

Afterwords: Pauline Oliveros

*Featuring reflections and observations from:
Annea Lockwood, composer and long-time friend,
Irene Revell, curator, writer and researcher,
Louise Gray, writer, and teacher of Sound Arts,
Maria Chávez, sound artist, abstract turntablist and DJ,
Stephanie Loveless, Director of the Center for Deep Listening,*

Including archive courtesy of the Oral History of American Music (1983 and 1998 interviews) at Yale University, KPFA interviews (1972 and 1985) from the Other Minds archive, plus BBC interviews (1993, 2009, 2012, 2016).

R3 INTRO

Now on BBC Radio 3: the return of our occasional series, AFTERWORDS – in which we revisit the lives and work of acclaimed musicians, in their own words, through archive interviews and recordings. This week: the American composer, accordionist, and “deep listening” pioneer, PAULINE OLIVEROS.

00:00

PAULINE OPENING: LISTENING IS MYSTERIOUS

BBC – MUSIC MATTERS

PAULINE OLIVEROS: First of all, listening is rather mysterious. You know, we know a lot about hearing, hearing can be measured, we know the physics of the ear and all of that, but we don't know much about listening. And so, as I'm talking to you, I have no idea how you're processing what I'm saying. We're engaged with one another, since we're in a situation where it's really rather important that you do listen to me, but sometimes interviewers don't listen. In other words, they don't listen to me, they're listening to what they're gonna say next, or what they want to accomplish during the interview. All of these kinds of things, dynamics, are going on.

MUSIC: The Receptive – Pauline Oliveros

ALBUM: The Well and The Gentle

LABEL: Important Records

CAT NO: IMPREC 491 (793447545912)

TRACK 4: The Receptive (16'00")

ARTIST: Pauline Oliveros

COMPOSER: Pauline Oliveros

PUBLISHER: Tuhtah Publishing

00:45

CONTRIBUTORS – SHORT DESCRIPTIONS OF PAULINE

LOUISE GRAY: Pauline Oliveros simply wanted people to listen. That sounds like a very simple statement, but it truly isn't.

ANNEA LOCKWOOD: A terrific listener. She really listened if you wanted to communicate something, she really focused.

IRENE REVELL: A composer, an artist, a thinker, whose life work was around opening up listening as an anti-hierarchical form of transformation for everyone!

STEPHANIE LOVELESS: She was a force, you know? A light force, a playful force...

MARIA CHÁVEZ: ...she was always very calm, supportive, smart, really smart, but with simplicity. Really sharp.

ANNEA: She is an amazing example of so many possibilities.

LOUISE: Quite simply, she's one of the most important composers of the 20th century.

MUSIC OUT

01:50

INTERVIEW SETUPS

VIVIAN: *For identification, this is Vivian Perlis, and I'm interviewing Pauline Oliveros today. And I think it's the 1st of February, 1983, a lovely spring day in New Haven, Connecticut...*

CHARLES: *It's good to have Pauline Oliveros here today, because this was the site of many of her exploits during the 50s and 60s, and although she's now based in New York...*

TOM: *...the American musician Pauline Oliveros is a composer, accordionist, improviser, and she's one of the most important presences, spirits and bodies of experimental and avant-garde music...*

LIBBY: *...today is June, June 8, 1998 right? I'm Libby Van Cleve. I'm speaking to Pauline Oliveros in her home in Kingston, New York, and we're doing this interview for the oral history American music project. Thank you very much for making some time for us today...*

ROBERT: *This is Robert Worby interviewing Pauline Oliveros at Dartington College of Arts on Saturday, the 25th of July 2009. Pauline, what are your concerns now, as a composer, what is it that you're trying to do?*

PAULINE: *Well, um, I'm trying to remain open and spontaneous in what I do. Things are changing very rapidly, and I don't have any – I don't have a set agenda. I work collaboratively, often, and do what I call "distributed composition". That means that people take part creatively in work. So maybe my concern is finding ways to make that possible, make it open.*

03:12

EARLY INTEREST IN SOUNDS – PARENTS' VOICES – CRYSTAL RADIO – TEXAS CICADAS

VIVIAN: *Pauline! (laughs)... I'd like to go back a little bit with you, because it must be that your interest in sounds, natural sounds, started early in your life.*

PO: *Indeed. Yes, I can't remember when I wasn't interested in sounds.*

VP: *You said, you remember very far back? That amazes me. Yeah, you were about two or three years old?*

PO: Yes, I remember that, and I remember particularly things like riding in the car with my parents, for instance, maybe in the back seat, listening to the sound of the motor, and listening to the sounds of my parents' voices being modulated by the motor so that the voice sounded all grainy and fluttery.

