I participated "in place" over a long period of time in order to meaningfully re-articulate a part of that place. A creative agenda is founded on discovering and understanding existing phenomena in places and action. This comes from the sense that one can think of an architectural proposal not so much as an insertion into an existing space but as a gathering up of elements of that space which is then reorganized in a way that can reveal latent phenomena of its context which is partly constituted by myself. That is, the proposal to be manifested is a result of lived experience in that place. I realize, for the working architect it would not always be possible to move about the world, to dwell with and become part of any situation in which s/he will build in. Putting aside the stringency of economic reality and the logistics of business etc., wouldn't this be the ideal situation in terms of creating place?

"A dwelling place must possess a certain felt familiarity, which normally arises from re-occupation itself. Of one thing we can be certain: both the continuing accessibility and the familiarity of a dwelling place presuppose the presence and activity of the inhabitant's lived body. The body has everything to do with the transformation of a mere site into a dwelling place. Indeed, bodies build places. Such building is not just a matter of literal fabrication but occurs through inhabiting and even by traveling between already built places." 7

The neighborhood called "Symphony" is unique in that it seems like a crossroads for all the surrounding neighborhoods that bear a relatively more homogenous identity from neighborhood to neighborhood. Relative to its surrounding areas; business, homes, studios, retail, and restaurants are seemingly juxtaposed unpredictably. Time shifts and types of activities intermix unexpectedly, and people with varying beliefs and life-styles live alongside each other. This area seems rich with unlimited potential ways in which one can dwell, be creative, and express oneself. Even the varying typology, scale, and in-between spaces of the built context exemplify the nature of the culture in this area. Most of all, compared to its surrounding areas, the boundary between public space and private space is ambiguous.
An aerial photo of the greater area that surround the site which includes BackBay in upper right corner, Prudential Center in the right middle area, South End in the lower right corner, Fenway in the lower left corner, Kenmore in the upper left corner and Symphony including the site in the center. The white outline roughly defines the symphony area but is somewhat misleading and should not be taking literally due to this areas porous nature. The white circle locates the site. Each neighborhood that surrounds the Symphony area displays their own distinct identity and flavor which may result in Symphony Area's sense of porosity and heterogeneity in terms of activities, people, ritual, scale, and life-style.

A view of immediate vicinity of site (with the site highlighted white in center of image). Boston Symphony Hall sits directly south east across the street from the site. There is a violin maker's shop across the street to the north of the site. This site has 2 street fronts, one on the north side and one on the south side.
Despite the rich variation of activities in Symphony one can say the predominate activity here is to be found in the realm of music. In this area you will find numerous music schools including New England Conservatory, Berklee School of Music, and the Boston Conservatory. You will also find numerous jazz venues, at least a dozen music supply shops, and many people on the street either carrying or playing musical instruments. What is missing from this neighborhood is a place where one can often listen to new experimental electroacoustic music. You could go to Boston Symphony Hall and sit through one of Beethoven’s Symphonies so that you may then listen to a modern piece which itself is subject to the attitude of potential repertoire. Even a smaller performance (i.e. a string quartet with electronics) seldom occurs without much planning and preparation. If only there were a place where impromptu performances or new music that will never be considered a magnum opus but is nevertheless new, fresh and experimental could be heard regularly. A place where people can practically walk along the street and be confronted by the possibility of experiencing what is usually exposed within pedagogical circles.

Spending an entire summer in the Symphony area allowed me to find a site which seemed to already be, in its existing condition, a place that I imagined for e/a music performance. The two things I first noticed about the site I have chosen is that there is a mural that portrayed a symphony performance from the perspective of an audience member in the back row and that there were two street fronts on opposite sides of the site. The south street front faces Boston Symphony Hall and the north street front faces a violin maker’s shop. After 30 minutes on the site, I noticed that at least 50 people must have passed through the site using it as a shortcut. I had sensed that a performance was taking place to be experienced by an “audience” that was passing through. Through relatively extended participation, I have discovered a performance place that was already there and was waiting to be revealed.

