

PROJECT REPORT: STILL EVERY YEAR THEY WENT

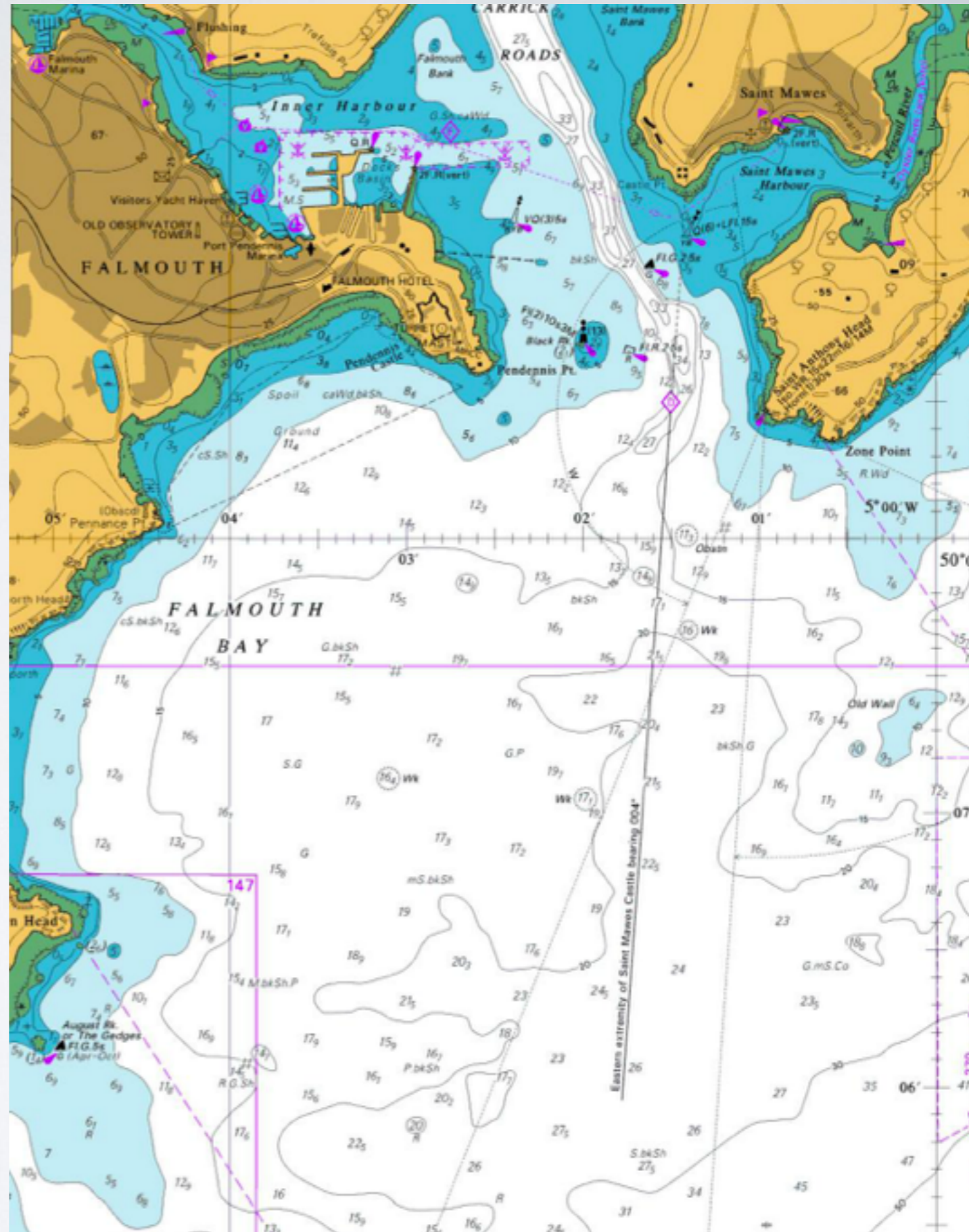
Johnny Lamb & Philip Reeder
Falmouth University



EVENT

- 15th April
- “The Girl Emily” (1974)
- 30 Pounds of Bone (Johnny Lamb) performed 9 new arrangements of traditional maritime songs, with a particular focus on the fisheries.