FX: CAR JOURNEY

PO: Uh, listening to my grandfather tune his crystal radio, listening to my father tune his short-wave radio, listening to the whistles and pops and static, and all of the sounds that one could hear on the radio, everything from the, I mean, I was always fascinated with the in-between sounds and the stations just tuning in-between. I love that...

FX: RADIO TUNING

PO: But I also was very, very interested in the sounds around me. We lived in the country, outside of Houston, Texas, and that's low land, and it's full of insects. And I still love to go and listen to the cicadas in the, going down the street. The trees will be full of them on either side, and it's a marvellous sound, bird sounds, all of those sounds were very important to me, growing up.

FX: CICADAS

I LIVED IN A MUSICAL HOUSEHOLD... MOTHER & GRANDMOTHER

BBC R4 – THE LISTENERS (2016)

PAULINE: I lived in a musical household, where my mother and my grandmother were teaching piano lessons every day. My grandfather was an amateur musician, he was an attorney, but he played cello and other stringed instruments, and at times the family would get together and play together. I also was fascinated to listen to my mother and my grandmother, when there were two pianos in the house – one piano in one room, and the other in another – when they would try to play piano duets with two pianos. So, they would be craning their necks back and forth (laughs) to see one another from the other room! And I found that kind of fascinating.

FX: PIANO DUET

06:04

ANNEA: LOVELY TO HEAR HER VOICE AGAIN

ANNEA: It's just lovely to be hearing that Texas accent (laughs) once again! Oh, what a treat to hear her voice.

ANNEA BEST INTRO

ANNEA: I'm Annea Lockwood. I'm a composer from Aotearoa, New Zealand, living for a long time in the US, and grateful to have been a friend of Pauline's.

<1972 KPFA BROADCAST>

CHARLES AMIRKHANIAN on KPFA: I think we'll begin by letting Pauline and Anna talk to each other, they've just met for the first time this night. I'd like to get in on what two composers talk about when they get together...

ANNEA: There we were meeting for the first time in person, live on KPFA!

<1972 KPFA BROADCAST>

PAULINE: Anna, the first thing I'd like to do is to thank Allen Strange for encouraging us to correspond. And the next thing I'd like to do is to tell you that, since January 1st, 1972, I've had a series of dreams about you, or, featuring you! (laughs)

RESPONDING TO 1972 KPFA CLIP – PAULINE DREAMS

ANNEA: Obviously I was in the States, it was, I think '72? I was in the States and intent on meeting Pauline in person, of course. So... we did it live, which was sort of... I gulped! You know, this was, for me, a hugely important meeting! (laughs)

<1972 KPFA BROADCAST>

PAULINE: This one is on May 1st, 1972. "We are to visit Anna Lockwood in London. I arrive first, by train. Her house is two streets from the train station. I find the door, and ring. Anna opens the door, slowly and momentarily. She has black hair, pulled back, and a red blouse. Her eyes are very intense. I go in..."

1972: THIS WASN'T OUR FIRST ENCOUNTER – SO WE COULD DIVE STRAIGHT IN!

ANNEA: We had been writing quite personally to each other about our lives and about our sound, sonic passions, for well over a year by then. And so, we already knew each other...

<1972 KPFA BROADCAST>

ANNA: ...I thought, opening a door "momentously"! Except that, except that – the first, well, the first time we meet was tonight! And the first time we meet is, for me, very momentous!

PAULINE: ...well, for me the same...

ANNA: ...so it would have been!

ANNEA: ...so it wasn't surprising that we were able to dive into the meat of what we were preoccupied with, right away. We were already there.

<1972 KPFA BROADCAST>

PAULINE: I wanted to go and collect some sounds...

ANNA: ...yeah...

PAULINE: ...for a project that I was going to do. We took a boat up the river, it was a boat that was powered by bamboo poles...

ANNEA: It was like direct nourishment to be able to talk with Pauline, who was absolutely clear cut, about how much of a space we could make for ourselves, what sort of a space, and how we could help one another. She enriched our sense of community, both woman to woman, so to speak, but also just experimentalist to experimentalist, through both and all genders, you know?!

<1972 KPFA BROADCAST>

ANNA: ...always, I used to figure that that was the same process as people always wanting to recognise what they were listening to, and to identify things, and catalogue them that way. And I used to think that maybe, when people hear a fresh sound, their whole impetus at first is to figure out what's making it, where it's happening. The orientation I guess is a reflex. But – having identified it, they can then push it out of the way....

PAULINE: ...toss it aside...

ANNA: ...and, not have to get involved or affected by it at all...