The site is spatially an “infill” type and is currently a parking lot for the bank on the corner to the east, the two streets that the site sits on converge at Massachusetts Avenue which experiences heavy car traffic. The buildings to the west of the site on the north street are intermixed with retail base and apartments or offices on upper floors. The houses to the west of the site along the south street are predominately residential and is generally a quiet street. The site’s north street front is only 35 feet wide which opens up to double its size on the south street front which faces Symphony Hall. I intend to keep the mural and to allow people to pass through the site to experience the mural.
12 Looking south toward the site (left of the row houses) with a view of Boston Symphony Hall behind the site.

13 Approaching the site from northwest.

14 View from inside the front of the site looking northeast outward toward Mass. Ave. and the Christian Science Center.
15 Looking south into the north side street front of the site. Image shows people passing through.

16 Looking north from inside the site. A mural of the B.S.O. suggests that the notion of performance is latent here.

17 Looking toward Mass. Ave. and Prudential Area from inside the north side of the site.

18 View of the south side street front of site.

19 Walking eastward alongside toward the south side street front of the site with a view of Boston Symphony Hall to the right and Mass. Ave. directly ahead.

20 A view of the alley behind the site on the south east side with view of Boston Symphony Hall ahead.
21 View of north street front of the site with a view of the mural.

22 Looking east toward Mass Ave. from inside the site with a view of the mural on the left the bank in the center and Boston Symphony Hall on the right. From this aspect one is able to look out toward both street fronts from the site.

23 A view from the inside of the site from the southwest corner. From here one can see down the back alley on the left, the back of the row houses with the end house and its mural.
Mapping as Proposal

“Every site study is in essence a form of re-enactment of place.” - Clive Knights

When beginning the initial site mapping, I feel it would be good to represent the site in a way that eludes considerations of form, geometry and dimension. The drawings attempt to represent my interpretation of what I imagined as I was standing within the site, as opposed to its elevational qualities or planimetric qualities from outside the site. At the same time, I feel that although my attempt is to try to represent the site from the inside that it is important to not ignore what occurs beyond the extent of the site boundaries. After doing onsite sketches using soft graphite or chalk, I took pictures from inside the site looking outward which show the surrounding context, as underlays or as a palette, and went over them with charcoal intending to initially render just shadow and light, elaborating the existing topological and light conditions of the site. As I started, I found myself making initial propositions in the form of masses and space created by the light and shadow which began to trace out a more elaborate topology. From this the masses and space began to take on minimal articulation. What I have done was to allow my inquiry to simultaneously be a proposal which in itself provokes further inquiry as a way to continually reveal existing phenomena and evolve an understanding of the conditions. The following four images are drawings as part of a series which all suggest a sense of “passing through” but in a way which is circuitous and always oriented toward the existing mural.
24/25 spatial mapping/proposal from inside the site using light and shadow to reveal/interpret topological/spatial conditions
“Built places, then, are extensions of our bodies. They are not just places, as the Aristotelian model of place as a strict container implies, in which these bodies move and position themselves. Places built for residing are rather an enlargement of our already existing embodiment into an entire life-world of dwelling. Moreover, thanks to increasingly intimate relationships with their material structure, the longer we reside in places, the more bodylike they seem to be. As we feel more “at home” in dwelling places, they become places created in our own bodily image.”

- E. Casey Getting Back Into Place
spatial mapping/proposal from inside the site using light and shadow to reveal/interpret topological/spatial conditions.
Discovering a Spatial Agenda

Traditionally, indoor orchestral music performance spaces are hermetically sealed from the outside world, which can most likely be attributed to the fact that geometry and surface treatments are the main tools employed for improving the acoustics of a performance space. To this day, the people who make up the electro-acoustic culture believes there is no place that currently exists that is optimal for electro-acoustic music performance, in terms of acoustics and accommodating the ambiguous nature of the relationship between audience, eletronics and performers. Some believe that a blackbox theatre which allows any configuration for any need would be ideal, but it is often too expensive and laborious to adapt the black box with every performance. I do not intent to invent the perfect place for this action which prescribes the ultimate form or scientifically calibrated space. Instead I will intentionally make a space that is not characteristic of its form or dimensions. The place can evolve through consideration of its potential spatial qualities. I imagine a space where the light level within the space is subdued yet one perceives an intense light that surrounds the it permeating the inside while sound from the inside reciprocates by permeating outward.

