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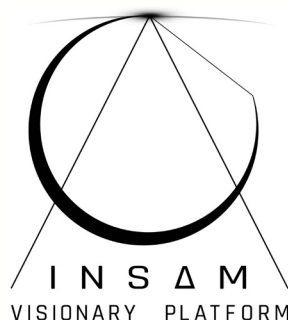
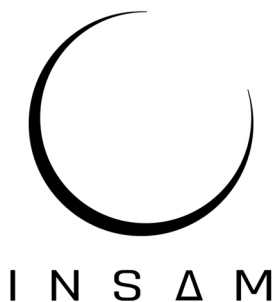


TABLE OF CONTENTS

(INTER)VIEWS

- 9 **Marija Maglov**
Dream Master: Conversation with Vladan Radovanović
- 19 **Dunja Crnjanski**
"Solidarnost kao životni izbor i revolucionarni proces": Intervju sa
Sašom Asentićem

MAIN THEME :

MUSIC, ART, AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE TIME OF GLOBAL CRISIS

- 28 **Marcello Messina, Valério Fiel da Costa, and Marco Scarassatti**
Cartridge Music in the Quarantine : Presence, Absence, Contingency
Setups and (De-)territorialised Performances
- 46 **Milena Jokanović**
Perspectives on Virtual Museum Tours
- 58 **Noah Travis Phillips**
Rhizomatic Remediation: Adaptation in a Web-Based Art Praxis
During Time(s) of Crises
- 74 **Susanne Junker**
Vanitas Reloaded: a Remote Tableau Composition from the Corona
"Home Wunderkammer"
- 89 **Magdalena Zorn and Juan Manuel García**
On the concept of 'music performance' in the context of the
COVID-19 lockdown: A brief musicological discussion based on a
public survey among listeners in Argentina

- 108 **Heitor Martins Oliveira and Leonardo Luigi Perotto**
Oficina De Criatividade Sonora:
Concepts About Music, Images and Sounds in a Collaborative Ex-
perimental Podcast in Northern Brazil
- 127 **Susanne Göttlich**
Performing and Premiering in spite of a Global Crisis:
Gerd Kühn's *Corona Meditation* and its Usage of Online Platforms

REVIEWS

- 139 **Monika Novaković**
Ivana Medić, *Theory and Practice of Gesamtkunstwerk in the 20th
and 21st Centuries – Karlheinz Stockhausen's Operatic Cycle LIGHT /
LICHT*, Belgrade: Institute of Musicology SASA, 2019.
- 143 **Miloš Bralović**
International Conference *Young Musicology Belgrade 2020: Shaping
the Present by The Future. Ethno/Musicology and Contemporaneity*,
Belgrade, 24–26 September 2020.

CONTRIBUTORS' BIOGRAPHIES

146

GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

150

EDITOR'S FOREWORD

The fifth issue of *INSAM Journal of Contemporary Music, Art and Technology* is the second one we are preparing and publishing in the Covid-19 pandemic. And while the theme for the previous issue was conceived in a world unburdened with what has preoccupied our minds and lives in 2020, the theme for this one is directly shaped by it. During the Spring, when we were taken aback by the governmental measures and the fear of the “invisible enemy” (the use of militant vocabulary is rather prominent in the discourse surrounding the virus), the uncertainty for the future grew strong. However, at that time, we could not predict the longevity, brevity and consequences of the pandemic – in December we are still not certain, but we are getting tired.

This is why I would like to thank all the authors for working with us in these trying times, unpacking what can only be a beginning of ‘a global crisis’ during the Summer and Autumn of 2020. The main theme of the issue, *Music, Art, and Technology in the Time of Global Crisis*, strives to capture this period through the lens of workers in art, music, and academia around the world, focusing on the role and place of arts and technology in our/their relocated institutional realities.

Two compelling interviews – Marija Maglov's conversation with composer Vladan Radovanović, and Dunja Crnjanski's talk with Saša Asentić – open the issue that is before us.

Shaped by the main theme, the central section contains seven papers that correspond directly with the notion of present-day crisis. In their work, Marcello Messina, Valério Fiel da Costa, and Marco Scarassatti write about performing Cage's *Cartridge Music* in quarantine. Milena Jokanović explored the fleeting interest in virtual museum tours, while Noah Travis Philips shows us examples of remediation and necessary adaptation in contemporary art practices. Analyzing the results of a digital photography assignment to her students, Susanne Junker explores the connectivity of “Coronavirus home offices” with Renaissance and Baroque *Wunderkammers*. Magdalena Zorn and Juan Manuel García investigate the concept of ‘music performance’ during the lockdown in Argentina, while Heitor Martins Oliveira and Leonardo Luigi Perotto write about music, images and sounds, as well as their experiences and conclusions on working on an experimental collaborative podcast in Northern Brazil. This section is concluded with Susanne Göttlich's piece

on performing and premiering musical works *in spite of* global crisis.

The Reviews section contains two articles. In the first one, Monika Novaković reviewed one of the newest studies in the rich scientific work of Dr. Ivana Medić, *Theory and Practice of Gesamtkunstwerk in the 20th and 21st Centuries – Karlheinz Stockhausen's Operatic Cycle LIGHT/LICHT* (2019), and in the second, Miloš Bralović gives us concise insight into themes and preoccupation of young musicologists and ethnomusicologists who were participating in the online international conference *Young Musicology Belgrade 2020*.

As always (and especially nearing the end of such an intense year), on behalf of the INSAM Editorial team and myself, I extend my deepest gratitude to our peer-reviewers, and our proofreader, Anthony McLean. Without their promptness, detailed work, and good communication, the publication of this issue wouldn't be possible.

In Belgrade, December 10, 2020,
Bojana Radovanović,
Editor-in-Chief

(INTER)VIEWS



Marija Maglov*

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DREAM MASTER: Conversation with Vladan Radovanović¹

It could be said that there is no individual who encompasses activities in the fields of contemporary music, art and technology, and polymedia practices approached in the inter- and transdisciplinary method in a more complete manner than Vladan Radovanović. His name has become synonymous with polymedia arts, with his pioneering work on electronic music in the former Yugoslavia and his leading role in establishing Radio Belgrade Electronic studio. Any attempt to address every artistic field in which Radovanović has innovated and traced new paths of creative expression with his unique solutions inevitably bears the risk that some of those activities remain left out.² In that respect, this interview is foremost focused on one work – the musical-poetical radiophonic³ work *The Eternal Lake* (*Malo večno jezero*, 1984) which initiated further streams in our conversation.

The choice for shaping the conversation with Vladan Radovanović in this manner⁴ was also initiated by the topic of crisis that is examined in this issue. On the one hand, the

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1 This interview was realized through the scientific research organization Institute of Musicology SASA, funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of Republic of Serbia.

2 For more details on the multifaceted activity of Vladan Radovanović, see artist's website (<http://www.vladanradovanovic.rs/index.html>) and bilingual thematic monograph *Sintezijska umetnost / Art Synthesis: jednomedijsko i višemedijsko stvaralaštvo Vladana Radovanovića 1947–2005/ Vladan Radovanović mono-media and polymedia art 1947–2005.*, Narodni muzej, Kragujevac, 2005.

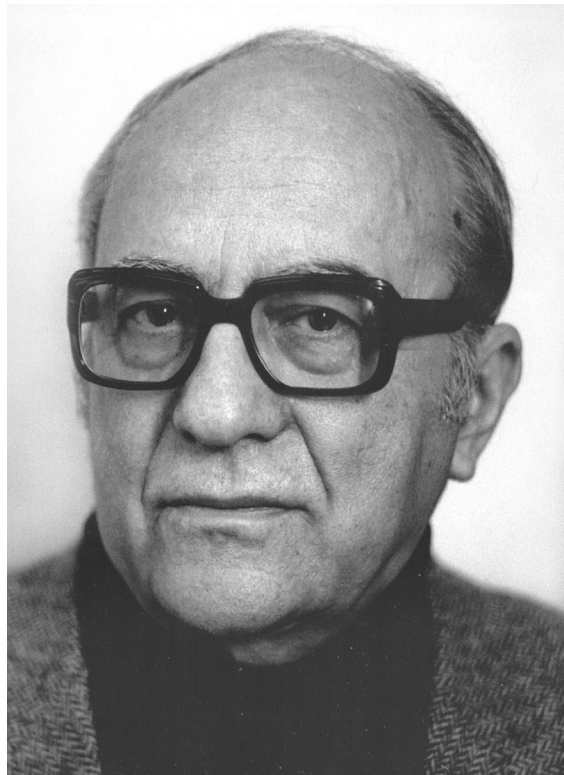
3 In relation to Radovanović's classification of polymedia art according to type of the media, movement and number of media, the author puts *The Eternal Lake* in the group of mono-media, mono-sensory and polymorph arts.

4 By this, I have foremost in mind shaping of the present version of the interview, based on several conversations with Vladan Radovanović during 2019, after which they were abbreviated and edited, and this authorized version was made.

present crisis has unveiled the difficult institutional position of artists, accentuating the need to emphasize the importance of artists' vocation in the society and to justify every help in the stabilization of their position. In this context, it is worth revisiting comments by writer Bora Ćosić on Radovanović: "Vladan, in a manner that to me seems to be foremost dignified, fought the right for 'artistic' tone of life as well as for showing products of fine arts as products of normal, direct human nature, gifted with discoveries..."⁵

On the other hand, the resonance that I felt between the sounds and semantical worlds of *The Eternal Lake* and my own internal world was emphasized during the pandemic-induced isolation. As was noted by Ivana Neimarević, the author "reached universal topics close to every man – questions of life's passing and meeting with death".⁶ In that sense, Radovanović's capability for self-reflexivity, for mediating feelings of loss and solitude by sound structure made of vocal-instrumental, electronic and ambient sounds and non-verbally treated voice and the voice in the form of speech, as well as sensibility skilled in "catching" dreams, makes his art evocative of some of ever-present questions on human experience. One such experience is dreaming and Radovanović's specific artistic activity is diving into the subconscious mind, striving for what is impossible to reach while awake, and materializing it through different media.⁷ *The Eternal Lake* is one of the manifestations of those subconscious events.

Times of crises provoke a rethinking of the importance of artistic endeavours and artists' positions. This is why I interviewed the artist whose uncompromising attitude speaks for that "defence" of arts, and decided to closely revisit procedures and processes that led to such layered work as *The Eternal Lake* which demonstrates the complexity and sensibility of artistic work.



Vladan Radovanović, Photo by Vladeta Stojić

5 Bora Ćosić, *Mixed media*, author's edition, Beograd, 1970. As quoted in: Milenko Pajić, "Dnevnik majstora sna", *Stvaralaštvo Vladana Radovanovića...*, op. cit., 98.

6 Ivana Neimarević, "Radiofonska dela Vladana Radovanovića", *Treći program*, no. 155–156, 2012, 251.

7 Radovanović writes down his dreams since 1953. Chosen dreams were published in the book *Noćnik* in 1972. Prior to *The Eternal Lake*, sound and radiophonic manifestations of dreams were realized in the works *Snoviđenja* and *Snevač*. More on Radovanović's practice of noting the dreams in: Milenko Pajić, op. cit.

*For the start of the conversation, I would like to ask how *The Eternal Lake* came to being and how did you decide to realize your preoccupation with dreams in a sound form?*

Mrs. Neda Depolo came to see me in 1984, in Radio Belgrade Electronic studio, and suggested that I put my dreams in radiophonic form. In the process of adaptation, I needed to transform dreams with drawings into the radiophonic verbal-musical structure. I had selected five dreams from my dream collection (*Noćnik*, note by MM), and the sixth was created on the basis of an experience I had with an old watch. It had a beautiful sound, but it was unbearable to listen to every night as it struck the passing of half an hour, then a full hour, then another half, then full, so one could not sleep. Due to it, I had the sound experience that initiated one whole dream. It happened during my gymnasium years, when I still did not have the opportunity to work with electronic media. One morning, the clock started to strike six. The first strike awakened me, after which I fell asleep shortly only to be awakened again with the sixth strike. During that time, I dreamt a dream which, thus, lasted for six seconds. I forgot the dream, but the experience of the length of that dream in regard to its real duration and dreamt transformations of clock strikes incited me to imagine a new dream and to try to create a dream transformation of the real clock strikes by the means of electronic music. In the work, this happens when the Dreamer (Snevač) starts to count: "One, two...". After the approach of a city's clocks striking, this wall clock strikes the time too. And from that the story of the fictional dream was further developed. After I chose the dreams, it was necessary to search for tones and noises to establish relation to the given story. Although the story was created first, that did not make the text considerably more important. It was always important to me to achieve that evenness of values and importance of both components. Đorđe Malavrazić, Radio Belgrade Drama programme Editor-in-Chief at the time *The Eternal Lake* was in the process of creation, generously granted a significant number of time-slots, which were needed in order to bring the work to fruition in a deserving manner. Then, we decided on actors for group scenes and talked about music. Since I realized I would not have enough time to compose all musical numbers, I decided to find suitable excerpts from my considerable oeuvre. I abbreviated them in the Electronic studio, or prolonged them, transformed them in the desired measure, and started to form the score. Concerning the choice of actors, we deliberated on who should play the role of Dreamer. That role was the most difficult and substantial. Since none of familiar voices or dictions suited my intention, we tried with my voice. After reviewing the results of the recording, everyone found it hard to imagine anyone else in the role of Dreamer. Not only do I think that only I was capable of performing some nuances in that way but I do not know how I, as a director, would instruct another person to perform in the same manner. After Dreamer was determined, I proceeded with deciding on the

music. Understandably, I determined what I will take from my own compositions, and what I will compose, I also selected ready-made effects and envisioned those that should be made. For instance, sand flowing is not a ready-made effect, but it is electronically produced. And one could say that the score was not always “going ahead” determining how every sound will be realized, but on occasion it was first decided what to make, and afterwards that was written in the score.

34

The image shows three systems of musical notation, each with a vocal line (S), an electronic effect line (E), and a control line (C). The notation uses various symbols like triangles, lines, and arrows to represent sound events and their durations.

System 1:

- S:** Lyrics: jedan dva dva da
- E:** *kucanje sata* (clock ticking), *šišti časovnik* (tickling watch)
- C:** *gradski satovi* (city clocks)
- Time markers:** 17.07, 17.19, 17.25, 17.31

System 2:

- S:** Lyrics: da da da da divno dolaze dugi duboki
- E:** *šišti časovnik* (tickling watch)
- C:** (Control line with arrows)
- Time marker:** 17.41

System 3:

- S:** Lyrics: tonovi titraju traju Tako netraženi nikada nisu nicali Zamislim i začas zazvuče
- E:** (Electronic effects with wavy lines)
- C:** (Control line with arrows)
- Time marker:** 18.10

Vladan Radovanović, *The Eternal Lake* (excerpt).

Was there any improvisation or was everything conceived in advance?

There was no improvisation. Everything was defined in advance. True, some textual-musical events I imagined more precisely, and some less so. On some occasions I had to search and research. Here, we are getting close to the concept of experiment and experimental music. Personally, I am not for calling modern and avant-garde music experimental. This is because the meaning of that expression – which is trial, testing, trying out something which is then evaluated as satisfactory and functional for us – is without saying something that is at work in the creative processes not only in music, but in arts in general, since Ancient Greece to the present day.

You quoted from works of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and Stravinsky in The Eternal Lake, as well as referencing your earlier composition, Vokalinstra. Did you have any intention to make the work resonant with postmodern poetics?