PAULINE: ...or identify with the sound...

ANNA: Yeah, or to let it influence them at all. Maybe it's a defence...

PAULINE: ...mmm, yes...

PAULINE CREATED HER OWN PATH

ANNEA: Pauline, as a woman in experimental music, a woman with very strong, clear ideas, was having to create her own path. She found a world, that was a world in which she could flourish.

09:52

AGED 16 – WANTED TO BE COMPOSER – WHO WOULD TAKE THAT SERIOUSLY?

PAULINE: *When I was about 16, I decided I wanted to be a composer, and I did – that decision came, I don't know where it came from, until I realized that my mother had done some composing. She had played for a modern dance class, and had started to make up some pieces, and I think that was a cue for me. But... who would take that seriously? A 16-year-old saying, I'm going to be a composer.*

DEEP LISTENING GOES FURTHER THAN JOHN CAGE'S 4'33"

LOUISE: People often think about John Cage and his composition 4'33", as the revolutionary piece of 20th century music. I would say that Oliveros's practice of Deep Listening goes far further than that, and in numerous radical directions.

LOUISE INTRO

LOUISE: My name is Louise Gray. I'm a writer for The Wire magazine, and I teach Sound Arts at the University of the Arts London.

I FIRST HEARD HER MUSIC IN 1980s – DEEP LISTENING BAND...

I first heard Pauline Oliveros's music sometime in the mid 80s, and this was the Deep Listening album that she made with Stuart Dempster and Paniotas. And – there's a pun, an intentional pun, in the name of this album, because it was recorded, you know, so many feet underground in a disused cistern at Fort Warden in Washington State... **(CROSSFADES INTO PAULINE TALKING)**

PAULINE EXPLAINS DEEP LISTENING ALBUM RECORDING

BBC R4 THE LISTENERS

PAULINE: *(laughs) My very lifelong friend Stuart Dempster, who plays trombone and didgeridoo, invited me to go to Fort Warden, in Washington state, where there is an empty cistern, that used to be the water supply for the army. In order to access this cistern, you had to go through a manhole-sized opening, down a 14-foot ladder. So, we went there, took our instruments... and as an afterthought took a recording engineer as well. So, we were down in the cistern, and the cistern has a 45 second reverberation time. So, when you play a note, a sound, it sits there for 45 seconds. So, we started playing, we had no discussion, no idea about what we were going to do at all. And we just learned to listen and play in that environment. And five hours later, we came out, we went home, and listened to the recordings, and decided we had an album. And then we had to name it. And so I said, how about 'Deep Listening'?! (chuckles) Then we decided that we were the "Deep Listening Band". And so, the Deep Listening Band has been playing and recording ever since. So that was 1988. By 1991 I thought, gee, Deep Listening, that sort of really explains what it is that I've been trying to do! So I was invited to do a retreat in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in New Mexico, at a little retreat centre. And so, I decided I'll call it the "Deep Listening Retreat". And twenty people came. And that's how it got started, "Deep Listening"! (chuckles) So we practised all kinds of ways of listening, that week. And I'm still investigating and learning, what is "Deep Listening".*

MUSIC: IONE (from Deep Listening album, 1988)

ALBUM: Deep Listening

LABEL: New Albion

CAT NO: NA 022

TRACK 3: IONE (17'40")

ARTIST: Pauline Oliveros / Stuart Dempster / Panaiotis

COMPOSER: Pauline Oliveros / Stuart Dempster / Panaiotis

PUBLISHER: Deep Listening Publications

13:26

DEEP LISTENING DEFINED ... HOSPITAL SOUNDS NOW

LOUISE: Deep Listening, Oliveros defined as "listening to all things at all times to the best of her ability". Which meant, in other words, that your ears were wide open to listening. And you didn't necessarily rate what you were listening as one thing was more important than another, but your ears were just open. And so, you know, I am sitting in a hospital, talking now, and I'm aware that there's a regular bleep that comes from one of the machines. It's somewhere down the hall. I'm aware of it in its rhythmical nature. I'm aware of its tone. And it's just there, in the same way as the rustle is, that I make when I move in my chair, for example.

HOSPITAL ATMOS

HOSPITAL AUDITORY ENVIRONMENT

LOUISE: Listening helps me understand the rhythm of the day. It helps me understand the architecture of the hospital, and after one has spent a bit of time here, it becomes oddly comforting. There's a kind of regularity. I begin to own it, if you like, as my own sonic space.

