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2005 SUBARU FORESTER XT



FEATURED PERSONAL



## Sound Affects

### Stretching Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* into a 24-hour experience

By Adrienne Gagnon

Published: Wednesday, April 21, 2004

"We find far more enjoyment in the combination of the noises of trams, backfiring motors, carriages and bawling crowds than in rehearsing, for example, the *Eroica* or the *Pastoral*," wrote the Italian futurist Luigi Russolo in his 1913 manifesto *L'Arte dei Rumori* ("The Art of Noises"). Russolo, often dubbed the first sound artist, envisioned a future in which conventional melodies would become obsolete, giving way to the noise of everyday life -- the subtle music of our increasingly industrialized world.

That we've come to this point, where we've taken Russolo's vision and proved it possible, countless artists have experimented with sound over the past century, creating a rich and tenacious genre that encompasses a broad spectrum of recorded work -- from raw silence to earsplitting sine waves, symphonies of dot-matrix printers to orchestras of crickets.

With Norwegian artist **Leif Inge's** *9 Beet Stretch*, the medium has come full circle, back to the symphonic masterpieces that Russolo disdained; but with experimentation in mind Inge has digitally stretched Beethoven's notorious *Ninth Symphony*, transforming it from a one-hour choral maelstrom into a 24-hour cascade of quivering overtones. Even the climactic "Ode to Joy," mangled over the years by countless young pianists, has been rendered completely unrecognizable by Inge's intervention. The resulting composition is an ethereal soundscape that encourages deep listening.

"For me, Leif's work is an opportunity to listen to something we consider familiar in a completely naive way," says S.F. sound artist Aaron Ximm. "We don't as a culture offer people many opportunities to observe anything over so long a time. To observe ourselves, and our process of attention, over such a long period ... [shows] us a whole new dimension to something we thought was completely known -- musty, in fact. That's a great gift."

This weekend, 964 Natoma hosts an "all-night pajamas-please sleep-over concert-event" to present *9 Beet Stretch* in its entirety. Since 2001, Ximm has offered this warm, welcoming loft for his monthly sound showcase, "Field Effects." Though sound art has blossomed in



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Sound artist Leif Inge.

**Details**

**Who / What:**

*9 Beet Stretch*

**Details:**

Starts at 10 p.m. on Friday, April 23 (though guests can come and go throughout the 24-hour presentation)

Admission is \$10-15

642-1592

[www.w.quietamerican.org](http://www.w.quietamerican.org)

**Where:**

964 Natoma (at 10th Street), S.F.

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recent years with the rise of affordable digital technologies that have brought sound-manipulating and -recording tools into the hands of even starving artists, visionaries still struggle with the challenges of presenting acoustic works to the public. Museums and galleries geared toward visual arts are squeamish about subjecting the paintings and sculptures on display to layers of sound, and these spaces rarely afford the silence and focused attention required of such works.

Nestled on comfy futons and beanbag chairs, with the lights down low, visitors to 964 Natoma experience experimental sound with no distractions. "The theory," says Ximm, "is that the more comfortable people are, the more open they'll be to unfamiliar art forms. They come because it's both a refuge and an opportunity to experience something new." Bring pillows, blankets, snacks, and an open mind. You've never heard anything like this.

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