

Folkways Records FX 6161

here at the waters' edge 1

From the motion picture "Here at the Waters' Edge"

Recorded in and around the Port of New York

by Leo Hurwitz and Charles Pratt

Sound score composed by Leo Hurwitz in collaboration with Charles Pratt

Introductory Notes by Sidney Finkelstein

a voyage in sound

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RERECORDING MIX ENGINEERED BY RICHARD VORACEK AT REEVES SOUND STUDIOS
MASTERTAPE ENGINEERED BY CUE RECORDINGS

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

here at the waters' edge 1

Sounds of nature and of man, recorded around the Port of New York, constructed into an evocative, emotional work of art. An abstract symphony of waves, gulls, fog horns, whistles, engines, trains, laughter and excited human speech. A record which will affect you deeply, using familiar sounds to voyage in a new direction.

Cover design by Ursula Suess

Photograph by Charles Pratt

a voyage in sound

FOLKWAYS RECORDS Album No. FX 6161

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HERE AT THE WATERS' EDGE [I]

A VOYAGE IN SOUND

From The Motion Picture Here At The Waters' Edge

by Leo Hurwitz and Charles Pratt

Recorded in and around the Port of New York by Leo Hurwitz and Charles Pratt

Sound score composed by Leo Hurwitz in collaboration with Charles Pratt

Passage 1 - Ocean into Inland Waters

Passage 2 - City Edge: The Coves of Manhattan Island

Passage 3 - The Surrounding Shores; Rideout to Sea

COMMENTS ON THE SCORE

by *Sidney Finkelstein*

This *Voyage in Sound* will move many people very deeply. Others will be both moved and troubled, for it will raise questions in their mind not easy to answer. It is a voyage in a new direction all the more strange because the materials it works with are so familiar.

It consists of three independent yet connected "constructions in sound." The sounds are what would commonly be called noises, but they are at the same time meaningful and evocative ones; the crash of waves breaking, the gurgling of running water, the cries of sea gulls, the warning calls of fog horns, the clamor of airplane engines, bells, steam whistles chugging engines and clattering trains, the measured beat of men hammering and of steam hammers, the drone, whine, buzz and rumble of saws, acetylene torches and electric drills, the squeak of loose boards on a pier and the creak of playground swings, the explosions of laughter and of excited human speech. But the purpose of these "constructions" is not to form an aural travelogue, recalling to the listener that now we are at the George Washington Bridge listening to the hum of late afternoon traffic, now we are on a tugboat meeting an ocean liner, now we are at the Battery when the Staten Island Ferry labors up to the pier, now we are at a playground overlooking the East River.

It was at places like these and many others, in and about the vicinity of the winding New York City waterfront, that these sounds were recorded. But they have been rearranged, mixed, played against one another, built into rich and complex textures, or-

ganized so that they discard their more specific place and temporal connections and take on new qualities in their combination and sequence. These "constructions" may be compared to a work of music, for they build with sounds in time continuity, like the repetition and alternation of musical motifs, and in space or simultaneity, like harmony and counterpoint. They have many characteristics of musical sounds, like rhythm, timbre, dynamics, and, in some cases, more or less definite pitch. But they are not produced by musical instruments, or by human voices trained to emulate instruments. The "construction" makes no claim to have followed any traditional musical form. But it does have the unity, cohesion and evocative emotional power of a work of art. And the question rises, what lies behind this evocative power? What meaning can we ascribe to it?

To find an answer, we must digress into the examination of some more traditional forms of art. When Rembrandt for example gives us a painting of David playing the harp before Saul, the question of finding meaning seems relatively easy to answer. We can say that this figure stands for David, the shepherd, that for Saul, the king. From the facial expressions and gestures, we can say that David is absorbed in his music, while Saul is worried, jealous, tormented. And we can go on from there to find even a hidden sermon on the conflicts in a proud and aging chieftan aware of the challenge of youth. But what happens when Rembrandt gives us a drawing or etching of simple Dutch landscape, and one built with motifs so familiar and ordinary that no tourist would stop to look at them in the real; a cottage, a road, a few trees? What does it mean? We are impelled into a more challenging question of art. After we think for a while we may say that we are presented with a subtle kind

of beauty, the beauty of things so commonplace that we need a work of art to make us really see them freshly; that the picture gives us not the simple things of nature but a state of human relationship to nature; that Rembrandt shapes his lines and unites his motifs with the consciousness of one to whom every part of this land is precious. We can say that in the back of his mind, guiding his hand, is the awareness of how dear this land is, the kinship he feels with those who have fought for their possession of the land, wrested it from the waters, transformed it and cultivated it with their labor.