HOSPITAL ATMOS

RIGOROUS CLASSICAL TRADITION... ACCORDION VIRTUOSO

LOUISE: Oliveros herself came out of a rigorous classical tradition. She was working from a basis of Western classical music, and a deep, deep understanding of that. You know, she was a multi-instrumentalist. She was a virtuoso in terms of playing the accordion, but also extending the accordion, and treating her instrument, in a Cagean sense, to extend its possibilities.

MUSIC: PAULINE PERFORMING LIVE ACCORDION "Rattlesnake Mountain" ON KPFA, 1985

ANNEA: Pauline loved the accordion, and God was she magnificent! I mean, she created the most beautiful, long, shifting textures, drones... gorgeous. She transformed the accordion, for sure. She transformed the accordion tradition!

<1985 KPFA BROADCAST – with audience>

PAULINE: (laughs) It's hard being an accordion player in this culture, hmm! (audience laughter) ... I mean, it's nice to find a few people who are interested! (laughs) Because when people ask me what I play, you know, I'm introduced somewhere in some evening, and "oh, what do you play? You're a musician, what do you play?" And I say, "I play the accordion". (chuckles) And, I mean the reaction is always – I can, I can tell what people are thinking. Their eyes roll around in their head... (audience laughter)... and they say, "the accordion!" (laughter) And it's really, very difficult for people to put it together! (laughs)

16:31

ACCORDION > FEMINIST > LESBIAN

LOUISE: Oliveros's chosen instrument, she always defined as an "outsider" instrument, which incidentally, sort of fitted very well with who she was. She was an early feminist. She was an out lesbian, in the days when it was really, really difficult to put anything about sexuality in the open. She was brave, in that.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE – SHORT, SOLID, LESBIAN... FUNNY, HUGGER, ALERT, RESPONSIVE

ANNEA: So when I call her physical being into mind, I call up a fairly short, stocky, very solid body, in something like jeans, belted, with a shirt. Yes! (laughs) lesbian for sure! Absolutely, essential part of her identity. Erm... funny! Oh, yeah, I mean, great laugh lines! A good hugger. (laughs) Gave great hugs! But also, a sense of her as somebody self-contained. And... alert, enormously alert. So her eyes responded, taking in, she was always taking in everything, yeah.

IRENE SELF-INTRO

IRENE: I'm Irene Revell. I'm a researcher and curator, and I have a long-standing interest in sound and listening, and their intersections with feminisms and other allied politics. With Sarah Shin, I co-edited an anthology book project called 'Bodies of Sound: Becoming A Feminist Ear', which takes as its starting point precisely Oliveros's interest in those themes.

PAPER RUSTLING FX

18:14

PAULINE LETTER TO KATE MILLETT – "WOMEN'S MUSIC" – HER APPROACH WAS MUCH MORE RADICAL

So this is Pauline Oliveros writing a sort of riposte to Kate Millett, who's one of the key figures in the Women's Movement in the US in the late 60s, early 70s. And this is a letter from 1973, where Kate Millett has invited Pauline Oliveros to perform at the very first so called "women's music festival" that was about to take place. And so, Pauline Oliveros says: "Is it enough to borrow sexist forms, and impose feminist words? I'm not sure at all that it is safe to borrow forms which continue a sexist message, such as rock, rhythm and blues, sonatas, symphonies, etc. Maybe we have to search around and find something else. Maybe we have to give up on what we know and love..." So, here she's talking about the work that she was already doing with the Women's Ensemble in San Diego, the sort of emergence of all of this thinking around "sonic awareness", the Sonic Meditations that was also folded in with her burgeoning interest in feminism, anti-war movement, and bringing all of this together into a sort of, what she understood as, a feminist philosophy of music, which somehow was at odds with this, I guess, in a way, basic idea of women's music, where Oliveros's approach was so much more radical, completely rethinking the infrastructure, collapsing the roles of composer, performer, audience, into these, intimate group listening situations, essentially.

19:55

SONIC MEDITATIONS ... FEMINIST ACTIVITY, ANTI-WAR... PEOPLE THOUGHT I WAS WEIRD!

PAULINE: *I was working with a group of women, and by 1970 had kind of articulated what I call Sonic Meditations. To do explorations as support to one another, and to find relationship to community at the time, and it was in relationship to feminist activity.*

IRENE: The Sonic Meditations... are text instruction scores. Sometimes Oliveros has spoken about the influence of Yoko Ono on her work. And I think for me, there's a very clear connection between Yoko Ono's event scores of a decade earlier, that have these extremely poetic and concise formulations that instruct something. So they're working in that lineage.