Like Jonathan Kramer I consider quotations and references important characteristics of postmodernism. Since quotations are present in *The Eternal Lake*, it is not unusual that one could classify it as postmodern. However, for determining whether work belongs to that mega-style, it is not enough to notice that certain characteristics are present, but to consider whether that was done because of an author's intention to be part of that poetics, or due to some other reasons. All self-references in this case were used since the limited time and conditions did not allow for the composition and recording of the intended musical numbers. And quotes from other composers' works were used because the narrative of one dream required it. Hence, there is no justified reason for classifying *The Eternal Lake* as postmodern.

Did you create all sound effects by yourself or did you use pre-existing ones, available in the Radio Belgrade phonoarchive?

Most of that which Shingler and Wieringa name as effects – which comprise everything except speech, silence and music – I produced myself. It is evident in the score in which purely electronic sound and those non-electronic sounds transformed by frequency, amplitude and timbre are marked with E, and ambient sounds (transformed or simply transposed) are marked with C. For instance, created effects are: sand flowing, the special walk of two-legged aircraft, breathing, an auto sprinkler, the flying of menacing snowballs, a chain rattling, big book pages fluttering, an old clock striking, and others. Spatiality is also a special effect. Thus, to realize the impression of deep space, one has to use sounds, voices and effects which are differently placed. One could be at the front, and the other one very far away. That effect is otherwise called *presentness*. In *The Eternal Lake* it is

applied when Martians emerge, and the voice announcing their emergence comes from afar. Or, with the occasion of descending down the stairs. The voice is moving left-right, further-closer, moving in the spiral. The impression of spatiality is achieved by reverberation, i.e. reflection of the sound in a certain delay. That is a very appropriate mean for creating the space. The impression of distance is stronger when the reverberation is combined with response in which deep frequencies are filtrated, about 120Hz. Distanced sounds lose deep aliquots, since they are absorbed in the terrain. You see how many procedures are not deducible from the scores, but stand behind it as radiophonic knowledge of *métier*. In a more general sense, the word is foremost about knowing the peculiarities of a radio broadcast, about knowing limiting factors regarding dynamics and frequency range. Those ranges have to be taken into account when the work is created only for radio reproduction.

How did the process of shaping the form (as a whole made of six chosen dreams) proceed?

First, I made the decision on dream arrangement. That arrangement constitutes the backbone of events. After I made the arrangement, I expected the visit of – to use that Ancient Greek term – inspiration. I waited to be told what to do. This is always the real thing. Of course, there is certain knowledge of logic development, based on considerable experience that comes from reading books and gaining an awareness of the grouping of elements in temporal arts etc, but I believe that the real thing comes from intuition, origins of which we cannot investigate. Searching for the origin of inspiration inevitably brings us to a dead-end street. The explanation may be behind that dead end, hidden for us in the unconscious or the subconscious – I do not know. During introspection we may arrive at that moment when a spark of imagination is seen, heard, understood, but one can only make assumptions on what was before that moment. I would not do that now.

One aspect that leaves a strong impression on me upon every listening is the passage between two dreams, virtuously realized with soprano voices fading into the ambulance siren and then into electronic sound. How was that place conceived?

In the interregnum between two dreams, it was needed to connect prior the dream to the one that follows. The connecting usually proceeded through *prosnivanje*.⁸ So – the man briefly awakens from the dream, turns to the other side, and falls asleep again. However, in that meantime something could have happened outside of the Dreamer's room. There could be, for example, an ambulance car riding outside, thus connecting the adjacent dreams. In the example that was already indicated,

⁸ *Prosnivanje* is Radovanović's original term, hardly translatable in English. Approximate translation would be *phantasming, fancying, reverieing*.

the next dream, via an ambulance wailing, presents circumstances of occupational angst [such as during the occupation of Belgrade, Yugoslavia in WWII, MM], which I remember vividly, the anxiety of wondering if somebody is going to knock down the door with the boot, to pull you out from your hiding place under the pointed Schmeisser, to put a deadly machine in the building, and so on. Exactly the text of that following dream, after the ambulance siren, starts with most of the people having already been put on the lists, dressed in uniforms, many corpses, in different-coloured uniforms are getting ready to move, etc.

Is there any moment in composition that is of special significance to you? Are there some moments that are especially dear to you, in terms of making a creative breakthrough with them or being attached to them in the work process?

Yes. Those are the moments I saw in advance as being difficult and complex for realization, whether regarding putting text and music in relation to each other, whether in taking care that the complexity does not obscure that which is important to understand. This is because there has to be something of primary importance for a listener to rely on. Surely, there has to be multi-levelness, but it always has to be opposed with a hierarchy of importance. Not all events can be equally important in every moment, although they maybe interchangeable according to their importance, which I am fulfilling in my polymedia works. Otherwise, exactly this place which you have chosen is important to me too, since it seems like you can successfully slip into an external reality and then convincingly return back to oneiric reality. Regarding effect, I would single out a dreadful dream about my father who bites the ground while making the way out of the grave. This place starts here: "Father has to bite his way through all the layers to get out. Father comes into the ward but I know I can't trust him". That is a requiem-like moment, with those disruptions, with pedal electronic sounds and excerpts from *Vokalinstra*. I shudder every time I hear it.

Yes, it is striking with those blocks of sounds and breaks between them.

And another thing, in another sense: here I took only two-three sentences from one of my saddest dreams. It is like you would be the only one returning to the planet on which everything has died, and corpses are not rotting, but they remain as they were and are laid into one lake that is supposed to last forever. "Years have passed, I have come back, but they all laid down in the little eternal lake. All the girls too. And there was nothing else left in the world except the old boat-shack and the leaves". I would single out another moment, for instance, this polyphony made of my own voices. Some procession is passing and with it a big wheel with a ball on the side. On the ball is a hole which absorbs the power for the wheel movement. A little metal-made man peeks from the hole and sings one motive several times. Here, I quadruple my voice. With this procedure chaotic moments were created in which

the little metal man jumps out of the mentioned ball, hooks the sky, twists it and pulls it in the ball.

Why have you decided to layer your own voice, and not several different voices?

Because I could not trust that any actor could carry out those colours and pitch changes simply based on my instructions. I believed that I could do it best by myself. And I assumed that I would lose too much time with somebody else. One should always measure everything that needs to be done regarding what time is available—that is one of the key criteria.

What are the leading principles and criteria in your artistic practice?

According to one principle, I strive to make sound and text reach their full expression. Somewhere, something should be moved, something changed, one should give up some previous intention so the abovementioned principle can be fulfilled. Of course, the question of freedom can be raised. In my creative process, I am somewhat free to choose a certain principle. However, if I decided on one dominant principle, I will not be free to choose other principles too, I will have to leave them aside. Or, perhaps, some of them could be of secondary or tertiary importance. Then one could speak of certain hierarchical coordination as of some broader method. Inarguably, effect is the most important criteria for me. Since this is art, no matter what media is in question, effect has to be realized. If it is not realized, principles are of no use, no matter what they are. In the perspective of art work's effect, what comes first is always an effect on the author himself. Based on that effect, an author – text writer, music composer – needs to have the deciding word when he arrives at the crossroads of multiple solutions in the realization of his work. He could discuss with others about choosing solutions, but without the possibility for someone else to vote over him. In the case of *The Eternal Lake*, we had a somewhat collective work. Still, since I was author of both the text and music, as well as director, I had more votes on my side and I could dominate the decision-making process (I am joking, of course).

How do you define authorship and what is your attitude towards group authorship and collaborations, which is somewhat needed for creating radiophonic art such as The Eternal Lake? Could you tell me something about the hierarchy of collaborator's contributions to the final outcome?

I define authorship as putting the highest emphasis on the expression of individual decisions. I believe that a high density of individual decisions is applied when there is a personal decision on every musical parameter – and there are at least five of them. In *The Eternal Lake*, all decisions – both regarding text and music –

are individually taken. Although I have nothing against group authorship, it is my impression that in this case, when polymedia works are in question, the planning of correlation between media is made more difficult and “intimacy” in those relations is diminished. Personally, I have never planned polymedia works – and among those are also verbal-musical radiophonic works – in collaboration with other authors, nor do I have the need for that because I am capable of creating alone in different art fields. Incidentally, it is possible to make a difference between group collaboration in artistic shaping of the work and group collaboration in its technical realization. In relation to that differentiation, a hierarchy of participation and authorship can be established regarding the creation of *The Eternal Lake*. I am the only author with an artistic shaping of all media and in making the score of the work in its entirety and I independently chose and adapted my own texts, recorded segments of my own electroacoustic music, chose and transformed segments of music from several other authors, recorded electronic effects, personally interpreted and recorded the Dreamer’s part, created the score and directed. I agreed to sign Neda Depolo as a director too, but the truth is that all directorial decisions were made by myself. The exceptional Zoran Jerković recorded the other actors and mixed the sound material according to the score.

When you are working with a chosen technology and media, which have their own predisposition and conditions of usage, to what instance does your idea adapt to the means at your disposal? Are you trying to find a way to go around the limitations so you can achieve your inner vision or do you choose means based on your pre-existing ideas?

Almost none of this is disjunctive, but it is conjunctive: first and second and third. Foremost, there is a certain adaptation to the media. On the other hand, I would say that there is a prior idea, *pre-idea* (*predideja*), because this is not an idea reducible to words, but more a feeling of sound, and especially, its colour. It should be said that first inner *pro-sounding* (*prozvučavanja*) of the future musical-poetical work indicates a direction which the story will have in regard to reality. Paul Valéry once said how the first verse is gifted by gods, the rest has to be minted. In this sense, I have not heard my *The Eternal Lake* in its entirety, but in certain parts which then grew regarding one another. Not everything is granted. Not everything is perfect and given as completely polished, but a lot of it is given. That gift is the momentous event for the creator, it is a celebration. Not only is the piece not given in its entirety from the start, but it also does not have to be offered in an order that is eventually accepted as definitive. I could hear the beginning and a little bit beyond it, and afterwards the part which is not immediately connected to the beginning, a part that I do not know if it will come into the middle or at the end, and when I do find out – I fix it. All of this mostly happens with works with a time axis.

In other words: one follows the other.

That is correct. In the end, there is nothing more fulfilling to me than the state of creation, when – and this is not a pretty expression – you make decisions. But, it is not us who make decisions, decisions are made themselves, they impose themselves. At least this is mostly my case. When there is some doubt, as practical matters get in the way, this is the moments when ratio enters. In most cases I hear, see, palpate, experience movement. Many do not believe me. What can I do? This is how I act and I believe this is an appropriate manner of work because I am gifted in that sense.

Translated by Marija Maglov

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SOLIDARNOST KAO ŽIVOTNI IZBOR I REVOLUCIONARNI PROCES

Intervju sa Sašom Asentićem

Saša Asentić je koreograf, performer i radnik u kulturi koji deluje u oblasti savremenih izvođačkih umetnosti. Rođen je u Derventi, a od 1995. do 2011. godine živi u Novom Sadu. Za to vreme osnovao je organizaciju Per.Art koja preko 20 godina deluje u oblasti inkluzivne umetnosti. Bio je umetnički direktor festivala Nov.Ples, autor i koautor brojnih predstava, performansa, uređivao je programe različitih konferencija, simpozijuma i kulturnih događaja,



Saša Asentić

Photo by Aleksandar Ramadanović

delovao je kao mentor lokalnim umetnicima. Njegov umetnički rad predstavljen je u vodećim centrima savremene umetnosti u Berlinu, Njujorku, Parizu, Tokiju, Hamburgu, Beču, Frankfurtu, Madridu, Teheranu, Atini i drugim gradovima širom sveta. Živi i radi u Berlinu. Aktivno deluje na internacionalnoj savremenoj plesnoj sceni, dok istovremeno neumorno radi na povezivanju lokalne (novosadske) scene sa svetskim scenama i savremenim umetničkim tokovima – podržava mlade umetnike kroz saradnje i mentorstva, saraduje sa institucijama kulture i svojim radom inspiriše nove generacije umetnika.

Imperativ političnosti je nešto što obeležava i prožima Sašin umetnički rad od samih početaka, a nastaje kao posledica životnih iskustava, aktivnog promišljanja društvenih odnosa i političkih ubeđenja. U svom radu, on istražuje odnos između društva i pojedinca i trudi se da

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kroz nastupe i saradnje zajedno sa publikom i kolegama uhvati bar na kratko ono čudesno što daje smisao životu i međuljudskim odnosima. Sa Sašom ću razgovarati o globalno aktuelnim temama – mogućnostima za umetnički rad u doba pandemije, korišćenju novih tehnologija u umetničkoj produkciji, ali i o dostupnosti sadržaja, otvorenim principima rada, umetničkoj solidarnosti i načinima sagledavanja i menjanja pozicija u kojima se kao umetnici i kulturni radnici nalazimo u ovom periodu.

Godinama radiš van institucija i deo si internacionalne nezavisne scene izvođačkih umetnosti i savremenog plesa, a ove godine si prvi put gostujući profesor na uglednom Institutu za primenjene pozorišne studije na Justus-Liebig univerzitetu u Gisenu u Nemačkoj. Na koji način pristupaš dvostrukom izazovu – predavanju kao relativno novoj delatnosti kojom se baviš i predavanju u doba pandemije?

Zajedno sa dugogodišnjim saradnikom i kolegom Aleksandrom Ašurom bio sam pozvan da kao gostujući profesor predajem u ljetnom semestru studentima osnovnih i master studija. Za mene je u predavačkom radu najvažnije pripremiti sadržaj i prijedlog u odnosu na kontekst i konkretnu grupu sa kojom ću raditi i razviti metodologiju koja će predavanja, odnosno susrete, promišljati kroz političnost tih susreta kako bi se studenti ili učesnici osnažili za kritičko preispitivanje postojećih struktura za obrazovanje, produkciju, distribuciju, arhiviranje i istorizaciju savremenog plesa, koreografje i performansa. Dosta toga se mijenja i uobličava tokom samog procesa i za mene je to najuzbudljiviji i najsmisleniji dio učenja i stvaranja znanja. Zbog pandemije predavanja su se odvijala preko interneta i dodatni izazov je bilo pronaći način rada koji će omogućiti studentima da učestvuju bez obzira na različite uređaje za korišćenje interneta, različite internet konekcije, kao i različite vremenske zone, zatim izazov je bilo pratiti i mijenjati formate za razgovor, prezentaciju, predavanje i razmjenu u odnosu na zamor koji nastaje usljed dužeg korišćenja ekrana i online prisustva, prilagođavati organizaciju rada, tema, sadržaja i vremena u odnosu na stanje i situaciju u kojoj su se studenti nalazili... Daleko je teže, s obizrom na to da nismo navikli na takav način rada, kada nema uživo fizičkog prisustva: slušati, osluškivati, vidjeti, osmatrati, osjetiti, reagovati... ali iznalazili smo načine kroz dosta razgovora i mnogo analiziranja. Predati se radu sa svim svojim iskustvom i odgovornošću, koji uključuju i iskustvo drugih, ranijih kriza, zatim dati drugom nešto od onog što znaš i imaš, a i ne predati se, u smislu ne odustati ili krenuti kraćim putem ili pravcem manjeg otpora. Veliko iskustvo u svakom slučaju za sve nas.