Let us turn to poetry. Keats begins his Ode, To Autumn, with a description of the fruit-heavy trees and vines. Then, in the second stanza, he touches on the human labor which nourished this fruitfulness, mentioning the threshers and gleaners, and the cider press. Then, for the third and last stanza, he gives us an array of sounds, ending with these lines:

Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river swallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

What does all this mean? We can say, of course, that it is a catalogue of the sounds heard in the autumn countryside. But there is nothing innately beautiful about the bleat of lambs or the buzzing of gnats, while the poetry evoking their memories is beautiful. And so we can say further that the poetry is beautiful because it communicates a human presence in the midst of nature, a miraculous state of being, a sense of being so close to nature that the body quivers in response to it, and its most familiar, forgotten sounds seem fresh. We hear in the mind the sounds with all the emotional associations that the forgotten experiences of life have woven about them. And now brought to the forefront of consciousness, these sounds seem to be a part both of nature and of ourselves.

So it is with the sounds of Here At the Waters' Edge. They are sounds so familiar to most of us that, except at special moments, we are hardly aware of them when we hear them. Often, we no longer hear them. But they are in the back of our mind. They are part of us. And now they are extracted, brought to the forefront of consciousness, put into strange and compelling relationships, woven into imaginative continuities and polyphonic oppositions, so that a sensitivity awakens to a part of ourselves that we hardly knew existed, and hardly were aware of because it was always there. They are not controlled and shaped musical sounds. But in a way, they are more basic to our experience and life than musical sounds, and are thus evocative to us. Let us consider, for but one example, some children playing ball in a slum neighborhood street, and think of what a catalogue of sounds must exist in the back of their minds, sounds which they must instantaneously translate into action, like the peal of a horn, the rumble of an approaching car, a shout, cry or whistle.

Of what does this "construction in sound" speak? We may arrive at this when we ask ourselves how to

classify these sounds. There are many kinds of classification. We can use musical standards, such as whether they are wind or percussion, long or short in duration, fixed, changing or indefinite in pitch. We can use scientific standards, such as the shape and speed of the sound waves, the overtones or wave mixtures, the kind of force, surface, tube or vibration that set the air in motion. But for our purpose a different classification is more useful. We can say that there are first of all the sounds of nature, like the break of waves, the flow of wind and waters, the cries of birds. They are as free, almost, as chaos, but have an underlying rhythm, a rhythm more marked in the average of its variants than in its defined regularity. Closely allied to these are the sounds of human laughter, or spontaneous speech and movement, also rhythmic in the larger sense but unmeasured, for in this respect people are also nature. Then there are the sounds of human labor. They are more controlled, more definitely rhythmic, than the nature sounds, and yet are not mechanically measurable, being always imbued with the freedom and variation springing out of human life and thought. Then there are the machine sounds, fixed, incessant and obsessive either in their unbroken continuity, like steam whistles and airplane roars, or in their unbroken, pounding regularity, like a steam hammer or chugging engine.

These categories of sounds are not rigid, but overlap. Thus the sound of a fog horn is a "machine" sound, yet one modulated by the waters over which it carries, the fog it penetrates, and the approaching or receding distance from the perceiving ear. But these categories of sounds, nevertheless, represent three basic and fundamental aspects of experience. They are nature, as perceived by man; they are man's work processes; and they are the products of human labor, the tools man creates, which by their non-human, unnatural regularity display the enormous power they possess, and which can escape from human control to lacerate or imprison the human being.

In the beginning, the land was separated from the waters. So says Genesis. So says the ancient Babylonian legend of Gilgamesh. Behind these myths lies the historical reality of the actual separation of the land from the waters by man; the draining of swamps, the digging of irrigation canals, the building of dikes, the control of the flow of rivers, that made the deltas of the Nile, the Tigris and Euphrates, the Indus and the Yellow River the centers of the first great stages of civilization. The later stages of civilization did not erase these earlier achievements, but built on them. And so we can say that all civilization to this day rests on the separation of the land from the waters, and beyond this, on the same process carried to ever new boundaries; namely the harnessing of the blind forces of nature so that they become tools in human hands, creating a new potential of freedom for human life that at the same time exists always and eternally in the framework of the blind forces themselves.

Just as the unshaped and uncontrolled forces of nature remain as the "outer world" for human beings, so also their tools, machines and structures shaped from nature, become part of their "outer world."