LOUISE: Each Sonic Meditation, there are approximately 25 or 30 of them – she added to them as time went on – are instructions about simply making a tone, and listening to a tone, listening to your partner's tone, and singing back to it. They're as simple as that. But... there's a gentleness and quietness to them, which runs at antithesis to the noise of American society at that time. She, Oliveros, was traumatized by the Vietnam War, and in a way, this was her contribution to a culture that was not war-like. It said, "Listen", basically it was saying, "listen to one another. If you listen to one another and you extend that into the field of politics, then perhaps you won't try to kill each other." Peace was the ethical foundation of them.

PAULINE: I had begun to think about all of those ideas, from my own childhood, from the time I was conscious, and I always felt that the world was going in a different direction than I! (laughs), until the ideas of the 60s emerged. And then I began to feel, you know, a sense of belonging that I had never felt before. So those Sonic Meditations were structures that reflected feminist thought, which form the basis of the work that I continue to do, now. But it was not recognizable at that time. You know? People thought I was pretty weird! (laughs) Because I was trying to get a kind of "community music" happening, and to do simple structures that gave people who had no musical training a chance to participate in the work.

STEPHANIE: She designed her Sonic Meditation text score exercises for listening, specifically so that they would be as inclusive as possible. No instruments needed, no training needed. Bring yourself as you are. Music is for you too. And when we participate in sonic expression together, and listen to and amplify each other's voices, she believed that healing was possible.

23:25

STEPHANIE SELF-INTRO

STEPHANIE: I'm Stephanie Loveless, I am the Director of the Center for Deep Listening, and I'm also a sound artist, media artist and sound scholar.

I NEVER HEARD HER NAME... GOOGLED HER... ATTENDED RETREATS... IT CHANGED MY LIFE

STEPHANIE: I minored in experimental sonic practices, and I never heard her name. And after my undergrad, when I was working, I don't remember what Google search I was doing in the early 2000s but I fell upon her, and discovered that there was this woman who was a composer, who was also working with movement, and incorporating dream awareness and listening in dreams, and she was running these retreats! And I could apply and go! And... it's not overstating it to say that it changed the course of my life, the way that I thought about my creative sonic practice, in relation to my ways of being in the world. This was really revolutionary for me, in terms of what it was possible to do as a composer.

MUSIC: Pauline Oliveros: I of IV (excerpt)

ALBUM: Pauline Oliveros - Electronic Works 1965 + 1966

LABEL: Paradigm Discs

CAT NO: PD 04

TRACK 1: I of IV (25'29")

ARTIST: Pauline Oliveros

COMP: Pauline Oliveros

PUB: Deep Listening Publications / Smith Publications

24:50

HOW HAVE THINGS CHANGED FOR YOUNGER FEMALE COMPOSERS TODAY? --- EQUITY

ROBERT: How do you think things have changed for younger female composers today? How are things different for them now, in the 21st century, than they were in the 1950s, 50, 60 years ago?

PAULINE: They can see more models.

ROBERT: They have more role models?

PAULINE: Role models. They can see more...

ROBERT: There are more women composing?...

PAULINE: There are more women out there, doing many, many things. But women are not enrolling in composition classes.

ROBERT: Why not?

PAULINE: They don't see a future for themselves.

ROBERT: Why not?

PAULINE: Because they see a male professor. So they don't see a role for themselves as a professor...

ROBERT: They see male conductors. They see male composers...

PAULINE: Well, so that's what they see. So they decide to become a musicologist, or they'll take theory class, but they don't take composition.

ROBERT: How is that going to change?

PAULINE: Well, it has to – what, the change that is needed has to start from grassroots beginnings. Music teachers anywhere need to provide their students with repertoire which is at least fifty percent composed by women, you know?! (laughs) I mean, that's a starting place, it's...

ROBERT: So, are you advocating positive discrimination in favour of women?

PAULINE: Well, it's not discrimination. It's bringing things into balance, into equity. But it has to be taken up by the music teachers. And also by the publishers, radio broadcasters, such as yourself, any institution, whatever, that deals with music, needs to redress the balance. And audiences! Audiences have to go to concerts and then complain to the management! Why is it not balanced? So, every single person who is dealing with music has a role in making the change. And if that responsibility is not taken, then it's going to take a longer, much longer time.

INCLUSIVITY: SHE LIFTED OTHERS' VOICES, VERY GENEROUS... SONIC MEDITATIONS AS INCLUSIVE AS POSSIBLE

STEPHANIE: She really did use her position of relative power to lift others' voices. She was a huge supporter of younger artists. So, I have this position now where I'm the Director of the Center for Deep Listening, and so people will sometimes come excitedly to talk to me about their experiences with Pauline. And, the number of times that somebody says, "you know, I just like, I sent her like a message, and she wrote back like immediately! And like, gave me advice, and, you know, it changed my life! And then we kept up a correspondence for the next 10 years!" And... she was like this for so many people. She was really a mentor for countless, countless people.

