

Rip Hayman - Forever Reverb Immersion



Capt. Rip Hayman (US Merchant Marine) is a sailing musician and musical sailor to many faraway places at sea and in sound imagination. His adventures around the world are an immersion in local realities and global human interactions. Then he returns home to the Ear Inn NYC and its cavalcade of human characters. If no one will listen to his stories, he retreats to the old phone booth to tell his ever-taller tales on the Ear Radio channel. Immersion for him is diving into the pool of humanity as much as diving into the sea. Previous events, *Dreamsound* for sleeping audience, *Blindsound* for blind audience and *On the Way*, a film and sound meditation on his near death experience, all extending the limits and depths of human consciousness. Recent work includes *Seascapes*, a presentation of his photos of the world ocean in its myriad moods along

with 3D-VR sea sounds. An excerpt of the mix was published on a Recital LP, with the premiere at the Natural History Museum in Greece.

Charlie Morrow: I'm here with Rip Hayman in the James Brown house. This is a bearded and powerful critter.

Rip Hayman: Is this live?

Charlie Morrow: We are live, we're speaking to the future. Remember it was Marconi who invented radio in order to talk to the dead.

Rip Hayman: Well, you got a lot of choices. You can hear them all on the FM dial, all these voices from the past. It's a miracle of eternal music.

Charlie Morrow: And, of course, we're speaking to the future.

Rip Hayman: If you're alive in the future, please send me a postcard.

Charlie Morrow: I was delighted when I received your reply to my invitation to participate in this book and this podcast. We're talking about immerse. And you said: I don't understand how you could have any immersion unless you're underwater.

Rip Hayman: Most of this as discussed is between your ears. It's an electronic media experience which is quite different than diving in with your whole body into, particularly, water. I mean the real immersive experience – I mean, I'm a diver, so, I go scuba diving or free diving. So there's a lot of talk above the water and until you're down there, you don't really know what there is. You can see a movie or you get on a VR, 3D, Oculus, and you don't get your feet wet. And I consider an immersion means your whole body and your systems and your subconscious are all taken somewhere else. I still think that the immersive technologies that are around today; they're still a bit of a toy without the full experience.

Though I hear that now some technicians are building body suits to simulate sensations on the skin – pressure, warmth coming out of a space suit technology so they can link parts of your body to some controlling mechanism so that you can survive in outer space. And they have, of course, a lot of that in underwater space.

But there's still nothing like being absolutely naked and being thrown in by surprise. You've fallen out of bed like that a couple of times.

Charlie Morrow: I certainly have.

And the problem was not falling out of bed naked. It was that there was a floor you hit and you just kept falling and then woken up later, it would have been a lovely dream ...

Charlie Morrow: Nicely put. One of the immersions that you've had that interests me very much is that you have spent a good deal of your time surrounded by sound and a good deal of your time surrounded by the sea. And I thought in a way that there was a certain ... love of immersion in that, the total predilection for environments and a repeated connection to them. I was wondering what attracted you to seascapes? What got you out there? Whether you got that as a kid ...

Rip Hayman: Oh, I had some experience as a kid out sailing, or we went on, I believe a liner to get to Europe the first time when I was a little kid. So I remember seeing the ocean since I was cognizant. And then once you're really out in the sea, far from land then it's an immersion, but it's with a visible 360 plane around you if it's clear. Or if it's not, you can feel completely lost in the clouds and the rain and the water. And then you're hopefully safe on a boat, but it's about as close as you can get to being without any tangible attachments to anything except for your life jacket. I mean, people do go out and just jump into the ocean and disappear because they want to be part of this.

Like – who was it? – Virginia Wolff who walked into the surf to end her life [correction: she walked into the River Ouse behind her house.] There are poets and sailors that just say: that's fine, that's where I want to be and they go. And I think you get the same thing with some musical experiences, if you're in the right place. And most music is, let's say, social – you want to be with people, you're dancing, you're having a good time; it's immersion in a kind of a shared consciousness, whether it's a mega-rock concert or sitting in a classical music concert and dreaming away to whatever you're listening to.

That's a different immersion than if you're in the right kind of built environment like we had at the Whitney with the Cube that was in the show where people laid down and then they are, more or less, surrounded by whatever it is. That's another portal to consciousness there and hopefully not life threatening ...

Charlie Morrow: [Laughter] I think you've said it all. I think that's pretty much what I wanted to talk to you about. If you have some other thoughts, please feel free ...

Rip Hayman: You know, we too have been out there, exploring the edges of this kind of musical experience. And when I did one of my last productions, which was "On the Way" film and sound for the near-death experience – that's about as immersive as one can get on the way to a place you may not come back from. But I kept coming back and then did that production. And then when I showed the film that we had done with theatrical lighting; it was all analog, spinning orbs and light refraction **on** a projection screen that was shot in 16-mm, meant to be projected on a ceiling so people could lie down and be immersed in that visual with the sound of the kind of sweeping sounds of eternity, if you want to call it that. And I showed it at the Banff Center with Pauline Oliveros at the Acoustic Ecology Conference and I showed it there and people started to get lost in it. When I later showed it at another medical conference, I was told you cannot just show this to people. You have to be ready for their psychological re-entry because they will come out with all kinds of hallucinations and memories – good, bad, and indifferent. So, I was warned not to present it to the public without some professional caregivers. Which is, I think, about as far as you can go, when you're a musician – better have your SWAT team emergency room medical response for the end of the concert folks. Sign up here for your

therapy. I don't think I really have to promote this and I never found production for it. Nobody ever wanted to produce it as an installation.