But these two aspects of "outer" are different, as different as the building-blocks and skyscrapers of New York are from the waters that surround them. In between the two all human life is lived, sometimes proceeding surefooted, sometimes trembling as on the brink of a precipice. It explores its freedom by setting itself in opposition to blind nature, glories in the very power of the forces it has unleashed by mastering the laws of nature and turning them to human ends, yet is always in danger that the very power of such creations may in turn grip people and alienate or estrange them from their own humanity, which is their tie to nature. And so through this interplay of sounds, three fundamental aspects of human life are evoked, one woven into the other, all of them brought into the forefront of consciousness, and put into relationships that evoke varying states of life. If Here At the Waters' Edge helps to create a new sensitivity to what a human being is today and how he lives, it may be called a success.

The inception of Here At the Waters' Edge was as the sound score of a motion picture of the same name, although what is heard here is not the actual film track. It is the film track reshaped, condensed, altered and intensified, so that it has an independent life as a "voyage in sound." The film, Here At the Waters' Edge, as well as the sound track, was created by Leo Hurwitz and Charles Pratt. The film is a visual web of images of the water edge of New York City, not so much a boundary as the locale of opposition and interplay between man and his creations on the one hand, nature itself on the other. On this waterfront nature and man-created works are organically connected. The boundary becomes indefinite, the waters invading the land in coves and inlets, or in the erosion of piers and beams, and man invading the waters with bridges, wharfs and tugboats. Here a busy life takes place shaped by the very condition of being poised on this undefined boundary. The film, made with an artist's fine eye for the unsuspected and revealed beauty of the familiar, was acclaimed at the Venice, Boston and Montevideo International Film Festivals. At Montevideo it was awarded the Grand Prize. In Paris there was a special screening by the Cinematheque Francaise which also showed another film by Leo Hurwitz, The Museum and the Fury. The critic Michael Capdenac wrote in Les Lettres Francaise:

Leo Hurwitz is a poet of the image, a lyrical and cosmic poet who invites the spectator to take part in his visions, his marvelings, his intoxication whether with life or death. The structure of his films is that of symphonies embracing the rhythms of the world in broad movements of image, counterpointing themes and leit-motifs. The cyclic composition can be perplexing, with its ramifications of ideas, its accumulations, its deliberate repetitions, its plastic abundance which looks like prolixity, but it is impossible not to yield to the fascination of a style which transforms a fact into a visual poem.

Capdenac continues, speaking of Here At the Waters' Edge:

Mastery and profound originality assert themselves. It is a Whitmanesque poem about the port of New York, where water becomes a presence gifted with

memory, speech and features. Like Joris Ivens, Hurwitz and Pratt know how to hear and how to see water. They capture it in all of its changes, its mutations, its slumber, its tenderness. Visual phrases accumulate impressions as Whitman accumulated words, hammering on our sensitivity. The extraordinary sound track, recording the enormous throbbing of the harbor, its gasps, its gratings, its pulsations, is used as a counterpoint to this cosmic description, to this dialogue between water and man at work. You are literally precipitated onto the docks, the shipyards, the tugboats, and you find yourself drawn into a shattering vortex of music and images which carry you off until dawn, toward the estuary of another beginning.

In the "Voyage in Sound" presented on this record the sound track of the film has been reworked, tightened, and reshaped into three Passages, each with its own continuity and structure, its climaxes, variety of color, tensions and relaxations of tension. In both the film track and the score presented here, the sounds are "real," in the sense that they come from a microphone turned on the busy life at the waterfront itself, but what the microphone captured has also been treated as "raw material." Further artifice was necessary in order to create a reality that is conceptual, more than naturalistic. For example to reproduce the sheer sound of a breaking wave, it was found necessary to mix many different sea-shore sounds, in order to create a wave-breaking sound of convincing aural impact, without the assistance provided in real life by the eye and the memories evoked by the eye. Just as a painter or photographer can recreate reality "realistically" only if he has an eye for its form and even reshapes and clarifies its form, so the ear for sound builds with its own special sensitivities, taking its raw materials from life and enhancing, so to speak, its "harmonies."

The first of the three Passages comprising Here At the Waters' Edge is called "Ocean Into Inland Waters." It is sharply dramatic, built on the opposition and clash of "nature" and the "machine", while human voices and the sounds of labor are present but subdued. It starts with the "nature" sounds, the waves and waters, the cries of sea-gulls. Then man-made sounds are heard, the horns of ships, but modulated by nature. Other "machine" sounds enter, the crescendo rumbling of an airplane, the chugging of an engine. They subside, and rise again; a fragment of childrens' singing voices enters. Again the water is heard, and the horns, and again the machine sounds rise with gathering intensity, with bells, whistles and clattering metal. We have what might be called an "antiphonal" construction with two great "orchestras" in opposition and contrast, the "orchestra" of nature, and the "orchestra" of the machine, with its varieties of color, its "brass, winds and tympani," its long drawn and its percussive sounds, its high pitch and low, its clangor rising to almost frantic intensity. With each "man-made" episode, the intensity rises, but separating the episodes are the recurrent nature voices, and

in the conflict between the lacerations of the machine and the resistance of nature, the dominating presence of nature is always manifest, as a reminder that the city itself has grown out of and lives surrounded by the waters.

