

## Sound Off: Air Traffic (Soundcheck: Monday, 01 March 2010)

Tue, 2 Mar 2010 WYNC Radio 93.9 FM – AM 820

In the latest installment of our monthly Sound Off series, we examine noise from airplanes and helicopters. New flight patterns over some New York neighborhoods have generated complaints from residents. Joining us today to discuss aircraft noise is Arline Bronzaft, chair of the noise committee of the Mayor's Council on the Environment. Also with us is Tony Bongiovi, a sound engineer, record producer and long-time pilot of a Twin Comanche.

Tell us : Is your life affected by noise from air traffic? Are you hearing more or less noise lately? Leave a comment -- we might read yours during today's show. [View original source »](#)

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" Hi this is John -- you're listening to WNYC. On demand pod cast streaming and MP3 downloads available when you want but wnyc.org. And iTunes."

" Come and live with the we'll yeah."

" And you can you. Some exotic foods. Changes in the air but it's not one that everybody's happy where. This is sound check and Jon -- and in the next hour sound off our monthly series on noise continues with a look at Air traffic.

But to begin the romance of air travel that **Frank Sinatra** -- about well that's -- distant memories these days. The skies -- more crowded and it appears noisier. The closure today of the largest runway at JFK for the next four months means rerouted flights over residential neighborhoods in Nassau County.

Meanwhile the FAA has melded and airspace redesign initiative. A plan to cut down on delays. By altering flight paths over the congested northeast it's drawing strong opposition from cities towns and -- counties. Who claim to suffer from shaking windows and rattled nerves. Of Course the New York area isn't alone in confronting this issue and questions remain about how detrimental air traffic noise really is. In a moment we'll talk with a sound engineer who's been applying his musical expertise to aircraft.

But first witnesses **Arline Bronzaft** -- Chair of the -- committee of the -- council on the environment. Arlene welcome back."

"Thank you for having me."

"Why is air traffic noise such a big problem."

"It's a big problem because the FAA has not appropriately assessed the impact of noise on communities. When they first film about the airspace redesign and I do have documents dating back

to... Indeed noise concerns was part of their 118 proposed design. But by 2001, they just kept safety and efficiency and dropped -- I think communities are outraged because they know that the FAA's employing. Methodology. To assess impacts but -- it. Even the people they used to work for the FAA. On grants and on proposals. But have come to the realization. That they no longer can. Except the methodology. And let me just give you an example. My daughter lives in Queens so I can speak very personally about -- a -- I told him not to moved him. Because it is near the airport but my other daughter moved to an area with -- aircraft noise. And they re -- complaints over her areas so you're never safe when it comes to noise. But she gets awakened by one plane at 5 AM let's say that one play a single incident. The FAA and using the 65 DNL. Methodology to assess. How much of -- handle it's it's an average which -- the evening noise incidents more than the daytime but it's an average over 24 hours. You don't get these single incident and those have to be -- it and they ignored that. If you're and that's a serious problem because they're using methods that no one else uses."

" I should point out that we did try to get the FAA needed to be a part of of this segment or are sound off series on noise today looking specifically air traffic and they they declined. But this 118 document you have. Has series of bullet points bullet point number three is noise guests by the time the thing actually goes to 2001. It is on that that bullet point is gone -- thought."

" Safety deficiencies certainly you want those there 100%. Is there are health hazard to to living in a flight path I mean is that the kind of -- it's just an annoyance or that genuine."

" Health -- noise has gone past the noise and stage unfortunately our government does not fund studies. That's look at the impacts of noise on health. But thanks to the European studies. We find that they have demonstrated. Without question. That noise can impact cardiovascular. Disorder is in fact more recent research has shown that people living near airports have increased drought. The World Health Organization. Has stated that noise diminishes quality of life. And two studies and I did one on a community exposed to aircraft noise when they lit the that this community was your local audience the other one near Newark. -- they -- equally -- is diminished you can't use a vacuum and you get awakened early in the morning or in the middle of the night. You can't listen to TV. You can't converse. The may not be health issues that you and I talk about them but take something -- health hell does not merely mean. Health innings a good state of health and diminish quality of life. Means there -- living less than a good state and in time this could have an impact on your physical health that we can --"

" I know that there's a bunch of things happening I mentioned just this morning JFK shuts down its biggest longest runway it's going to be shut down for four months. Lots of planes being rerouted. There will be other planes circling waiting there opportunity to land on the three remaining runways at JFK. There's also the the airspace redesign thing which has been in courts in like six different states all of whom are affected by. This this area this this corridor in the northeast. Is the situation getting worse or are there. Factions of -- that are making things better."

