

## ENGELBECKEN / Kreuzberg / Berlin

A composition by **Sam Auinger** from the series

**listening pieces for independent experimental performance** for berlinlokalzeit.de.

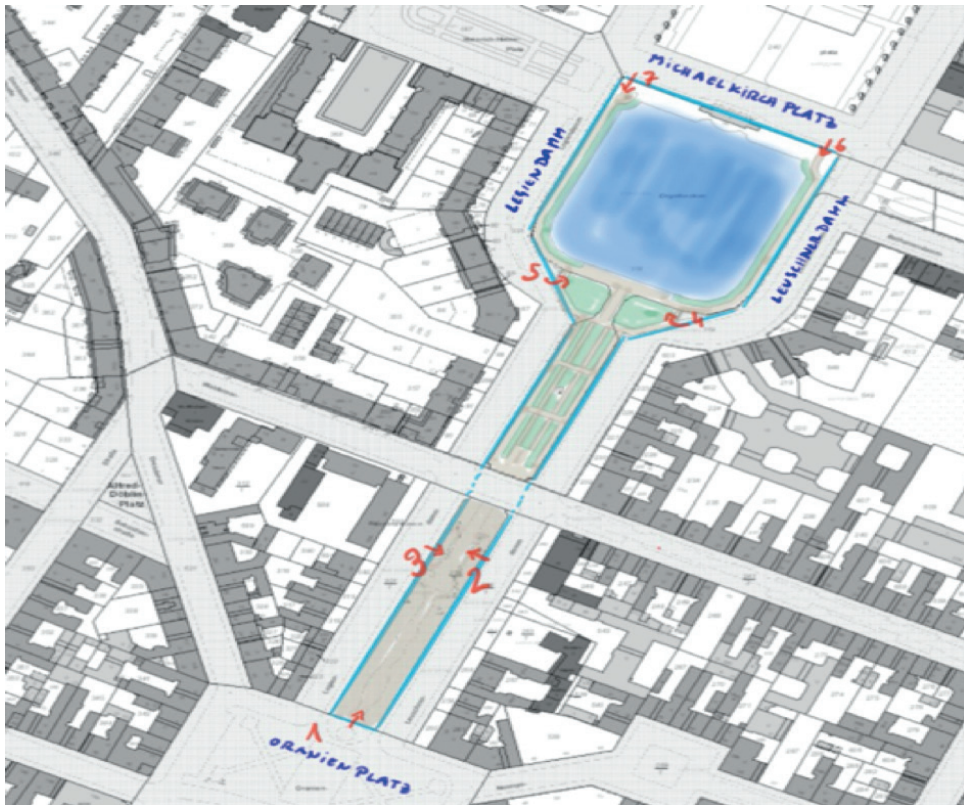
ENGELBECKEN, how is it performed?

ENGELBECKEN is walked, discovered, and listened to.

One is on the spot, strolling around, lingering, and listening.

The audible is thereby emotional and informational at the same time.

ENGELBECKEN has a playing-field (the area within which the piece is played) with clearly defined and visible boundaries. The pool was formerly part of the Luisenstädtischer Kanal in Kreuzberg. It is a multi-layered place that starts at the Dragon Fountain on Oranienplatz and extends between Leuschnerdamm and Legiendamm to Michaelkirchplatz. There are seven entrances.



Its topography and design are special. Coming from Oranienplatz, the path initially slopes gently. After an underpass, the playing-field becomes a large flat container about 3m lower than everything else outside. It is planted with simple strips of greenery, bushes and flower beds, and there are well developed paths and seating benches along its edge.

A large square of water dominates the place. Except for its boundary at Oranienplatz, the entire playing-field is surrounded by traffic arteries. Along Legiendamm and Leuschnerdamm, it is overlooked by multi-story buildings.

ENGELBECKEN has two states and consists of an intro, 3 parts, and an epilogue. The piece can be played by several people at once; however, it is a solo piece, i.e., everyone plays his own music alone.

The two states are strolling and lingering. They are connected to attentive listening and can be changed at will. There is no fixed duration for the entire piece or for its individual parts.

**Intro / Settling-in**

**Part 1 - The Atmospheric**

**Part 2 - The Dynamic**

**Part 3 - The Relational**

**Epilogue / Reflection**

Playing **ENGELBECKEN** means creating your own listening paths on the playing-field and finding listening sites. The experimental character of the piece lies in their discovery and identification. When, where and how long one listens while strolling or lingering is determined by the player himself. The piece begins when the player consciously enters the playing area and ends when he or she finally leaves.



samauinger.de



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### Intro /Settling-in

In playing, we listen to ENGELBECKEN musically. We are more interested in the specific sonic qualities of what we hear than in their causes or relationships. At the beginning we consciously pay attention to all sound events and listen for their specific musical qualities such as loudness, frequency, spectrum and dynamics as well as their rhythmic patterns, structures and gestures. In doing so, we locate them in different positions and an audible geography of the playing-field emerges. The variety of sound events prevailing at the time of our performance - whether static, standing or moving in space - determines the tempo / liveliness of our performance.