The second "Passage," called "City Edge: The Coves of Manhattan Island," begins with the evocation of human activity and labor from the break of dawn on the bay and river. A different dramatic life is created, with less sharpness of conflict and contrast, and a more even-textured flow of complex rhythms and sounds, the whole "Passage" being dominated by the rhythms, controlled yet free and unmechanized, of human labor and activity. Thus at the outset the sounds of hammering are heard, hammers handled purposefully and softly by men, becoming a polyrhythmic interplay of controlled activity, with saws also heard, and faint voices, then an engine chugging. These sounds subside and "nature" is heard, but nature subdued, inland, eroding the shores, with the gurgle of water, the creak of boards in a pier, the squeal of windlass chains. The controlled rhythms of human labor rise again, with louder voices, machine sounds, their clatter urgent yet intermittent, reaching a more intense rhythmic polyphony, but never altogether mechanized and oppressive. Then counterposed to the clamor comes an episode of human voices in their own complex rhythmic freedom and lightness of timbre, like human life recovering the spontaneity of nature. What we hear are "waves breaking" of human speech and laughter instead of waves in the water, and always, if softly presented, is the presence of the machine, as in the counterpoint of auto horns against the voices. Again the labor sounds rise with clamoring intensity, reaching a peak of machine-clang, and yet with mechanization never supreme, and always the dominance felt of the human control, its busy excitement, its mastery of the forces it holds in hand. There is a more subdued passage, with nature appearing, but in terms of man wrestling with it and it eroding man's work, with straining and heaving, whistles and voices, creaking and tearing, and then plaintive fog horns. The clatter of a train is heard, the rumble of a plane. And then there is a climactic hammering, but the hammers are those of pile drivers, the opening motif of the "Passage" now developed, louder and more emphatic in its counterpoint. The voices of ship horns then close the piece.

The third "Passage" is called, "The Surrounding Shores; Rideout to Sea." Built of longer and slower sound elements, its dominating theme is the interplay of nature, or the waters, with spontaneous human activity, while human labor is present but subdued, and the machine clamor is heard, sometimes challenging but never triumphant. And so at the beginning the "nature orchestra" is heard, with its subtle variations of timbre, and the "man-made" or "machine" choirs intermixed and modulated, with horns of different pitch, a plane rumble rising and subsiding, a chugging of engines emphatic but not urgent. What may be called a "charged silence" is then heard, silence that is not silence, like a

background consciousness of indeterminate sound, and then human voices are heard, with the shouts and cries of children at their games. Through all this playground sequence, the machine is heard as background. Then the "charged quietness" of nature reappears, with water sounds, birds chirping, soft horns. The interplay of water and machine gathers intensity, as traffic sounds and train whistles are heard, and this man-nature counterpoint is followed by another man-machine counterpoint, a climactic episode of children at their games with cries and the squeaking of playground swings thrown against the rumble and clatter of auto horns and trains. It is a reminder that in the city with its civilization and great works, the freedom and spontaneity of play has to be wrested from the grip of the machine, the menace of which is ever-present. But if freedom must be fought for and guarded, it is the more precious, and as the play sounds subside, a new thought enters, evoked by the "coda" of water and ocean sounds. It is that freedom rests on the fact that tools and triumphs have value only if they aid man to rediscover his own "nature", which is also his unity, on a new level, with nature itself.

The question remains, can Here At the Waters' Edge¹ be considered a musical work? There are arguments pro and con, that might be set forth. Pro: It is a continuity of sound, created out of the "logic" and relationships of these sounds. Con: It has no melody, or tune, or anything that could be called a melodic line. Pro: There is a movement in music today, which abjures traditional melody, and works with sounds and silences, dynamics and timbres, even indefinite in pitch. Con: For all the interest of such experimental works, people still and will probably always want some of the music to sing. And even in this musical "laboratory," if we can call it that, the sounds are calculated ones, produced by man and instrument, with any relationships to the sounds of nature or daily life being irrelevant, and the form intended as a pure structure with its own logic. The continuity of Here At the Waters' Edge¹, on the other hand, still rests on the fact that the sounds, for all their refinement, mixtures and abstractions, retain deliberately their links to nature and human activity.

