

Who is the Course For?

This course is for everyone interested in exploring new musical responses to environmental questions, including: • *Environmentalists* • *Music Educators* • *Community Musicians* • *Instrument Makers* • *Land Artists* • *Sacred Music Animators* • *People who work with Creation Spirituality*
It is appropriate for participants with ALL levels of musical experience.

Testimonial

Tonalis is watering the roots of music, reviving the mystery through precise techniques, and nurturing the sacred which lies behind all inspiring performance. It is vital work.

JONATHAN HARVEY - Composer and Author of 'Music and Inspiration'

Michael Deason-Barrow - director of 'Tonalis' - has taught at all levels from universities and community contexts to schools and leads trainings in the fields of music education, singing and therapeutic musicing. He has led a choir of 250 singers in a concert of sacred world music called 'Song of the Earth' at the celebrated '3 Choirs Festival' in Gloucester Cathedral. He has also written groundbreaking books on 'The Soundscape' and a compendium of music for 'The Song of the Earth'.

FEES: £165 (booking by June 1st) £175 (by July 1st) £185 (thereafter)

Weekend Attendance only welcomed: £115 (by June 1st) £125 (thereafter)

Work Scholarship Fee: £115 Please enquire re. eligibility

Times: Friday = 11am - 6:30pm, Saturday = 10am - 6pm, Sunday = 10am - 4:30pm

Lunches: £9/day: Organic Soup, Salad & Roll from the Ruskin Mill Café

A Registration Letter - including Travel Information, Accommodation List, Times, etc. will be sent on receipt of the Application Form and Fee.



APPLICATION FORM - Music and Nature

Please complete and send with your fee (cheques payable to 'Tonalis') at:-
4 Castle Farm Close, Leighterton, Glos. GL8 8UY, England
or pay into the Tonalis account: Sort Code 08-92-50, Account # 68684633

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____ email: _____

Do you require accommodation? Yes ☐ (circa £25 / night) No ☐

A list of local hosts and B&Bs will be sent to you.

Would you like the Lunches: Yes (please pay cash at the workshop) No

MUSIC & NATURE

Journey into Aural Ecology, Nature's Music, Eco-Centric Musicing & the Soundscape



August 22nd - 24th 2025

Tonalis

Led by Michael Deason-Barrow
VENUE - Ruskin Mill, Nailsworth, GLOS

Enquiries: tel. 01666-890460 info@tonalismusic.co.uk

Nature's Music & the Soundscape

"OUR UNIVERSE IS A SOUNDING MUSICAL COMPOSITION
in which we are simultaneously audience, performer and composer."
(R. Murray Schafer)

We are so used today to thinking about the environment in visual terms
that the soundscape and aural ecology receive little attention.

This course will therefore ask,

i) **WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO OUR CONNECTION TO
THE NATURAL WORLD IN MUSIC?**

ii) **WHO SPEAKS FOR THE SOUNDSCAPE TODAY?**

- How can we create a new eco-centric music, i.e. a naturalisation of music?
- How can musicians make a constructive contribution to the deep environmental and urgent ecological questions of our time?
- How can music increase our concerns for the future of the earth (beyond merely creating song lyrics about environmental awareness)?

Our world is literally going deaf and our audio-ecosystem is falling apart amid its technological din. In fact modern human beings hold the world record for noise. And yet we are ignoring the issue of noise pollution and its effects on our health.

So instead of the sound of glorious bird song in the garden, we now hear 'Radio One', pneumatic drills, chain saws, aeroplanes and traffic noise.

All this means we no longer know -

HOW TO SING THE SONG OF THE EARTH.

In response to this, this course will open you up to
a vast new sensory world, namely the riffs of our aural soundscape.

It will show how we can train people to work with

- soundscape design
- acoustic ecology and
- music in the environment.