"The exploratory tasks should be allowed to influence, potentially, your interpretation of what a place for any certain activity might be. Such an interpretation may conflict with or transform the conventional expectations of any given typology. It is important to always question building programs, to seek more inventive possibilities, and to transcend given conditions." 

I have built a full scale intervention with the intent to slightly alter a given condition. The intent was to discover something that exist in physical reality by means of interpretive manipulation of that reality as is experienced by the body. The full scale size of the model ensures that there is a corporeal dialog that takes place and that material reality is addressed. Through this exercise, I could discover a generic spatial condition from which I could develop a specific condition that could define a particular place.

I built a 4 feet tall by 2 feet wide "filter" that was placed in a south facing window at MIT. The "filter" is made up of 3/4" slats of wood which are placed close together to create almost nonexistent slots between. Across the face, the ratio between slat dimension and slot dimension was about 8:1. The depth of the slats are also about 8 times that of the width of the slots. The initial intent was to shut out most of the light while retaining a sense of continuity to the outside.
A full scale "one to one" intervention that alters an aspect of a given generic spatial condition.
Before installing the filter I had assumed that the shadow would prevail and consume the little bit of light that would penetrate through to the inside of the filter and that the filter in general would black out the space entirely. The images reveal that, although the light is squeezed down and is forced to pass through very thin slots, it seems that the slots do not subdue the passage of light but actually intensify it (similar to when one squeezes a water hose which forces the water to shoot out in a stronger stream). Once the light reaches the inside of the screen it takes on a tremendous glow, bending around the corners of the slats, to quickly take over the shadow created by the dark side of the slats. As the light travels into the space it quickly returns back to its ambient state within just a few inches away from the filter. The model reveals the nature or materials and construction in that despite the slots and slats alternating equal distant to each other, the alternating light and shadow pattern does not remain consistent. From this I imagined how the filter could be calibrated to allow the material to be put into action to express its own materiality while still allowing light to pass through it in the same way.
a full scale “one to one” intervention: this image shows a fabric in front of the slats which further reveal the way the light quickly overtakes the shadow (despite it being concentrated between thin slots) to return to its ambient state.
These images show a second pass taken on the "one-to-one" full scale model with the attempt to give a sense of the wood in action. Here the tectonic is similar but now the wood slats are "bundled" like reeds to allow light to permeate through in varying intensities.

When reflecting on the performance space in particular, I tried to imagine how this tectonic system could adapt to changing acoustical needs. What if the plane of slats could be adjusted from a "flat" state to an undulating surface depending on how much or little reflectivity a certain performance would need?
The calibration of the “one-to-one” full scale models take a third pass shown in the images on the facing page. This time the scale is reduced to 1/2” = 1'-0” which is still relatively a large scale so that I could get “into the space” to continue to address tectonics and light conditions from the “inside”. Using cast concrete and wood with steel fasteners and rods, I created a frame of concrete that defines the flanking walls, ceiling, and floor in which a wood and steel filter could infill. This time the wood slats are cut laterally and partially overlapped where the cut meets. The composite filter wall is 16’ tall with three 8’ wide bays. The upper portion of the screen is attached at the top to hang straight down and overlaps on the outside of the lower screen. The lower portion of the screen becomes the adjustable surface. It is about 12 feet tall and is attached at the bottom end. At the upper end of the screen, I imagine a cantenary cable that is on a pulley which allows the slats to fall inward toward the space when the cable is loosened. The wood slats take on the natural curve of the cantenary under the influence of gravity and is guided by a “fine toothed steel comb which is placed toward the top of the lower screen.

When the lower screen cants inward, more sound from inside is deflected and absorbed through to the outside of the filter and more light from the outside enters the space but is also deflected and scattered. This system has created a reciprocal representational condition. Here, light and sound respond to each other accordingly depending on the calibration of the filter wall. Particular conditions of light become associated to corresponding particular conditions of sound.
Large scale material model as a means to make calibrations from the "one-to-one" models.
Metaphoric Drawing

The next few pages display 3 of a series of collage drawings which allowed me to start to see and imagine spaces for specific activities. By using collage, I no longer have full control over the rational aspects of any space that I attempt to create. From these drawings I could discover an agenda that begin to describe a general relationship between materials, light and adjoining spaces.

