On a November weekend in 2011, some 150 people attended Chicago’s first Sound Art Theories Symposium. I organized the symposium for the Sound Department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and it would not have happened without the support of the department’s faculty, staff and students, as well as the school’s Dean of Faculty, Lisa Wainwright. Additional support in the form of ancillary sound art events was provided by Experimental Sound Studio. During the 2-day symposium, 13 scholars presented papers with wide-ranging, deeply thought out and occasionally contradictory approaches to theorizing sound as art and art as sound. Intentionally broad and nontopical, the symposium was, I think, what my opening remarks had hypothesized: an “enticing, provocative, messy and substantive” pluralistic environment for thinking of, about and through sound and much more. And as the closing remarks by the invited presenters attested, it provided a much-needed, invigorating and supportive framework for a discourse that all would like to see (and hear) continued. So, at the invitation of Nic Collins, with the participation of several of the symposium’s presenters and through the indefatigable editorial assistance of Patricia Bentson at LMJ, I am pleased to extend the discourse a little further into the forehearable future with this on-line publication of seven of the papers presented in 2011.

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Lou Mallozzi is a Chicago-based artist known primarily for his work in sound, often with a focus on dismembering and reconstituting language, gesture, and signification. His work includes performances, installations, music works, recordings and radio works. In addition, his visual art practice includes drawing and other media. He has performed and exhibited extensively in the U.S.A. and Europe. In addition to his solo works, Mallozzi often collaborates with artists, filmmakers and musicians, including Sandra Binion, Michael Vorfeld, Alessandro Bosetti, Michael Zerang, Frédéric Moffet, Antonia Contro, Jacques Demierre, Vincent Barras, Fred Lonberg-Holm, Charlotte Hug and many others. He has received several fellowships from the Illinois Arts Council and artist residencies through the Chicago-Lucerne Sister Cities Program, the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Study Center, Ragdale Foundation and Spritzenhaus Hamburg. He is an Adjunct Professor of the Sound Department of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and Executive Director of Experimental Sound Studio. For more information, see <loumallozzi.blogspot.com>.