Poznajem te kao osobu iz generacije koja nije preopterećena novom digitalnom tehnologijom niti je naročito voli. Da li se u ovom periodu za tebe, na ličnom nivou, promenio pristup tehnologiji i da li je na drugačiji način koristiš?

U proteklih nekoliko mjeseci promijenilo se dosta toga. Nikad nisam imao Facebook nalog, ali u protekle dvije godine koristim Instagram za vizuelnu komunikaciju sa prijateljima i za praćenje pojedinaca i organizacija u oblasti

antidiskriminacije, antirasizma, antifašizma i antikapitalizma. Od avgusta 2020. kada je Facebook donio odluku o proširivanju njihove liste u pravilniku o „Opasnim pojedincima i organizacijama”, odnosno praktično o izjednačavanju kao opasnih organizacija antifašizma i antikapitalizma sa ekstremnom desnicom i White Supremacy organizacijama i gašenju određenih naloga, gotovo da sam se vratio na to kako sam internet koristio prije 20 godina – na email, pretplatu na newsletter i posjetu website adresama. Takođe, nakon svjedočenja u live predavanjima i story postovima opresivnoj i rasističkoj osnovi algoritama po kojima funkcioniše Instagram morao sam u isto vrijeme istražiti o samom problemu, ali i voditi računa da pratim uputstva aktivista čiji su nalozi i sadržaji diskriminirani kako se informacije ne bi „izgubile” i kako bih ih mogao pratiti. Uz ovo se, naravno, postavlja pitanje i odgovornost materijalne, finansijske i moralne podrške ovim aktivistima, kao i našeg vlastitog rada na razbijanju struktura na kojima opstaju duboka društvena raslojenost i nepravda. Ono što je posebno zastrašujuće je da se opresivnost ovih algoritama ne odnosi samo na sadržaj u pisanoj formi, nego i na vrstu govora i njegov sadržaj, ali i vrstu tona kojim se govori, emotivno stanje, izraz lica, itd. U smislu iznalaženja govorničkih i izvođačkih taktika, jezika i načina komunikacije, kao i organizacije publike, mislim da je izuzetno bitno biti svjestan ovih problema i shvatiti da se radi o potrebi za novom vrstom otpora perfidnim mehanizmima opresivnog sistema.

Revolution Won't be Performed
Photo by Aleksandar Ramadanović



Sada je već opšte mesto da su sve umetnosti izuzetno pogođene globalnom krizom, a naročito izvođačke umetnosti. Traže se alternativni načini komuniciranja sa predstavama, performansima, među publikom i izvođačima. Da li posmatraš ovaj period kao mogućnost za promišljanje, reflektovanje, „čekanje” ili menjaš svoje načine rada i planove i prilagođavaš ih drugačijim medijima?

I ova kriza je ukazala na brojne postojeće i duboko ukorijenjene problem u društvu i u javnom sektoru. Samo ih je učinila ponovo još vidljivijim... i opasnijim.

Nema čekanja. Mislim da se čekati može samo ukoliko se ima privilegovani položaj u svijetu nepravde i neizvjesnosti u kojem živimo. Ja taj položaj nemam, što znači da promišljam i iznalazim načine, ne samo za sebe, nego i za sve one sa kojima saradujem, a posredno onda i za one koji su publika. Govorim o publici koja učestvuje u stvaranju javnosti, a ne onoj koja se statistički shvata na osnovu pojavljivanja u knjigovodstvenim izvještajima pozorišnih ili festivalskih blagajni. Problem koji otežava stanje je taj što se ova druga publika sve više favorizuje, pa tako i u ovoj kriznoj situaciji to spriječava bavljenje sistemskim promjenama svijeta izvođačkih umjetnosti koje bi omogućile nove načine stvaranja i predstavljanja umjetnosti. Ovako, nažalost, alternativni načini se zapravo pojavljuju najčešće kao „kozmetički” zahvati u okviru novih pravilnika o mjerama opreza, s tim da se prethodni poredak i tržišna logika kreativne industrije ne dovode u pitanje. Kad bi ta „kozmetika” bila bar u smislu „make over-a” možda bi imala veći potencijal kao alternativa postojećem-opstojećem stanju.

Šta se zapravo dešava kad se nešto iznenada prekine? Na primjer, kad se prekine rad na probama predstave koja se zasniva na stvaranju novih društvenih činjenica i pojavljivanju novih društvenih subjekata kroz grupnu izvedbu odnosno djelovanje u javnosti? Ostanemo privremeno bez tog čina, ali ne i bez tih ljudi, koji su upravo ti koji taj čin mogu izvesti. Oni kao takvi onda iznalaze načine kako to mogu izvesti u novim, promijenjenim uslovima. Pri tome su na razne načine neposredno ugroženi s obzirom na uzroke i posljedice prekarnih uslova rada, a u vrijeme pandemije neki od njih su kao pripadnici najosjetljivih grupa potencijalno i životno ugroženi. Način koji za mene ima jedino smisla, a u vanrednoj situaciji pogotovo, jest apsolutni fokus na ljude – umjetnike i publiku, njihovu sigurnost, dostojanstvo, prava i dobrobit, te sa te pozicije promišljati krizu, kao i ulogu i mjesto izvođačkih umjetnosti u društvu, te potencijal javne izvedbe i okupljanja u političkom smislu. To svakako podrazumjeva i korištenje različitih medija, djelovanje kroz različite izvedbene formate i različite oblike organizacije rada. Ono što meni pomaže u tom promišljanju jesu istorijski primjeri umjetnika koji su u različitim društvenim uređenjima koristeći performans kao medij preispitali odnos privatne i javne sfere, pogotovo u onima u kojima je javna sfera bila pod kontrolom državog aparata, jer smatram da je ključno shvatiti i ideološku pozadinu novih ograničenja i zabrana sa kojima se nosimo u ovoj krizi kao radnici u kulturi i kao građani. Pored ovoga pomaže mi i stalna razmjena sa kolegama koji žive i rade u različitim kontekstima van centara

savremene umjetnosti i bogatog dijela Evropske unije, sa kolegama koji žive u Čileu, Iranu, Kini, Brazilu, Italiji, Srbiji, ali i sa kolegama sa invaliditetom, kolegama koji pripadaju LGBTIQ+ i BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) populaciji u SAD, Australiji, Njemačkoj, Novom Zelandu/Aotearoi. Od sredine marta ove godine zbog nemogućnosti putovanja i drugih ograničenja zbog pandemije, u ovoj razmjeni internet kao prostor komunikacije igra ključnu ulogu, jer nam omogućava direktan kontakt, s tim da u zavisnosti od zemlje koristimo različite načine i platforme za komunikaciju.

Glavni fokus u prethodnom razdoblju bilo mi je preispitivanje načina rada i materijalnih uslova za rad, pružanje podrške i brige o kolegama, rad na uspostavljanju veza i unapređenju odnosa i naravno komunikacija sa kolegama i partnerima, kao i rad na pripremi uslova i plana za održavanje i prilagođavanje prekinutih postojećih aktivnosti kako bismo se mogli nositi sa novim promijenjenim stanjem.

Savremeni ples i izvođačke umetnosti često ostaju na margini umetničkih scena. Da li u kontekstu svog rada razmišljaš o načinima dopiranja do (šire) publike putem interneta?

Publika za mene nikad nije neka anonimna masa ljudi koja u tišini sjedi u mračnom gledalištu, pa me u tom smislu ne zanima ni potencijalna anonimna strogo kontrolisana publika kratkotrajno okupljena opresivnim algoritmima društvenih mreža i vladajućih internet pretraživača. Moj kolega Dalibor Šandor, umjetnik sa invaliditetom, rekao je jednom prilikom tokom rada na jednoj od naših predstava da on zapravo zamišlja kakva će biti publika, ko će sve biti u gledalištu, ko će doći iz društva u kojem živimo, kako će reagovati, da li će se složiti sa njim i sa predstavom, da li će ga podržati... Čini mi se da je upravo to bitno za promišljanje publike i gledaoca danas – promišljati izvedbene formate i pristupe izvedbi, koji podržavaju ideju raznolike nenormativne publike, neočekivanog i prije svega nekontrolisanog sastava, publike koja se ne podstiče na navikavanje na konzumeristički internet model culture on demand, publike koju zamišljamo, publike koju ne možemo ni zamisliti, a koja se aktualizuje zahvaljujući izvođenju predstave, publiku čije nam je prisustvo i čija nam je reakcija, mišljenje, sudjelovanje bitno...

Ističem ovo, jer vidim koliko se nekritički prisutpa novom zahtjevu od strane države i njenih javnih institucija u kulturi da se aktivnosti ubrzano prebacuju u online sredinu i da se podstiču digitalni formati, te se predstavljaju kao neka vrsta olakšica u iznalaženju načina za rad u novonastaloj situaciji. Što mislim da ne samo da nije tačno da je olakšica, nego je štetno, pa čak i opasno na taj način pristupati kompleksnosti situacije u kojoj se nalazimo. Smatram da je ovaj zahtjev važno problematizovati u odnosu na to u šta se internet pretvorio kao mjesto koje kontrolišu, kako naučnik i teoretičar kompjuterskih nauka Jaron Lanier kaže, „imperije modifikacije ponašanja” koje razaraju samo tkivo društvenosti i društva, o čemu glasno kritički govore i drugi stručnjaci informacionih tehnologija koji su bili ključni za razvoj aplikacija društvenih mreža i pretraživača kakve danas koristimo,

tj. koji koriste nas i naše podatke za stvaranje profita. Takođe mislim da je bitno razumjeti i šta ovaj zahtjev znači i u odnosu na „The Great Reset” inicijativu koji je Svjetski ekonomski forum najavio kao plan, a koji podrazumijeva i nove društvene ugovore po pitanju rada, radnog odnosa, radnog mjesta, mobilnosti, itd., a sve to problematizovati u odnosu na dalju moguću prekarizaciju rada u kulturi i umjetnosti. S druge strane, ono u što vjerujem i što govorim kolegama i studentima, a insistiram i kod umjetničkih direktora, upravnika i onih koji učestvuju u stvaranju kulturnih politika da moramo osvijesiti i vlastito neznanje o aktivističkim i umjetničkim praksama cyperformansa, online i digitalnog teatra, i internet aktivizma, koje danas i u proteklih 25 godina internet promišljaju i koriste kao prostor za političku akciju, jer proširivanjem znanja i oblasti djelovanja, kao i udruživanjem snaga, možemo bolje sagledati sadašnji trenutak.

Tokom prvog talasa pandemije, realizovao si seriju intervjuja pod nazivom „In conversation with...” sa eminentnim internacionalnim umetnicima sa invaliditetom. Serijal je producirala umetnička organizacija Per.Art čiji si osnivač i umetnički direktor, a podržali su ga Kampnagel iz Hamburga i Pact Zollverein iz Esena. U toku razgovora pokrenula su se izuzetno važna pitanja o trenutnom stanju na nezavisnoj umetničkoj sceni, produkcijama, izmenjenim uslovima funkcionisanja. Da li bi mogao da izdvojiš nekoliko tematskih linija koje su ti bile najinteresantnije?

Da, tokom tri mjeseca počev od aprila svakog petka vodio sam online razgovor sa kolegama iz oblasti savremenog plesa, performansa i disability arts-a. Sagovornici su mi bili umetnici koji svoju praksu razvijaju u Njujorku, Berlinu, Beču, Teheranu, Hamburgu, Varšavi, Atini, Oklandu, Lisabonu, Padovi i Novom Sadu. Pokrenuo sam ove razgovore jer sam htio da čujemo o tome na koji način ovi umetnici promišljaju trenutno stanje u kojem se globalno nalazimo, kako ono utiče na nas kao umetnike i građane, šta se dešava s umetnošću u vanrednom stanju i kako ona može doprineti jačanju kulture solidarnosti.

Uputio bih čitaoce da potraže „In conversation with...” na internetu preko ovog linka: <https://www.disabilityartsinternational.org/events/fridays-online-per-art-in-conversation/>

Teško mi je da izdvojim nekoliko tema, jer su razgovori bili zaista bogati i bili su zamišljeni kao prilika za refleksiju i konverzaciju, a čitava serija kao trenutna reakcija na novonastalo stanje lockdown-a, ali s idejom da se razvija dalje i da uključuje nove sagovornike, nove formate i prostore za dalje promišljanje. Za svaki razgovor imao sam nekoliko različitih pitanja u odnosu na umjetničku praksu, iskustvo i kontekst u kojem žive i rade sagovornici, ali sam i svakog od njih zamolio da postavi jedno pitanje za mog narednog sagovornika. Htio bih zapravo ta pitanja ovdje podijeliti sa čitaocima i podstaknuti ih na razmišljanje i diskusiju. Pitanja koja slijede postavili

su Maja Kowalczyk, Diana Niepce, Michael Turinsky, Venetsiana Kalampaliki, Irini Kourouvani, Vivi Christodouloupoulou, Dalibor Šandor, Pelenakeke Brown, Perel, Juri Rovarato, Dennis Seidel, Miad Nohekan, Leila Jalalian, Hamidreza Hamidi, Aleksandra Skotarek i Justyna Wielgus:

- Da li pravite red u životu za vrijeme karantina?
- Kakav vam je poredak stvari potreban dok ste u karantinu?
- Na koji način je ova izolacija drugačija od drugih vrsta izolacija koje ste do sada doživjeli?
- Šta je *mobility justice* za vas?
- Na koji način i kako se promijenila vaša percepcija vremena u proteklih nekoliko mjeseci? Šta je drugačije?
- Koje su pozitivne stvari i iskustva nastala u ovoj situaciji i da li imate ideju kako ih razvijati dalje i nakon krize?
- Šta odbijanje, protivljenje i neprihvatanje znače za vas? Ima li nešto čemu se protivite, što odbijate ili ne prihvatate u ovom trenutku ili u proteklom razdoblju?
- Šta je vaš *guilty pleasure*? Da li *guilty pleasure* može pokrenuti revoluciju? I ako da, kako?
- Koja je svrha vaše umjetnosti i koliko ona ima smisla u krizi izazvanoj pandemijom? I da li i na koji način će imati smisla u budućnosti?
- Da li je dovoljno učinjeno od strane nadležnih organa kako bi institucije kulture mogle ponovo biti otvorene?
- Kako se kao umjetnik nosite sa ovom situacijom? Na koji način održavate rad, komunicirate sa kolegama, publikom, zajednicom?
- Šta za vas znači "povratak u normalnost"? I da li joj se želite vratiti?

Zanima me da li misliš da je solidarnost na nezavisnoj umetničkoj sceni danas moguća i šta ona podrazumeva u trenutnoj situaciji? (namerno pitam za taj suženi kontekst).