"Often the established graphic conventions for visualizing situations support an emphasis on form at the expense of other characteristics that may be present, In particular, the experiential qualities of a situation are often ignored, together with the influence of appropriate imaginative constructs offered up in our dreams, recollections, hopes, anticipations, and reveries. Experiential drawings exploring the inspirational content, qualities of light and material."9

By choosing and recomposing fragments of pictures which represent material and light, I am working with a medium that "resists" and asserts itself. Although just a representation of material, it represents concrete conditions which engages me in an ongoing dialog from my initial intention.

"It is important to realize that mediating representation has always been the primary purpose of any authentic art. In other words, the mediating representation had always been a means of participation in the world and not a goal in itself, as happened in late perspectivity."10

From this ongoing dialog, I am able to see aspects of the spaces portrayed that could constitute a certain spatial quality. These drawings do not pretend to be a literal geometrical representation of a fully realized built space but act as to always suggest in its "projective" state.

"The new reading can be metaphorical or reflective, and often cannot be precisely identified or labeled. What we seek here is a metaphor which has the capacity to establish the similarity between different objects, and as a consequence to reveal on a deeper level what is common to them. The thing-ness of a thing is its purpose and serviceability, which includes human attitudes, dreams, aspirations, and so on, which taken together represent a world to which a thing belongs and which in turn belongs to it. The world to which a particular thing belongs is inexhaustible."11
39 spatial study: "composing"
a view of one of the composer's studios
looking down into the performance space
40 spatial study: composing

38
The design within the site evolved primarily through an evolving large scale "working" model on a 5'x3' base including the surrounding streets and buildings. Working on one model, as opposed to making multiple models as the design evolves, allows the designer to sense not only the history of the evolving spaces but also the history of the work and toil of the hands that goes into the model evident by the scars and imperfection created by recurrent additive and subtractive making. It is important that the process of design is thought of as a narrative latent in the evolving piece (model). In the past, when working on multiple models, I had found it too easy to ignore previous conditions that had manifested from earlier models. By maximizing the scale of the model, I am able to make place from the "inside working outward" beginning from my own body and projecting outward. In the past, when starting from small scale conceptual models, not only did I find myself concerned with making "aesthetic" forms to be experienced from the air, I also sensed a certain obligation to respect these hermetic sculptural objects without considering its spatial consequences. The following pages chronologically presents the working model at certain points during the thesis period after midterm as it had evolved.
41 (top left) Aerial view of entire site. The building on the left (south side) contains performance and studio spaces and the building on the right (north side) houses the two composers apartments with a public cafe on the street level. The buildings flank a central open courtyard area that opens up to the street on the southwest side of the site.

42 (bottom left) Apartment north street facade. On the ground level the three openings from left to right are the cafe, the apartment entrance and the public path to the performance space and through the site respectively.

43 (top right) Partial apartment south courtyard facade. The top floor is the first apartment upper level. The middle portion is the second apartment lower level.

44 (bottom right) Apartment south courtyard facade. On the street level the public passes under the housing into the courtyard. The back of the cafe spills out onto the courtyard. There are two parallel walls in the middle portion of the housing that are six feet apart creating an "intertwining" circulation spine which wraps around one of the walls. Both composers share an entrance space which then splits off into two separate stair systems.
45 (top) Apartments: Shared rooftop outdoor space. Both upper levels of the composers apartments face each other on opposite sides of a tiny area open to the sky.

46 (bottom) Looking north through the circulation axis of the performance building across the court into the aligned circulation axis of the apartments.
Looking south through the apartment building public way toward the courtyard and performance building. To the right is a secondary entrance to the composers housing. A light well in the center of the underpass and the two foot setback along the right side from the existing mural wall allows light to infiltrate the underpass.
49 (top left) Performance building westside. Performance space below and one of the studios above. This studio gets some of its natural light through a large opening into the shared central spine.

50 (bottom left) looking northeast into the performance building through to the central courtyard.

51 (top right) Looking north through the performance space toward the courtyard.

52 (bottom right) Looking on axis north through the performance space with view of the mezzanine bridge landing from the apartments.
53 (top left) Looking west with a view of the east facade of the music building to the left and the central outdoor area to the right. The outdoor area opens out to the quieter south street of the site across from Boston Symphony Hall.