Moderator: Let us admit that Here At the Waters' Edge¹ is in a different realm from that of musical composition. Certainly its creators don't think of themselves as composers. But looking at the work for its own qualities, is there not some overlapping with the art of music? And I am thinking not of the modern "experimental laboratory" alone, but of the music of Bach and Beethoven as well. Does not their music, in its rhythms and dynamic thrusts, appeal to something more in the mind than the learned reactions to patterns of chords and melody? Does it not also evoke and gain some of its power from buried memories of all the heritage of experience in sounds from almost the moment of birth, the sounds of nature and of life? And thus, cannot Here At the Waters' Edge throw some light on the appeal of and the materials used by the art of music itself?

The question must be left here, as beyond this, each listener must provide his own answers.

A Note on The Sounds, Soundtrack and Soundscore
by Leo Hurwitz

The voyage in sound, which began with planning the score for the film and ended with making a master tape for this recording, was a several-stage journey. It kept opening up experiences and fresh insights into the stuff of sound-actuality. It brought a new awareness of its expressive potentials, its wide and subtle vocabulary, its variable syntax and time-shapes. And it crystalized a conclusion that actual moments of sound can be molded by feeling and meaning much as the raw material of any art (words, tones, pigment, scratch of pencil, clay or stone).

The writing, photography and editing of the film were complete before the work on the soundtrack was begun. The track was post-synchronized. As Charles Pratt and I started to make a list of the required sound effects, I wrote this note on the top of the page:

"Always work with the sounds not only in the frame, but around, implied."

This seemed like the key to a basic relationship between sound and picture: the need for sound to expand the energies implicit in the image, to create a surrounding matrix out of which the specific images emerged, to weave back into the totality of experience the isolations, enforced by composition within the motion picture's rectangular frame. These needs are operative of course in the writing, directing and editing processes, in all the aspects of film-making that fuse disparate elements into an organic growing whole. Nevertheless, because it was contemplated that the film would be without words and have two relatively short pieces of music by Henry Cowell, the function of the soundtrack took on special importance in this regard.

The idea that the sounds surrounding the objects in the frame must be specially attended to, became a stimulating factor in the search for sounds, their recording and integration within the sound score. It also led to a greater insight into the experiences of hearing sound.

Not having too much experience in recording, the first effort was to search the available libraries for sound effects of ocean, harbor, boats, river-edge industry and people, etc. The pickings were slim. Most of the effects were "usual", neither specific nor rich enough. Their textures were smoothed out, eroded by too many generations from the source or synthetic in feeling. In any case there was insufficient variety; many of the effects called for in our shot list were simply not available.

There was nothing to do, therefore, but to rent a Nagra recorder and to go on a voyage of discovery searching for sounds in the places that had been the locations for the filming. (Fortunately the popularization of tape and the simplification of recording machines have made the innocent bold.)

At the ocean shore, the bays, pier ends, shipyards, dock constructions, marinas and lumberyards, on the ferries and tugs, under the bridges, we listened to the sounds.

In most films sound is used in a direct parallel to the image:

a car starts // its sounds are heard
people walk // footsteps
plane above // plane motor approaching and going

The actual experience was different:

timber and oily flotsam beneath a barge dock
// railroad squeeks, bells, hum of cranes
children playing stickball
// screeches of near and distant tugs
crates being lifted by gantries
// a loudspeaker voice carrying for blocks.

Of course these sounds never came singly, but always orchestrated with other sounds, some directly related to the activity, some not. The discovery, in returning to the actual hearing experience, was that the synchronous sound is the special case rather than the rule. And this justified the original note, to work especially with the implied sounds, not only in terms of the needs of the film but directly out of the experience itself.

Frequently the sound felt was not heard at all, or heard on the bare threshold and magnified psychologically by the meaning of the image or the sense of physical presence.

Standing on the deck of a swift tug and seeing the wash flare back and away, we were sure we heard the high-pitched sounds of the wash of water. But through the microphone from the same place, there was no distinguishable sound of water; the overriding noises were engine and deck throb.

To record the hearing experience the microphone would have to be placed in an entirely different relationship to the water than to the ear.

In brief, physical hearing (what is recorded through the microphone) takes in a complex welter of many sounds, some barely separable in their volumes and frequencies. The hearing experience separates, selects and organizes out of this welter those sounds which, at that given moment, make a meaningful configuration with the rest of the experience.

