



Soundscapes

The experience of silence and sound in the landscape

International Landscape Study Days
2024, XX edition

Treviso, Thursday 22nd and Friday 23rd February 2024

abstract and lecturer's short biography

DAVID GEORGE HASKELL

Professor of Biology at the University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee, and writer

Sounds Wild and Broken. Listening beyond the surface

online preview lecture, Friday 16th February 2024

We live surrounded by sonic marvels and brokenness, from the diverse music of humans and nonhuman animals, to the dreadful noise that we pump into oceans and cities. David Haskell will explore what these sounds can teach us about the past and present. Although sound is ephemeral, it carries memories from ancient times, all the way back to the early days of the cosmos. Understanding these legacies can reshape our listening in the present and root us in life's community. He will also discuss sounds normally inaudible to humans, such as the inner motions of trees and vibrations of insects. These hidden sounds reveal to us some of the processes that shape nonhuman life. Sound is a great connector, passing through barriers and uniting disparate beings. Listening, then, opens us to the interconnections from which life is made, and can be a ground for belonging, justice, and joy.

Starting with the origins of animal song and traversing the whole arc of Earth history, Haskell illuminates and celebrates the emergence of the varied sounds of our world. We learn that human music and language belong within this story of ecology and evolution. Yet we are also destroyers, now silencing or smothering many of the sounds of the living Earth.

Haskell shows that sonic crises are not mere losses of sensory ornament. Sound is a generative force, and so the erasure of sonic diversity makes the world less creative, just and beautiful.

Sounds Wild and Broken is an invitation to listen, wonder, belong and act.

David Haskell is a writer and a biologist. His latest book, *Sounds Wild and Broken*, was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in General Nonfiction, finalist for the PEN/E. O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award, and listed by *The New York Times* as an "Editor's Choice". His previous books, *The Forest Unseen* and *The Songs of Trees* are acclaimed for their integration of science, poetry, and rich attention to the living world. Among their honors include the National Academies' Best Book Award, John Burroughs Medal, finalist for Pulitzer Prize, Iris Book Award, Reed Environmental Writing Award, and National Outdoor Book Award for Natural History Literature. Haskell is William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies at the University of the South in Sewanee, TN, a Fellow of the Linnean Society of London, and a Guggenheim Fellow.