



# hiSS<sub>vol. 1</sub>

## [Synesthesia Sampler]

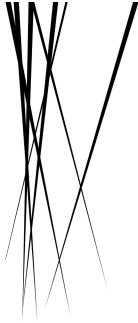
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Artwork by Kirjava [[kirjava.deviantart.com](http://kirjava.deviantart.com)]  
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## TRACKLIST:

- 1A. Volker Hennes - "eromenoi erastai"
- 2A. Chris Mercer - "deification"
- 1B. Ian Helliwell - "Convergence"
- 2B. Jeroen Visser - "The Spanning"

## RELEASE INFO:

Title: 'hiSS vol.1'  
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## **Volker Hennes (GER)**

Volker Hennes (b. 1976) is a sound artist and composer. He studied at the Academy Of Media Arts Cologne from 2000 till 2005 – mainly at the Sound Laboratory, at which he was employed as assistant for two years. Focuses on live-electronics, acousmatic and electroacoustic music, computer music, field recordings, multichannel and interactives works, and installations. Works have been performed and presented internationally; e.g. Metamorphoses / Belgium, ICMC / Copenhagen, Concordia University/ Montreal, Música Viva / Portugal, MANTIS Festival / Manchester, Festival Internacional de Música Electroacústica Ai-Maako / Chile, A & A Elektrokonzert / Argentina, Digital Art Weeks / Zürich, SMC, Inventionen / Berlin. In 2003 he founded All Of Orlov with Robert Vater, since then performing duets and duels. Member of the audiovisual performance and improvisation group Frequenzwechsel.

[[www.earesistible.de](http://www.earesistible.de)]

Title of the piece: **eromenoi erastai**

Duration: 12' 16"

### Working techniques and hardware

I used various feedback techniques and unforeseeable variants for sound generation as well as for time-structuring. As soon as a set feedback breaks down or radically changes its character, I broke the chain. Another connection is created and detaches the previous one. In addition I manually improvised on top of the prior layers – often as solistic elements.

For the realization of the piece I used pieces of analogue equipment - some of them are customized or self-constructed: mixing desk, monophonic synthesizer, step-sequencer, different filter modules (high-pass, low-pass, cross-modulation-filter), various piezoelectric discs, guitar spring reverbs, found metal-spring, transducers, custom hacked amplifier module, circuit-bent radio, parametric EQ, tape machine, guitar pickup, compressor, noise-gate. I used Pro Tools LE via MBox1 for recording and a little mixing. Most of the dynamic gestures were played live to track without later mixing.



### **Chris Mercer (USA)**

Chris Mercer received a B.M. in Composition at the North Carolina School of the Arts in 1995, and a Ph.D. in Composition at the University of California, San Diego in 2003. His principal teachers were Chaya Czernowin and Chinary Ung - instrumental music; and Peter Otto and Roger Reynolds - electronic music. He has held artist residencies at Experimentalstudio SWR, Künstlerhaus Schloss Wiepersdorf, and Sound Traffic Control in San Francisco. His music has been performed by The Nonsense Company, Ensemble Ascolta, Ensemble SurPlus, SONOR Ensemble, and Schlagquartett Köln. His most recent electroacoustic music and research have focused on animal communication, especially non-human primate vocalization, with research residencies at the Duke University Lemur Center, the Wisconsin National Primate Research Center, and the Brookfield Zoo.

His instrumental music involves modified conventional instruments, found objects, and instruments of the composer's own design, in combination with amplification, live electronics, and spatialization. He has taught electronic music at UC San Diego, UC Irvine, and CalArts, and is currently coordinator of the Music Technology program at Northwestern University.

[\[musictechnology.northwestern.edu/Mercer\]](http://musictechnology.northwestern.edu/Mercer)

Title of the piece: **Deification** | for 2-channel tape

Duration: 13' 14"

- 1 Processional :54
- 2 Prelude to Wind Sermon I 1:22
- 3 Wind Sermon I 1:42
- 4 Devotional 2:58
- 5 Testimonial 3:01
- 6 Wind Sermon II 1:13
- 7 Postlude to Wind Sermon II :50
- 8 Recessional :35



Deification was produced using a large collection of cassette decks and other consumer electronics - Radio Shack equalizer, handheld tape recorders, etc. The sounds were assembled, edited, and mixed entirely on consumer-grade cassette decks; only the mastering phase (minimal compression and EQ) was handled digitally. All mixing was performed directly to cassette; no mixing board was used.