27:30

MARIA SELF INTRO

My name is Maria Chávez. I'm a conceptual sound artist, abstract turntablist and DJ. My relationship with Pauline Oliveros was one of a "life mentor" friendship.

PAULINE TOLD ME I WAS GOOD – I FELT HER "SENSE OF SAFETY", HER SUPPORT

MARIA: I think when we first connected, when we first met, she saw me perform in downtown Houston. And afterwards she told me, she was like, "This is really good, like, you're really good". And I was so young still at the time, and I hadn't been around anyone that was supportive. And I actually wrote an essay about "Pauline's sense of safety", that's what I called it. And I think she sensed that I've never been safe, that I had never been in a safe place, and she provided that with her words,

with her support. And that really meant a lot to me, because if you listen back to some of her lectures from when she was alive, especially the last few years of her life, she normally talks about, mentions my work, along with many other young sound artists that identify as female, and I really appreciated that thought. Because I didn't ask her to do it, you know, she did it on her own.

TATE 2012 AUDIO (permission granted by Irene)

from <https://hernoise.org/her-noise-feminisms-the-sonic/#oliveros-talk>

PAULINE: ...I met Maria Chávez in my hometown, Houston, Texas. She was performing with her turntable in one of my pieces, in the youth ensemble led by David Dove. Her artistry developed considerably...

IRENE: She just had, has this very powerful presence, very powerful physical presence, which you can hear. But really in person, more so of you know, absolute calm and poise, but power and yeah, as I said, taking that power in order to share it and diffuse it with others.

TATE 2012 AUDIO

PAULINE: ...There are many more women in creative music. Composers who challenge who can be a composer, what materials can be used for composition, where performances can take place, and who can participate. They are spreading creative spirit, and their noise, into the world. And thus, are changing the world. These women will be in the archives of the future.

29:36

HER ENERGY WAS EXTRAORDINARY – GIDDY UP ANECDOTE – INCREDIBLE ENERGY!

LOUISE: She was absolutely indefatigable in getting the message out. Her energy was extraordinary. She literally circled the globe, giving lectures, doing new commissions, conducting pieces, teaching Deep Listening workshops...

LOUISE: I remember being in Oslo at an all-day workshop that she was running. And there were maybe 20, 25 of us? You know, she explained a little bit about what she meant about Deep Listening, and then she said, "right, we're going to do some exercises". And so she made everyone jump up and do some breathing exercises, and then some various kind of warm up body exercises. They might be just swinging your arms around, and just slapping your body, and resounding your body. And then she just said, "now, giddy up!" And she started leaping around like she was riding a horse! And... it was extraordinary! It was like she was a five-year-old pretending to be a pony, galloping up and down. And she, the energy she brought to this "giddy up" dance was just incredible! And she had the whole, all of us on the floor, with laughing! She had immense physical energy, incredible charisma.

FX: JUMPING IN A BIG HALL

I MISS HER SENSE OF HUMOUR – NOT TOO SELF-IMPORTANT

ANNEA: I miss her sense of humour. Which helped alleviate our tendency to take ourselves too seriously, to be too self-important, to be too didactic, especially. I mean, that sense of humour was a levelling. Yeah, we need it! We... I miss it!

(CHANGE OF MOOD – small pause here)

31:15

ENCOUNTERING SEXISM – IT MADE ME ANGRY, IT WAS LIMITING

LIBBY: I wonder... there has to have been moments of anger or resentment, or times where you've hit up against things that are not so comfortable. Do you want to address that at all?

PAULINE: Well, best I can. I mean, I've learned a great deal in this odyssey of 45 years of being a composer and so on. In the early days in San Francisco, when I was looking for a teacher, a mentor, it was very difficult to find that person. And I encountered some very sexist teachers, who gave the impression that my coming to them as a female, you know, that gender, was really stupid. And of course, I didn't pursue those teachers at all. That kind of attitude, I didn't need. I mean, it did – sexism did make me angry. It made me very angry, and it was very limiting.

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT YOU'RE A WOMAN?

LIBBY: How important do you think it is that you are a woman? I mean, is that? Is it possible that you could have...

PAULINE: Incarnated as a man?! (laughs)

LIBBY: ...yeah well, it seems to me, on an intuitive level, that your music is so feminine...

PAULINE: Well, I don't really know. I mean, if my music is experienced as feminine, well, that's fine with me, except that I'm not... it's not a necessarily an intention. Because it's the insistence on the freedom to express myself as I need to. Not as someone else says I have to.