" the day and with respect to today's closure must've been aware that this was going to happen. We just -- New -- suddenly we're told this is gonna happen. Before you do something like this you should take into effect. The routes that you will be implementing and you should look at the noise to just say

that you're gonna come to the communities now and talk about it. I think communities note that nothing there. We'll realistically what could the F fade you have to get planes at a airport lifeline. Something I do not fly the Washington I take Amtrak. -- like California and if you tell me only three of four flights available that day. Those ones I would have to look -- so. We should have built up our rail system. I think what the government has done is it's allowed the FAA. Which I consider that the friends of airports and airlines. Not an agency looking after the well being of this nation. Re really have destroyed -- part of our railroad system to come back particularly for sure if I'm living in Germany. And I want to go from an album city to Paris I -- a train to Frankfurt and then I would like Paris. We have to really think of transportation. Policy to just think of air travel. Dependent on rail. And it is really to me ignoring. The potential solutions to the problem yes we do fly -- you fly but if you're going to do -- think about going over the water. Maybe not a over the land. I -- people suggested that the F and they know."

" Well you've got three major airports surrounding the city. You've got to teleport so on either side yes patent there is an awful lot of air traffic and that produces a lot of noise."

" And according to FAA documents obtained by one local activist in Brooklyn. Since 2006. Low altitude plane traffic over park slow yes which is not near any of those three -- with that has increased by 52%."

" Now that's in Park Slope I live in Park Slope I've noticed more planes going overhead yes I cannot imagine what it would be like to be living. In Howard Beach with a rock -- near JFK or to be living you know in northern queen."

" I do like a little more data side when I go there I -- stuck on planes coming out and talk about the impact. With the all the research I've done two studies on the impacts on people. It took my thirteen month old grandson to teach me something really now littered. He was playing in the backyard and every time a plane came over it disrupted his play. Every single time. Now to a child who's thirteen months old play is learning and I've done the research on the effects of noise on -- To watch him stopped. And just -- him. So why -- from the plane comes over to hold these -- the child is now four years old when he hears nearly sealed a year. But more importantly he couldn't play and I watched enough -- comparable situation trying to flawlessly. Until she collapsed. Every time she closed to rise and is only about 1112 months ago. Every time she characterized the plane came -- I would like the FAA to actually get into those communities. Two of the surveys that really address the impacts of people having never done anything like the FAA today. Does not does not not really -- their mark tree is not in homes the study that I did which the F they criticized. They said we went. Two homes it was too few watching the catalogs and number. Well we had monitors in homes for 24 hours. Have the funds. To do lots of homes but we at least took a sample the F they had not done that."

" But we're speaking with Arlene bronze -- chair of the -- committee of the mayor's council on the environment and we're talking in our monthly sound off series which is the first Monday of each month. About air traffic noise this time around in there certainly is -- enough of that and more coming it seems and listeners. Is your life affected by noise from air traffic especially."

" If you live in Queens near Easter at LaGuardia or JFK we'd like to hear from you or you live in New Jersey near Newark Airport."

" Are you hearing more or less noise lately. You can call us at 212433. WNYC. Mets 433. 9692. Or leave a comment on the sound check page WNYC. Dot board."

" And joining us now on the line is Tony **Bon Jovi**. "

" Record producer low time pilot he flies at twin Comanche he's an award winning sound engineer record producer studio designer. -- to that **Bon Jovi** yes."

" But his work with acoustics -- led him to develop techniques to lower the sound level in his own aircraft. Tony welcome sound check."