Notice, for example, when you are walking on a heavily trafficked street, that the loud sounds of whizzing tires, horns and grating brakes will not come through to your awareness if you are occupied with the store windows or conversation. But, when you cross the street and a car starts too early and threateningly, the motor sounds of acceleration will be magnified out of all physical relation to the surrounding sounds of trucks and traffic. Notice also that at this moment you did not at all hear the physically present heel clicks of pedestrians in front or behind you.

The very fluidity of the hearing experience, and its relativity within the context of what is seen, felt, feared, hoped, thought and done become the basis for the expressive use of sounds - of their wide spectrum of meanings, and their varied relationship to other aspects of experience. This is also the basis for breaking away from the oversimple use of sound in its strictly "parallel" relationship to the seen image or the heard word.

In recording the sounds for the film it became necessary therefore to photograph them, as it were, from many angles, to turn foreground into background, background into foreground, isolate the several components, within a single hearing experience, magnify and distort - in order to have the material for later synthesis into sound structures related to the actual experiences and to the expressive needs of the picture.

An example of turning background into foreground: near a busy pier we lowered the microphone to a point a few inches above the lapping of water against pier boards, and from this angle recorded the horns of boats on the river, the nearer blasts and toots of ocean liner and tugs, and the hum of the city.

An example of magnification: the regular break of waves, tried from different angles, did not record with the heavy accent on the break as experienced. We came closer to the hearing experience by dialing down the volume for the lull and bringing it up sharply for the moment of break.

An example of distortion: the gentle waves of an inlet recorded with insufficient distinction from ocean waves. We re-recorded these at double speed achieving the gentler feeling by the changes of rhythm and pitch.

When hours of tapes containing the required material had been amassed, the problem was to select the best sounds in each category. It was not difficult to eliminate a few inadequate lengths of tape and certain repetitions. But listening comparatively would not reveal which sound was better. They were different, not better or worse. The remaining amount of quarter inch tape was formidable, and somehow had to be cut down to manageable proportions before transferring to 35 mm tape for editing with the film.

The solution to this problem was accomplished by making a leap from considering the sounds individually to considering them in groups and series - within a time sequence. This involved working the recorded sounds into meaningful passages of sound organized rhythmically, with development, climax and resolution.

In other words, if I treated boat whistles or hawser creaks not as two random series of individual sounds but as two unified passages, each with its own development. I could edit the material for a feeling of morning on the river with the whistle series, and the story of a barge docking with the hawser and winch sounds.

The polarization of sounds by arrangement into a time sequence under the key of meaning allowed for a decisive and savage elimination of the unessential, the redundant, and those sounds that did not fit the new configuration. Selection, then, was achieved not by the comparison of like sounds, but by making structures inspired by the sounds themselves and related to the expressive requirements of the film sequences.

After these selections were transferred to 35 mm tape, they were organized into categories of subject matter:

Ocean	Water lapping and slapping
Bay and inlets	Children
Gulls and birds	Work voices
Gantries	etcetera
Shipyard	

Each category was subdivided into interior categories, without however making the categories too strict. For example, the category of water slapping against piers might contain distant boat whistles, trains, helicopters or even a mighty blast from an ocean liner. It was important to hold both the simplification into categories for the sake of control, as well as the rich combinations of sound within the category for the sake of retaining the variety and textures of the real events. This made classification more complex, but functioning simpler.

In composing the sounds with relation to the edited film, a new problem and a new potential came into being. The sounds had been organized, primarily for the purpose of selection, into passages with loose but meaningful developments. There was no point now in breaking down these passages into their components to work them separately in relation to each image. On the basis of previous insights - that the specific image was not the defining element in the choice of sound, that environmental energies were significant, that the meanings of sounds emerge not only in their individual entities but in their time structure - it was clear now that the way to work was to choose a passage of sound that was generally right for a passage of the film; then to refine it by more closely relating its rhythms, meanings and synchronization to the development of the picture by cutting or adding; and then to introduce an orchestration of related or contrapuntal sounds on other tracks. In other words,

to work "vertically" in relation to the structural development of the film in the primary phase; and secondarily to work "horizontally" in relation to specific image or movement, and in relation to the layers of orchestrated sounds. The basic attention was to the large units of the film's progression, working so to speak in figures, phrases, motifs, themes and movements rather than in terms of individual notes.

At the end of the process of editing the sound, there were many tracks and loops for each reel. (see illustration of re-recording log). These were fused, balanced and dynamically interrelated in a re-recording or "mix" session, in which the playing of the tracks was synchronized to a screening of the work picture.

