Looking at archival sound: enhancing the listening experience in audio archives

Jared Wiercinski & Annie Murray

Concordia University Libraries

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

July 25, 2012

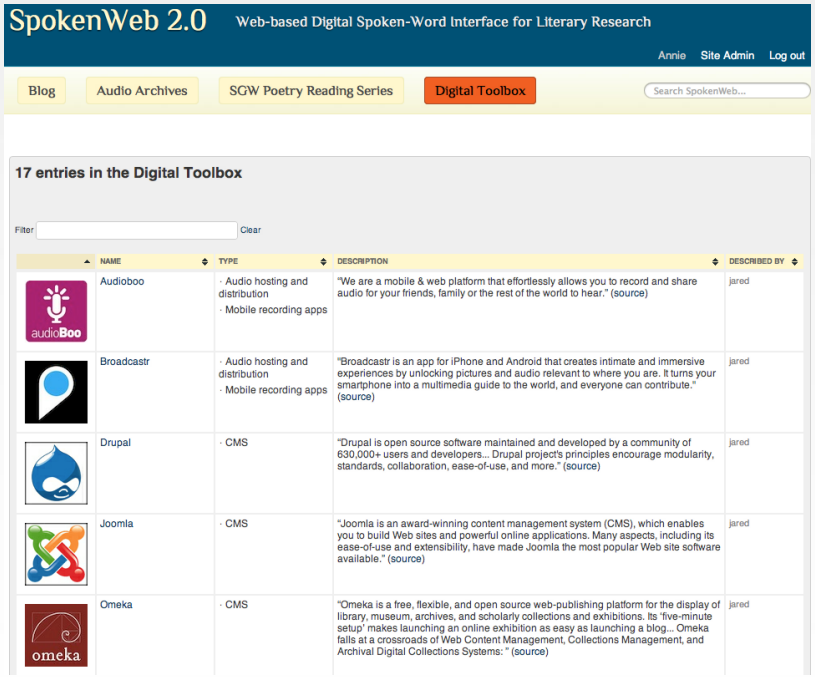
AIBM·IAML 2012 MONTRÉAL

Overview

- SpokenWeb project
- Research on the scholarly process
- Close listening
- Features that facilitate close listening

Spoken Web

Conceptualizing and Prototyping a Comprehensive Web-based Digital Spoken Word Interface for Literary Research

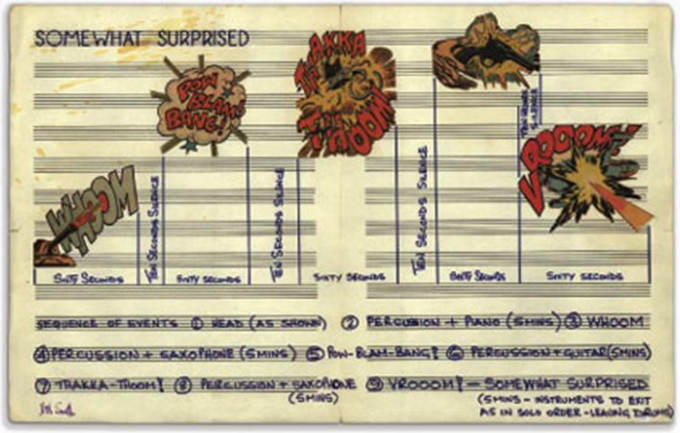


Scholarly Information Activities & Primitives
Palmer, Teffeau & Pirmann (2009)

- Searching
- Collecting
- Reading
  - Scanning
  - Assessing
  - Re-reading
  - Note-taking
- Writing
- Collaborating

Towards close listening

- Humanists “deeply engaged in source material rely heavily on browsing, collecting, rereading and notetaking.”
- In an audio environment, reading and rereading become listening and relistening
- The close reading done by humanists expands to include what Charles Bernstein calls “close listening,” a practice of critical engagement with sounded poems



Poetry and Music Scholars: Affinities

- We can link some of the work of music scholars and literary critics
  - Attentiveness to sounded poetry and sounded music; existence of a written source and a sounded source; versions of works
  - Awareness of performance practice
  - Importance of rhythm, metre, prosody, phrasing
  - Importance of language to both music and poetry

