

# The Invisible Symphony

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The continuous presence of the mass of insects in our living environment cannot be effectively seen with humans' limited view span, but could be heard clearly if we pay attention to the "audible world" that surround us. "Soundscape", simply the panoramic photograph of sound in an environment, offers another gateway to examine the ecological system. We are informed of the realities revealed through biophony (sound of the organisms), geophony (sound of the nature like wind, streams) and anthrophony (man-made sounds including automobiles, machines as well as music). The spectrogram below taken in early morning at Kampung Bantal, a village located in the heart of a national forest reserve, Pahang, enhances the fact that the chorus of insects, joining in harmony with the birds and fowls, has been the backdrop of human lives all this while, and the sound structure formed is no less refined than that of a symphony. Range (different

groups of insects occupying different frequency range), timbre (the diverse tone color), melody and counterpoint (sound motifs responding and alternating to each other) are all present in this multilayered arrangement. Its effect on human growth is yet unstudied, but not a small number of scholars were tempted to speculate that humanity first learned music and composition from the organisms who had mastered the art of ensemble. While standing amazed to the intellectual design shown by the insects collectively, our urban life, centering on newly-developed housing areas accompanied by much monotonous sounds of engines and machineries would in long term alter our sensitivity towards sound, music and beauty.

