Andrea Polli
Needless to say Andrea Polli's trip to Antarctica was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. There was intense sunlight 24 hours a day, the most clean air you could imagine and an environment which she describes as a natural „hifi soundscape“, a place so quiet that it gives you the feeling of hearing your own nervous system.

There is an intriguing quote by computer scientis Paul Dourish which perfectly defines her work: „There is more information available at our fingertips during a walk in the woods than in any computer system…”. There is an immediate connection to the Antarctica project: One part of her work there involved learning how weather and climate information is gathered. She expected this to be done using automated weather stations, which are basically nothing but a little box mounted on a mast, containing a data device, a battery and the meteorological sensors. Truth be told, these automatic station have become essential. And yet, as it turned out, it is still mainly people who are responsible for the largest part of the workload. This seemed to be running against rational logic, because it is much more costly and even outright dangerous to send meteorologists there. Still, the outcome of her analysis did not provide her with a clear answer. As a matter of fact, the solution remained entirely intangible. So to get back to the quote by Paul Dourish, the amount of information that is out there and that you're taking in through your senses is incomprehensibly vast. And apparently, we're processing a lot of it without actually being aware of it. This has in turn made an important contribution to her work as an artist. In her sound pieces, the notion of an intangible element – the things you can not explain, can not quantify, can not intellectually understand - has become a key.

In her work „Sonic Antarctica“, also released as a CD on Gruenrekorder, this is becoming clearly apparent. Andrea programs software which will make use of numerical values to change particular aspects of samples. You can think of how the wind produces sound: It moves through different objects and thereby changes their timbre. So to get back to the question of the relationship between music and data: To Andrea, this data has a particular form, a shape, which will become visible in the music. What you are therefore hearing is a particular quality of Antarctica as music.

Christoph Korn
As mentioned in the introductory essay, not all questions regarding the relationship between music and data can be answered as clearly as on a hit song. This is certainly true for the work of Christoph Korn and especially so for some of his most recent pieces, including „Waldstücke“, an online composition, „I speak this text“, originally a radio play as well as „Series Invisible“ the first edition of which was published last year. That release alone made some people wonder. Essentially, it was nothing but a little book which contained textual descriptions of recordings which had been deleted – no audio, no sound, just descriptions of the place where the audio and the sound came from. It got a noteworthy prize and some comparisons to the emperor's new clothes – certainly one of the more controversial things Gruenrekorder have published over the years.

Korn's approach touches upon an intriguing aspect of the idea of sound as data – or perhaps also on what makes music different from data. Usually, when composing, one accumulates material. One starts with nothing and arrive at something. One adds elements, like a painter adds colour to the canvas, the way he would add lines, circles or concrete objects like people, cats, dogs. Here, however, everything is about taking things away. It is about starting with something and ending up with a lot less. This is, of course, a tradition the minimalists have employed for centuries, but it is somehow becoming very contemporary through the thought of sonic digitisation. If music is indeed data, then the question is: What is really hidden behind the ones and zeros?

Achim Wollscheid
Reactions are a key element of Achim Wollscheid's approach. One may possibly not be able to tell from his current work but he has a background in Rock music and one of the worst thoughts to him has always been the way classical music is presented in public: As a passive consumption of what is happening on stage without any kind of feedback loop – except perhaps polite applause at the end. On the contrary, during a Rock concert, the way an audience reacts will influence what one is doing, creating at least partially the sensation of co-operating on something together. This ideal has remained important to him throughout the years.

Roland Etzin
Software transforming an image into sound has become all but ubiquitious. And yet, it was exactly one of these programs which inspired Roland Etzin to come up with „Image Data“. To Roland, what made this program interesting was not so much the musical quality of the result, but rather its structure – and how much you could somehow detect analogies in the music to the way the photograph was organised.

So the point of „Image Data“ is not to prove that you can transform image into sound. But to have a look at how image and sound correspond with each other. For each sequence, Roland is only using site-specific material – meaning if you have a scene in the forrest, then the only material which is used for that piece are sounds and images taken on that spot. There are many different ways of processing the material, for example by translating images to digital files and then have these files trigger Software-Synthesizers. These Software-Synthesizers, meanwhile, will only use sound sources culled from field recordings. So it's a game of lots and lots of connections, of ideas which are all related to each other in some way and which will hopefully, lead to a clearer insight into the way visual and acoustic properties are related.

„Image Data“ is also a good way of showing how you can make use of the data properties of sound to arrive at fresh musical results. In the run-up to the Data festival, Roland mentioned that he was excited himself about where the different transformations would take him. What it does is replace the entirely subjective experience of the way one remembers what something sounded like in one's mind with a somewhat more objective picture, which can be discussed by different people. Each of these angles deepens the impact one would get from just looking at a silent, static picture or a pure field recording. Which also goes to prove that even if music is nothing but data, it is still all about emotion.

Derek Holzer
Even today, Derek Holzer's technique of using overhead projectors to trigger sound looks futuristic. In reality, as he's pointed out several times before, his work is part of a long tradition of experiments, which goes all the way back to a lot of Russian composers and technicians as well as the BBC Radiophonic Workshop. Actually, what looks futuristic today was at one time, long ago, the direction electronic music seemed to take in general: Some of the earliest Synthesizers worked with light impulses

and some of the earliest music was recorded on film strips. So you would transform sound into light waves and then record them onto celluloid through photographic processes. Vice versa, there were very early visual Pianos which you would play with a regular keyboard, but which would create projections on a wall by sending light through a series of optical discs. And there's another great example of the interrelatedness of image and sound on Derek's homepage: Composer Daphne Oram developed a technique of painting little sketches and figures on 35mm film and using this as source material for her music – coincidentall called Oramics.

And just like there is a long tradition of working between the worlds of visual and sonic arts, there is actually a rich tradition of specifically using the overhead projector. Entire festivals have been built around the device, such as the „Art of the Overhead“ in Sweden, which consisted of seminars, workshops, performances and a psychedelic closing party. Tonewheels was, in fact, planned during a similar event called "Kunst & Musik mit dem Tageslichtprojektor", where artists from different fields came together to come up with creative solutions. Derek certainly has.