



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Edinburgh Research Explorer

From centimetres to seconds

Citation for published version:

Williams, S 2013, 'From centimetres to seconds: Sound design's shift from technical serialism to musically informed performance practice in the 1950s WDR Studio, Cologne' Paper presented at What is Sound Design?, Edinburgh, United Kingdom, 27/11/13 - 29/11/13, .

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Publisher Rights Statement:

© Williams, S. (2013). From centimetres to seconds: Sound design's shift from technical serialism to musically informed performance practice in the 1950s WDR Studio, Cologne. Abstract from What is Sound Design?, Edinburgh, United Kingdom.

General rights

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact openaccess@ed.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



Dialogues Symposium – What is Sound Design?

Dr Sean Williams

University of Edinburgh

sean.williams@ed.ac.uk

AV: projector and audio (standard)

Abstract for 25 minute paper:

From centimetres to seconds: sound design's shift from technical serialism to musically informed performance practice in the 1950s WDR Studio, Cologne

Music made in the West Deutsche Rundfunk Studio for Electronic Music in the 1950s was characterized by a strict serialist determination of all sound parameters. In Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Studie II*, and *Gesang der Jünglinge*, sounds as short as 0.05 seconds were designed and had to be realised with particular frequencies, dynamics and envelope shapes. The time and effort needed to achieve such exact detail was making it impossible to produce longer pieces, so something had to change.

I demonstrate how sound design and realization processes evolved during the production of *Gesang der Jünglinge*, from editing together hundreds of tiny pieces of tape to creating complex structures lasting several seconds using more performative and gestural techniques.

Sean Williams

Biog

Dr. Sean Williams is a Leverhulme Early Career research fellow in the Reid School of Music, University of Edinburgh, researching by practice the live and studio practices of early electronic music. He builds electronic instruments and performs with these in the ensembles *Grey Area* and the *Monosynth Orchestra*.