How music scholars listen

- Brown (2002) - Straddling the humanities and social sciences: the research process of music scholars
- Hunter (2006) – A new breed of musicians: the information-seeking needs and behaviors of composers of electroacoustic music
- Liew (2006) – Beyond the notes: a qualitative study of the information-seeking behavior of ethnomusicologists

Previous Work: multimodality of learning & visual features that enhance listening

First Monday, Volume 17, Number 4 - 2 April 2012

HOME ABOUT LOG IN REGISTER SEARCH CURRENT ARCHIVES SUBMISSIONS

Home > Volume 17, Number 4 - 2 April 2012 > **Murray**

Looking at archival sound: Enhancing the listening experience in a spoken word archive

Annie Murray, Jared Wiercinski

Abstract

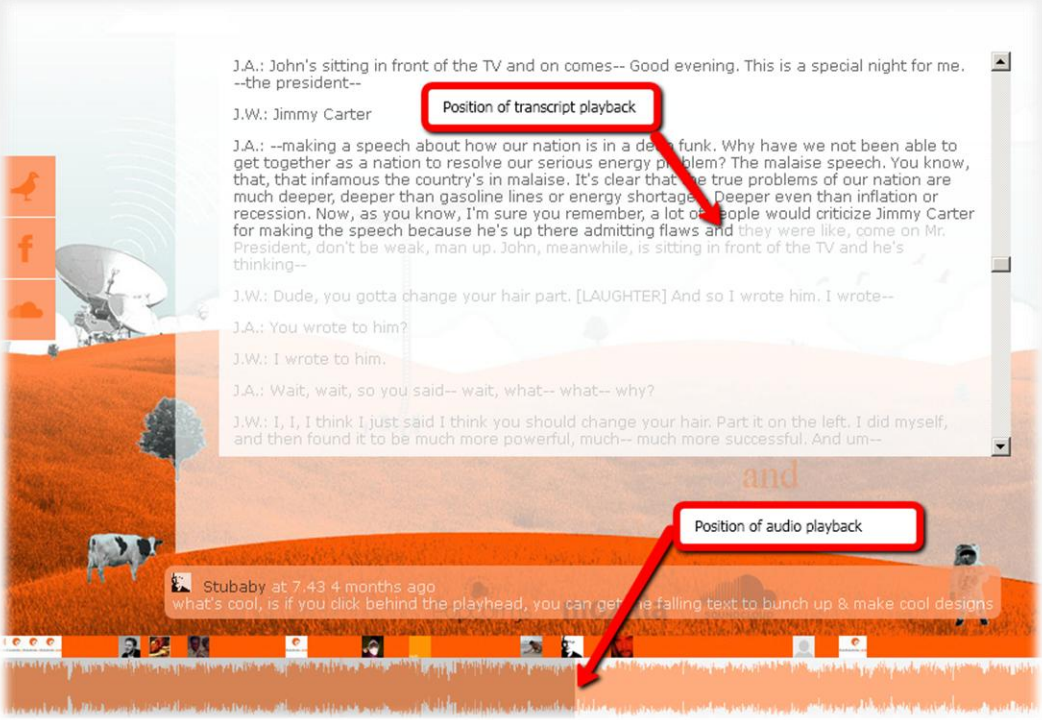
What helps researchers listen in deep and engaged ways to poetry that is delivered on the Web? This paper considers how visual aspects of Web-based archives for poetry recordings can enhance the listening experience for users by providing more context and clarification that can help users better understand and use the recordings. Drawing from studies in a variety of disciplines that demonstrate that much of our learning is multimodal, the SpokenWeb project in Montreal, Canada is using digitized live recordings of a Montreal poetry reading series from 1965–1972 featuring performances by major North American poets to investigate the features that will be the most conducive to scholarly engagement with recorded poetry recitation and performance. Visual features such as tethering audio playback with a written transcript, sound visualization and including videos and images are discussed as means to enhance the listening experience in a digital spoken word archive.

Full Text: HTML

What features might facilitate close listening?