Naravno da postoje pojedinci i grupe koji svoj rad i javno djelovanje u zajednici zasnivaju na solidarnosti, ali pitanje se odnosi na scenu, pa onda neću govoriti o njima. Ukoliko govorimo o nezavisnoj seni savremenih izvodjačkih umjetnosti i pogotovo savremenog plesa, mislim da solidarnost nije moguća, jer to nam pokazuje i sama scena u proteklih 20 godina. Aktuelna scena se u potpunosti uspostavila na neoliberalnim principima, mada ona sama o sebi tako ne misli, što mislim da je samo još jedna potvrda njene ideološke nesvjesnosti. Kompetitivnost, klanovski mentalitet i beskrupuloznost su snažne odlike scene. Kako da govorimo o solidarnosti kada u Srbiji kolege krađu projektne ideje jedni drugima zarad lične koristi, normalizuje se neplaćeni rad i eksploatacija, svrha i smisao umjetničkog rada određena je idejom „prvi, jedini, najbolji”? Zatim, kako da govorimo o solidarnosti

kada u Srbiji kolege svoje neznanje i nepoznavanje drugih prethodnih i drugačijih aktualnih lokalnih praksi, kao i odsustvo razumijevanja kulturnog, političkog i društvenog konteksta u kojem se radi uzimaju oportunistički kao mjesto i priliku za samopromociju i vlastitu kreativnost? Scena ne problematizuje opštu kulturnu, društvenu i ekonomsku centralizaciju, kao ni „odlivanje” scene iz ekonomskih i političkih razloga, a diskriminacija i korupcija kao dvije glavne odlike savremenog društva u Srbiji najčešće nisu problemi kojima se scena strukturalno bavi. Pri tome ne zaboravimo da se ovakvo ponašanje i odnosi dešavaju među ljudima u zemlji Srbiji koja je jedna od najsiriomašnjih zemalja u Evropi i među onima sa najvećim ekonomskih nejednakostima.

Pojedinci „nezavisnu” odnosno vaninstitucionalnu poziciju drže u nekom rascijepljenom stanju duha u žudnji da se stabilnost obezbjedi kroz odnos ili poziciju u instituciji. Mislim da bi svakako bilo dobro da scena uradi reviziju samog termina „nezavisne scene” i zatraži pomoć u sprovođenju vlastite kritičke analize kako bi svima, a možda najviše samim akterima, bilo jasno o kakvoj strukturi, o kakvim odnosima i o kakvim afektivnim stanjima i životu se radi.

Na međunarodnoj sceni situacija je na drugi način problematična ukoliko govorimo o solidarnosti. Pogledajte koliko umjetnika, festivala, pozorišta, programa za podršku u protekle 3–4 godine u objavama o svom radu ima termin „solidarnost” (*solidarity*) i „briga” (*care*). Veliki, veliki broj, a koji prije 5, 10 ili 15 godina ni na koji način nisu govorili o ovim pojmovima, a kamoli da su ih praktikovali. Ali sada je došlo vrijeme za novi trend na tržištu, pa su odjednom naravno svi solidarni i puni brige o drugom. Protiv ovoga se moramo boriti, jer se radi o najstrašnijem obesmišljavanju i depolitizaciji ovih pojmova odnosno praksi koje su itekako bitne upravo za borbu protiv političke apatije i nemoći.

Za mene je solidarnost životni i istorijski put... To nije trend koji se prati, niti stvar koja se radi u slobodno vrijeme, ili zbog toga što je raspisan konkurs. Ona nije podložna statističkoj obradi podataka o učesnicima i „razvoju publike”. Ona je istorijski revolucionarni proces. Ona je život koji živimo jer smo kao društveno biće upoznali drugog i zbog njega smo velikodušno, odgovorno, s povjerenjem, suosjećajnošću, požrtvovanošću i suštinskim prihvatanjem ideje asimetričnog reciprociteta na drugačijem životnom putu od onog koji smo započeli na osnovu svoje klasne, rasne, rodne pripadnosti i fizičkog, senzornog i kognitivnog stanja. Uzajamnost. Kakva krasna riječ! Uz-ja-mnost. „Ja” ne stoji samo, nego ga određuje ovo „uz”, koje podrazumjeva drugog. To je moje iskustvo solidarnosti, koje živim i za koje se borim sa snažim entuzijazmom. Kod drugih je to drugačije i tu je ljepota i smisao uzajamnosti kojom oblikujemo odnose, društvo, svijet u kojem želimo da živimo.

MAIN THEME:

MUSIC, ART, AND TECHNOLOGY
IN THE TIME OF
GLOBAL CRISIS



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CARTRIDGE MUSIC IN THE QUARANTINE: PRESENCE, ABSENCE, CONTINGENCY SETUPS AND (DE-)TERRITORIALISED PERFORMANCES

Abstract: Between the end of May and the beginning of June, 2020, we performed individually, filmed, synced together, edited and presented a quarantine version of John Cage's *Cartridge Music*. Uploaded on YouTube, the performance was broadcast on 1 June, as part of the 4th Research Colloquium of the Postgraduate Programme in Music of the Federal University of Paraíba. Stranded at home since March, unable to reach our respective faculty offices/studios, and mostly left with domestic gear, kitchenware, sound-producing car equipment and our children's toys, we put together an emergency version of the piece, characterised by three dramatically different setups, each with its own spatialities and soundworlds. Importantly, our use of the signifier "emergency" here is meant to refer much more to the concrete condition of our existences in this particular situation, than to the contingent circumstances of this specific musical activity. In this paper, we discuss the piece by considering its preparation, performance, presentation

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and audience reception. In particular, furthering our previous studies on the (de-)territorialisation of performance and on the territorial metaphors embedded in collaborative artistic interaction, we question the notions of “place” and “venue” in the context of a collective performance that happened in three different locations and of a subsequent première that did not happen in any tangible physical place at all. However, and in spite of the substantial de-territorialisation of our gig, we also consider a set of persisting spatial narratives that inscribe the performance in terms of both visually and aurally perceptible power relations. Finally, considering the inherent criticalities of the field(s) of “experimental”, “avant-garde” or simply “contemporary” music, we assess the gains and losses of such a dematerialised and yet ubiquitous performance in terms of audience participation and appreciation.

Keywords: John Cage, *Cartridge Music*, experimental music, quarantine, pandemics, (de-)territorialisation of performance, contingency setups

Introduction

In mid-March, 2020, public universities in Brazil started shutting down their physical premises due to the rising Covid-19 emergency. Almost overnight, academic communities – and especially those affiliated to postgraduate programmes – found themselves facing an urgent conversion from presence-based tuition into remote, online-based learning and teaching. At the time of writing this article, we are still observing physical distancing and social isolation, while national guidelines have postponed the recommended return to presence-based teaching to 2021. When not cancelled, conferences, symposia and other academic events have also been relocated to live streaming services.

Between the end of May and the beginning of June, 2020, we performed individually, filmed, synced together, edited and presented a quarantine version of John Cage’s *Cartridge Music* (1960). Uploaded on YouTube, the performance was broadcast on 1 June, as part of the *IV Colóquio de Pesquisa* (4th Research Colloquium) of the Postgraduate Programme in Music (PPGM) of the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB). The video appears as a three-way split screen on our separate working spaces. Each of us had basically filmed himself with a fixed cell phone camera while performing the piece: notably, the three films were shot from substantially different angles, each of them highlighting the performer and the instruments in crucially different ways (Fig 1).

As a matter of fact, right in the days when we were preparing and performing the piece, the city of João Pessoa (where two of us are based) was hitting a peak in terms of daily deaths and infections. In this paper, after an introduction on John Cage’s discussion of the “experimental”, we situate our collaborative work within the conceptual framework of the (de)territorialisation of performance. Subsequently, we discuss our performance of the piece by considering its (multiple) preparation(s), its performance, presentation and audience reception.



Figure 1. A snapshot of the video of John Cage's *Cartridge Music*. On the top left: Valério Fiel da Costa. On the bottom left: Marco Scarassatti. On the right: Marcello Messina.

Experimental/experiment

In 1957, John Cage declared his coming to terms with the signifier “experimental”. He proposed a shift from the notion of “experiment”, as an act of truth-production through trial and error, to the notion of “experimental”, understood as a way to detach oneself from their composer prerogatives, not only letting “sounds be themselves” (Cage 1973, 10), but also allowing the author to participate in the musical phenomenon from a relatively passive point of view, as a casual listener. The distinction between experiment and experimental was proposed during the lecture *Experimental Music* (Cage 1973, 7-12) in terms of a misunderstanding that had been finally overcome. According to the composer, when someone called his music “experimental”, he objected:

It seemed to me that composers knew what they were doing, and that the experiments that had been made had taken place prior to the finished works, just as sketches are made before paintings and rehearsals precede performances (Cage 1973, 7).

In opposition to this, and as a form of disambiguation, the composer categorically rejected any predetermination inherent to this understanding of the “experimental”, and sought a diametrically opposite definition of the term: “what has happened is that I have become a listener and the music has become something to hear” (Cage 1973, 7). In other words, Cagean experimentalism proposed a break between compositional design and sound result, in a way that the author would not know what their own work sounded like. The radical refusal of preparation, measurement,

forecasting, testing, laboratory work, and so forth, in favor of inadvertence, chance, risk, and the connection between art and life, is at the basis of all Cagean rhetoric from the early 1950s until his death in 1992.

According to the philosopher and musicologist Lydia Goehr (2015), such a dichotomy could be reworked by considering the experimental attitude consolidated by Francis Bacon's scientific method as not being incompatible with Cage's proposition, in that the two authors share, in their modes of experimentation, a relationship of respect and reverence in relation to nature (Goehr 2015, 16) as well as an active criticism of hegemonic conservatism; there is therefore a positive experimental attitude to be considered in Bacon. Goehr, in proposing such an approach, makes an effort to rehabilitate the English philosopher, in view of the fact that, according to Horkheimer and Adorno's perspective, the scientific revolution associated with Bacon was also considered responsible for the predatory use of science as a way of controlling nature (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002, 2). Contrary to the promising expectations associated to the term "experimental", and advancing their critique of experimentalism as a form of control, Horkheimer and Adorno conflate both forms of experimentation in a single, catastrophic formula: "in dialectical terms, what the experimental shows about the experiment is the latter's tendency, despite itself, to control and thus eventually to kill nature through tortures performed in enlightenment laboratories of science and art" (Goehr 2015, 18). In other words, despite the possible differences between an experimental scientific and an artistic attitude, both would result in predatory ways of exploring nature. Goehr rehabilitates Cage and Bacon, relativising both the predatory character of the Baconian experiment and the nihilism of Cagean experimentalism, and seeking to highlight the strengths of both projects.

Beyond the warning issued by Horkheimer and Adorno, it is also necessary to discuss Cage's dichotomy, insofar as it suggests to identify the term "experiment" as something negative (control, repetition), while it associates positive features (creativity, risk) with the term "experimental". In other words, the first term allegedly seeks to promote a harmful control over nature, while the second term attempts to return to harmony with the very same nature through, for example, the idea of a conflation between life and art (Cage 1973, 12). The idea of risk being linked to a purposeful experimentalist attitude is also problematised by Goehr, as it implies that novelty comes with risks (which seems to be a general rule in the arts), or work in the opposite direction, taking systematic testing and logistics as preliminary steps before applying conclusions to the real world (Goehr 2015, 20). But how could we consider Cage's experimental attitude in this context, while taking into account the way in which the composer elaborated his utterances, his notational strategies and his relationship with the performer?

Contradictions of Cage's model

In this section, we propose some notes on the apparently simple premise that the experimental Cagean attitude is predicated on a desire for total freedom in relation to the canonical formulas of European concert music (rejecting an experimental scientific attitude and taking up a libertarian stance). The first aspect to be considered requires a reexamination of the aforementioned idea of a shift from author into listener. When Cage declares to have become a listener, it would be reasonable to assume that the hierarchically determined (and naturalised) roles of composer and listener would have undergone a reorientation: the mode of fruition of both allegedly becomes equal, as it were, since both would be surprised with the sound result, contrary to what happens in the traditional paradigm in which the composer pre-determines the form. However, Cage's prerogative to decide the existential status of what will sound is reaffirmed, based on his own fruitive experience, considered as an irrenunciabile condition for the work to exist, that is, for what was programmed (by himself) to establish a more or less direct connection with what will sound. In Cagean terms, the evaluation of the difference between what was planned and what happened, from the composer's point of view, is what defines whether the work is "determinate" or "indeterminate" (Cage 1973, 35). We emphasise here the positionality from which the work's existential status is managed, preserving the composer's prerogative as an active and necessary agent in its process of delimitation. If the composer is aware of what will happen, the work is *determinate*; if they cannot tell, the work is *indeterminate*.

Another aspect of such an arrangement is Cage's indeterminate music score, narrated as something to be unraveled, not resolvable and ultimately incapable of communicating objectively to the reader what it should properly sound like. A thorough examination of how the notations proposed by the composer, despite their apparent openness, end up facilitating the emergence of certain results, would not fit here. It is important to note that the radical openness expressed in these scores did not prevent them from being understood as scores *stricto sensu* and even as "works" in the classic sense of the term. According to Goehr's model, we understand the concept of work here as "the use of musical material resulting in complete and discrete, original and fixed, personally owned units" (Goehr 1992, 206). Cage's scores, from the 1950s onwards, are not proposed merely as approximate guides for making music freely, but as true units of belonging, being distributed in the market as such and, in the same way, delimiting a clear territory in terms of notational models, creative propositions and conceptual approaches.² It is from the contradiction between the idea of a "work" *stricto sensu* and its impossible correlation with an invariable result,

² Emblematic in this sense is the case of Mike Batt who was sentenced to pay copyright to Edition Peters for using a 1-minute section of silence, which was understood as plagiarism of Cage's 4'33" (cf. Kurzon 2007).

that it is imperative to speak of indeterminacy.

Returning to the fundamental premises of Cage's indeterminacy, one would assume that once the composer stopped operating actively towards the definition of musical form, this would become the performer's prerogative. Such a rearrangement would make the exchange of roles in the hierarchical game even more radical, since a traditional subordinate agent (the performer) would become a protagonist and, ultimately, decide the final form of the work. However, in Cage, there is no widespread recognition of this prerogative: quite the opposite, there is a constant criticism directed at interpreters who are allegedly unable to handle such a demand at a high level. In fact, the composer plays, on several occasions (Cage 1969, 136; Kostelanetz 2003, 72, 108), the role of a censor with the interpreters of his works; either by complaining about the way they perform, or by defining emblematic figures (such as pianist David Tudor) as unrivaled examples of how to proceed.

For Cage, the formula for a good use of the freedom left to the interpreter would be their ability to get rid of personal tastes, neutralizing any authorial impetus, in order to allow "the sounds to be themselves": "one may give up the desire to control sound, clear his mind of music, and set about discovering means to let sounds be themselves rather than vehicles for man-made theories or expressions of human sentiments" (Cage 1973, 10). Thus, there is no need to consider Cage's indeterminate music as a real device of liberation of the interpreter: rather, it is a form of control over the interpreter's attitudes meant to ensure that, in a disciplined way, they be able to bring out sound results compatible with an ideal of non-authorship or even "freedom", not of the interpreter, but of the "sounds". It is sounds that are free (or that sound as if they were) and not human beings.

The composer, listening to their own work "inadvertently", can admire the naturalistic or re-naturalized character of their own compositional decisions, concealing them behind an iconoclastic statement that seems to declare the divorce between an archaic and authoritarian tradition (the scientific experiment's desire to control nature) and an attitude of communion between life and art.

This conclusion is not intended to discredit the Cagean project, but to highlight what actually gives it consistency in poetic, aesthetic and operational terms. So, instead of assuming that the author has no control over the context, which could give rise to an arbitrary attitude in the performance action, it would be more convenient to discuss how the items presented in a given proposal end up inducing certain attitudes and conclusions and interdicting others. Such a route would serve as an indication of how to proceed, avoiding out-of-context solutions; no longer taken as a vehicle for sound release, due to its "indeterministic" character, the score is considered as a strategy of invariance that imposes obstacles to individual expression, indirectly guiding the performer's action to follow a certain protocol; and, finally, instead of considering the absence of a strict score as a means to allow the performer to interfere freely, it is important to understand that we are facing a very specific artistic project, based on sound models imbued with invariance, whose direct in-

dication has become indispensable through a diffuse but incisive orality, endorsed by Cage himself and by his followers, and by mimetic models that were validated during his career.