**Above all, on this course you'll experience a glorious collaboration between
MUSIC and NATURE**

**which will demonstrate how soundscape processes can help us learn
to respect and dialogue with the natural world in utterly new ways.**

Key Themes the Course will Explore

• THE HISTORY OF THE SOUNDSCAPE -

Come and explore our human journey,
from the earliest Ancient and Neolithic Soundscapes
→ *Rural and Medieval Soundscapes* → *Urban soundscapes*
→ *the sounds of the Industrial and Electronic Revolutions.*

• OUTDOOR VS INDOOR MUSIC

Explore how our journey in terms of musical contexts has been one that has moved from
Outside in Nature

- **Inside in Cathedrals and Concert Halls**
- **today's Enclosed World of Earphones.**

This journey you'll find is echoed by the change from using
Outdoor Instruments & Voicings (e.g. bagpipes, horns and Bulgarian voices)
to playing **Indoor Instruments & Indoor Styles of Singing.**

*So come and have a go at Outdoor Singing Styles and playing Outdoor Instruments,
from wassailing and street cries to playing huge primordial instruments (e.g. the lur).*

• AURAL ECOLOGY AND SOUNDSCAPE DESIGN

*This course will offer you new Environmental Listening activities, including:
'Sound Walks', 'Sound Diaries', and ideas for 'Repairing the Soundscape'.*

We'll also address questions such as:

- the effects of noise pollution on our health and well-being
- the implications of moving from natural instruments to plastic and electronic ones
- how we can assess and classify the keynotes of the soundscape.

• MAN-MADE TEMPERED TUNING VS. NATURE'S TUNING

Almost all the music we hear today uses 'equal temperament tuning'. This has become a kind
of **industrial standard which makes all music DISOBEY nature's laws.** Unbeknown to
most of us this is a key reason why we are becoming so disconnected from the natural world.

To explore this theme

we'll compare 'Nature's Tuning' (i.e. 'the Harmonic Series') with 'Equal Temperament
Tuning' by playing magical bronze gongs (and other instruments). Through this exploration
you'll find we can move music off the grid of equal temperament and into open country!

•EXPLORE SOUNDSCAPE INSTRUMENTS - NATURAL, ANCIENT & NEW

At the heart of this course will be the exploration of both new and natural instruments that have been designed to sound in and with the natural world.

This will include investigating

- i) The Maori people's extraordinary orchestra of *natural instruments*
- ii) *Sound Sculptures* - including interactive play sculptures - inspired by season and place
- iii) *New Soundscape Instruments* including: the streaming harp, Weyeneth's extraordinary standing stone lithophones, singing trees, as well as aeolian and water harps
- iv) *Soundscape Instruments that sing of the ' 4 elements', including:*
 - the 'fire' of primordial trumpets known as lurs and the oceanic sounds of the tam tam
 - the 'earth' rhythms of drums and stones
 - the 'air' play of flutes, wind chimes and whirlies
 - the 'water' sounds of tone harps, raintrees and waterphones.

• COMPOSING THE SOUNDSCAPE

How are today's Composers turning their ears to the Music of the Earth?

Come and explore how the resonance of different spaces and contexts are shaping and affecting the way composers are using the elements of music (e.g. tuning, non-measured rhythms, gliding pitches, nature's textures, timbres, density and registers, etc.) and how each of these elements have evolved in ways that mirror natural vs. man-made contexts.

Also explore how designing acoustic spaces was a veritable ancient practice from the amphitheatre at Epidaurus and the neolithic tomb at Newgrange to Romanesque cathedrals.

We will then create improvisations together so that we can enhance and nourish

THE SPIRIT of PLACE in MUSIC.

• HOW MUSICAL FORMS ARE/CAN BE INFLUENCED BY NATURE

Musical forms, voices and instruments have traditionally been influenced by the natural environment - from the rainforest chants of Baca pygmies and the mountain soundscapes of Swiss yodellers, to Saami joiks and the music of Japanese Zen gardens.

So come and sing and play these musics inspired by their natural soundscapes.

Also tune into the music of composers whose works resonate particular soundscapes from:

- Sibelius' vast Finnish forests • Rautavaara's Cantus Arcticus • Britten's seascapes
- Vaughan Williams' Sinfonia Antarctica • Sculthorpe's Aboriginal soundscapes
- Messiaen's birdsong • Crumb's whale song & • Reich's urban soundscapes,

to

the new Soundscape Compositions of
Murray Schafer and John Luther Adams.