" Thanks for having me and jobs like as a about it on -- that that's actually tell you tonight. Yes that's correct. My engineering background as it is in an -- I've been fine for an awful long time in most of the noise and worked and I've done. An aviation has been on the inside of helicopters or corporate aircraft and I've used. My little one commissioner to run a lot of the technology that I developed through that kid tested and deceit. It -- fact that it's it's viable and cost effective to implement and corporate aircraft and helicopters especially. So that that's basically my background there had been flying an awful long time and been listening with a great deal of interest I've done. A lot of work an environmental north east studies. Four places like clubs where there's I'd -- dance club or adapt musicians playing. And how it impacts on. And he people who live in the area and have. Aboriginal extensive amount of papers on what to do and also been consultant for communities. Even in Manhattan because. The there are noisy. Levels that are acceptable that are published by individual communities including the city of New York. There are daytime levels in nighttime levels of distances from the source. That you have to comply with -- And I put a great deal of effort into helping somebody's the club owners that operate the club well into 2 and 3 o'clock in the morning. And we've done an array and have a variety of different applications of how to get the noise out of this we do with masking."

" Antonia how if you put this to work in terms of you know. Aviation. Air traffic noise in New York is it right."

" This isn't about to get to that okay the problem of course with airplanes is. That you have to be able to take safety into consideration you have to get on the ground. There are procedures. That have been implemented by the FAA called noise abatement procedures and these are usually published. And you're you're flying guide that you use your maps and on sometime to -- on the runway. Bit instructions will tell you that they be printed right -- when you take off you have to make a sharp turn to the right."

" And and climb very -- and high time political high angle of attack so as to avoid noise sensitive areas and."

" That has been followed that's a very strict rule that pilots have to file no matter what your flights so the noise abatement procedures are designed."

" To keep as much of the noise away from the community it's possible. Unfortunately."

" Jets corporate commercial airplanes same make a -- lot of power that's necessary to get that -- off the ground of course when your landing."

" The problem there if you need to have certain amount of space between airplanes. And the FAA has tried and pilots also contribute to -- we have to have the safest way to get on the ground."

" And a lot of times that may not be conducive to good north practices especially. When you have an airport that's gonna congested area like New York City but there are procedures. Wherever possible got to implement it to that takes noise in the consideration."

" So the people down underneath him the steep angle of attack for taking off."

" Might help abate noise somewhat but for safety reasons you can't have a steep angle of attack when -- when your landing a big commercial jet."

" Well no that's true and and even on and take off configurations that angle of attack as it's called. Have to be tapped flown in such a way that if something happens to -- what -- the exit on the airplane that you can keep still keep flying. Are you installed airplane but unfortunately when you have to come down -- you'll have much choice in the matter and."

" Probably the."

" That that they run right they get thousands paid off the end of the right where we are constantly making. Throttle adjustments to maintain what we call a glide past so that you get on the ground safely and unfortunately there -- until much you can do about that so. That that's my experience and and you know we we try."

" I am I disagree with that. First double I find the word -- the knowing sensitive areas that big offensive I'm sorry I know that's the word you used. It's noise affects people. Let's not -- noise sensitive areas not -- it's not used sensitive uses let's call with these days -- people. Yes I took care about the safety of the planes I fly. Well what about the safety of the people on the ground. Their health is at issue and this is a country where we're looking. At health programs and we haven't even tackle the impacts. Of noise especially aircraft noise on people's health. Now I don't think the FDA has done the best job there have been suggestions that sometimes the planes. Could fly more quickly over the war that. Waterway next to Atlanta in other words -- what to say that the FAA's doing the best in terms of people on the ground. You have to state affirmatively. That they are using assessments. That correctly. Assess the impact let me just say. Well I in the latest paper and this is criticism of the FAA and they they lost. And this was a case in Minneapolis. When you consider 65. Decibels from her. The the level of which people should how should tolerate. What we know that at 55 their problems and in need of retribution at 45. When you ignore. The individual incidents. Following you don't look at the impacts of de -- walk it's a loss where noise. Is reverberated differently when you would know all these things. They knew how come up with procedures. That I really assessing the impacts on people. Because you happen generated the data. That allow you come up with that those procedures and that's world disagree with."

" well let me let me let me ask you Tony I mean a bit different people have done different things to try and tackle this problem is it true that you once tried to land at Westchester airport and they turned you away because. The no is of of play or landing --"

" That story do it drops them off in Connecticut and daddy they have an elf like policy from 10 o'clock at night. And my I was talking -- controller message it's only five after pentagon can get them. And the S and control -- just coming in from the long islanders over -- Long Island and they said that. Well if you do you better be on fire because he can get out here so that they had they enforce."