Charlie Morrow: This is interesting because I never understood the full production. And here I am; part of the impetus for all of this is that the Immersive Sound Committee director for the International Planetarium Society; and the purpose of all this is to put together is to develop the knowledge of, you know, a discussion of immersive techniques, but also to stimulate the creation of immersive projects. So, it would be entirely possible to make a planetarium or dome experience one sort of another from your content. Is the 16-millimeter of sufficient quality or do we have to start from zero?

Rip Hayman: I just digitized it to three-quarter Beta broadcast tape of it that was made of the film. The film was made by this Italian film director. I don't have a copy of the print.

Charlie Morrow: Do you have his name? Is he still alive.

Rip Hayman: Yeah. Yeah. Roberto Bertini.

Charlie Morrow: Bertini?

Rip Hayman: Albertini. If that's correct, he's in Rome somewhere. But he was at NYU and we shot it at the NYU film lab. We set it up in their black box. I've never shown, it never got broadcast, never got produced. It was meant to be a theatrical performance, but I never could get anybody interested because they're all afraid of the topic, basically.

And I was warned about it and I said, yes, that's true. I thought it would be good for a place like the Rothko chapel in Houston, the Audium in San Francisco and a few other places that are cultural access, but they're there, they're open space and can be built in, like that room at the Whitney.

Charlie Morrow: Yea.

Rip Hayman: That's very similar. We had a platform where people comfortably lie down and look up. And a planetarium would be perfect for it.

Charlie Morrow: Well part of this project is to have a listing of shows for a planetarium or domes online so that people can get them.

I don't mean to raise too much of a psychological warning about it. Because if people are properly informed, then they will not, hopefully, have a bad reaction. But what we found is that people start grieving. If you start to imagine your friends and family that are gone, or you're worried about your own health, all those emotions come out? That was the problem. I only sold two copies of the video and they were both to the US military trauma medical research group. And they said: "We need this so we can show it to our trainees, our doctors and field staff, that this is a common experience in the battlefield, severe wounding that's reported very often in military trauma.

Charlie Morrow: Well, that's marvelous that you were in touch with your own self enough to create it to the point where you say, yeah, that's it. To have produced it means that you've had to have been there and say this is what I experienced. I think your medium then is verifying your experience.

Rip Hayman: Well, I got the scars to show for it.

Charlie Morrow: [Laughter]

Rip Hayman: They cut me apart, like a tic tac toe for breakfast when I survived. And Pauline was my encourager, the international woman of great mystery but ...

Charlie Morrow: But a great voyager ...

Rip Hayman: So it was definitely up the deep listening curve. And then, of course, she and Dick Higgins worked on the CD release. He designed the CD.

Charlie Morrow: Really? Did it get released?

Rip Hayman: Yea, it was a Deep Listening release, but I could never get the theatrical auspices to put up the design. And then all of the digitization, electronics and ... So, I remember at Paul at Harvestworks, he said: yeah, you can just do that on a computer. All you need is a streaming stream of light and you can do that, you can project it. I said, well, it's quite different if it's live theatrical lighting.

Charlie Morrow: Yes.

Rip Hayman: Like in a planetarium. I mean, a lot of it's digitized, but it's full-scale ... and therefore it's not just looking at a tablet or a screen. At the time, it was a 70millimeter film. And it's being made for the planetarium. And the people doing it are close friends who have a studio in Hollywood. I think we'll speak to them about working on it. Because they have the full knowledge of how to create the spirit, the dome images for different-sized domes.

Charlie Morrow: The movie, *Moonwalk One*, was done as a flatscreen, at the time 70 mm film and it's being made as a planetarium piece now. The people doing it are close friends who have a studio. I think we'll speak to them about working on it because they have the full knowledge of how to create the dome images for different-sized domes.

Rip Hayman: Well, I can show you the film.

Charlie Morrow: Well, I'd love to see it.

Rip Hayman: I'm working on something to play at my own funeral. I'm working on it.

Charlie Morrow: The elegy.

Rip Hayman: My elegy, yes.

Charlie Morrow: Is there any sound that has the right sound for you at that moment when you leave and when people gather after you're gone? What would be the Rip echo?

Rip Hayman: My reverb.

Charlie Morrow: Your reverb.

Rip Hayman: I want a reverb so long that I'll live forever.

Charlie Morrow: That's a good one.

Immerse! Podcast 11: Rip Hayman - Forever Reverb Immersion

Seafarer soundfarer & Morrow collaborator at the Ear Inn & elsewhere

Playlist

Interview by Charlie Morrow
Incidental sound samples used

- 1 Base inTRO2 • Morrow vs b/art
- Seascapes • Rip Hayman
- Waveflutefunk • Rip Hayman vs b/art
- Waves for Flutes • Rip Hayman
- Dreams of India & China Two • Rip Hayman
- Dreams of India & China • Rip Hayman
- Moonwalk One • Morrow

Mixed & collaged by bart plantenga, mastered by Sean McCann

Rip Hayman: Pauline Oliveros wrote a lot about that – the persistence of any sound, in relation to this great echo chamber and continuous installations of sound. But I remember one saying: Whatever sound we make it actually continues to persist in the universe amidst all the other interference. In some ways you can listen to almost anything that's ever been done, if you're in the right

meditative mood, which is why people hear the voice of god all the time even though he ain't sayin' nothin' no more. Humans, figure it out on your own. I'm tired of you prayin' to me man. When you look at the water, you have incredible complexity of wave patterns because they've come from all over the ocean and even microscopically and you think it's still water. The water is never still, there's some motion, even at the atomic level.

Charlie Morrow: That's what our elegy should be; we've been making wave music pieces – it'll be the eternal wave.

Rip Hayman: *That's right, that's why we should pass out the audio surfboards*

Charlie Morrow: Love it. Fantastic!

Rip Hayman: Keep paddling forever.