- Tethering audio-playback and written transcript
- Sound visualization
- Annotation
- Playback manipulation

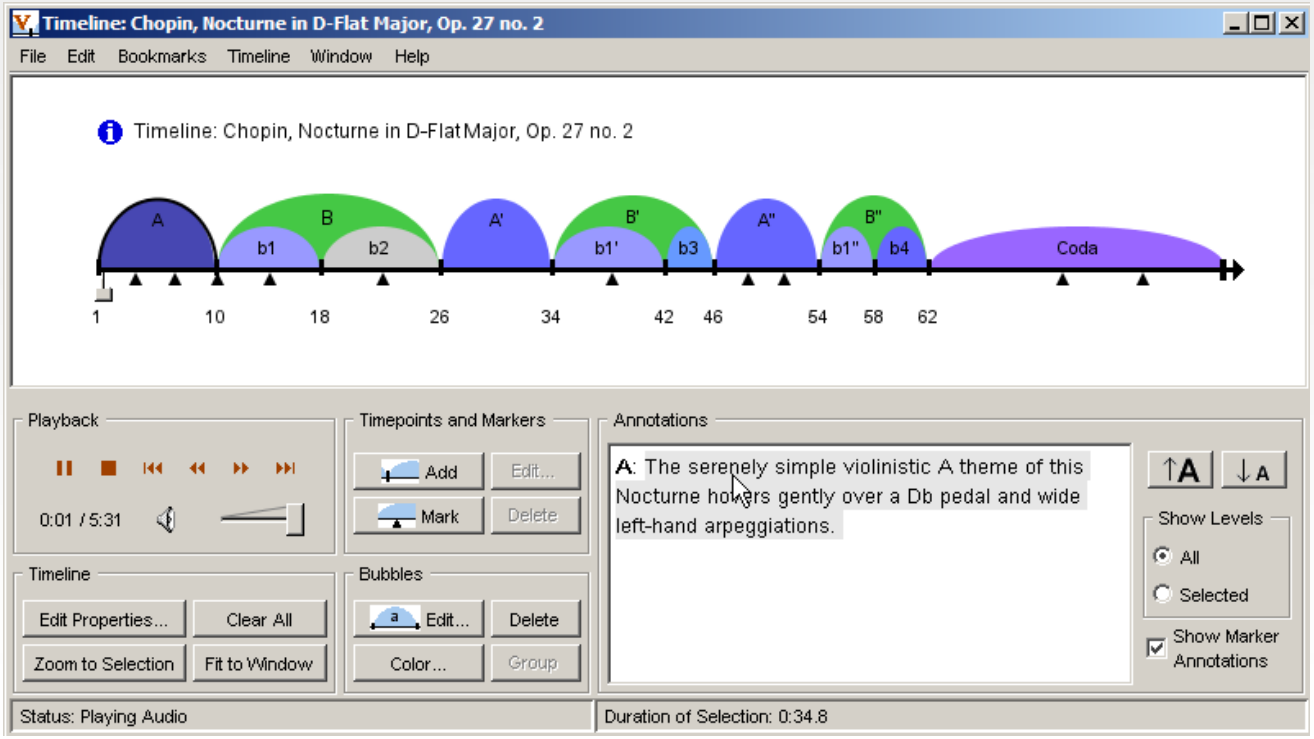
Tethering audio-playback and written transcript: Radiolab



