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Bonn Feier Burns in Brooklyn

Doug Cohen, Brooklyn College

Bonn Feier began on Monday, 11 September at 7pm at ShapeShifter Lab in the Gowanus section of Brooklyn in a concert featuring students and faculty of the Conservatory of Music at Brooklyn College. The evening opened with a performance by all in attendance of Pauline Oliveros' *Tuning Meditation* in memory of those who died on 9/11. From this moment, everything that took place from Gowanus to the Midwood section of Brooklyn, where Brooklyn College is located, was part of *Bonn Feier* until the end of the Legacies of Pauline Oliveros symposium on 4 November 2017 at 9pm.

Pauline Oliveros's *Bonn Feier* won first prize in a commission for urban music to be performed in outdoor spaces for presentation as part of Bonn, Germany's 1977 Beethoven Festival. Oliveros called her work an environmental theater piece for specialized and non-specialized performers. The complete score contains several pages of instructions about the types of specialized performances that might be staged as part of the several hours (fifteen hours minimum) to several months (up to one year) of festivities, but the opening paragraph encapsulates the entire piece:

Bonn Feier is intended for performance in a city, college, or university environment. All normal city or campus activity, as well as specially arranged activity, is a part of *Bonn Feier*. Anyone who enters the city or campus during the designated but unannounced time of the performance is a knowing or unknowing participant in *Bonn Feier*. Special rituals, activities, and sights, described below, are to be blended smoothly with normal city or campus activity all during the normal working day and evening. The intention of *Bonn Feier* is to gradually and subtly, subvert perception so that normal activity seems as strange or displaced as any of the special activities. Thus the whole city or campus becomes a theater, and all of its inhabitants, players.*

In this realization of *Bonn Feier*, almost all were unknowing participants. It came to a focus on 30 October with a concert by Brooklyn College composers at ShapeShifter Lab, followed by a week of concerts and talks by musicians associated with Oliveros on the International Electroacoustic Music Festival, and culminating in the symposium, Legacies of Pauline Oliveros, on 3 and 4 November.

Bonn Feier was listed as the last piece on the final concert of the symposium in Studio 312 on the west side of the Brooklyn College campus. The audience was instructed to perform a fifteen-minute version of Oliveros's listening meditation, *The Poetics of Environmental Sound*, while processing due east across the campus, through the Bedford Avenue underpass where the parrots nest and hatch their young each spring, past the lily pond where the turtles live amongst the carp, arriving at the Sculpture Garden where a globe shaped Weber grill awaited with hardwood inside ready to be ignited. As the listening meditation ended, the audience circled around the grill, the fire was started, and as the flames developed the performance completed, accompanied by vegan marshmallows and s'mores.

* Pauline Oliveros, *Bonn Feier* (Smith Publications, 1977).