The primary source material is a group of evangelical preachers (and related programming) recorded from television and radio broadcasts in western North Carolina. The multi-movement form of the piece is loosely based on a typical Southern Baptist church service. The use of consumer-grade analog equipment is an attempt to deal with the lo-fi source materials —radio and TV broadcasts— on their own sonic and cultural terms and in ways that merge with and enhance the broadcast character of the original recordings.

Where musical instruments appear, they too are heard through this lo-tech filter, so to speak—a very old recording of an organ made on a handheld tape machine; oboe and acoustic guitar recorded with headphones; electric guitar and Casio synthesizer overdriving a tape deck's mic input.

Cassette production techniques include:

- Editing via live-to-tape use of pause button (and, where applicable, incorporating the sonic features of the button);
- chorusing and phasing techniques derived from manually mixing multiple copies of material;
- live-to-tape manipulation of tape reels;
- live-to-tape mixdown of multiple layers of material, involving timed live tape-switching on multiple decks simultaneously;
- stereo imaging achieved via live-to-tape manipulation of cassette deck pan knobs during mixdown.



### **Ian Helliwell (UK)**

Since the start of the 1990s Ian Helliwell has been making films and building and modifying 9v circuitry, developing his unique series of Hellitron tone generators, which are used for live performance and for the soundtracks to over 50 of his experimental super 8 shorts. In 2007 he designed and built an analogue synth, the Hellisizer 2000, and since 2008 he has been producing The Tone Generation, his ongoing radio series which explores the early development of electronic music. In 2010 several of his abstract super 8 films have been included in a major retrospective of direct animation - Celluloid: The Cameraless Film at the Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt.

[\[ianhelliwell.co.uk\]](http://ianhelliwell.co.uk)

Title of the piece: **Convergence**

Duration: 14' 02"

#### Equipment used:

- Hellitrons 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 13 & 17
- Hellitrem & Helliecho 2
- Violin
- Drums and percussion
- Microphone
- Tascam 4 track recorder

Convergence was originally created to fill a 15 minute slot in the schedule of London's Resonance FM, and presented an opportunity to work on a longer duration, and with a violin player in conjunction with electronic sounds.



The violin was recorded first, with the player Carrie Topley, making sounds and improvising while being recorded direct to 4 track. I made suggestions as she played, and treated the sounds by plugging a microphone into 1 of my customised modulating devices. All this was done spontaneously in 1 very short session, taped on 2 of the 4 available tracks. The least successful sections were erased, and other passages were bounced across onto an adjacent track, using the recorder's tone controls to simulate a wah wah effect.

Previously I had captured drum sounds onto a portable recorder with an array of percussion instruments, and some of these were transferred onto the 4 track master to mesh with the violin and electronics. The electronic sounds were all created with my self-built Hellitron generators, wired together in a variety of configurations, to construct the main body of the piece and integrate the different sections of violin.

The Hellitrons are simple tone generating circuits which I have been constructing since the early 1990s. They have various controls – knobs and switches which can be operated during recording, allowing for the essential physical interaction between player and machine. Chance elements were integral to the composition – unplanned events that occur when a dial is turned or a particular wiring together of Hellitrons is happened upon.

Unlike the violin session, recording with a variety of different generators lasted for several weeks in order to gradually build up the layers of electronics. Often the Hellitrons were used in a spontaneous way – searching intuitively for sounds that caught the ear and fired my enthusiasm; other times specific tones were sought to fit in certain passages and work with sequences already recorded.

The final important consideration in *Convergence* was the stereo positioning and movement of sounds during the recording and mixing. Panning was carried out manually with the 4 track potentiometers after several trial mixes.



## **Jeroen Visser (CH)**

Jeroen Visser (1961) is a musician and a composer living in Zürich, Switzerland. His primary instrument is classical piano, and he is also a self-taught woodwinds player. After his study of Sonology in Utrecht, being taught by a.o. G.M. Koenig, J. Vink, and S. Tempelaars, he worked as musician and sound engineer. From 1988-1992 he worked as music technologist at the Sweelinck Electronic Studio in Amsterdam, NL.

After his relocation to Zürich in 1993, he has been composing music for groups and theatre, where he was also responsible, as musical director, for productions, and making musical or sound installations. Recent musical activities, apart from electro-acoustic compositions, include studying ethiopian music, and playing music which investigates the combination of improvisation and musique concrete.

