

Sonic Blueprints

Composing Music
for Spatial Experience

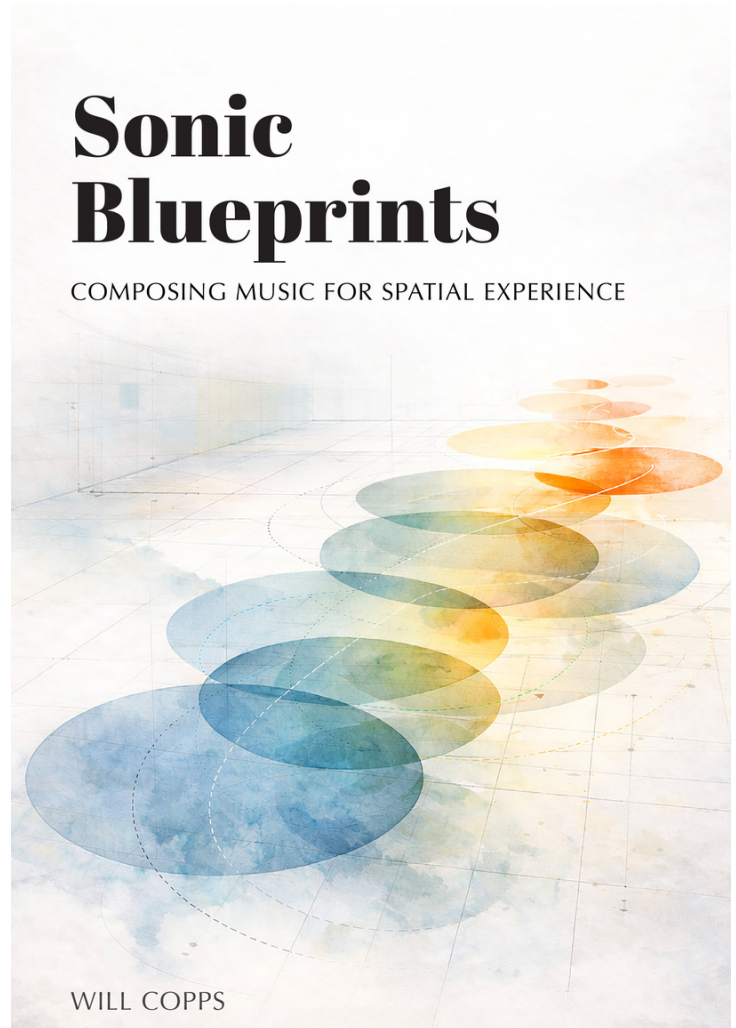
Compose music for
physical spaces.

Places to enter, explore and move through.

Sonic Blueprints brings architectural thinking to music composed for physical spaces and the people moving through them. It connects perception and artistic intent to musical form, then follows the work into speaker installations and interactive media.

Will Copps

Forthcoming February 23, 2027
Selected advance material



Book cover

Music as a place to inhabit.

Sonic Blueprints is an illustrated guide to composing music for physical spaces people can move through. Will Copps uses architecture to connect perception, artistic intent and musical form, from hearing and planning to composition and realization. These ideas can be realized through installed speakers, AR/VR and game environments, GPS apps, or temporary sonic installations.

I How We Place Sound

Understand how position, distance, motion, enclosure, clarity and scale shape listening.

II How We Frame

Define artistic intent with a Program Brief. Use eight architectural frameworks to develop a Sonic Blueprint.

III How We Compose

Develop melody, harmony, rhythm, silence and spatial behaviors as paths, fields and encounters.

IV Realization and Continuity

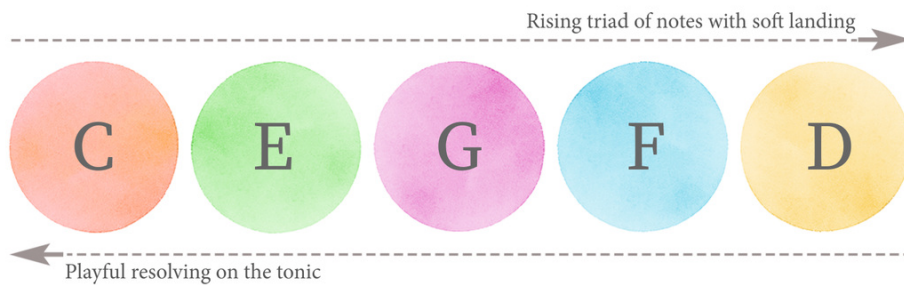
Explore sensing, tuning, accessibility, adaptation and documentation as the work takes form in real conditions.