The (de-)territorialisation of performance

The critical approach that we propose when analyzing Cage's work can be expanded and applied to several other cases, helping reinsert as a problem, in the examination of the musical phenomenon, the notions of authorship, work, score and interpretation. We are interested in highlighting the problem of performance as an active and creative instance, considering it the main determiner of what is heard, regardless of the notational strategies involved in the process. Since the sound form we hear has a direct relationship with the performance action that shapes it, in other words, as what we hear is a direct product of the decisions taken in the process of assembly and execution, and as it is not always possible to establish a direct connection between the sound result and the score, it would be convenient to invest in an approach to the musical phenomenon based on the performatic action. This is especially relevant in the repertoire of so-called indeterminate music, for improvisational proposals and ideas transmitted orally, but it could also be expressed in the environment of a music based on Goehr's concept of work, considering that, despite its formal closure, nothing prevents it from being the object of a shift towards morphological investigation.

In this way, the performance itself might cease to serve an *a priori* objective, i.e., responding in a disciplined way to what the work requires, but would manifest itself as an active decision-making body capable of creating its own responses to any stimuli, regardless of their open or closed nature. In this context, *ad hoc* criteria are activated to deal with concrete situations such as: who will perform the piece, in what physical (or virtual) space, what are the sound bodies available for the performance, what is the technical level of the performers in dealing with such sound bodies, what is the duration of the performance, etc. We call this a work of (de-)territorialisation of performance, because nothing is known about what the best attitude to take is before the start of the process; no model of performance behavior can be defined *a priori*, because the real performance conditions are yet unknown (Fiel da Costa 2016). We are used to consider the symbolic field of social relations in music as a territory whose norm would require a disciplinary commitment to performance in relation to the expressed demands, both for the musical text and for the social context in which its action takes place. Such an arrangement tends to ignore the concrete subjects and the real context in which the performance actually occurs. (De-)territorialising performance means demobilising the standard expectation in terms of performers' behavior, and aiming at a (re-)territorialisation that takes into account, as structuring factors, their bodies, aptitudes, desires and effective and affective relationships with the place and time in which the musical event will take

place. Incidentally, we may identify a further (de-)territorialisation of our specific performance of *Cartridge Music* during the quarantine, in that it happened in three different locations while, at the same time, its premiere did not happen in any tangible physical place at all.

Obviously, in the context of the (de-)territorialisation of performance, the original work is not disregarded: it is rather used as the basis of the performance act and its indications are strictly observed. What we seek in it, through a detailed examination of the score and of the context in which it was elaborated, is traces of invariance, stylistic determinations, strategies to block certain results and encourage others (Fiel da Costa 2016). Such an examination allows us to extract, from a specific musical proposal, elements that make it unique in the context of a broader set of proposals, and to work towards highlighting these elements. A work guideline is established and a series of specific decisions, directly linked to the performance action to be carried out (even if in relative disagreement with some particular indications), orientate the final result.

Recreating John Cage's *Cartridge Music*

In order to illustrate our process of re-creation of *Cartridge Music*, we need to focus primarily on our re-listening of the video recording of our performance. Re-listening implies the re-invention or reconstruction of a living memory. Our recorded performance, in turn, recalls another memory, namely, that of each of us acting as a “cartridge”, that is, a “phonograph pick-up” (Cage 1960) to capture and amplify the music resulting from John Cage's compositional project, available to us in the form of instructions and maps. Re-listening in itself works as a cartridge replacement, in that it modifies the perception of this experience and sheds light to the whole context of performance preparation.

Re-watching the video, on the other hand, highlights a series of spatial narratives that have to do with the three-way split screen, somewhat a cliché of remote interaction that is nevertheless capable of suggesting both a virtual approximation between three physically distant performers and a rigid territorial separation between their setups and their domestic workspaces – each with its own political negotiations and with its own overlapping of working and family roles.

The unstable nature of these domestic adjustments – aggravated by the Covid-19 crisis which made these spaces the only possible *loci* of creative work – has certainly influenced our setups: stranded at home since March, unable to reach our respective faculty offices/studios, and mostly left with domestic gear, kitchenware, sound-producing car equipment and our children's toys, we put together an emergency version of the piece, characterised by three dramatically different setups, each with its own spatialities and soundworlds. Despite the contingencies, however, nothing in our setups was the mere consequence of a life of precariousness and isolation.

We especially need to clarify this in light of a recent episode involving Caetano

Veloso and his son Moreno, who played the traditional plate and knife from the Bahian *samba de roda* tradition during a quarantine live concert from home. On that occasion, the Brazilian edition of the music review *Rolling Stone* commented that “one of the most unusual and comical moments happened during [the song] *Pardo*, when Moreno Veloso, in the absence of instruments, used a plate and a piece of cutlery to make the sound” (Rolling Stone 2020).³ Caetano Veloso responded by voicing his indignation against the ignorance of the reviewers, and highlighting the “lack of care and respect” that emerges from such a comment, while other observers on social media pointed out the effacement of local traditions operated by centralised national and global narratives (Veloso 2020).

Despite the illusionary anti-identitarian stereotypes that might be associated with experimental music practice (Ciacchi 2020; Messina 2019), we claim that our work is profoundly inscribed in a series of different traditions and personal or collective histories that have to do with our varied social identities, articulated in turn around important demarcations of ethnicity, gender, class, race, age, etc. In this context, far from claiming that the emergency-driven “absence of instruments” mentioned by *Rolling Stone* has not affected us, we nevertheless maintain that our choices in terms of setup and instrument choice were not merely random or comical effects – they are categorically part of our identities and traditions as experimental musicians.

In fact, our use of the signifier “emergency” is meant to refer much more to the concrete condition of our existences (and of the lives and deaths of millions of people around us) in the particular situation of the pandemic, than to the contingent circumstances of this specific musical activity.

Cage, in the cage

Each cartridge of phonographic pick-ups extracts and reads the sound information while groping the surface of an object, to amplify and make audible the apparently inaudible; in *Cartridge Music*, based on the contact with these objects, these electronic artifacts capture and modify their performance. Faced with the multiple challenges of interpreting the instructions proposed by Cage; of choosing the objects and cartridges to be used; and of mounting a performance in which these elements all interacted, not only did we perceive a systemic process in which the electro/electronic artifacts were sensitive extensions of our choices, we also perceived a situation in which the performer is one of the cartridges, and that other cartridges influence their decisions and interactions, while also bringing up socially experienced situations as they amplify and alter the constitution of this Cagean game. Furthermore, objects are also artifacts and, following the logic of the piece, they are cartridges that alter the existential performance of each of the elements in play. While putting together the piece, many cartridges interacted, operating at

³ “Um dos momentos mais inusitados e cômicos aconteceu em ‘Pardo’, quando Moreno Veloso, na falta de instrumentos, usou um prato e um talher para fazer o som”.

different levels, all subjected, in one way or another, to the quarantine, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The cage in the cage

In Brazil, on top of the pandemic, we are coping with the daily attacks of the current Government, whose political project of control made life disposable (Jesus 2019). This project made a big experiment and won the elections – since then, it subverts all the principles of what is humanly acceptable: it attacks life. In his famous formulation of “necropolitics”, Achille Mbembe looks at “those figures of sovereignty whose central project is not the struggle for autonomy but the generalized instrumentalization of human existence and the material destruction of human bodies and populations” (2003: 14). In this big necropolitical game, the Government literally seems to extract pleasure from the sustained tragedy that has been accompanying our lives in the last six months.

At the same time, in this phenomenological contingency, confinement and social isolation made us familiarise with the use of recording devices, such as our computers, tablets or smartphones, that, connected to the Internet, resume our access to existence in social networks (De’ Pandey and Pal, 2020), literally in exchange for our capitulation by giving away information, data, habits, cultures, etc., enforcing a domination over human existence reduced to reified relationships, work and life, and transformed in an undistinguished mass (Chan 2020).

Thinking about *Cartridge Music* in this context is referring to a world transformed into a massive social network, to a digital reality that allows the infinite multiplication of existence at work; it is a permanent state of work, whereby life has become just one aspect of its precariousness. This state of permanent work means that we are producing all the time, producing data and content for the network, even with the illusion of procrastination, when it occurs within the network itself, we work on the production of the data required in this new order of the Capital:

as mined data and information become the most valuable commodity for a planet already depleted of natural resources, digital Pandemic temporalities lifeworlds become new extractive frontiers rife with the temporal dissonances and unequal futures that already structure capitalist modernity (Chan 2020, 13.4-13.5).

This introductory reflection serves to think about *Cartridge Music*, exactly 60 years after its composition, at the time of this writing, from a perspective in which the electronic circuit (the needle capsule) creates an extension of the human nervous system to the outside world (McLuhan 1964), until this present historical moment when digital platforms capture existence in a systematic way. Cage's proposition, in this specific context, brought to the fore modes of displacement and resistance, in daily life through craftsmanship – or what Lévi-Strauss referred to as “bricolage”

in the Amerindian context – tactile relationships, beyond digital interaction with artifacts and devices.

Cage in Cage

Marco Scarassatti chose to map the piece onto the surface where the interaction between objects, auxiliary sounds and cartridges would take place. For that, he organised a board from an instrument case, whose clear and smooth surface would allow him to arrange performance maps as well as objects/cartridges. The performance map was then posed on this working board, and the choice of objects and cartridges followed as a procedure of getting by with a limited range of instruments – fundamentally, what he had at home – even with a need to decontextualise them to perform the function he stipulated in the operation of bringing Cage to the surface. In this sense, the procedure was closer to what Claude Lévi-Strauss considers as the bricoleur's *modus operandi*.

His [or her] universe of instruments is closed and the rules of his [or her] game are always to make do with ‘whatever is at hand’, that is to say with a set of tools and materials which is always finite and is also heterogeneous because what it contains bears no relation to the current project, or indeed any particular project, but is the contingent result of all the occasions there have been to enrich the stock or to maintain it with the remains of previous construction or destruction (Lévi-Strauss 1966, 17).

Scarassatti replaced the transparent sheets with tracing papers drawn upon with India ink, which helped visualize superimposed figures. These papers overlaid on the instrument case called for a setup in which the objects to be touched would be part of the cartography of the piece placed on the surface. He disassembled an 18-inch car speaker (part of his old sound sculpture) and positioned it between the wall and the cartographic surface. In front of this main speaker, he put a pair of smaller speakers and a tweeter, all disassembled from an old hi-fi system. This quartet of speakers diffused the audio captured in the performance, while it also functioned as an object/cartridge, in that, when approached by the piezo, it fed the system back as part of a reciprocal game between two electromagnetic fields. Scarassatti used a threaded bar from a previously disassembled instrument invented by him, and put it on the overlaid maps of the piece. He then completed the topographic setup by adding a metal pulley, a spring, two guitar pedals, two clip-on contact mics (movable from an object to another), a fixed condenser microphone stuck to the instrument case, an already drawn sheet, a graphite pencil and a wooden bowl with 16 cowrie shells inside (Fig. 2) – this last object has important implications in light of Scarassatti's connection with Yoruba culture and the study of *Ifá*.⁴ The presence of

⁴ On *Ifá* as a philosophical system within Yoruba episteme, cf. Adegbindin (2014).

the shells somewhat changed the relationship between the cartridges and the objects that were meant to produce auxiliary sounds. At different levels, such as that of overlapping papers and that of the created assemblages, these artifacts sometimes operated as objects, sometimes as cartridges.



Figure 2. A series of different angles on Scarassatti's setup.

Scarassatti's sound sculpture approach somewhat diverged from Valério Fiel da Costa's pragmatic use of different objects meant to produce specific sound-types. Fiel da Costa used eight objects, namely: (1) a metal bottle rack, meant to produce metallic sound, friction textures, clicks and light resonances; (2) a key chain, producing high and bright sounds, clicks and tremolos; (3) a marble rotating inside a metal bowl, indicated in order to emit a tonal sound with varying speed loopings; (4) a knife, producing impetuous gestural sounds and frequency modulation with a

declamatory quality; (5) a crackling microphone; (6) a pencil on paper, providing an impetuous high-pitched gesture, with low looping dynamics; (7) a metal platter used as a percussion, whose resonance produces feedback; (8) a metal chair, meant to produce percussive sounds alongside the squeaky metallic effect produced when dragging the chair on the floor (Fig. 3). In relation to Fiel da Costa's setup, the loudspeaker provided two possible operations: increased intensity (resonance) and echo (texture).

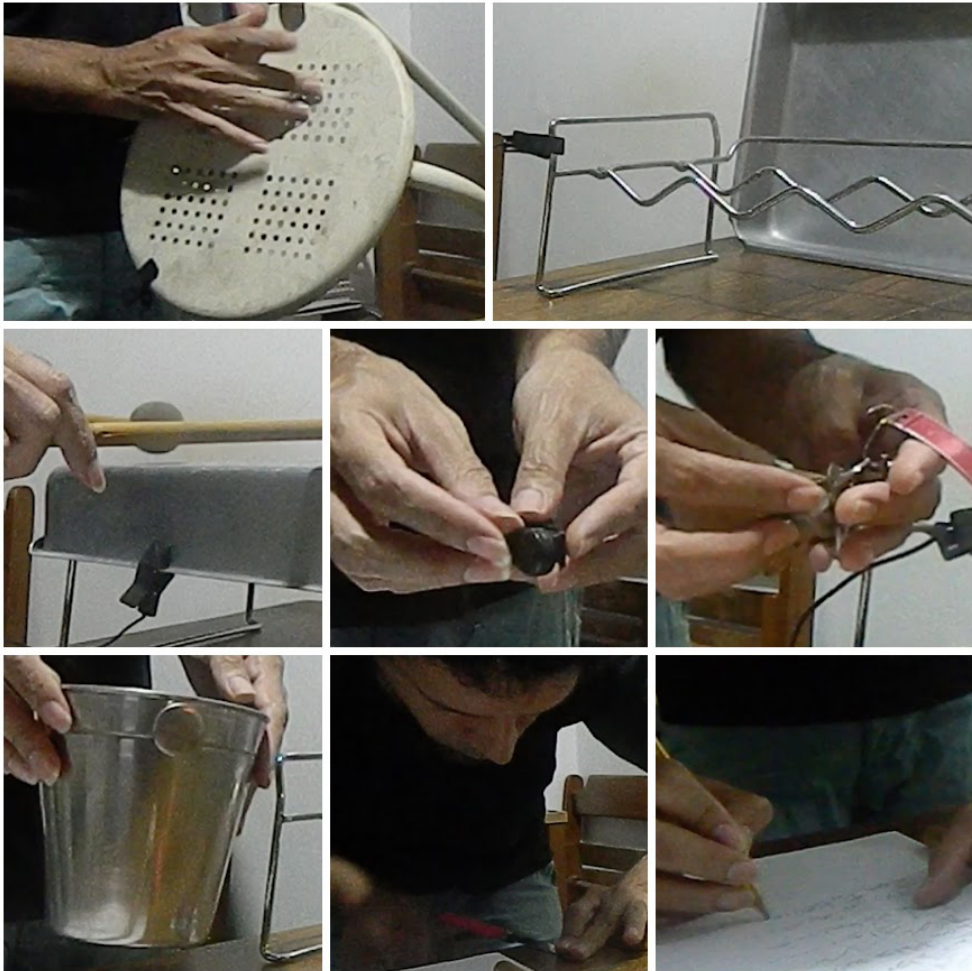


Figure 3. A panoramic view on the objects used by Fiel da Costa in his setup.

