Steve Heimbecker – Quotes from the Press (1996 – 2013)

"In my opinion Heimbecker is Canada's most established audio/sound artist. The first time I heard his multichannel work it totally changed my perception of the sculptural power of audio: powerfully intense, subtle and complex."
> -- Garnet Hertz, Canada Research Chair in Design and Media Arts at Emily Carr University of Art and Design, Electrochoc concert (Montreal, QC) Facebook event, Oct 31, 2013.

"In this work (Wind Array Cascade Machine), air is not an empty ultimate condition but a sort of 'white box', a transition from a variable but always determinate input to a variable but always determinate series of outputs. The machinery embodies the indefinite process whereby the air becomes itself by being made exterior to itself."
> -- Steven Connor, "Next to Nothing" – TATE ETC., London U.K., Issue 12, 2008

"If music is, as American composer John Cage said, "organized sound," then Heimbecker displays how sound, transcribed by technology, can be made into an aesthetic replication of experience: not music, but something altogether new."
> -- Cameron Skene, "Sonic Boom" – The Montreal Gazette, January 13, 2007

"Nous nous trouvons ainsi submergés dans un bassin de sons et dans la résonance du lieu, une expérience sensible hors du commun qui nous plonge dans un univers musical d'une sérénité rare. Finalement, la grande victoire de Steve Heimbecker, celle qui fait de Songs of Place une oeuvre remarquable et significative, c'est de parvenir à procurer une satisfaction de savoir et de découverte faite de temps qui s'écoule et de temps en suspens, de chant audible et visible."

(translation : "Thus submerged in a pool of sounds and the resonance of a place, we perceive the out of the ordinary as we are plunged into a musical universe of a rare serenity. In closing, Steve Heimbecker's greatest victory, that which makes Songs of Place a remarkable and significant work, is to invite us to discover time in its dual dimension of flow and suspension, as a song both visible and audible.")
> -- Philippe Gimet, Octopusenligne – Octopus le journal en ligne des musiques libres et inventives, Septembre, 2006, English translation Bernard Schutze.

"... video images of rural expanses flash across horizontal bands of varying widths, evoking an endless journey through remote countryside. Accompanied by a dense, hypnotic tapestry of sound, made up of bird calls, rustling, hisses, wind-like sounds and enigmatic tinkles, these images (and sounds) create an impression of floating in a timeless limbo."
> -- Rahma Kkazam, "On Screen" – The Wire, Adventures in Modern Music, London, U.K., Issue 270, August, 2006

"Heimbecker has continued to create unique instruments and sound production systems, heard in quadrophonic, octaphonic, and soon sixty-four-channel sound. He engages multi-channel systems to map, present, and represent immersive sonic environments, resulting in extremely high-resolution impressions of audible phenomena and/or daily life."
> -- Anna Friz, "At work and play in the soundpool" – MusicWorks, Toronto, Issue #94, Spring 2006.

" "So," I said, smirking. "This sound installation makes no sound." "Yes," said Steve, not smirking. Wind is like sound because they both move invisibly in waves, Steve patiently explained. "Both interact with whatever they strike."
> -- George Lee, "Seeing Wind" – Geocol, Edmonton, AB., June 29, 2005. #4803B

"I'm sure Heimbecker links his art much closer to the work of minimal environmentalists like Walter De Maria. Aesthetically, it does look like Dan Flavin on speed. Or maybe, a gigantic promotional room design sponsored by Pimp Watch? Seriously, it's really an impressive work visually. Equal or even better to the installation of light bulbs by Artificiel at Musée D'Art Contemporain that cheered a bunch of people a couple of years back. Why are there no museums buying this stuff? I swear it's worth nearly half of Dia Beacon, as visual impact."
> -- Cedric Caspesyan, Art Twit (online review), December 22, 2004

"Grâce à ce dispositif, le spectateur peut visualiser le vent, voir ses vagues comme s'il était devant un lac à la surface ondoyante. Quand le vent souffle fort, l'effet est saisissant. Et parfois l'artiste triche un peu, remplaçent la présentation en direct par l'enregistrement d'une bourrasque plus remarquable. Là, le jeu de lumières devient presque hypnotisant.... une œuvre d'une beauté aérienne et poetique."
> -- Nicolas Mavrikakis, "Dans le Vent" – Voir Montréal, 25 novembre, 2004.

