

THE SOUNDTRACK OF YOUR LIFE

by: Ed Lettner of The Music Studio



Have you ever noticed the daily soundtrack that accompanies your life?

I am not referring to music in the traditional sense, but rather music that exists in the world around us. Nature creates its own symphony of sound, whether it be the singing of birds, the buzzing of insects, the croaking of frogs or the gentle sound of a slow moving stream. These random sounds contribute to

a soundscape that we are often oblivious to as we go about our busy lives, but that enriches our daily experience.

If you take a few moments to really listen to nature's sounds, you will hear melodic patterns in the notes of a songbird and rhythmic patterns in the chattering of squirrels. Outside the city, the mournful and musical howling of a wolf often causes an emotional response in people and the neighing of horses has its own pleasant sequence of musical pitches.

The music around us is not limited to the sounds of nature. There are many examples of man-made sounds that also contribute to our daily soundtrack. The clanging of the streetcar bell and the chimes that sound when the subway doors close have their own melodic notes and rhythms.

One of my early drum teachers pointed out to me that the ring of a telephone had a rhythmic pulse. After that, the ring of a phone became more than simply a mechanical sound. To my ears, it became a source of music.

John Cage's composition "4'33" focused the spotlight on the question of "What is music?" This piece had its premier in 1952 and continues to cause debate today. The "performance" consisted of a pianist sitting at the piano and closing the keyboard lid at the beginning of the piece and then opening it at the end of the piece. Therefore, the piece did not consist of any music in the traditional sense, but to quote John Cage, "You could hear the wind stirring outside during the first movement."

So wherever your daily travels take you, take a moment to listen to the soundtrack of your life.

Ed Lettner owns The Music Studio in Etobicoke, which has offered music instruction since 1990. He is an honours graduate of the Humber College Institute of Technology music program. Ed enjoys listening to the soundtrack of his life on a daily basis. For information about the programs at The Music Studio, please call 416-234-9268, email ed@themusicstudio.ca or visit www.themusicstudio.ca