[\[121234.net\]](http://121234.net)

Title of the piece: **The Spanning**

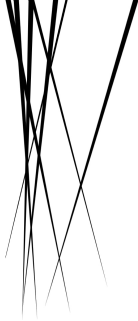
Duration: 13' 41"

### Intro:

The Spanning was made in 2007 on an artist in residence invitation of Worm in Rotterdam NL. The purpose of this invitation was to have a composer with a sonological background to compose a piece in the known CEM-studio, now hosted in the Worm buildings in Rotterdam.

The CEM studio operates with only analog synthesis systems, first built around an ARP 2500. Later it was complemented with a Serge modular system, an EMS VCS3 as well as a Korg MS20, of which I only used the EMS. As capturing mixer, a Tascam analog board was used, and external FX consisted of some distortion pedals.

The recording medium was a Metric Halo 2882 for capturing, and mixing was done in Cubase with all individual channels summed on an external buss, using a spring reverb for layering. The Spanning was premiered in Worm (nov 2007) in a special adaptation for the '192 Loudspeakers', a wavefield system developed to enable a holosonic sound projection. It had it's radio premiere on Dutch National Radio VPRO in dec 2008.



### Object:

The Spanning is a piece which hinges on the irregularities in rhythm, tuning and timbre. As analog equipment has interesting phenomena - temperature influencing tuning, bad contacts leading to distortion etc. - the idea sprung to mind to exploit these 'features' and superimpose them to rhythm and timbre. As irregularity is also one of the characteristics of humans, it became an interesting idea to add some physicality in the piece too. Searching for a medium which could be used electrically as well as physically, and which produces sound under irregular human muscle tension, a piano string was chosen. An instrument was self-fabricated, the 'long string instrument' (explained under Methods). Using this instrument, a connection between muscular- and electrical-power was established.

The different sequences seek to expose the beautiful spreading of reverberating overtones, with the strings used as 'thump' generator. The small-accent sequenced parts used stereo imaging, with the pulsing electronic rhythmical structures, the static state mood after the turning point at around 5 minutes in the piece, the manually tuned long revolving glissandi, and the long crescendo towards the end of the piece. Much care was taken to achieve an interesting stereo image, as well as foreground/background layering using the spring reverb. Patterns were then combined in an associative manner.

### Methods:

The Spanning was composed bottom-up, first spending some days gathering material with the general idea in mind. The arrangement and mix were done in three days. Little artefacts like clicks of the sequencer were not edited out but kept as character.

The ARP 2500 was set up for some tuned sequences (using an 'anchihoye' (ethiopian) pentatonic scale), and used triggers and EOB pulses to create stereo-effects. The Serge Modular was used for the low rhythmic passages, using only VCO's as LFO and for FM. The more complex 'tuned' sounds were also made with the Serge, where a 16 step sequencer was driven by two detuned triggers on set/reset with the different voltage outputs driving a FM-VCO and/or FM-VCF to create high frequency irregular patterns. Also from the Serge were the manually tuned long glissandi. There is a distorted sequenced part near the end which was made again with the ARP2500.

For the acoustic string parts, a self-made instrument consisting of long unwound piano strings of different lengths (3-8 meters) was used. This was held over a piezo pickup and recorded.

The instrument is played by attaching one side of the instrument to a wall, and by pulling the strings at the other side into tension with handles, to produce the unmistakable sound. Afterwards, the recorded sound was used straight, or pitched down one or two octaves using half speed tape technique - this makes for the cluster of strings in the beginning. All gathered material was then ordered and arranged in Cubase, and mixed on an external summing buss.



**This label is intended as a repository of electroacoustic works.** The main goal is to retrieve the late Renaissance praxis of **Ricercare** – devised as an exploration of a technical device by playing it and subverting it in different ways. So this kind of **Musica Ricercata** should be effected by individual approaches with sound materials of any kind - samples, electronic devices, pure sine generators, transducers and so on. The local and momentary gesture generates relational sequenced processes, that define the sonic path from start to end. These recordings are intended as a document or **Simulacra** of a solo or collective performance, but not as the performance itself, (which is affected by causality relationships and other environmental and statistical phenomena). The Project is maintained and supervised by **U.S.O. Project** in collaboration with many other audio-visual artists.

[www.synesthesiarecordings.com](http://www.synesthesiarecordings.com)

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