"Par contre, son matériau est porteur de belles évocations. Ces registres poétiques de la pièce sont particulièrement bien développés. Redressant sur des tiges verticals les diodes lumineuses qu'on retrouve habituellement sur une console de son, Heimbecker a créé un véritable champ de diodes lumineuses; on se retrouve devant un champ de blé étincelant, comme si un vent immatériel traversait l'espace. Mais encore, cette référence naturaliste oscille avec une autre, autrement plus urbaine, alors que la représentation

métaphorique du vent se transforme en la ligne des toits d'une ville virtuelle, avec ses tours dans la nuit. L'effet est saisissant, offrant différents points de vue selon notre manière de nous déplacer dans l'espace. Ce qui reste, toutefois, c'est cette impression fugace que passe un courant de matière invisible, auquel on a retire la matérialité pour ne conserver que le mouvement. Ne reste plus qu'à se laisser bercer."
        -- Bernard Lemarche, "Champ de diodes" – Le Devoir, Montréal, QC, 13/14 novembre, 2004.

"Another visually striking work that simply but powerfully illustrated the power of wireless technology and the ubiquity of network communications is Steve Heimbecker's POD (Wind Array Cascade Machine). ... The result is that viewers "see" the wind blowing in Montreal while standing in the room in Helsinki, providing a wonderful moment of simultaneity and synesthesia."
        -- Scott Andrew, Grand Text Auto » ISEA 2004: Art Report (online), September, 2004.

Je doute que quiconque ait pu aimer la pièce de Heimbecker. « Songs of Place » n'est pas le genre de pièces qu'on peut « aimer », ou alors il faut redéfinir le mot « aimer » pour y inclure la saine douleur infligée par les artistes bourreaux qui, comme Heimbecker, nous forcent à constater notre délit de fuite permanent en face de la vie. Et pourtant, à mon humble avis, s'il y eut une pièce « importante » dans tout ce Vasistas, c'est celle-là.

(translation : "I doubt that anybody could have loved the piece from Heimbecker. "Songs of Place:Ile de Montreal" is not the type of piece that can be "loved", or a redefinition of "love" is necessary in order to include the sane torment inflicted by seductive artists who, like Heimbecker, force us to consider our permanent escapism in the face of life. And still in my humble opinion, if there was an "important" piece in all this Vasistas, this one is it.")
        -- Guy Laramée, Songs of Place Ile de Montreal, Theatre La Chapelle – Vasistas, Montreal, QC,
        March 2, 2002, english translation – Vidal Neron

"I have in the past marvelled at Heimbecker's witty objets soniques... I'm certain that it (Enormouslessness of Cloud Machines CD) will be appreciated both as historic documentation and as a worthy souvenir for those lucky enough to have attended a Heimbecker performance."
        -- Mark Sutherland, album reviews – MusicWorks (Toronto, ON) Summer, 2000.

"Heimbecker is a consummate artist capable of simple, unique and beautiful things."
        -- Noah Wane, Splendid Ezine, Canadian Electroacoustic Community (Montréal,
         QC) Apr 10, 2000

"Canadian sound artist Heimbecker creates unusually spacious and unhurried montages. They may be reflections of his prairie upbringing, but they are assuredly products of his "sound sailing" technique... Voice and breath, gentle environmental sounds, small machines and a sense of humour are key ingredients. Much of it feels boundless, yet electroacoustic composition is rarely so habitable as here."
        -- Julian Cowley, The Wire: Adventures in Modern Music, Issue 193, March 2000 (London, UK)

"By simultaneously immersing us in, and removing us from, the unstable space (of), sound and time, Heimbecker reconfigures our relationship to them."
        -- Jack Anderson, The Regina Leader-Post (Regina, SK) Oct 28, 1999.

"If it's not your average story, that ís because no way is Saskatchewan artist Steve Heimbecker your average humanoid."
        -- Mary-Lynn McEwen, FFwd (Calgary, AB) Sept 02-08, 1999

"Heimbecker now concentrates on making what he calls "dreamlike vistas" of octaphonic and quadraphonic sounds. If this sounds ambiguous and complicated, it is. When we listen we listen in 4D, he explains... my interest is in trying to get people to listen to space, and the music of that space."
        -- Kristine Finstad, Cloudbusting, Calgary Straight (Calgary, AB) Sept 02-09, 1999.