RESPONDING TO 'GENDER' CLIP – FEMINIST NOT FEMININE

STEPHANIE: Mm. You know, I experience her work as feminist, which is not the same as feminine. But it also occurs to me that in a masculinist world that a musical expression that is, you know, to use her words "balanced", would be perceived as "feminine".

33:13

HOW IMPORTANT THAT SHE WAS A WOMAN? – SHE WANTED TO BE SEEN AS HUMAN, SOUND HAS NO GENDER

LOUISE: How important is it that she was a woman? Certainly, when she was a young woman working in the Tape Music Center, but she always said that men have a way of talking about technology that excludes women. They can't help it. It just is. That is why she would go into the studios, late at night and small hours in the morning, and tinker around with the stuff to find out, what's it, how she could make music. Because she didn't want someone coming and saying, "oh, this plug goes there, that plug goes there". She was, so she was fighting against that sort of basic levels of gendered education. She... the Feminist Ensemble was very much set up, you might say, against the military machine which was male, but, in later life it was more important, I think to her, that she was human, and seen as human, and that sound had no gender.

PAULINE: More than anything, I like the notion of transcending gender issues to higher kind of purpose, to achieving forms that are integrating for all, for everyone, rather than promoting and encouraging exclusivity in a negative way.

SHE WAS SO AHEAD OF HER TIME, WE ARE STILL JUST CATCHING UP

MARIA: Even with her writings, early writings in the 70s, that was ahead of its time. You know, obviously her electronic works as well, like in the 50s, being so ahead of her time then. And then, figuring out how to allow physically disabled individuals to still perform, by using computer technology, like, having deaf people compose, trying to invent music instruments for dolphins, for aquatic fish, you know, like, it's so important. But it must have been so frustrating to be ten, twenty years ahead, and then 10 years later, they're doing what you've already been doing, and calling themselves the change! (laughs) She's like, "I literally sent sound to the moon, like you guys need to catch up!" You know?! I feel like we're still slowly catching up.

MUSIC: Poem of Change – Pauline Oliveros

ALBUM: Lesbian American Composers
LABEL: Composers Recordings Inc.
CAT NO: CRI CD 780
TRACK 1: Poem Of Change (10'28")
ARTIST: Pauline Oliveros
COMP: Pauline Oliveros
PUB: Deep Listening Publications

PAULINE WAS INTENSELY CREATIVE WITH ONCOMING TECHNOLOGY

ANNEA: She was more creative, more intensely creative with oncoming technology, than almost anyone else I can think of in that milieu. Which is saying something! (laughs) It's pretty high-tech milieu! But, she was always completely open, and knew just what to do with it, just how it would move in new conceptual directions.

36:03

CREATIVITY VERSUS SECURITY

PAULINE: *My faith is in creativity. I believe in creative process, and I believe that if you want to be secure, that you need to develop your creativity. If you're worried about security and not developing your creativity, well, you're not going to be secure, because anything can happen. And if you're not ready to apply creative problem solving to your dilemmas, then you're not secure. And also, you're not happy! (laughs) So, I, that's my answer to that. I, um, dropped out of academia in 1981 from my job at University of California in San Diego, and have been surviving the last 17 years by my wits!*
LIBBY: (laughs)

INCREDIBLE CONFIDENCE – SHE LEFT TEACHING TO GO FREELANCE – SHE WANTED TO CHANGE THE WORLD

LOUISE: She had a confidence in her own ability, and what she was doing was important. I mean, it takes an incredible confidence, if you like, to take yourself out of a tenured position in an American university, and just effectively go freelance. I think she drew confidence in the students and the people who she worked with, and who came to her. And she had this sense that, by inculcating even the beginnings of Deep Listening, it was a way to change the world. Not only musically and compositionally, but socially.

37:36

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF YOUR COMPOSITIONS?

VP: *Does it have social and political implications to you, the kind of music that you write?*
PO: *Oh, yes, I feel that one's interactions, the way one relates in an organization of any kind is political and social and very important. And, the path that I hope to be on is one where the energy that comes out of the work that I do is beneficial. And that, I mean, beneficial to others, as well as myself. I want my work to be mutually beneficial. I don't, I'm not interested in making an object of art, and entertainment. But I'm interested in making something that helps me to grow, and expand, and change as an individual, and in relation to others.*

MARIA: Her Texas accent in that recording, that's so cute. "Expand..." (laughs)

STEPHANIE: The experience of hearing Pauline's voice through these headphones right beside my ears... you know, I don't listen to her voice regularly. Uh... it's really moving.