Marcello Messina's setup focused on the use of everyday objects from his continued domestic experience, with a specific (but not exclusive) attention to his son's toys. In this context, a creative renegotiation of these very same objects had already taken place in a pre-pandemic piece titled *Dott.ssa*, where a series of

asynchronous encounters between the toys and voices calling Messina's deceased mother is meant to reflect on a meeting – that between grandson and grandmother – that never happened because they did not make it in time.⁵ In this sense, Messina's setup of Cage's *Cartridge Music* exists primarily in its intertextual relationship with the piece *Dott.ssa*, with an added layer regarding the pandemic, the precariousness of domestic spaces and equipment, the limited amount of time at disposal between family duties, etc. Locked in an office at the university, most of Messina's equipment was not reachable in a quarantine situation, therefore, while both Fiel da Costa and Scarassatti used clip-on contact mics, he had to use a cheap USB desktop microphone. The sound picked-up by the USB mic was then fed to a simple Pd patch where it was amplified, distorted, and played back by built-in laptop speakers (Fig 4) – this allowed for a decently loud recording despite the lack of proper mics and loudspeakers. On top of the toys, Messina also played Baoding balls, an electric toothbrush, a kitchen roll cardboard tube, etc.

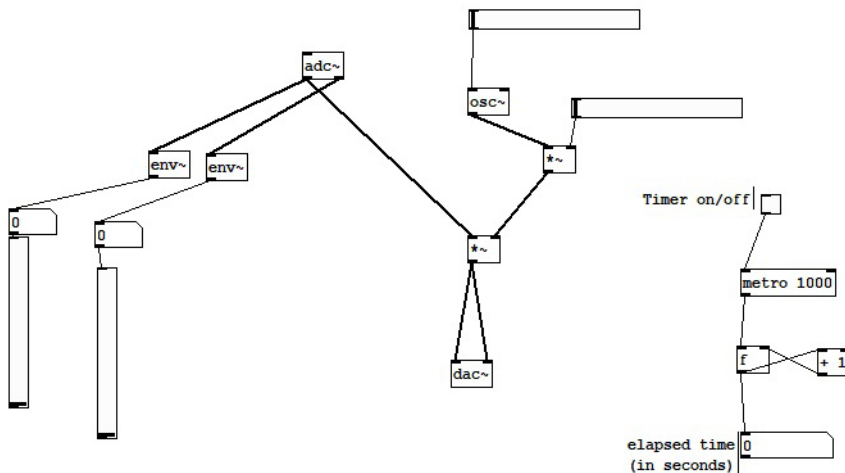


Figure 4. A snapshot of the Pd patch used by Messina in order to amplify and distort the picked-up sounds.

Putting the video together

As *Cartridge Music* is a modular piece, the overlapping of the three separately recorded layers ends up generating a random result. Our first idea in this sense contemplated the use of fingersnaps as cues at the beginning of each individual performance, in order to lock a specific synchronisation of the vertical encounters

⁵ Audio available on <https://youtu.be/4MGNXH9mE>.

between our respective actions and sounds. When editing the final video of the piece, however, we realised that syncing these initial cues was not the only way in which the piece could work vertically. Eventually, we found out that ignoring/cutting out the cues and allowing for a slightly different syncing of the three performances would produce a more dramatic effect in correspondence of crucial moments of the piece. Most notably, in our slightly de-synced setup, the piece ends with the three performers finishing their material and disappearing from the screen, one after each other in the following order: Fiel da Costa, Scarassatti, Messina. Arguably, this progressive exit from the video reproduces a sort of orchestral effect of progressive reduction to silence, as it were, from *tutti* to a collective *tacet*.

Final remarks

As mentioned above, our collective performance of John Cage's *Cartridge Music* took place in three different times and places, literally, in our own domestic spaces and in our own time. This asynchronous interaction was then collaged together with the help of video editing software, and, as noted above, the discrete quality of the three different performances allowed us to choose between multiple options in terms of vertical encounters between the events. Once we agreed on a final version of the three-way split-screen video, we packed it up as a collective performance, as a single "work", and sent it to the organisers of the Research Colloquium, for them to schedule a broadcast of the video, to be located within the temporal arrangements of the conference. When the video was broadcast on 1 June 2020, between 5.00 and 5.30 pm (UTC -3), a premiere of our performance took place, literally in no place, or at least in no physical space.

A combination of three separate performances, capable of being incorporated as a single artistic item, and to "happen" at a specific time as much as any other collective performance, our version of *Cartridge Music* – together with a plethora of other works produced remotely during these times of physical distancing – defies the implicit association between musical activity and synchronic/syntopic interaction. In this context, the "venue" as an apparently irrenunciabile part of the live presentation of a musical work, dissolves as one of the "social paraphernalia" (Keller et al., 2010), whose regulatory function with respect to musical activities urgently needs questioning. At the same time, we need to ask ourselves whether simultaneous interaction is always the safest, more reasonable, and, especially, the only existing option for collective creative activities in music (Messina et al., 2019).

Finally, we want to consider the inherent criticalities of the field(s) of "experimental", "avant-garde" or simply "contemporary" music, both in terms of the discursive and programmatic limits of these rubrics (Rebhahn 2012; Fiel da Costa 2017; Messina 2019; Ciacchi 2020) and in terms of lack of social impact with audiences and followers (Foucault and Boulez 1985). In the context of such

a dematerialised and yet ubiquitous performance,⁶ we were able to paradoxically appreciate an unprecedented participation on the part of the audience – part of this may be due to the fact that, even during live streaming performances of “erudite European music”, listeners are allowed to interact discreetly with the rest of the audience through written comments, something that would be impossible within the rigid social rules of the concert hall, aimed at the literal cancellation of the listener in terms of its physiological and communicative functions.

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**CARTRIDGE MUSIC IN THE QUARANTINE:
 PRESENCE, ABSENCE, CONTINGENCY SETUPS
 AND (DE-)TERRITORIALISED PERFORMANCES
 (summary)**

Between the end of May and the beginning of June, 2020, we performed individually, filmed, synced together, edited and presented a quarantine version of John Cage's *Cartridge Music*. Uploaded on YouTube, the performance was broadcast on 1 June, as part of the 4th Research Colloquium of the Postgraduate Programme in Music of the Federal University of Paraíba. Stranded at home since March, unable to reach our respective faculty offices/studios, and mostly left with domestic gear, kitchenware, sound-producing car equipment and our children's toys, we put together an emergency version of the piece, characterised by three dramatically different setups, each with its own spatialities and soundworlds. Importantly, our use of the signifier "emergency" here is meant to refer much more to the concrete condition of our existences in this particular situation, than to the contingent circumstances of this specific musical activity. In this paper, we discuss the piece by considering its preparation, performance, presentation and audience reception. We start off with a critical discussion of the Cagean dichotomy *experiment vs. experimental*, and proceed by identifying a set of crucial contradictions in Cage's model, mainly boiling down to the idea that indeterminacy is far from being a device for the liberation of the interpreter, but is rather a form of control over the interpreter's attitudes meant to ensure that, in a disciplined way, they be able to bring out sound results compatible with an ideal of non-authorship or even "freedom", not of the interpreter, but of the "sounds". Furthering our previous studies on the (de-)territorialisation of performance and on the territorial metaphors embedded in collaborative artistic interaction, we question the notions of "place" and "venue" in the context of a collective performance that happened in three different locations and of a subsequent première that did not happen in any tangible physical place at all. However, and in spite of the substantial de-territorialisation of our gig, we also consider a set of persisting spatial narratives that inscribe the performance in terms of both visually and aurally perceptible power relations. After all, (de-)territorialising performance means demobilising the standard expectation in terms of performers' behavior, and aiming at a (re-)territorialisation that takes into account, as structuring factors, their bodies, aptitudes, desires and effective and affective relationships with the place and time in which the musical event will take place. In the central section of the paper, we discuss in detail each individual setup, its particularities and contingencies. Importantly, we reflect on the slightly de-synced montage of the video, that allows the piece to end with the three performers finishing their material and disappearing from the screen, arguably, producing a dramatic orchestral effect of progressive reduction to silence. Finally, considering the inherent criticalities of the field(s) of "experimental", "avant-garde" or simply "contemporary" music, we assess the gains and losses of such a dematerialised and yet ubiquitous performance in terms of audience participation and appreciation.

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PERSPECTIVES ON VIRTUAL MUSEUM TOURS

Abstract: As a number of world museums have closed their doors for the public due to pandemic of the new Corona virus, curators are thinking of alternative ways of audience outreach: 3D virtual galleries are increasingly created, video guided tours shared, digitized collections put online. The new circumstances unquestionably bring potentials for growth, but carry numerous risks and inconsideration, as well. Many theoreticians argue that the crisis of this scale will undoubtedly fasten the digital transformation in museum and arts sector and consequently, in a much more wide sense influence the identity rethinking. However, the research of audience interest to virtual museum tours show there was a peak of just 3 days visiting these, massively followed by a fast decrease even the social isolation was globally still present and museum buildings still locked. Turning back to the genesis of the virtual museums, in the following paper, we will question why there is no interest to virtual museum content. Do tours answer the needs of the contemporary digital-born audience? Do these represent just a copy of settings from physical galleries or use potentials and logic of the new spaces? Will museums finally transform and enter into so many times nowadays mentioned digital shift answering the need of the new, transmedia perception of audience?

Keywords: virtual museum, pandemic, transmedia perception, technology, digital shift

Virtual museum – a brief overview on terminology and history

The very notion of a virtual museum today, along with modern technologies, is most often associated with a space on the World Wide Web, being on a site of some museum institution or an independent exhibition online. However, following Ber-

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nard Deloche and his acknowledgement of the virtual museum (Deloš 2006), we can agree with the idea of museum virtuality regardless of technological development, as each exhibition, from the predecessors of modern museums – curiosity cabinets – were meant to provoke the mind wondering through the virtual paths of mental images. On the other hand, for the purposes of this text we will accept a slightly narrower understanding of virtual worlds expressed in Lev Manovich's position: “By virtual worlds I mean 3D computer-generated interactive environments.” This definition includes existing 3D computer frames – high-quality virtual realities that work with monitors on the head and with photorealistic graphics, salons with video games, video games on CD-ROMs and multiplayer online games, virtual movie realities reproduced on quick time programs, VRML (shaped virtual reality language) scenes and graphical chat environments such as “palace” or “active worlds” (Manovič 2001, 49).

When it comes to the virtual museum world, it is important to mention that several terms are used in parallel and for the same notion: digital museum, electronic museum, online museum, hypermedia museum, Web museum, or Cybermuseum (Schweibenz 2004, 3):

This wide range in terminology is due to the variety of involved disciplines: computer science, library and information science, museology and the museum related disciplines such as archaeology, art, history, and natural sciences, which often developed specific and independent ideas of the virtual museum” (Schweibenz 2004, 13).

Agreeing that the multitude of terms is still used a decade afterwards, Hermon and Hazan emphasize that work is still to be done “for better understanding the (perhaps sometimes subtle) difference between digital collections, online archives and virtual museums” (Hermon, Hazan 2013, 625–26).

Therefore, we will think of the virtual museum as a space online, separate from the physical, a network of data that should be interpreted for the audience, i.e. curated, co-created for and with site visitors, following the needs of the contemporary audience and exhibiting potentials of the *virtual aura* (Hazan 2003) or even *aura without the object* (Groys 2020).

However, the distinguishing feature of the idea of the virtual museum in comparison to the physical one is the *hypertext* and potential of a non-linear exposition where one can cross-reference vast quantities of information (Pascon 1997, 62). In addition, interactive multimedia technologies respond well to the convergence culture in which different (old and new) media collide (Jenkins, 2006). Therefore, from the last decade of the 20th Century when the first CD-ROM virtual museum tours were sold in the souvenir shops of the big museum institutions, with the development of technology, digitalization, the Web and the perception of people – virtual museum tours are every day more numerous, enabling people from all parts of the world to enjoy the content. While these tendencies definitely go along with the

predicted digital shift, there are still many issues to be raised. In this paper, we will come back to the *hypertext* and discuss if the interpretation of content in the virtual museum (as defined in this introduction) relies on this potential or if the old models of the linear and often non-interactive setting still dominate even in virtual spaces.

No Interest in Virtual Tours?

When we talk about virtual museum exhibitions, it is important to note that the museum audience from the very beginning and development of virtual tours has rarely been captivated by such content. Interestingly, even in the current time of pandemic with recommendations for physical distancing, avoidance of being in inner spaces with others, closed borders, and less chances for travelling, the 3D models, video guided tours and curated exhibitions online have again proven not to fulfill the needs of audience.

Namely, Michael Alexis, Marketing Director of Museum Hack, examined the trend of visiting virtual museum tours around the world during March and April 2020, in the moment of the highest population closure due to the strong intensity of the Coronavirus pandemic at that time in Europe, parts of Asia and North America. A large number of newly created or strongly promoted online content offered by almost all world museums due to the locked doors of their buildings first attracted the attention of the audience, which consumed these in large numbers from their own homes. However, as Google Trend shows, virtual museum tours were popular for four days during March 2020, and then the public's interest dropped sharply, even though the museums were still locked. (Alexis 2020)

Such statistics raise many issues. Some of them certainly concern the needs of the audience, i.e. its perception, the way in which virtual tours are made and the question of whether they use the potentials of digital space and contemporary technology or just copy established models of the setting in the physical space. Therefore, we will analyze what the strategies of audience involvement in online tours are, which are the most common platforms for virtual museums, and how these tours correspond with the transmedia perception of a younger, digital-born audience. We will see that each approach to the virtual museum tour creation has its advantages, however, I would say, neither is all-embracing.

Nevertheless, many theoreticians would argue that, currently, there are two trends in virtual museums, which stem from fundamentally different technical approaches. One is the use of general-purpose Virtual World platforms, in which the museum space and artifacts are modeled and exposed. For instance, many museums, real and fictional, have been created within the Second Life Virtual World. Another trend is the use of panoramic images and video tours to present captured aspects of an existing museum collection. Currently very successful in this domain is the Google Arts and Culture Project hosting high-resolution representations of art works and collaborating with many museum institutions.

3D Virtual Galleries and Traditional Expography

One of the main issues which, I would argue, makes virtual museum tours uninteresting for visitors, is that they often just copy models of existing physical settings, while there is rarely an attempt to offer innovative interpretation and immersion of the audience into the logic of the digital world.

Writing about a 3D museum tour on the Internet, Lijana Makteviš argues:

Dynamic movement is not part of the experience that virtual reality museums offer to visitors. Internet users do not move through virtual chambers, but occupy fixed positions in the center of the gallery. The walls of these galleries rotate, creating the illusion that a stable observer turns his head to search three-dimensional space (Makteviš 2013, 283).