"His work often combines elements and approaches derived from past styles, yet it nevertheless conveys freshness, spontaneity and charm."
        -- Paul Woodrow, Exhibition catalogue from "Soundpool: The Manufacturing of Silence" (Illingworth Kerr Gallery, Calgary, AB) 1996.

"Without that dash of humanity, he could have gone to work at General Electric, adjusting the sound of blenders to make them more pleasing to the average housewife instead of becoming an artist."
        -- Tracy Johnson, Cameo #13 (Calgary, AB) October, 1996.

"Maybe it's the venue, the church hall above the CSIF, but the space within the (octophonic speaker) circle feels.... holy, energized, magical. I walk outside the circle and the sound becomes dead. Crossing the perimeter again, I am transported."

-- David Jones – C.S.I.F. ANSWER PRINT December, 1996 (Calgary, AB)

Steve likes this kind of concept, the "captivated" audience. It requires the listener to play a part in the event and get lost in the sound. This atmosphere is something that Steve works hard at, to a given environment. Steve places eight speakers, each of which is doing something different with the sounds being generated or played. The listener may stand within the environment, at the centre of all eight speakers, or the listener can move from speaker to speaker interpreting what is presented. The other option is to remain stationary and listen to only one speaker. At this point Jimmy, the rest of the space becomes an ambient soundscape, full of the murmurings of the environment, peoples voices, the clanking of glasses, all of these things become part of the piece. The point is Jimmy, whether you are seriously dedicated to the performance or not, you're there, it's up to you to interpret the chaos, the white noise, the art of the audio, a kind of interactive composition, interactive art. The individual becomes a living piece of the sound; that's pretty damn cool, Jimmy.

"Then I ask him about the progression of Heimbecker? What is it that Steve wants to do with his work? He looks at me, Jim, dead in the eye with that serious look, and says, more or less, "I'm doing it." He adds, though, that he would like to set up something of an art collective, where people could come and gather and learn to do this stuff. Steve adds, that he had to teach himself this craft, it is essentially something Steve worked very hard to learn, which probably adds to the serious way in which he views his craft."

-- Rob Faust, The Eight Phases of Heimbecker, V0X Magazine, CJSW Campus Radio, Calgary, AB. October, 1995

Steven Heimbecker's installation Metaphenophone (It's all Greek to Me) reversed tje usual functions of closed circuit TV and audio surveillance systems... returning the viewer's sounds and image to the embodied individual. The installation frightened me. I looked into a wide panel of smoke cloured glass that reflected the room, as I walked toward it, my image disappeared. A deep thudding noise came from somewhare and echoed into silence. I backed up, startled.
--Christopher Brayshaw, Artichoke Fall/ Winter 1994 (Calgary, AB)

"De fait, ses improvations sonores tentent de secouer nos perceptions du temps et de l'espace. Pour ce faire, Heimbecker a conçu un système singulier, constitué de huit haut-parleurs proportionnels au corps humain et deposés en cercle, telles les colonnes d'un temple. Se sentant invité à circular au sein de l'installation, l'auditeur, par ses mouvements, module directement la recéption des sons."

-- Marie Lachance, Improvisations in Octaphonics, Voir – Québec, QC, 14 au 20 septembre 1995

"The audience roamed the complex quadraphonic sonic waking dream trance ambient sleep compression capsule (of Gregory, Pinchbeck, Heimbecker), everyone experiencing the work differently in ever-changing relation to the speakers. The result was a totally mesmerizing sonic environment."
-- Susan Chafe, Sounding Off, Border Crossings Issue #70, Volume 18, No 2, May 1999 (Winnipeg, Mb)

"The trio of Ken Gregory, Shawn Pincbeck, and Steve Heimbecker were hypnotic. The three collaborated recently for a week to make music for a specific set of equipment. Channeling their electro-acoustic compositions into a large quadraphonic space, their work created an extremely stirring effect."
-- Kevin Matthews, Once tuned in..., Winnipeg Uptown Magazine, November 26, 1998