54 (bottom left) Looking south down into central outdoor area with a view of the north facade of the music building.

55 (top right) The music building south facade seen from the back alley.

56 (bottom right) Looking north at the southeast corner of the music building with a view of a sunken sitting area alongside the east side of the building.
57 Apartment North Facade.
cafe: lower left corner
apartment entry: lower center
public passway: lower right corner
first apartment lower level: middle section
second apartment upper level: top left and middle bay.
58 (top) View of apartment roof. Central area of courtyard (top), circulation spine (center) and public passage (bottom) all open to the sky.

59 (bottom) View of the apartment building from the street.
60 Partial north elevation of apartment building. First apartment lower level in middle area of picture and the second apartment upper level on top. A view through the central circulation spine on left and visual courtyard on right behind both apartments.
61 (top) Apartment north facade from above

62 (bottom) Looking south through the apartment public way with a view of the apartment street entrance in left center of image and secondary entrance on left side of public way with the light well circulation hanging above.
63 (top) Looking south through the apartment public way toward the existing sunlit mural wall on the right. A bench runs along the right side of the passway in front of the mural wall.

64 (top right) View into the north side of the first apartment lower level looking south across the central circulation and lightwell.

65 (bottom) Looking south through the shared rooftop courtyard from the second apartment upper level on street side toward the first apartment upper level on the courtyard side.
66 (above) Apartment wings. Looking north from the westside at a view of the first apartment lower level double height space in far field of image and the same apartment’s upper level in the near field of the image. The two apartments face each other in the westside lightwell on the lower level (shown here) and in the east side shared outdoor space on the upper level.

67 (top right) A similar view as the image on the facing page with a view of the lightwell circulation and the second apartment lower level in the bottom right corner of the image.

68 (bottom) The apartment secondary entry from the public passage way with a view of the cafe to the right.
“A truly transitional space is often a place for creative action, providing enough protection to encourage experimentation (if not outright exploration) without being overly confining.”
-E. Casey *Getting Back Into Place*

69 (top) Looking north back through the apartment public passage way from under the apartment courtyard bridge landing.

70 (bottom) A similar view from inside the cafe.
71 (left) Apartment west facade shown without neighbor building. The flanking apartments and translucent glass clad circulation looks onto the light well. The public causeway under the apartments divide into two smaller paths. The east path leads straight out to the upper court area near the cafe and the west path leads to a stair which descends to the lower court and performance building entrance.

72 (right) Apartment south facade. The first apartment upper level and the second apartment lower level face the courtyard.
"Just as the heretical and the hermetic adumbrate two ontological categories (earth and world) and call upon two ways of being bodily in the world (stationary and mobile), so they also evoke two ways in which to build: "topological and participational." We become acquainted with this form of building by empathic connection, e.g., by sensory channels that tie the body as in-the-center of a situation to other bodies and objects in the same situation which all co-participate in creating a place. Such a building brings with it its own locale or vicinity, in which every topologically pertinent ingredient participates. The result is a truly porous built place, which opens onto the environing world through numerous apertures."

-E. Casey Getting Back Into Place
74 (top) Second apartment lower level interior looking east toward the sunlit central circulation spine and the double height space in the far field of the image.

75 (bottom) The same space looking west toward the window and brick wall of neighbor building to the west.
Southwest side of the apartment building shown here without the west neighbor building.
77 (top) Second apartment lower level with view of the public passage light well on left and the composers' bridge that connect the two buildings.

78 (bottom) Apartment building south facade at upper court level with a view of the cafe on the right, second apartment lower level above and the public passage way to the north street on the left.
“An interspace, or rather an interplace, between inner and outer as well as between front and back, right and left, and up and down, this interstitial structure does not importune the visitor to go either in or out.”

-E. Casey *Getting Back Into Place*
View through the main public entry of the music building into the lower reception area below the performance space. After one passes through the main doors, s/he would proceed to the left toward the light where flanking stairs takes him/her up the performance space where s/he enters on axis either on the north or south side.
81A View of the bridge landing and central spine space that leads to the two flanking studios on the upper level.

82 A view of the standing box within the hanging outer shell.
83 Music building north side. The composer's bridge connects the studios to the apartment building.