However, this aspect of staticity which is mentioned could easily be overcome. After witnessing the PokemonGo game and extreme advance of technology, the fact is that the virtual museum is not following the pace and the term still refers to a gallery in a digital space relying on the principles of classical expography:

Although visitors can move to another fixed position, they are limited by technological rather than physical barriers. Only those observation positions designed by software designers are available. The visitor's experience of the possibility of movement is limited because in virtual galleries, reality is defined exclusively in visual categories. Virtual observers are offered a limited bodily experience, where visual and occasionally auditory perception is emphasized (Makteviš 2013, 284).

With this kind of the tour, designed by someone else's mind, visitors do not feel invited to interact with the exhibited material, to research on their own, or to let their mind wonder through virtual spaces, but they give up quickly. The default interactivity of the new media in this context is again shown not to be fulfilled, as the movement of our hand (which controls the mouse), does not necessarily involve deeper mind processes. A media theoretician, Lev Manovich will come to a very important conclusion for understanding the relationship between the new media and observers/users:

When we use the concept of interactive media exclusively for computer-based media, we are faced with the danger of interpreting interactivity literally, equating it with physical interaction between users and media things (press a button, choose a connection, move the body), to the detriment of psychological interaction. The psychological processes of filling, hypothetical shaping, invocation and identification, (...) are wrongly identified with the objectively exist-

ing structure of interactive connections (Manovič 2015, 99).

We could easily apply these notions to the virtual museum tour and the involvement of its audience.

Throughout the research of the mentioned Second Life Virtual World platform, I came to the conclusion that the majority of museums here maintain a real-life metaphor by displaying artifacts on walls or in cases in rooms, even though there is no explicit need to do so. Richard Urban, Pail Marty, and Michael Twidale, library and information scientists, argue:

In a world where the sun always shines, there is no reason not to display artifacts in the open air or even floating in mid-air; since Second Life avatars are able to fly, museums in Second Life can take innovative approaches to displaying artifacts that maximize vertical space as well as horizontal. With no need to worry about artifact theft or deterioration over time, developers of museums in Second Life may choose to display their collections in vast open spaces rather than forcing visitors to move from room to room in a single building. (Urban 2007).

These researchers add that this would also avoid a sense of claustrophobia when visiting a virtual museum gallery. Another advantage which virtual museum spaces have is that these 3D models of buildings could so easily change their shape or size from one visit to the next, creating an always special and new experience.

Finally, built-in multimedia technologies provide opportunities for displaying unique types of collections that may be physically impossible to display in real life museums. The International Spaceflight Museum, for example, offers a solar system simulation where visitors can stand in the middle of a model of the solar system, calibrate it to any date in history, and watch the planets revolve around them. Museums in Second Life can offer unique experiences that would be prohibitively expensive in real life museums, allowing visitors to find out what it would be like to be caught in a tsunami (at NOAA's Meteora Island), take a rocket ship ride into space (courtesy of the International Spaceflight Museum), or parachute from the top of the Eiffel Tower (in Paris 1900), Urban, Marty and Twidale (2007) will conclude after a detailed review of the Second Life virtual platform museums.

Potentials for Virtual Encounters

Another important issue when it comes to reasons why the virtual museums are not as visited as expected is the one considering social relations and contacts during the visit. In contemporary times it is expected for the museum to be a forum for discussion, a space for education and entertainment, and not a place for lonely wondering through the vast collection of objects. Programs such as group guided tours through exhibitions, conferences, seminars or forums taking place in the museum

and performances within the exhibition confirm this thesis. Therefore, the virtual museum audience is also searching for encounters and possibilities to exchange impressions. The document that curators and employees of museums from all over the world filled in together during the first months of the pandemic, offering reflections on what content in the virtual space and to whom to offer, and what the audience's reactions to them will be, indicates the need for opinion exchange and socialization during the virtual museum tour, more precisely, within the tour in the digital space. There was even a notable group of visitors who come to these tours on a virtual date during the lockdown.²

However, while many 3D galleries do not show other visitors but leave the virtual spaces empty, within the previously analyzed Second Life platform each avatar can meet others on the same spot at the moment, observe their motions and actions and communicate to them in real-time. There is also often a constructed space for different talks, exchanges and performances in the virtual museums of the Second Life World. On the other hand, within the Google Arts and Culture Project, there is no possibility for any such kind of virtual encounter. Still, this platform has the great advantage of high-resolution images which surpass the perception of a human eye and offer a much more detailed perspective on the museum object. The problem of the lack of social encounters within tours in the Google Arts and Culture Project could be surpassed using other tools and media for virtual tour creation. The example of good practice in this context, which occurred during the lockdown and closed museums in Italy, was the activity of Poldi Pezzoli House Museum which organized Zoom guided tours with a guide and up to 20 participants in a specified time. The guide created the tour using the Google Arts and Culture Street View 360° option, virtually walking with all participants through the gallery. As the evaluation of this project confirms:

Google Arts & Culture offers an amazing feature: the possibility of zooming paintings images to a very high detail. This was definitely the highlight of our tour: the possibility of showing minute details of the artwork, normally quite difficult to appreciate in real life, definitely gave a special feeling to the experience. (<https://www.invisiblestudio.net/post/coronavirus-tips-to-organise-a-virtual-visit-to-a-museum-using-google-arts-culture>, 2020).

Another feature that proved useful was to have extra visual material at hand so everyone could switch over from the StreetView experience. In this manner, an interaction with the audience was achieved and they all communicated via chat or by audio. Finally, even though the tour was recorded and placed online, there was no follow-up interest in this version almost at all. Consequently, we can conclude that the audience prefers and is attracted to exclusive programs and the possibility of

² “Who are our COVID audience segments based on emotional need?”, open Google document research sent to museum professionals during April and May 2020.

social interaction during the tour. Virtual museum tours should therefore concentrate on social interaction, and, we will see later on, on the principles of co-creation, transactive thinking, and transmedia content.

Virtual museum within *Convergence Culture*

We have seen in the previous example of the tour using Google Arts and Culture Street View 360° and the Zoom meeting application with the presence of the the museum guide as well, that the combination of different media is a good recipe for fulfilling audience needs. Reflecting on the current efforts of museums to sustain the audience in the times of pandemic, museologist Sandro Debono argues:

What will matter now, more than ever before, is not the digital. What I think will matter much more is the careful choice of engagement tools that each museum will go for to best communicate its ethos, ideals and experiences.

Referring to the phenomenon of Harry Potter, which has succeeded in becoming not just a book bestseller, but a whole universe of movies, video games, action figures, Lego sets, web-based newspaper, social media groups, and even an amusement park, he points out that: "...digital transformation is about talent, not technology. The digital may be perceived to be the magic wand museums need at this hour, but wands need a Harry Potter to work" (Debono 2020).

This thinking, informed by Henry Jenkin's notion of convergence culture is, I will agree, the crucial point of departure when thinking on all levels of a museum's functioning, especially with the creation of the virtual museum tours. As Jenkins explains, convergence is the coexistence of old and new media together, but it actually "occurs within the brains of individual media consumers and through their social interactions with others." Media convergence impacts the way we consume media and it changes our perception, making people capable of doing many activities in parallel: "A teenager doing homework may juggle four or five windows, scan the Web, listen to and download MP3 files, chat with friends, word-process a paper, and respond to e-mail, shifting rapidly among tasks" (Jenkins 2006, 21). The new consumers are also more socially connected, as well as much more dynamic with migratory shifting from one media to another, and noisier and more public than the users of traditional media. Therefore, transmedia storytelling has emerged in response to media convergence, while content which is co-created and participatory is very welcome.

One example in favor to this is a recent museum campaign that has fast gone viral: a recreation of works of fine art and posting of photos on social media. Inspired by a Dutch Instagram user, the *stay-at-home art challenge* was taken over by the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, who invited

their followers to recreate some art works from their collection. Soon, almost all the big museum institutions in the world joined in, resulting in tens of thousands of images contributed to social media and “half a million users started their own Facebook groups sharing photo imitations of famous paintings from different museums around the world and creating a living ‘archive of creativity in isolation’ (Grincheva, 2020). This activity does not show just how the audience is willing to participate in creating content, but it also indicates a high level of visual and media literacy of all art work re-creators.

On the other hand, thinking on museum institutions in times of crisis and new ways to keep museums accessible, Erica Lehrer and Shelley Ruth Butler hope museums will engage their audiences critically in the digital space. Standing for virtual curating and co-creation, and not just collecting (adding to museum collections), which is already very common, they point out that people’s relationships to museums should be open to the most radical re-thinking:

We urge museums to view the current ‘state of exception’ not only as a constraint (which it obviously is), but as a moment to experiment. For instance, museums could offer design software that allows exhibitions to be re-curated on a web platform, or re-captioned with new interpretive texts. Imagined shows could be curated whole cloth by aspiring curators, museum critics, students, and community groups. The interactive online game-in-development Occupy White Walls, for example, sidesteps art-world gatekeepers by allowing users to not only curate virtual exhibits, but build and populate whole virtual museums (Butler 2020).

Accordingly, except for more use of the advantage of contemporary technology and social media, the concentration on all-encompassing virtual museum projects which respond to the dynamic, transmedia perception of an audience is preferable. Therefore, the potential of interpretation within the digital exhibiting space relying on the mentioned hypertext and networked mode of operation is vast.

Writing about positive aspects of digital art history, Maja Stanković gives an interesting example of how one contemporary art work could be interpreted in a 3D form, interactively or virtually. She takes a *Mona Lisa Bazooka* (London 2007) piece by Banksy. Explaining this (on first glance a quite simple intervention in the public space) Stanković gives a model of presentation of a complex work in its meaning. It visually indicates intersection points of different registers: art, culture, socio-political circumstances and advertising – all interwoven in a message the artist sends through his work (Stanković 2020). This chained and visual interpretation is very convenient for the virtual space and if used for further virtual tour creation, it would probably communicate well to a digitally born generation accustomed to images and screens and not to linear textual data.

Finally, technology is developing so fast that many museum tours are already applying Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) tools. What these new

realities bring is not just an innovative approach to presentation, but a possibility for completely new categories of thinking and perception for a Man. Achille Mbembe pointed out the current moment as a trans-human turn in which human reasoning has reached its' limit, delegating it to the computational mind. However, we could foresee a great opportunity to the development and rethinking of our (societal) as well as the museum (and therefore virtual museum as well) identity. Inspiring initiatives in this context are done by contemporary new media artists who are indicating new perspectives to the whole museum and art sector, and much wider.

While using technology for creative expressions, the new media artists raise many issues considering exhibiting space, the materiality of artefact, audience interaction and manners of interpretation, which all shed a new light on virtual museum potentials. An interesting example in this context is the recent exhibition made for the Acute Art app-based platform. Using the Augmented Reality application, artist Brian Donnelley, known professionally as KAWS, launched the exhibition "Expanded Holiday" showing his trademark clown sculptures throughout the world simultaneously thanks to the AR application for mobile phone and invisible to the naked eye. These sculptures were floating several feet above the ground over 11 locations: Doha, Hong Kong, London, Melbourne, Paris, Sao Paulo, Seoul, Taipei, Serengeti National Park, Tokyo, and New York City. "When I realized the quality that could be achieved and experienced in AR, I was immediately drawn to its potential," KAWS expressed in a statement:

I have been creating objects and exhibiting works in public spaces throughout my career, and this allows me to expand on that in a whole new arena. The possibilities of locations and scale are endless, and I'm excited to start a new dialogue in this medium (Reiner-Roth 2020).

Between many other artistic projects conducted lately, one fascinating example is the work of experiential studio Marshmallow Laser Feast. Fusing deep experiences of nature, science and technology, they create VR installations. These art works are immersing observers into the virtual reality offering a non-human perception, a point of view of different animals and plants in the natural world:

One fascinating consideration is how time can compress and expand depending on what organism you embody. Humans can watch a film at 25 frames a second without perceiving a pause – the images seamlessly flow. A dragonfly is a finely tuned killing machine with eyes so close to its brain that its effectively living life at 300 frames per second. When it watches the same film it sees a slide show, each frame holding for an equivalent of 12 seconds. A dragonfly has better colour vision than anything in the animal world. It can see well into the ultra violet and infra-red spectrum through its almost 360-degree eyeballs. We can get a glimpse of those colour spectrums through specialised cameras and this informed the way we created that world,

Barnaby Steel, creative director of experiential studio Marshmallow Laser Feast will explain illustratively (Krichewsky 2020).

Nevertheless, what projects like this are succeeding in, is to make us start repositioning ourselves in the world and therefore maybe understanding better the needs of the coming *consumers* of contemporary world;

“I think virtual reality can take us one step closer to nature than filmed documentaries. Rather than having an experience of nature through the rectangle of a screen, being able to embody other organisms is a whole other level of connection and empathy. It also takes us out of our own body which breaks the human centric feeling that reality is just what we see.” (Kirchewsky 2020)

Inspired by the current situation of proliferation of virtual museum tours due to lockdown and recommendations for physical distancing, in this paper we have tried to offer some of the reasons why these tours are not as interesting as expected to museum audiences. We looked back to the beginnings of the museum apparition in digital spaces and researched the most common models of virtual museum interpretation today. Therefore, we can draw a conclusion that many virtual tours just copy the real-life museum setting and rely on linear storytelling. On the other hand, informed by the notion of convergence culture, the transmedia perception, as well as concepts of co-creation and co-curation, we recognized some examples of good practice when it comes to virtual museum content that fulfills the needs of the audience. Finally, we recognized a great potential in the new media art works which are opening other horizons and making us question our own perception and position within a wider transhuman context.

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PERSPECTIVES ON VIRTUAL MUSEUM TOURS (summary)

This research is informed by the response of museum and arts sector to the “new reality” in the times of crisis caused by the pandemic when the doors of cultural institutions across the whole world are locked, recommendations of social distancing are stressed, but when the proliferation of the virtual museum content is happening as well. Therefore, the goal of the paper is to analyze perspectives of the virtual museum, potentials it has considering audience outreach and new exhibiting models, but also limitations and problems museum professionals face when creating it.

It was however, necessary to dedicate attention to the origins of the virtual museum and terminology used in this context at the beginning. After reviewing the existing tendencies considering virtual museum perception and creation, it is analyzed why the audience is not as interested in these exhibitions as expected. Therefore, the history of virtual settings created on different platforms is researched, advantages of this medium are stressed, but problems in its functioning are recognized as well. It is concluded that many online platforms still repeat the traditional models of expography and do not rely on the logics of the digital environment and perception of the digital-born contemporary audience. However, aspects of audience socialization, participation, new transmedia perception and expectations are also analyzed. Finally, overviewing the examples of the good practices of museum activities online which were popular during the lockdown, as well as of the new media art creation and representation and successful use of virtual and augmented reality technological tools in this context – some potentials and solutions for virtual museum development are recognized.

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Review article

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RHIZOMATIC REMEDIATION: ADAPTATION IN A WEB-BASED ART PRAXIS DURING TIME(S) OF CRISES

Abstract: Willingness and the ability to adapt is vital in time(s) of crises. Remediation provides one novel and useful example of adaptation in contemporary digital art. This study explores the personal experiences of an art practice moving to virtual exhibition spaces, both by choice and as a response to multiple simultaneous crises (pandemic, environmental, racial, and democratic). This research reflects on three distinct examples of individual, subjective experiences of art making and exhibiting during this sudden shift. Each example highlights different approaches and possibilities, and examines similarities and contrasts in scales (local, national, and international) as well as more specific forms of remediation and relocation. Key findings include the different forms of remediation (different ways the art is translated for digital presentation) as well as the value of postinternet aesthetics, posthuman metamorphosis, and the nonsite. These themes help narrate these experiences and reflect more on these scenarios in ways that might be useful to other artists, curators, creative thinkers and practitioners. A suggestion is made that these groups would benefit from recognizing the value of rhizomatic (multi-centered, interrelated, and inclusive) approaches that include active remediation and adaptation.