- recorded at sea
- in the larger falmouth bay area between Pendennis Point and the Helford Passage
- for release in stereo and surround on Armellodie
- to be performed live in surround.



CAPTURE

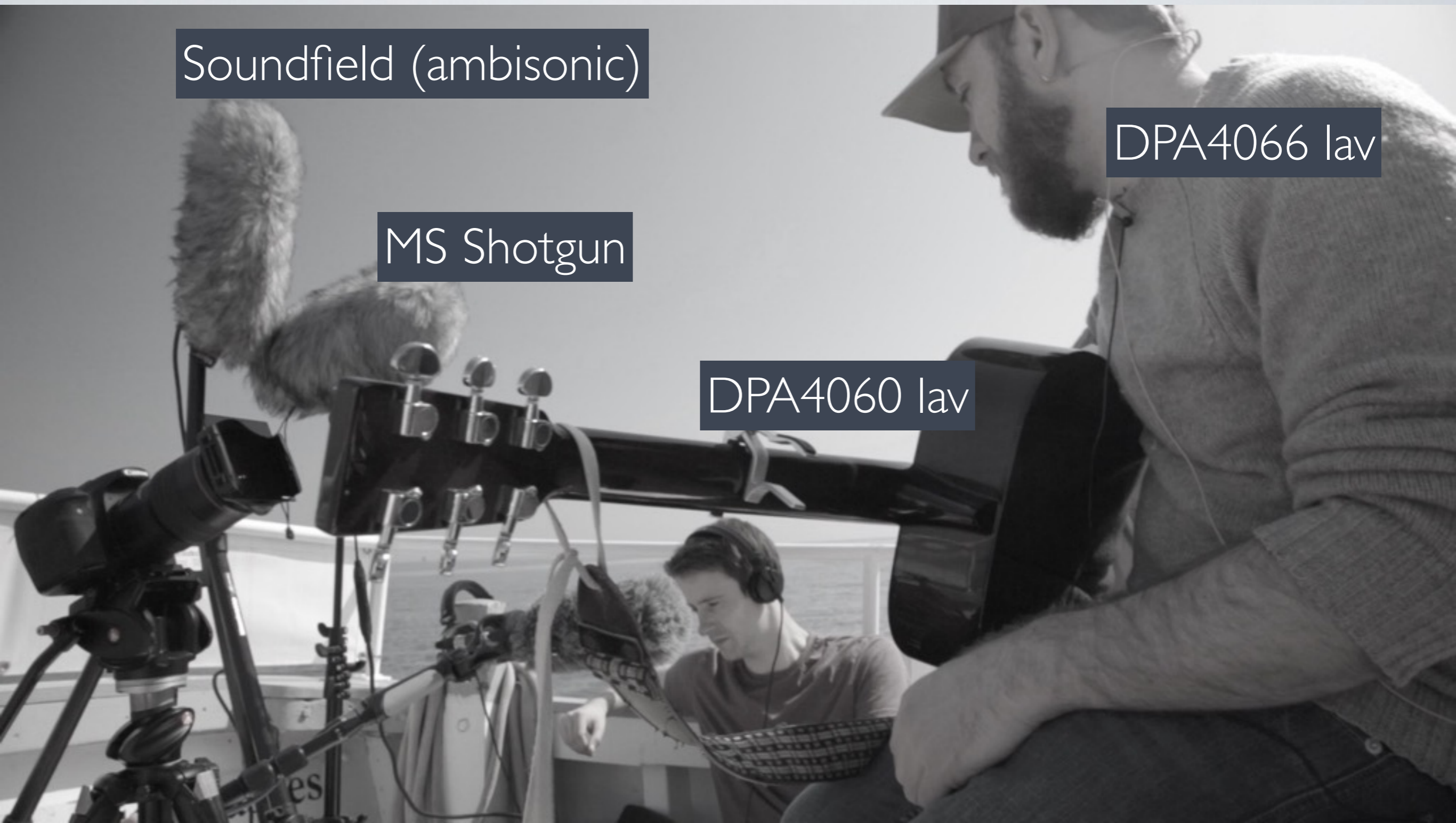
- Soundfield SPS200 (ambisonic)-> Edirol R-4 pro
- Sennheiser MKH418 (MS shotgun) -> Tascam DR70D
- DPA 4060 & 4066 (omnidirectional lavaliers) -> Zoom H4n
- H2a-XLR Aquarian Audio (hydrophone) -> Zoom H4n

Soundfield (ambisonic)

DPA4066 lav

MS Shotgun

DPA4060 lav





- Use of contextually rich ‘wide-angle’ frame microphone setup with the ambisonic, with ability to ‘narrow-focus’ made possible by close microphony.