The mixed sound track had been composed in direct relation to the film, but also as a distinct element with its own expressive problems and its own unity. Playing the track alone revealed this. There was a pleasure in it that one does not expect when a sound track is sheared away from its binding to the picture. The challenge, then, was to explore whether, with new editing and changes of rhythm and dynamics, a sound structure could be developed that would have meaning and satisfaction and completeness for the ear alone, and whether it could be evocative of the root meanings of the film - much as a musical suite can be made from the music track of a film.

In making this version of the sound score the key consideration was to convert the sound track, designed to be integrated with the film, into a sound score that would be complete as an aural experience. The content supplied by the pictures was removed. What was to take its place? The more insubstantial but freer associations stimulated by the sounds themselves, called forth from the listener's store of memories. This would inevitably be a different experience from the film: more private, more meditative and more varied from listener to listener. But the overall feelings and ideas of the film could still be retained, since the basic materials and structure of the sounds derived from the same sources as the film itself.

The first hearings of the track carried the after images of the film with it. It became clear that the film had to be erased from the mind if the sound was to do the whole job. Repeated hearings enabled me to attend again to sound alone. Then, it became clear that it needed ruthless editing and transformation to live by itself. In certain sequences developments and rhythms established in relation to picture had no validity on their own. Some sequences would have to be tightened, climaxed differently, radically changed in dynamics. Certain passages would have to be lopped off and joined with the next in the same arc of movement, since they tended to become episodic in their original design when separated from the film.

On the other hand new potentials emerged because the ear can listen with a new intensity when the progression of images does not guide the listening experience. It hears new subtleties and new textures in the same sounds. Some passages, like delicate motor hums and airtones gained fresh interest and could function as foreground elements, where in the film they had been used as accompaniment. Some passages, e.g. childrens' voices and answering boat whistles, required a sharp reduction of the contrapuntal elements (abrasive traffic and train sounds) in order to weave a purely aural continuity. In others, rests had to be introduced where the accompanying film image had originally provided a sustaining line against which to play a long sequence of sharp, rough and percussive sounds.

In the end, the film was forgotten and the magic of sounds as an independent substance emerged in the work.

This was the genesis and trajectory of this "voyage in sound".

WORKING WORDS FOR A FILM WITHOUT WORDS

Leo Hurwitz

(These are a collection of work notes made during various stages of the production of the film Here At The Waters' Edge. They are assembled here in the order of the main line of the film's progression.)

Ocean

The great id. The water god.

The ocean moves in from restless, powered deeps, from its vast expanse under sky, to touch and discover shore - ending its surge in delicate fringes on the sand. This shore is only the hint of the permanent power, the unknown of nature which is part of us and remote from us at the same time.

The image gives us the "graspable" ocean - with nevertheless a clue to the deep source of its rhythms: the vast and miles-deep water face, with its permanent cycle through

sky
vegetation
land
and back to the sea.

Music and sound should give us the latter - our long yesterday and our long tomorrow, our primitive connection with water, the sense of the ungraspable sea, from whose edges the rest of the film emerges.

The Inland Waters

The transition is from the raw beating sea to the calm edge of bay proliferating with life.

The ocean has moved into one of its recesses. What it has done to land: its quietness allows new forms of life, bird and plant, new and slower rhythms, trickles of sand in tidal brooks, stationary symbols of power and movement, like broken shells, and the steady march of scroled gentler waves, the steady breathing of water against rocks and pier poles.

Its new pulse is tolerant of objects in it and lining its shore (compared to the intolerance of ocean making everything part of its restless push and pull). The stable power of land has interacted with the force of ocean. Something new emerges, which was not possible within the energies of the wide sea... The water is not now naked force. It has been tamed. It is no longer only itself, id. It promises contact with other things, sharing its flow and movement with another part of the world. There is, though, the sense of the continuing ocean. This calmer thing is the ocean, transformed.

The sounds prepare for a peacefulness, a sense of stability - the surprise of boat horns and those large puffing floating things that pass on water, which were wholly out of the boundary of mind during the previous ocean and cove sequences. The preparation is for that remarkable calm possession of the sea by man and ships.

The sea is on the move penetrating the land. It squeezes between loose boards, pulses out from pilings, touching and transforming. What it carries are clues to what it has touched before, what has touched it, what is at this moment not seen... It carries in solution, on its surface, in its movement, the memories and echos of its experience.

Now it is contained between river shores where the tides of the sea and the flows from mountain streams meet; it has become part of the happenings on its shores, a part of the life of the land. Part of what people have done:

shoring up its edges
shipping
building
garbage
sewage

whose remnants, shadows and reflections are absorbed into the changed, unchanging life of water.

