

## **Into the Labyrinth (2000)** for 8 (or2)-channel audio

by Hildegard Westerkamp

*Into the Labyrinth* is a sonic journey into aspects of India's culture. It occurs on the edge between dream and reality, in the same way in which many visitors, myself included, experience this country. Little ever happens according to pre-determined plans or expectations. Although travelers usually do reach their destination somehow, the journey itself—full of continuous surprises and unexpected turns—becomes the real place of experience.

In composing this piece, I was re-examining my own compositional process as it has developed over the years: just as India has challenged many of my Western Eurocentric values and turned them upside-down, so has this piece challenged my preconceived notions of the creative process. From the start I had the image of entering a labyrinth of a multitude of sounds and sonic experiences. I had made no plans for the piece other than letting the recorded sounds move me through a compositional journey into an unknown sonic labyrinth. Obviously my experiences of travelling in India and of recording the sounds played a significant role in the formation of this piece. But I could never be sure of where I was going and where I would end up. I worked on it continuously as if on a 15-day journey, where the journey itself became the centre of experience. The composition simply is a result of that experience.

*Into the Labyrinth* was commissioned by "New Adventures in Sound" with the assistance of the Canada Council and was realized in the Electronic Music Studio of the School for the Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University. Many thanks to Darren Copeland for giving me this opportunity to explore composition for 8-channel diffusion. I would also like to thank Savinder Anand, Mona Madan, Arun Patak, Veena Sharma and her mother Mrs. Goyal, Situ Singh-Bühler and Virinder Singh for taking me to the places where the sounds and soundscapes for this composition were recorded. Without their help and local knowledge I would have had a difficult time gathering them on tape. Many thanks go to Max Mueller Bhavan (Goethe Institut Delhi) for inviting me to India in the first place and giving me the opportunity to meet and work with those who have become my Indian friends. Listening to India together has deepened our understanding of each other and our cultures' differences.

*Into the Labyrinth* is dedicated to my daughter Sonja, who courageously travelled through India by herself and emerged enriched from a labyrinth of new and complex experiences.

### **SOUND SOURCES**

#### **Voices and Musicians:**

Group of Rajasthani musicians, camel fair, Pushkar  
Kamal Kothari's group of Rajasthani musicians, Jodhpur  
Sitar, played by Arun Patak in music shop, Old Delhi  
Situ Singh-Bühler, mezzo soprano, Delhi  
Snake Charmer, Lodi Gardens, Delhi  
Sarangi player, Madore Park, Jodhpur  
Vendor, Janakpuri, Delhi  
Young boy singing, camel fair, Pushkar, Rajasthan

#### **Other Sounds:**

Bicycle Bell, Tilak Nagar, Delhi  
Crickets, Palolem, Goa.  
Film music from loudspeaker near vegetable market, Tilak Nagar, Delhi  
Footsteps, Shivananda Ashram, Rishikesh  
Gate, Shivananda Ashram, Rishikesh  
Stone cutters working at restorations, Jodhpur Fort, Rajasthan  
Toy vendor's trumpet, Delhi  
Traffic, Connaught Place, Delhi  
Traffic near vegetable market, Tilak Nagar, Delhi  
Train with trainhorn as it is approaching Delhi  
Trainhorn as heard from the elevated grounds of the Bahai temple, Delhi

Length: 15:06