Ocean Gazing: Episode 40
Sounds of science
The JOIDES Resolution

<intro music>

Ari: This is Ocean Gazing: it's the podcast where we turn our eyes to the watery world surging all around us. I'm Ari Daniel Shapiro.

Peart: Okay, I can't get that and both of you unless you move in close. And maybe put this behind your hand, and then we can get your audio too, see how that goes. Alright.

Ari: We're back aboard the JOIDES Resolution, or JR. That's the ocean drilling research vessel in the northeast Pacific that I profiled last episode. But this time the educators and artists onboard who are doing outreach to the public – including Leslie Peart whom you just heard – have gone all over the JR, and recorded sounds and interviews. This episode is theirs, and it captures a bit of what it's like to live aboard a massive research vessel for 2 months straight. Stay tuned.

<fade up intro music and sustain until ends>

Ari: First up, Leslie Peart, the Education Director for the Deep Earth Academy, and the leader of the JR's outreach team.

<fade up karaoke music on deck>

Peart: I took you out on a little bit of a walkabout. It's a little bit of JR karaoke *al fresco* with the wind, water, waves and the enormous sound of one of the thrusters that keep us on site. <more karaoke> These roustabouts and floormen go out on their breaks, and crank up the karaoke, and sing in the middle of the morning, and it's just so much fun. And we can hear it all around this area on the ship.

Slobodzian: Hello, call me Slobodzian comma Daniel.

Peart: And this is our chief engineer. And he's talking about what I thought was his bottomless pocket.

Slobodzian: Remember, don't judge me. Okay, let's start with what's closest to my heart: that's the left breast pocket of my coveralls. What do we have? We have clickable eraser, ballpoint bens: black and red, two screwdrivers for making those fine adjustments. And we move over to the right pocket: got a steel ruler zero to six inches, got a telescoping magnet: picking stuff up I drop in the bilge. Let's go with the left front pants pocket, small flashlight, tape measure. Right front pocket: keys, special wrench for opening control panels. That moves us around to back pocket: crescent wrench – some people call it a shifting spanner – it's a real engineer's wrench, pelican saber light. And that's about it. So there you have it: that's what I'm carrying today.

Peart: I think it's a great look into the life of a very professional engineer, and someone who's devoted to this kind of work.

Ari: Next we hear recordings made by Brigitte Thiberge, a high school teacher from Normandy, France.

Thiberge: Can you say something in Japanese, please? <Japanese is spoken>

Ari: She's fascinated by all the languages she's been hearing onboard the JR.

Thiberge: Merci beaucoup!

Ari: Thiberge wrote me a note about the recordings she collected. She said:

"It's so interesting first to mix cultures and habits. It's so useful to try to understand other people because we have to live together during 2 months. No escape, even quite no place to be alone sometimes! You have just the ocean all around you.

What a pleasant idea to see that in this sort of topic, people from different countries share a part of their knowledge, just for science, and probably need the experience of the other countries.

It's why I recorded different languages you can find on this boat, different Filipino languages, Japanese, Chinese, French, German.

Long life to the ships!"

And she spoke with Dinah Bowman, an illustrator and another member of the JOIDES Resolution's outreach team, about their shared impressions.

Thiberge: Hello, Dinah. What can you say about the JOIDES, please?

Bowman: One thing I've particularly known is it's very international aboard this ship. <Chinese spoken> Not only the US, but also Japan, China… <more Chinese>, Scotland, France… <French>, the Philippines… <Filipino>, and even South Africa.

Thiberge: Thank you very much.

Ari: Stephanie Keske is a Master's student at Texas A&M in computer visualization. She rounded up a handful of scientists and crew to answer a couple of her pressing questions.

Keske: Can I ask you a question?

Katie: Sure!

Keske: Why are you excited about ocean drilling?

Katie: Because it's awesome! Okay, I need to think about what my answer is gonna be.

Keske: No, no, no, I need an immediate answer. I need it to be exactly what stirs up from your soul.

Katie: It's awesome because we're learning about this entirely different environment that we can't see even from a submarine on the seafloor. You know, when we go down in a submarine, all we see is what looks like a big blanket of sediment, and that's it. But when we drill, we can actually go through that.

Keske: Awesome, sounds awesome.

Katie: It is awesome, it's totally awesome!

Keske: Alright, and what's your favorite place on the JR?

Dustin: Favorite place on the JR? I think I would have to say the movie room because it's really, really well sound insulated and so it's one of the only places on the ship where you can be extremely loud and not worry about bothering people.

Jennifer: I'd pick the bow. There's a bit at the front of the ship where you can curl yourself up under a piece of metal and sit on a bench and then you can look through a hole straight down to the ocean. And it's all sheltered from the wind, and it's warm.

Michelle: It's a tough one. The galley cause it has the cake.

Keske: Oh, right, it has the cake. Tell me more about the cake.

Michelle: It's very good, and there's lots of it. Too much cake!

Stefan: When we're in transit, I like the very front of the bow because it's dark and quiet. You can see the stars.

Fisher: You know, my favorite place on the JR is the driller shack out on the side of the rig floor. And when I first started to come out here, I was very intimidated by the rig floor. There's big guys moving big equipment around. I remember thinking the first time I came out that the guys who work on the rig remind me in a lot of ways of a combination of the smartest guys that I knew in high school and the guys who took auto shop. They have both of those characteristics.

Keske: Cool. Well, thanks.

Fisher: Sure.

Ari: Finally, tape from high school teachers Jackie Kane from Toledo, Ohio and Jean Marie Gautier from Normandy, France. Here's Jackie Kane explaining the recordings. <the following narration is mixed with the sounds of the JR>

Kane: Very excited about being on a science ship, so I wanted to record the sounds of science. But I found two things. First of all, the sounds of science were very quiet and second of all, there was a lot more background noise than I was aware of. <noise> I found this interesting because at home, when there's not that much noise except when I'm teaching, I get very distracted with all the other things that are going on in life and yet here on the ship, where there's a lot of background noise, I'm able to concentrate much more on the sounds of the science. Thinking about science. <sounds from JR>

Song: Hello science, my old friend,
I've come to hear your sounds again,
JR sounds are new to comprehend
Continue on, like an iPod in replay
I will hear these sounds today
In my soul, as others fade:
The JR "Sounds of Science."

<fade out music and noise; then outro music>

Ari: There's lots more tape the outreach team collected that I wasn't able to include here. So head over to our website oceangazing.org to hear a poem about the sounds of science by Jackie Kane and to listen to Dan Slobodzian's full inventory of tools and gadgets in his pockets. You'll also find a link to the JOIDES Resolution blog where you can follow along with their adventures, and even drop them a note, but only until the end of August because the cruise is coming to an end.

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<fade up outro music>