(Surface film,
pulse,
flotsam, jetsam,
sparkles,
light and color.)

This transformation gives clues to a world dependent on it. The water remains itself reflecting sky, caressing plants and flowers, mud and relics, and at the same time it leads to a world, familiar, large - containing generations of labor, a harbor, a city of sunlit boats and sunlit buildings.

The Changing River

The big blast of the Liberte' and the echoing boat horns project out of the now:

The rivers that have flowed through time,
the past of masted schooners,
and Indian canoes,
the island as it was

when first touched by the Europeans. Silence, a contrast from the clutch, scratch, bang, roar and whimper of the present.

Out of the silence, delicate accretions of sound and changes of reflections on the water build the landscape from the distant past back to now.

The City's Edge

In the development of the film, this sequence of the many "coves" of the island is the transformation of the river by working and living, pulse and beat, the current growing of the city on its waters.

The river's imprint on the city;
the city's transformation of the river.

The idea of the river and the river-rounded city reaches its climax here. The ocean seems to have lost itself in a metamorphosis from the raw sea to the workings and work of men:

shipbuilding
pier construction
windows of buildings
children at play
switchyards
tugs at work, trains, planes, industrial reflections.

They seem to have crowded out the free pulse of nature. Nevertheless, unlike the interior of the compact city, here nature surrounds everything with its air, light and sky, and puts its constant force against man's most modern tools.

The tug ride, moving by the close shapes of the city, under its bridges to other shores, hints at the "islandness" of the city within the stream of nature.

The Surrounding Shores

The city's connections to its surroundings.

On its edges and on its other shores, the forces of nature erupt in their random, novel, ordered and disordered ways:

in the surprise of sunflowers amid squalor
dumped apples
children's play and revery
lack of straight street lines
water flow
eddies of oil and brilliant
sparkles
people across bridges
bridges across rivers
flow of leaves
pressure of sunlight...

...a release from the tightness, the closed-in feeling behind the walls of the city. The "life" of free growth is placed against the "death" inherent in too much order and compulsion. Vacation from the squared off, treeless

streets,
the cubed rooms
the goings and comings
the telephone ring, typewriter clacks
the bills
the threats of traffic and boss,
the city's work and structures.

The Island City

The events of sunset - the violence of light on city and water - set the island within the stream of nature. The city, which from within seems like a containing world, itself lies within an envelopment of primal forces. In the large frame of sky, rivers, bay and chang-

ing light, its familiarity is torn open; its solidity questionable against the energies of wind, sun, water, plants; its permanence put into process by the agelessness of nature's constant change.

Charles Pratt

Charles Pratt is a photographer. He was born in New York City in 1926 and has lived there all of his life - with interruptions for school, college (Yale '48) and service as an ambulance driver in Italy during the war. After college he worked in the theatre as a stage manager for about ten Broadway shows and then as a producer.

About 1953 he began to photograph, and studied with Sid Grossman, Lisette Model and David Vestal. By 1958 photography had become so important to him that he dropped his theatre work and concentrated on this. Apart from magazine publication, his work has been seen in exhibitions in and around New York, including a one-man show in 1961 at the Image Gallery. He is represented in the Museum of Modern Art collection. At present, his photographs are the result of purposeful wandering around the New Jersey meadows, the Fulton Fish Market and other areas on the edge of New York City as well as the Maine coast. He is completing a book having to do with various aspects of the city's edge.

Here at the Water's Edge is his first film.

He is married to the actress, Julie Follansbee, and they have one child, Mike.

Leo Hurwitz

Leo Hurwitz is one of the pioneers of the American documentary film, noted in connection with such works as Hunger 1932, The Plow That Broke The Plains, Heart of Spain, Native Land, Strange Victory, USA, The Young Fighter, The Museum and the Fury, and the recent Here At the Waters' Edge.

He was a founder of Frontier Films, founder also of the C. B. S. Television News and Special Events programs, and one of the organizers of the Screen Directors International Guild. Director of Film Production for the United Nations, he produced a series of films on many aspects of the U. N. including the controversial There Shall Be Peace. In 1961 he directed the television production of the Eichman Trial in Jerusalem.

A constant experimenter in new film forms, he was called by Michael Capdenoc, French critic, "a cosmic poet of the image". This album, resulting from a happy collaboration with Charles Pratt on the film Here At The Waters' Edge, is the climax of his interest and work on film sound tracks, and represents his first departure into working with sound as an independent entity.

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