

***'The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and Tuning of the World.'***

***'Part One: First Soundscapes, Voices of the sea.'*** By R.Murry Schafer

Annotation By Britney Saywell 2023



Figure 1: 'Water view,' East Auckland, Britney Saywell. 11 Mar 2023.

Figure 2 'Water view B,' East Auckland, Britney Saywell. 11 Mar 2023.

R. Murray Schafer's writing on Soundscapes poses the idea that the sound of water is the first sound to exist in relation to the human ear. Pulling on Greek mythology and elaborating on a parallel between the sounds apparent in the womb. Schaffer<sup>1</sup> presents, "What was the first sound? The caressing of the waters." The fetus's ear within the amniotic acid emulates the caressing waters.

I find Schaffer's language used to describe the sounds and their differentiations, evoke vivid images in the mind. Reading has become an encounter with the author's deep respect to sound. The writing provokes a multitude of questions and wonderment about sound as any good text should show toward its subject. Leading you to a greater intrigue and a depth of knowledge.

In conversation with a friend, Donald Goodhall<sup>2</sup>, He shared the experience of being present in his children's water births. "They can stay under the water, and it is completely fine. It is when you bring them, up from the water and they inhale air, this is a baby's first moment that they rely on air to breathe." This conversation brought real-

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<sup>1</sup> R.Murry Schafer, *'The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and tuning of the world.'* Destiny Books. Vermont 1977 -1994 pg 15.

<sup>2</sup> Donald, GoodHall. *'Conversation with Donald Goodhall,'* Two Room café. Auckland, 16 March 2023.

life experience to support the question, “What was the first sound?” Hooked on the idea of an origin sound, I considered the ways that sound reflects our environment thus affecting our experiences in the world.

R. Murry Schaffer’s audience is anyone who cares for their environment. This Earth is a great symphony that we are born into. Our ears are blessed by the sound of the land, the waters, and the skies. Schaffer protests that each person would do their part to keep the sound of the natural world alive rather than crush them under industrial sound. Suggesting that the Western world is disconnected from the ancient soundtrack from Earth’s first sound.