" That kind of that noise restrictions. And and by the way north sensitive areas that's and that's that aviation terms that's used quite often but generally. And means that there is a community underneath or something that noise is gonna impact and it could be more than people yet you're right noises."

" As a problem."

" But the first issue of course and aviation safety and then hit it the efficiency of get airplanes on the ground."

" Going out over the water although that's a great idea that may not be conducive to good good. Safety when it comes to landing some."

" Go through all kinds of gyrations to get into Washington national airport to avoid the Pentagon to avoid these. These restricted areas -- and for a little airplane it's pretty easy to produce those. Those somewhat safe file into a maneuvers but it but it gets demanding and you got a real short -- so there's there's a lot to be said eat spirits until much. That can be done they try to stop the aircraft and -- choice to make it as as noise pollution free as possible of course yeah. All noise impacts on health absolutely in the -- take a weighted curve. Which is talking what he's talking about it'll take an average should take noise readings. Every so often and then they'll average that and they say well that's the that's how loud something -- but any one incident."

" Could contribute -- volume level that would be much greater but yet when you average it comes down. Yeah that's what --"

" Area as the inevitable moments of planes going to get ahead really ski with his way out of out of alignment with what that's that's published averages. -- we're talking about several things as. Commercial jets which can't make the the quick maneuvers of a smaller. You know private plane that's the type to Tony's talking about. This helicopter noise we wanna continue talking about all of that we need today we need to get some calls and comments as well. You can call us on the line 212433. WNYC. Or leave a message on the centric page it wnyc.org. Slash sound check. And will continue our conversation about air traffic noise in just a moment."

" And then coming up later. British singer and pianist Jamie -- has collaborated with everyone from **Clint Eastwood** to Spinal Tap. You'll join us to play lives in our studio."

" Check out today's subject line."

" I remember hearing the concorde's sonic boom at my grandparents' house and Howard Beach and I have to say the normal airplanes flying overhead seemed at least as loud. But the sonic who was new when it was disturbing because none of us had a chance to a climate ties to."

" For the rest of the story this ascension PGA WNYC dot born."

" Yet."

" And coming."

" We're back on sound check on John -- it's march 1 it's our monthly series sound off about how noise impacts our lives and today we're talking about air traffic noise. With Arlene runs chair of the -- committee of the -- council on the environment. And Tony **Bon Jovi** award winning record producer but also -- longtime pilot he's developed techniques to lower the sound level of his twin Comanche aircraft. And we have comments on the website we have callers on the line what's. -- right into the control room where producer Joan Myers moderating the comments jolt."

" John our listeners that girl in New York is happy that -- air traffic from the west side teleport is being moved downtown she writes the west -- help -- is merely a launching pad for pleasure seekers at the expense of local residents. Who must endure the noise from spring to autumn. Krista from Brooklyn Heights warns us though the Manhattan downtown -- is particularly unsuited as a -- as abusing helicopter base noise is reflected off high buildings. And off the water and that increases noise levels -- Chris is concerned about what that means for Brooklyn residents. -- and -- in New Jersey writes airplanes dogs music police sirens they're all noises of life if you feel that -- impairing your life perhaps you should move away from all Britain might be beneficial for you -- outer space. And Betty and has a question for our pilot Tony. Indiana writes do pilots fly planes lower in inclement weather it seems some days the plane sound much lower than others --"

" No they here's what happens in calmer weather. They're they're strict rules that you must adhere to its called it an instrument flight rules. And legalize and use the same airspace. That year Continental Airlines US air uses that the air traffic controllers the only way that they can."

" Tell the difference is by the speed or how fast airplanes going back."

" When it's time to get into the metropolitan area sometimes I'll be above. Commercial airliner and sometimes below its just that the inclement weather what that does is that reflects more sound because the more humid. That the areas in the more likely that it does sound travels a lot farther and moisture here so. But now we fly and inclement weather at the same altitudes. Except where. Far away we can't go nearly as high as corporate or commercial aircraft camp but once you get into the New York area you're pretty much stuck with what -- control -- tell you to do."

" Date date -- take control airplane they tell you what to turn when the climb would come down."

" And all that is done by strict set of rules that's instrument flight rules."