CONCERNS

- So -
- recording of a performer in a supposedly appropriate environment
- field recording - sound based music
- “I remember wandering into this Poundstore and over-hearing a couple deep in conversation about which tinsel they wanted to buy...Until that moment I had never thought about the sound of tinsel, and yet tinsel has the most extraordinary sound, shimmery, itchy, staticy. No other documentary process, no other medium could have led me to understand tinsel in the way that the field recording did. So field recording is about accessing the environment in a very certain way.” (Felicity Ford in Lane and Carlyle 2013: 87)

- on the one hand embracing the referential frame of phonographies - the song and the sea might be ever present
- but also sounds for their own sake (e.g. hydrophone in the water with jellyfish)
- ...without engaging wholeheartedly with the contemporary fiction of a recorded performance.

- phonography and sound based music composition often referred to as a bottom up process
- this has an obvious tension with the project here

- every use of an extra-performance recording (hydrophones capturing the engine, inserted in between a verse or to conceal a performance blemish)



- is a move towards a stuffed fox smoking a pipe.



There is an obvious series of things to briefly address here:

- The nature of the collaboration
- The rewriting/arrangement of traditional song.
- The songs' origin in/about maritime practice.
- The 'return' (and this word is used somewhat cynically) to the sea.
- The collapsed rendering of an already collapsed experience within the realm of composed and produced music.

A COLLISION OF PRACTICES TOWARDS NEW WORK:

- One practice engaged with sound-based recording.
- One practice engaged with popular music with an interest in trad material.

THE REWRITING/ARRANGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL SONG.

Firstly, to quickly examine the status of the contemporary folksinger: Michael Brocken suggests a potential motive for practitioners' appropriation of these traditional forms: 'The presentation of folk music assumes something more than just a musical style. It is a point of identification.' (Brocken 2003: 141)

A revival is inherently both revolutionary and conservative. It simultaneously comprehends a demand for change in an existing situation and a requirement of reversion to an older form. (Boyce 1993: 10)

THE SONGS' ORIGIN IN/ABOUT MARITIME PRACTICE.

The practical role and necessity for these kinds of song shifts in this way. Tasks performed at sea are affected by newer technology, just as music has been. Furthermore, we are decathected from the fisheries. We have withdrawn our attachment to the practice of harvesting the sea.

THE 'RETURN' TO THE SEA.

In taking the songs (back?) to the sea, there is an exposure of the lack of need for this material within the working context, but at the same time an echo of discontinued fo'c's'le practices. But whatever the pleasure of the skipper and mate during the performance of the songs, it is quickly clear that what is of significance here is the migration of the songs: from land to sea to land, or more truthfully: from collection to composition to performance to capture to further composition to production.

THE COLLAPSED RENDERING OF AN ALREADY COLLAPSED EXPERIENCE
WITHIN THE REALM OF COMPOSED AND PRODUCED MUSIC.

The irony is in the facts - in reality, the best way to set something intangible safely beyond time is to reify it. (Eisenberg 2005: 10)

As Phil has already suggested, the project involves:

The reification of a performance taking to a supposedly appropriate environment.

The capture, not just of the performance, but of the environment itself which implies the intention of immersion.

The point at which production and composition immediately disrupt any possibility for achieving this.

This is where the analogue of taxidermy becomes useful.

If one considers the process of recording music, one is eventually confronted by ontological catastrophe. That's not your voice you hear.... Is it?

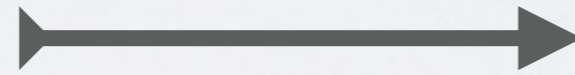
Where do you end and where does the recording begin? Here we start to find Poliquin's 'irresolvable tension' of taxidermy within our own work.



It is useful to think briefly about the work of Viennese Actionist
Rudolf Schwarzkogler.