84 View from the lower outdoor area alongside the main public entry of the music building.
85 View of the northwest corner of the music building. The entire outer "shell" of the building never meets the ground.

86 An aerial view of the music building roof. This aspect reveals the two parallel studio spaces flanking the central circulation spine which allows light in from above and the outer "shell" facade which allows light to penetrate from above and cascade down through the space between the inner shell and the outer shell.
87 Southeast corner of the music building. The east music studio allows itself a framed opening by breaking through the south outershell and pushing the upper portion of this corner slightly open to allow more southern light down into the lower space.

88 Southwest corner of the music building viewed from the back alley (shown without the concrete wall). From here you can see the inner shell which stands firmly within the outershell.
Southeast corner of the music building.
90 Music building upper circulation spine with "catwalk" and east music studio (shown without glass enclosure)
View from within the main entry to the music building looking up at the light space between the outer and inner shells.
92 Looking up from inside the main public entry toward the inside standing box and the concrete bridge landing.
93 The southeast corner of the music building shown without the outer shell.
Southeast corner of the music building shown without the outer shell. The center area shows the undulating walls of the performance space which is accessed on the north-south axis defined by the circulation spine above. The area below the performance space is the main entry public area.
The central circulation spine that separates the two music studios above the performance space. With a view to the apartment across the central court area to the north.

A view from the performance space looking up at the "catwalk".
An interior view of the westside studio (top) and east side studio (bottom) and performance space below shown without the hanging slats and outer shell.
99 (top) View of the south entry into the performance space with the shared music balcony on upper left and the deep south facing studio window on the upper right.

100 Looking north from the main entry area of the music hall toward the sunken outdoor space.
Post Design Orthographics

After thesis period, plan drawings were made as an additional way to document the project in its current state at the end of thesis period. The drawings were made for the sake of this book as an opportunity to understand the project in another way but only after experiencing the project through more experiential means as was presented in this book.

101 (left) Ground floor plan showing the cafe, apartment entryway, public passage way central outdoor court and performance hall. (North is up, not to scale)

102 (right) First floor plan showing both the first apartement lower level on street side, second apartment lower level on south side. and the two music studio spaces. (North is up, not to scale)
Conclusion

How many times have you heard, "Architects? Ah yes! I know what they do! They make blueprints." or "Well...... I wanted to study architecture but I wasn't any good at math. If we want to continue to live under such an opinion of the general public then we should simply go about our business and continue to offset magenta colored lines, copy ready made "blocks" of details in appropriate places, and virtually fly around agravic horizontally folding translucent planes. I am not saying that we should jettison all the current popular tools for designing or representing architecture. The question is, are we using technology to aid us in designing meaningful places or are we allowing technology and its workings to be the seed from which a dialog for creativity occurs. The processes that I have chosen may give the impression that I may be technophobic since I did not explore how the computer can aid in representing space experientially. I have extensively employed the latest technology in the past and I do believe there is great potential for its use but not without critical inquiry and discipline. But first, it was necessary to step back out of an increasing myopic condition as a way to look at the situation in a fresh way. In the end, I have increasingly discovered that it is critical that whatever medium we choose to use for making places that we attempt to engage all the senses so that the body remains in the center of any situation and things, allowing everything to "co-participate in creating a place".
Notes

1 see Veseley. D. *Architecture and the Ambiguity of the Fragment*, p. 119

2 see Casey. E. *Getting Back Into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*, p. 141

3 Casey. E. *Getting Back Into Place*, p. 48

4 Casey. E. *Getting Back Into Place*, p. 46

5 Casey. E. *Getting Back Into Place*, p. 111

6 Murail, T. "*Spectra and Pixies*" in Contemporary Music Review, p. 158

7 Casey. E. *Getting Back Into Place*, p. 116

8 Knights, C. (in conversation)

9 Knights, C. (in conversation)

10 Veseley. D. *Architecture and the Ambiguity of the Fragment*, p. 113

11 Veseley. D. *Architecture and the Ambiguity of the Fragment*, p. 112
Image Credits


3  Chadabe, J. *Electric Sound* p.41.

4  Chadabe, J. *Electric Sound* p.84.


10  http://ortho.mit.edu/

11  http://ortho.mit.edu/

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top to bottom

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106 Tod Machover