" good point. You made the point about moisture and how sound is reflected differently. A -- the FAA consider that when it. Uses methodology. To assess impacts of people living in the water which.

Doesn't -- water water. Don't most of most airports in JFK -- went pretty -- it doesn't did they ever it's as the fact that there are parking lots. And you have low flying planes over the parking lot -- off -- and they're just so many variables that are ignored. And that's really I think what troubles the individuals. That --"

" There's there's there's two things first when you when -- when you're flying on an instrument conditions can't see anything you depend on of the airplanes. And unfortunately there's."

" It's all electronic so what happens -- happened as a function of what what's necessary to do."

" But there is one thing that I think you're missing and that's important all these discussions about north and how it impacts. But the aircraft manufacturers themselves. Have taken a great deal and it made tremendous strides in lowering the noise levels. Of the engines on airplanes tremendous amount of work has been done a better and the area of helicopters -- kind of stuck because you've got this. Thing called planetary gear box and make that -- pitched -- it's not the engine. -- every time you load argue you start to lift has left thousands of pounds -- These skiers make those -- wonder under load can't do anything about that that's been tried I've been involved working. With the Sikorsky helicopter factory trying all kinds of things because especially in corporate. But that kind of money they want to be quiet inside your points very difficult to do that it's about the physics of sound that you have to deal with but aircraft manufacturers. Have taken a giant leaps. Forward in reducing the -- being generated by the engines themselves even airframe knowledge that the little wing which just sit on that it's beyond me."

" To wing -- there are to improve the efficiency of the airplane flying by reducing drag but also contributes. -- they foresee that create the noise it takes away from that."

" So it's it's not only remedy writes it's not a yet."

" It's little leash a quieter but it's also its fuel affairs division of the latest yes I I said to John about that the latest. Articles I've read about the new design they have found that fuel efficiency. Goes hand in hand. With noise curtailment. And I think that there desires to say fuels sure. Benefited. The people who are concerned about the noise pilots get some of those people who are concerned about the noise on the air we are talking about helicopters a moment ago and Laura from Port Washington is joining us and a -- get a lot of helicopter noise out there yet so lie."

" And what do it in what I mean is it all days consonants in -- is it commercial."

" I believe it to be commuter helicopter. Some could be privately owned helicopters. But a lot of them I believe our commuters. Going to the Hamptons. Then. And he. That he. Traffic increases until around Memorial Day weekend July 4 weekend. I have one. And just little the and helicopters going over and counted twenty in an hour an hour and twenty helicopters and 1000. Don't a couple of years ago. It has since been quite instead is that. But there are some weekends where it can be quite bad. Sometimes. Helicopters. Like the Mac crossing patterns that exactly but definitely in the same time amen. And helicopters are more egregious because. There -- lower flying and there's provides clinicians to them. Not only do you have noise but she gets vibrations. That -- well."

" Yes Tony was telling us in that there is kind of a problem just with the physics of getting a helicopter off the ground and then back down."

" Let's let's take a call from queens Robert lives in Rego Park so Robert treat your fairly close to LaGuardia is that right."

" Yeah a billion junk grade shell. He had basically. The complained to come all the my -- who really like every thirty seconds. Heading towards. He's the Kennedy alignment of their prized medals from Claudia. I've moved and how it's maybe fourteen years ago two -- that you have to get used to. You can have a pleaded technology that's that's where they could have been CEO. But have you gotten used to it looked added. Didn't hyperbolic plane -- this -- the world we --"

" so you you've made your peace with this kind of -- going on is just part of your life there."

" He actually. It's really not so bad he had me get liberated have a outside all the time are we tie it. It's it's going to be probably should because those who is two issues health care for people. In other sports -- she's."

" But I Robert thanks very much that's Robert out in regal park sort of on a couple of flight -- that sounds like."

" We've been talking about air traffic with Arlene -- that chair of the -- committee of the mayor's council on the environment."

" And Tony Bon -- the award winning record producer and sound engineer who is also a long time pilot -- Tony thank you both for being with us -- today."

" Thank you okay thank you. Still to come singer and pianist Jamie -- is blurring the lines between jazz and pop covering songs like Radiohead and Rihanna."

" He joins us talk about his latest album and to play live in our studio next."

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