WHO IT IS FOR

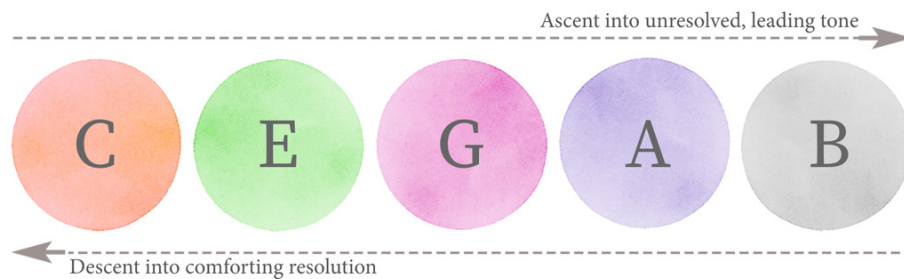
For composers and sound artists, the book offers a working approach; familiarity with melody, harmony and rhythm helps with the examples. It is also for architects, curators and anyone who simply wants to better understand how they hear the world. Readers can begin in any of its four parts.

PLATE 01: SPATIAL MELODIES

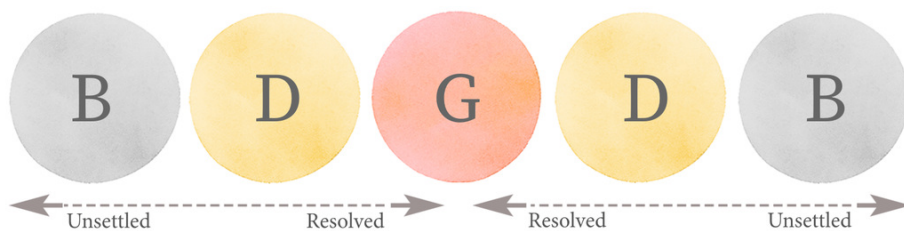
DUAL RESOLUTIONS



UNRESOLVED SIDE



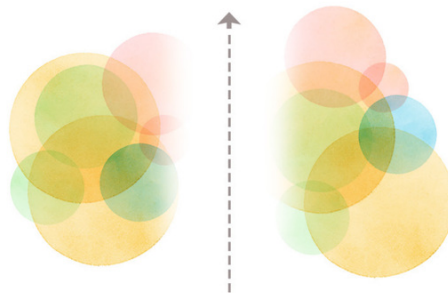
PALINDROME



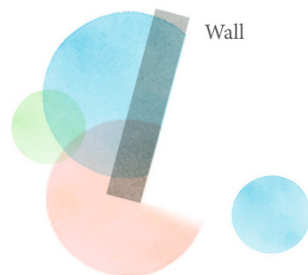
Walk toward the same sounds, then return. Their positions stay fixed while the order you hear changes. The book treats that choice of route as part of the composition.