38:46

ROCK THROWN AT ME – PAULINE SUPPORTED ME, THEN SHE PASSED

MARIA: We had been on the phone, like two days before she passed away. I had just gotten to St Petersburg, to Russia, for an artist residency, and Trump had just gotten elected the second day I was there, and I had just gone to an art opening where someone threw a rock at me. I mean, I'd been discriminated in all sorts of ways all over the world before, but no one's actually like, thrown a rock at me, you know?! (laughs). And, Pauline was like, "Look, when you get back to New York, come up here, we'll talk about it, and we'll... we're gonna figure out how to deal with this next era". And I was like, "yeah ok, I can't wait to get back, because then I can go see Pauline. Go see Pauline. We're going to talk about it, we're going to talk about it". And then it was like, two weeks before I was going to get back, and she passed. I was like, dammit. But I'm glad that... the last conversation we had, was one where she showed true concern for my wellbeing. ... She was, I've never had grandparents, but I feel like that's what a grandmother would be like. So, yeah, I'm really, really grateful for our friendship.

CLOSING SECTION

40:01

I DO MISS HER... HER QUIET WISDOM... BUT, SHE IS IN THE WORLD I SEE

LOUISE: I do miss her. I would have welcomed her quiet wisdom in everything that befell the world following 2016, where we find ourselves all imprisoned in our own bubbles, nobody listening to one another. I would like her wisdom now. But on the other hand, she is in the world. I see so many students who are finding their way to Oliveros. They know that there's a necessity for a listening practice. And I think that's a wonderful thing. And in that sense, she's always with us.

MUSIC: The Gentle (II)

ALBUM: The Well and The Gentle

LABEL: Important Records

CAT NO: IMPREC 491 (793447545912)

TRACK 1: The Receptive (20'06")

ARTIST: Pauline Oliveros

COMPOSER: Pauline Oliveros

PUBLISHER: Tuhtah Publishing

HER LEGACY – I FEEL SHE WAS ON THE ASCENDANCY

IRENE: Of course, lots of people sadly become better known after their death, but I have a feeling that she was, anyway, absolutely on the ascendancy. And I, it's just a shame that she didn't live to appreciate this moment, or this ongoing moment where her work is so much more widely recognized.

HER INFLUENCE IS GETTING STRONGER – THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR IT

ANNEA: Her influence is only getting stronger, because I think we're becoming more ready for it?

OUR WORK IS EPHEMERAL BUT IDEAS ARE UNSTOPPABLE – AS WITH PAULINE'S LISTENING IDEAS

ANNEA: You know we, many of us put out so much work, and it's all ephemeral. But what is not ephemeral are the ideas underlying the work. And those ideas keep being transmitted from person to person, and through different age groups and so on, just as we see happening with Pauline's listening ideas, ideas about how we listen, and how we might listen. Those ideas are just – it's like water just seeping through strata. You know? It's unstoppable! The ideas are unstoppable. I mean, the works, the media that we use to record them on – especially those of us who are working with

recordings, right? – they decay, they change, they disappear... but the ideas just keep seeping through. And... yeah. Pauline's are doing just that!

42:00

PAULINE – CRY OF THE LOON

(BBC R4 'THE LISTENERS')

LOON SOUNDS BAKED IN UNDERNEATH – OK TO USE

The first time I heard the cry of a loon, over a lake in late August – the sound was so beautiful, it swept me off my feet! I mean, that's the task I gave myself, in 1953, I said "listen to everything all the time, and remind yourself if you're not".

It had to do with having a new tape recorder, and I was in San Francisco where I was living at the time. I put the microphone in the window, and I listened, and recorded for half an hour. Putting the microphone in the window meant I would be able to pick up some traffic, and whatever else was going on. Then I played back the tape, and I heard sounds that I hadn't heard before. And I said, "ok, you have to expand your listening, so that you're listening to everything all the time, and remind yourself when you're not". That was my meditation that I gave myself all those many years ago, and I still practice that.

43:18

ENDING – "I HOPE IT'LL BE BENEFICIAL!"

VIVIAN: *Well that's, I think, a wonderful way to finish. Thank you so much.*

PAULINE: *Thank you Vivian, I've enjoyed it.*

VIVIAN: *Really appreciate your coming here to do this with us.*

PAULINE: *I hope it'll be beneficial!*

VIVIAN: *I think so!*

TAPE RECORDER BUZZ + SWITCHES OFF

43:34

ENDS

R3 OUTRO

AFTERWORDS: PAULINE OLIVEROS was produced by Steve *Urquhart. It was a Falling Tree production for BBC Radio 3.

[Urquhart = "URK-ut"]