Sound visualization: Soundcloud player

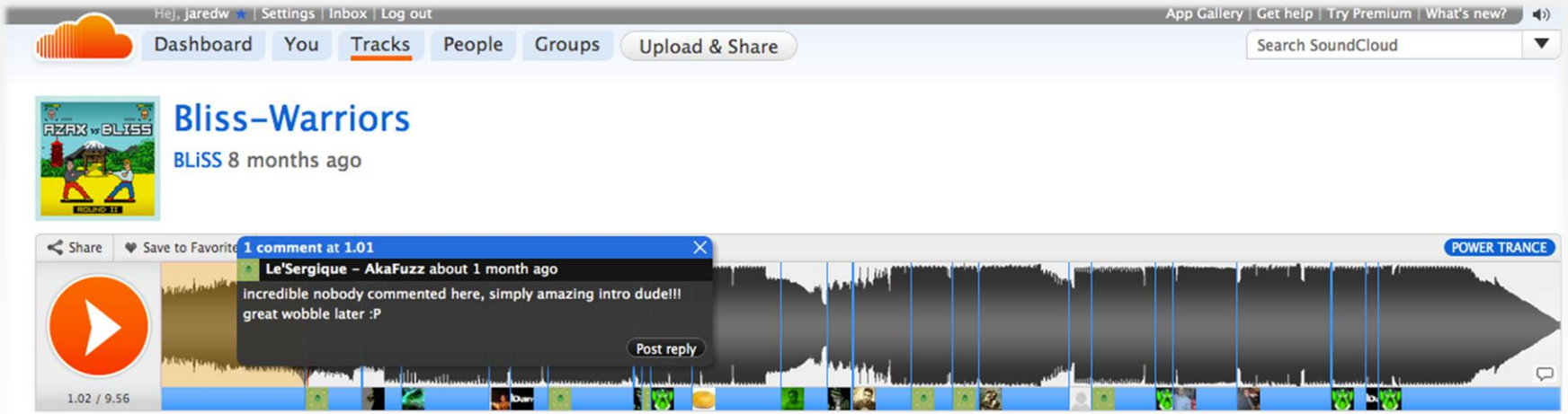
Sound visualization: Mashup Breakdown

Sound visualization & Annotation: Variations Audio Timeliner

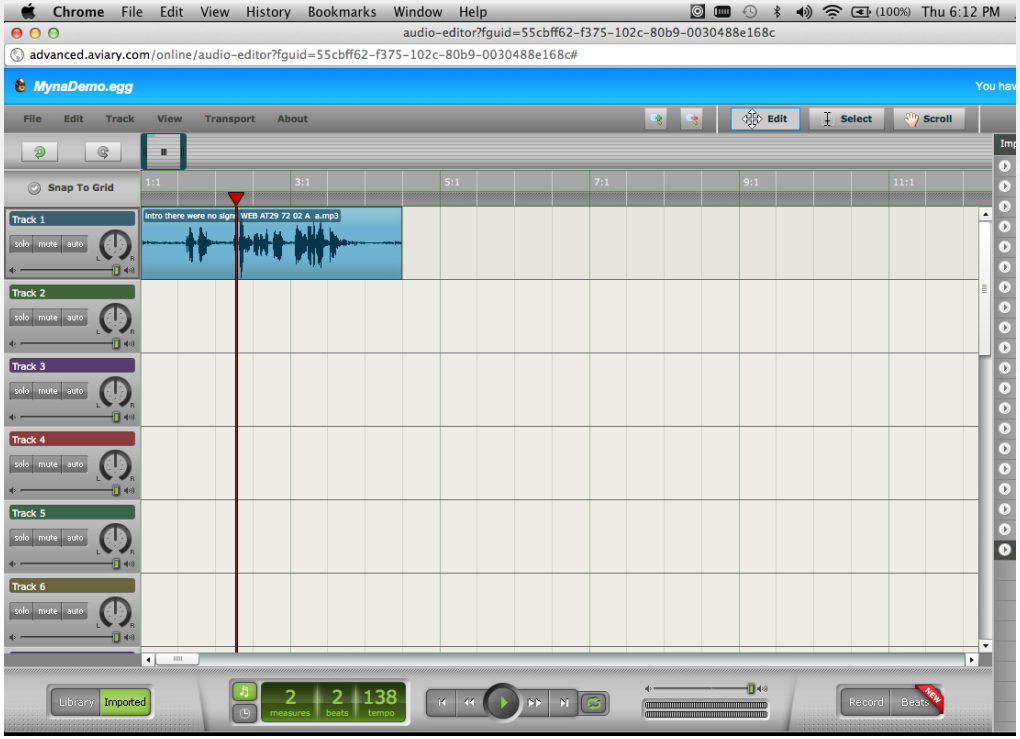


Sound visualization: Smithsonian Jazz Mixer

Annotation: Soundcloud



Playback manipulation: Myna



Listen to the listener.

Contact information:

Jared Wiercinski
jared.wiercinski@concordia.ca

Annie Murray
annie.murray@concordia.ca

Photo credits

1. Kenneth Goldsmith
2. R. Murray Schafer “Concerto for Flute & Offernkleide"
3. Ana Sokolovic
4. James Dean