### Part 1 – the Atmospheric

After our settling-in phase and a time of strolling, we look for a place to linger. Maybe we'll sit down on one of the many benches. Wherever it is, you can feel and hear a clear difference between outside and inside. Depending on the time of day and season, the large green space is differently alive and enveloped by the hustle and bustle of the city. We listen to the large space, taking in its mood and atmosphere.

### Part 2 – the Dynamic

Depending on where and how we move, the ground resonates musically to the rhythm of our steps. These sounds and the noises of our clothes define our near-field in the large listening space. An essential aspect of ENGELBECKEN reveals itself: orientation and spatial depth - the audibility of direction and distance. We listen inside and outside. Endless variations of voices of all kinds can be heard. In the distance horns and the subway give depth and size to the outer space. The hum of the city, its drone, envelops the playing-field, rising and falling in the rhythm of its cycles, but is never completely lost.

The design of the entire green space, its paths (some covered with plants), the central large water basin with its rich birdlife, and a daytime café with terrace creates a wide variety of actions and activities. But at no place does it become so loud and intense that the larger space disappears for long or that individual sound events within the playing-field lose their locality. Our venue always has dynamics.

### Part 3 – the Relational

What we experienced in parts 1 and 2 now serves as our starting point.

We now begin to pay attention to differences in the audible concerning the position in space. Whenever we come close to one of the seven entrances, we can briefly leave our playing-field to return immediately and experience the perceptible change of acoustic space. Coming from Oranienplatz, we glide into the piece almost imperceptibly from the outside. In contrast, entrances four and five demonstrate dramatic acoustic thresholds from one space to another.

In this part, the larger space reveals that its different sites and spatial segments have different auditory qualities with their own specific atmospheres and aesthetic character.

Where does the city push most strongly into the playing-field?

Which places and paths are occupied by motorized traffic?

Where does the wind speak here?

Where does one hear the rhythm of footsteps well?

Which place has many bright voices?

Where are acoustic thresholds?

Etc..

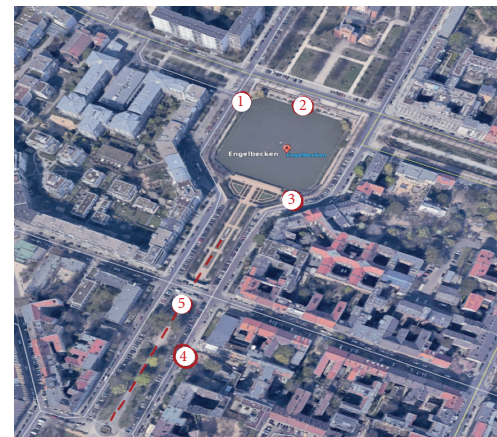
### Epilogue / Reflection

After the end of our game, we stay on location for a while and summarize what we just experienced and heard. This can be done purely mentally or better with notes and drawings in a small performance book. It is also interesting to reconsider what we have just heard and experienced in terms of its information and put it in relation to each other. In doing so, we become aware of and understand all kinds of interrelationships. A deeper immersion into the piece - its emotional as well as informative quality - can be achieved by playing it several times.

It is good to reflect on what was heard and experienced in a group. Exchanging different narratives and observations can be very interesting.

### Field Recording Positions Engelbecken

November/ December 2020



#### 1 Engeldamm\_Legiendamm

Recording position is the first park bench if you take the entrance Engeldamm and Legiendamm  
<https://aporee.org/maps/?loc=51566&m=satellite>

#### 2 Café Engelbecken

It is Saturday. We hear people and animals, mostly birds, embedded in the city, a busy urban environment in Corona times. <https://aporee.org/maps/?loc=51555&m=satellite>

#### 3 Engelbecken 6 o'Clock Ringing

It is the 6 o'clock ringing at the Engelbecken in Kreuzberg. The large open space is lovely to hear, and the St Michael church's ringing makes the whole site swing. <https://aporee.org/maps/?loc=51551&m=satellite>

#### 4 Cobblestones and Children Playground

A Berlin city music: radial tires on cobblestones passing the children's playground. <https://aporee.org/maps/?loc=51559&m=satellite>

#### 5 Engelbecken Walk

a walk from Dragon Fountain to Indian Fountain in the direction of the Angel Pool and pass under the Waldemar Road <https://aporee.org/maps/?loc=51540&m=satellite>