PLATE 05: CARVED SILENCE

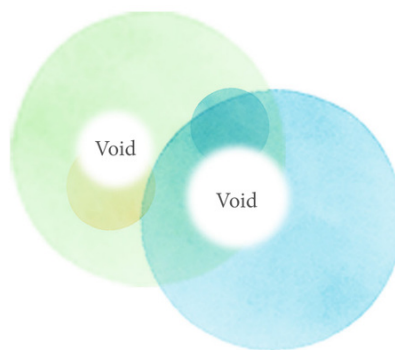
SILENT CORRIDORS



ACOUSTIC SHADOWS



VOID POCKETS



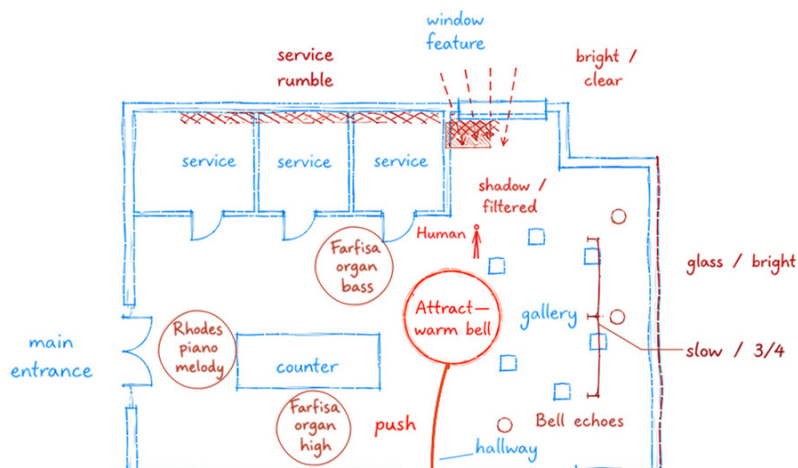
Colored fields show composed sound; gaps mark intended quiet. A pause within a busy field can become a place to rest and hear the surrounding world.

Give the music a spatial structure.

A Program Brief begins with intent: who a place serves, what happens there and how it should feel. Eight architectural frameworks then help turn those intentions into a plan for musical choices.

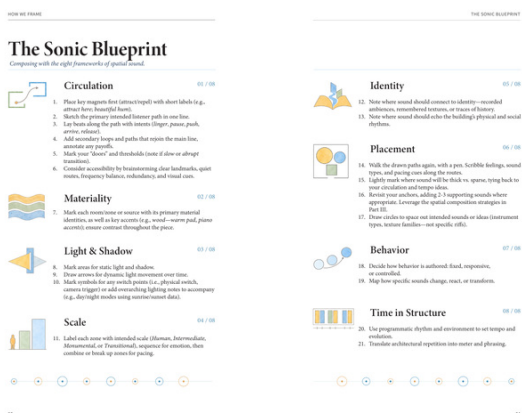
An intention you can hear.

The route bends toward “Attract / warm bell.” Circulation becomes a musical decision: give this point a sound that invites approach. The drawing records an intention to develop and test.



Detail of the developed Sonic Blueprint, advance manuscript p. 89.

KEY BOOK TAKEAWAY



Two-page handout preview

The Sonic Blueprint

An illustrated handout turns eight frameworks into 21 prompts for an annotated plan, connecting routes, sound identities, placement and behavior to musical decisions.

Circulation · Materiality · Light & Shadow · Scale · Identity · Placement · Behavior · Time in Structure

Request the full two-page handout

Music for an incomplete listen.

“A listener does not need to hear everything to feel satisfied.”

From Designing for Indefinite Time

Most music assumes a specific path and ending. Spatial music may not. People arrive late, leave early, pass through sideways, or stand still far longer than anticipated. They may encounter a work for thirty seconds or thirty minutes. Designing for this reality requires abandoning the idea of a “complete listen” and embracing indefinite time.

In spatial composition, a good loop is less like a chorus and more like a garden. It sustains interest without demanding attention. It allows entry at any point without punishment. It reveals detail slowly, often only through movement or patience.

One key consideration here is between synchronous loops and layered loops. When all elements repeat together, patterns become obvious quickly and fatigue sets in. Layered loops—different lengths, offsets, or probabilistic variations—create longer perceptual cycles. The space feels stable, yet never quite the same.

Selected excerpt · Part IV: Designing for Indefinite Time

Real conditions

A work may use speakers or headphones. Sensing, calibration and tuning shape what happens in actual conditions.

Traces of the work

Maps, text and “sonic photographs”—short listening snapshots—preserve different aspects of an encounter.

Will Copps

Will Copps is an audio-visual artist and composer based in Washington, DC. His work explores sound, image, movement and place.

A week at a 2014 Amsterdam sound HackLab led to more than a decade of experiments with speakers, GPS and AR. This book develops an architectural language for that compositional practice.



For conversation

What changes when the listener chooses the route?

How can quiet become a compositional decision?

What makes a partial encounter feel worthwhile?

Spatial Garden

TCW / Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden

A GPS-based musical landscape encountered through a visitor's route.

willcopps.com/works/spatial-garden.html

Liminal

Catholic University of America / 2023

An audio-visual installation with a GPS-based campus extension.

willcopps.com/liminal/



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PRESS REQUESTS

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For chapters, listening examples, interviews and press images.