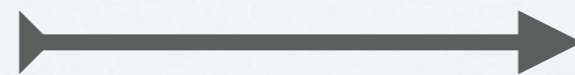
FRAME / CAPTURE

- ambisonic
(distant)

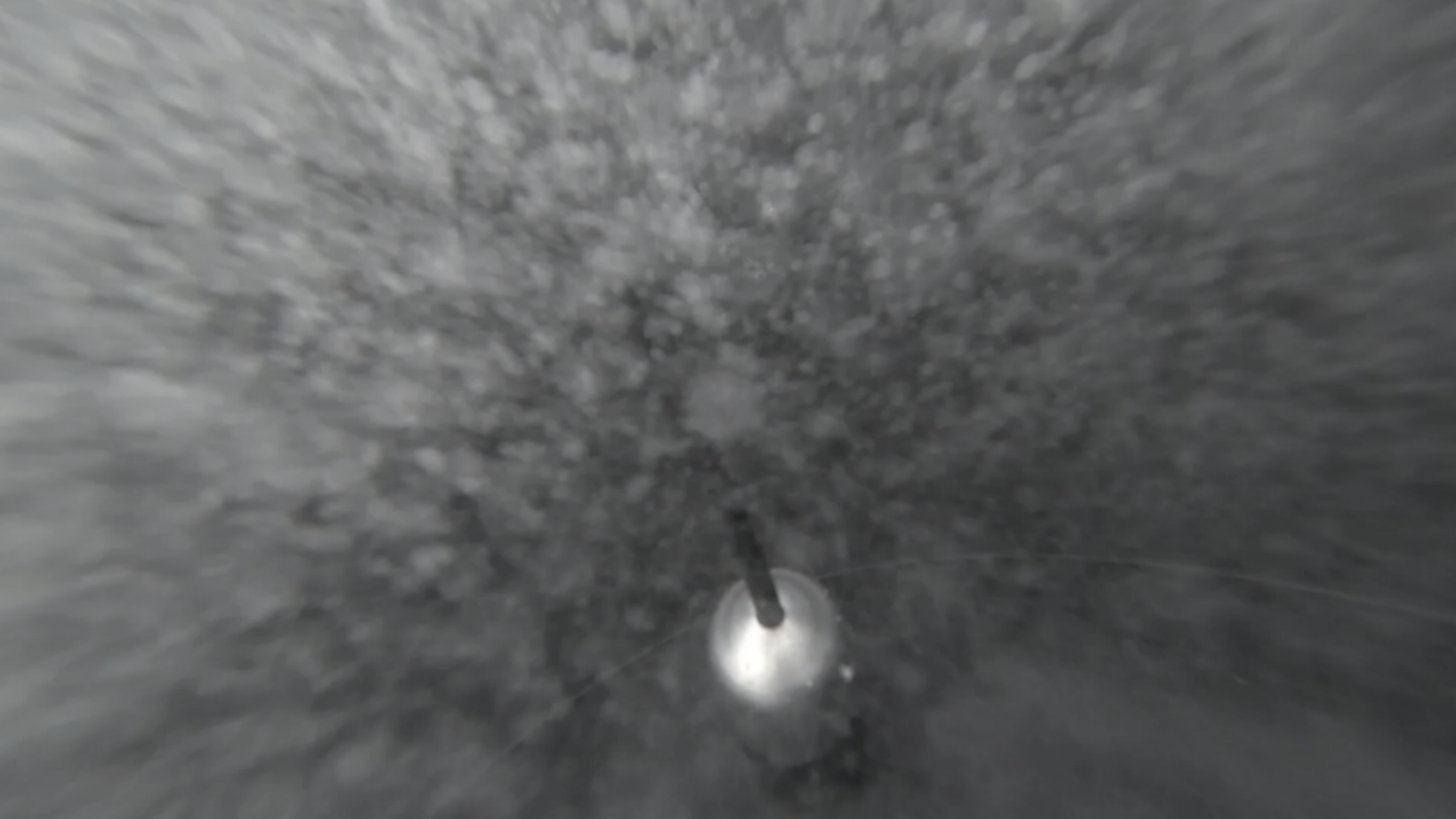


- lavelier
(close)

- lavelier
(close)



- ambisonic
(distant)



end.