Keywords: postinternet, posthuman, anthropocene, crises, remediation, digital exhibitions, rhizomatic, adaptation

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In Media(s) Res / Prologue

These crises continue, so we must begin *in medias res*. Herein I cultivate a series of notes and reflections – documentary, speculative and fragmentary. I trace one trajectory through (one experience of) online art practice during multiple simultaneous crises. The horizon of this essay is focused on my own artworks and participation in these exhibitions, as; artist, curator, or producer. My approach here (as well as my experience and my scholarship overall) is interdisciplinary. I will be looking at art and exhibition-making in our (ongoing) digital age, focusing on topics/theories surrounding web-centered art praxis, as a means of responding to issues of the Anthropocene and posthuman (which is to say again simultaneous ongoing crises). The postinternet, posthuman metamorphosis, as well as remediation, and the non-site will help narrate these experiences. These concepts will also act as a means of reflecting on many experiences via the subjective, and as a way of speaking to some of the potential significance of this praxis of adaptability.

Clearly, we are now in the middle of a variety of crises. There's no question the world is experiencing a period of multiple simultaneous crises, happening all at once: the coronavirus pandemic, a racial justice awakening, climate change, crises of democracy, and so on and on. Because of this, I want to acknowledge the difficulty/ies everyone is facing, in whatever area of the spectrum, as these crises continue to unfold and unravel (Anonymous 2020). These projects began at different points approximating the beginnings of the coronavirus crises, which, for me (and many all over the planet), also meant: attempts to resolve regular emergencies of various kind and degree, a sudden shift to relating to everyone other than my immediate family via video-conferencing (I was also suddenly teaching three classes online), reports of additional catastrophes, and the pause/interruption/dissolution of every exciting plan (which instead have formed a strangely resonant and echoing alternate reality that continues to haunt me and remains phantom for so many of us in such a diverse array of ways).

And we really must think about *crises* rather than crisis. People are experiencing a viral crisis, climate crises, racial and class crises, and crises of democracy nearly the world over. Jeanine Canty, professor of environmental studies at Naropa University, whose work concentrates on where ecological crisis meets social injustice, describes our situation lucidly and (com)passionately:

Presently, the planet is in a state of crisis. To a large extent, we have finally accepted that global warming is a reality and issues of climate justice are paramount. Suffering across the globe extends to both our human and more than human communities, with the direct and indirect effects of corporate globalization, whether through species loss, pollution and toxicity, wide-scale poverty, resource and religious wars, injustice, mental illness, addictions and spiritual loss. We

problem, and given. The internet then is another aspect of everyday life; quotidian, like the structures (social and architectural) that surround us. The internet is a no less potent context, medium, symbol, etc. and thinking of these projects this way helps us to understand why this approach/aesthetic is particularly vital regarding current growing awareness and appreciation of such artistic and creative practices. This is also to say that these subjects could be considered from many directions, and mine are based on very subjective experiences. Kinsey further suggests that the internet has transformed not only art but also our thinking about the digital – from an image-centric conception to one that includes objects and bodies (Kinsey 2020, 110). In this way, the internet thus becomes a (and maybe, for a moment here, *the*) context in which art occurs, is experienced/apprehended, and understood.

This suggestion of transformation of humans by the internet resembles a form of posthuman metamorphosis narrative, a concept expounded on by Bruce Clarke. We will see that each of these exhibitions has gone through its own form of post-human metamorphosis (Clarke 2008, 96), which, here, is also to say remediation/radical mediation (Grusin, 2015: 130); including ideas of hypermediacy (Kember and Zylinska 2012, 131), and “liv/feness” (Kember and Zylinska 2012, xvii), and that each is based on adapting to convergences in crises, crossovers that exist in spite or because of these crises. This becomes particularly important as these artworks and exhibitions are repeatedly remediated. Each of these projects makes experiencing art more accessible overall, particularly regarding location. We often refer to web-pages as “sites” – each of the exhibitions explored here changes its site in some way. From specific sites they are all translated in some way to exist on/within the pseudo-universal location of the Internet, strongly suggesting Robert Smithson’s “non-site” (Smithson 1996, xviii). These exhibitions further make art more accessible by helping to promote aesthetics that don’t frequently find their way into galleries, specifically postinternet aesthetics.

Necessity shifts the emphasis to the digital/virtual at this temporal/social/historical juncture. Given the urgency and charge of this period, it seems critical to forward things and ideas important to us. Bruce Clarke acts as a role model throughout this essay for merging different theoretical systems in symbiotic mergers – ideas and theories will be combined and hybridized. The exhibitions plus their attendant (non-)sites will be presented individually, and each will help us think through the others in fresh ways. Clarke guides us to read narratives of metamorphosis as allegories of systemic operations, suggesting that it is more important and critical that we consider these projects and artworks on a meta-level, and that we remain attentive to relationships between things than the specific *relata*, or things being related (Clarke 2008, 126). Relationships are read across and among exhibition and art transformations that are inspired, required, and made possible by circumstances and contemporary technologies, which is to say technoculture.

The internet’s rhizomatic structures have possibly helped gather these creatives and continued to move their practice from niches of social media echo chambers or

the elitism and exclusivity of the art gallery, to more public publics. In both *Bigger View(s)* and *Friendly Ghost* exhibitions are moved, out of necessity, from conventional gallery exhibition spaces into more discursive and marginal(ized) spaces. Alternatives through more official channels are presented, and unconventional structures of (re)presentation and legibility are implemented to actively resist dominant/dominator modes of thought. This is also to say there are multiple forms of remediation/metamorphosis present throughout. As Sarah Kember and Joanna Zylińska tell us, “in that process of ongoing mediation, with its inevitable ebbs and flows, singular stabilizations, fixes, or cuts to this process matter. Not only are these singular fixes or cuts responding to the wider historio-cultural dynamics; they also, in their subsequent incarnations as “media,” acquire a cultural significance” (Kember and Zylińska 2012, 22).

It must be noted that digital/virtual curatorial and artistic practices, including exhibition-making, are elements of an approach that I – as well as many of my peers and fellow artists – have been cultivating for a long time now, as did many before us. We are part of networks and lineages. It’s interesting to see institutions flooding into a space that others have been inhabiting, in part, because it is explicitly, specifically not those institutions. Many of the projects within this essay, mine and those of other participants, bear the fruits of some of Gene Youngblood’s predictions from his seminal book *Expanded Cinema*, now celebrating its 50th anniversary. Youngblood’s penchant for interconnectivity, and optimistic focus on the positive aspects and attributes of new media is a role model here. For example, Youngblood tells us that “By creating new realities in video/cinema we create new realities in our lives. We have seen that it is aesthetically and technically possible...” (Youngblood 2020, 132). We can extend this to include creating new realities with images, in this way it also suggests that we create new realities in life or new realities that are also available to others, thanks to the broadcasting capabilities of the internet. We keep trying to share realities via media, thinking through the relevance of this analog/digital shift and the crises that intensify it, as they both continue to unfold.

beneath the beach, seamless paving stones (RPG flashback)

Rhizome Parking Garage (RPG) is a digital, virtual, but surprisingly physical curatorial project started by Ian Bruner and myself. What began as a collaboration quickly developed into a platform/venue for The Wrong Biennale of New Digital Art. It went from a dialogue between two people (both living in Colorado (who still have yet to meet one another) to scores of participating artists in a virtual exhibition international in scope. RPG has been a response to other crises from its inception: climate, social/systemic, and institutional, to name a few. In some ways, RPG was born already metamorphosed. During the pandemic its progressive idea(l)s and unorthodox approaches had increased attention and appreciation including more exhibitions and an article written in consultation with the curators (Arreola

and Burns 2020). The project responded to anti-racist awakening by initiating the *Benefit Chapter of Solo Show*, as well as using RPG as a platform for voices related to the revolution.

Rhizome Parking Garage is a multi-centered, ecological, adaptable response to exhibition-making in times of crises. From the beginning, *RPG* was intended as a radical platform, or idealistically revolutionary gesture. The music appendage of this curatorial project *Music for Parking Garages* describes itself as “providing music for the revolution.” ([Music for Parking Garages](#) n.d.). The title of their first exhibition, *beneath the beach, seamless paving stones* is a kind of remix/mutation of the famous Situationist slogan: “beneath the pavement, the beach,” speaking to the revolutionary intentions of and influence on the exhibition. From a text posted by RPG ([RPG Instagram](#) 2020) during the recent racial equity crisis:

... the uprising will be a rhizome, something not able to be pulled out by its roots. This project was inspired greatly by The Situationists International, and in this way based on ideas of revolution. The parking garage itself could act as not only a site for guerrilla art, but also a fortified center of an autonomous zone. We stand for Black Live Matter! We stand for decolonization!

RPG can be thought of as an act of anarchization, as it participates in a movement to open opportunities and platforms up to wider audiences, participation, and possibility. RPG explores other possibilities of/for exhibition outside certain institutions and gatekeepers, often taking digital/virtual forms. These exhibitions sometimes seem to sprout up, maybe more like weeds, literally rhizomatic and de-centered. For me, it is more interesting to see the things that arise, rather than trying to be overly determinant of aesthetics or content. The layout of the RPG website is minimal and focused on presenting the works of the artists in a relatively uniform way, allowing them to speak for themselves. Artists approach the exhibition in a range of ways: single authors, or even collectives, some strictly digital, others strongly informed by digital strategies, and postinternet aesthetics.

The RPG website presents a web-based / virtual means of exploring *beneath the beach...*, an exhibition that includes more than 66 artists from all over the world, and remains active as it continues to receive applications. Conceptually, *beneath the beach, seamless paving stones* grew from the idea of multiple remote sites presented together as a single, nexus-like location on the internet. Participating artists make documentation of their artwork in a nearby parking garage, using parking garages as the gallery. This is then presented as one exhibition on the internet. ([RPG](#) 2020) This acts to reframe multiple sites via a universal(izing) “non-site”. Most of the artworks/installations were physical at some point, and could even be considered location/site-specific, but then they are presented in this universal and virtual parking garage, a format that strongly suggests Robert Smithson’s concept of the “non-site.” Artworks are always-already remediated in a way, existing at some point as physical

installations that are documented knowing that this will ultimately be exhibited in the context of the internet, presenting a multi-perspectival take on virtual exhibitions.

The theme and location of RPG's first show directly comment on transportation, cars, and infrastructure, as well as pollution and the Anthropocene as themes. One of our thoughts when developing the exhibition was that people are often in these spaces (parking garages) anyway, so they can act as potent locations for reconceiving and reimagining the structures we inhabit. We also realized that this exhibition would limit how far artists need to travel to exhibit, as well as how far people have to travel to see the exhibition. The audience doesn't travel to the venue, artworks don't require shipment. While the internet is not without its own carbon footprint, it accounts for approximately two to three percent of global emissions (predicted to double by 2025) (Shift Project 2019), cars account for approximately 20 percent or one-fifth of global emissions (Sims et al. 2014).

We based the format of our website for the exhibition on Buckminster Fuller's Dymaxion map projection, using the universal language of emojis for artist avatars. Populating the map made apparent the expected and assumed densities and holes, with artists concentrated in the "global north" and west. One goal for future projects is to be able to populate some of those locations, though the clusters that do exist are mostly attributable to broader sociopolitical contexts: from lack of internet access in a particular region to algorithmic alcoves on a specific platform (Arreola and Burns 2020). The Dymaxion map presents another way of considering the world, with Fuller suggesting that it could be (un)folded in multiple ways so that different configurations illuminate special aspects of the world (Fuller 1943, 44). Gene Youngblood was deeply influenced by Buckminster Fuller, Youngblood tells us that the Dymaxion Map was also designed to help facilitate Buckminster Fuller's "World Game", Youngblood describes how it can be used for "comprehensive anticipatory science' at a planetary scale" and "making the world work for 100% of humanity in the shortest possible time through spontaneous cooperation without ecological offense or disadvantage to anyone." (Youngblood 2020, xxi). *beneath the beach* thus acts as a speculative model for something like this, a speculative consideration. Many of the projects explored in the exhibition were done in this utopian spirit. As an illustration of this and a further example of RPG's adaptability, their next exhibition titled *Solo Show* switches the exhibition setting to primarily personal, intimate, and domestic spaces, adapting to the restrictions of global quarantine and continuing to highlight those implementing novel creative approaches.

In a further flashback, one previous idea for the first show title was "from the concrete, the beach" suggesting of course that the structure below so-called civilization's fortifications is made from these natural materials, and can likewise return to them, a kind of remediation in itself. From the text for RPG's first exhibition, *beneath the beach, seamless paving stones*:

The rhizome offers a radicalizing pathway, an alternative, a possible source of disruption, and allows for an avenue of re-organizational practices, modes of thinking and acting. The many portals and pathways in the multi-connected rhizome, as well as the dissemination of thoughts and knowledge, have the potential to disintegrate and devour the entrenched ideologies of the imposed structure from below/within. The internet acts as its rhizomatic companion of transmission/distribution and presentation (communication). ([RPG Website](#) 2020).

***Friendly Ghost* at Miriam Gallery**

Friendly Ghost was an exhibition curated by Aaron Mulligan, for Miriam Gallery in Brooklyn, New York. In addition to myself, this exhibition also featured: Camille Yvert, Tony Gonzalez, Jamie Raap, Cassie Shao, Everything is Collective, Ian Bruner, Brian Zegeer, Nichole Shinn, and Paige Landesberg. *Friendly Ghost* happened as a very early and inspired response to the pandemic. At the very beginnings of quarantine and the pandemic, I consulted with Aaron Mulligan, the curator of “*Friendly Ghost*” about the possibilities and potentials of an online exhibition for the gallery. *Friendly Ghost* is among Miriam Gallery’s first few exhibitions and was developed by curator Aaron Mulligan as a way of maintaining Miriam Gallery’s momentum during the initial quarantine. Mulligan embraced the opportunity to engage the newly relevant possibility (and only viable option at the time) of a web-based exhibition, and extended this agenda by also providing a “Curator Research Page” (2020). Miriam Gallery, which describes itself as “an artist run gallery and bookshop” in Brooklyn New York was shuttered along with all other ‘nonessential’ businesses, when New York City was one of the first places coronavirus arrived in the U.S.

Friendly Ghost is an online exhibition. It doesn’t present itself as a “white cube” or gallery experience, but rather a website. The space of the gallery is not re-created, and the form it has on the internet and the form it will have in its remediated physical future are very different. The exhibition was curated specifically for a digital space. Mulligan seems to have used the opportunity of the sudden shift in context and possibility to explore online exhibition practices and extend the gallery/site elsewhere.

Friendly Ghost is a remediation as a response to a kind of interruption, or disruption, providing the possibility of and the opportunity for change as it negotiates between a kind of formal inside in contrast to a formal outside, and because it acts as a response to a certain form of mediation, highlighting a process of “becoming other” as outlined by Sarah Kember and Joanna Zylinksa in their book *Life After New Media* (2012, 28), From the formal outside of the gallery it responds by creating a formal inside, of an intimate web-based exhibition that participates in a turn to digital exhibition strategies. It is a response to art exhibitions suddenly moving or existing primarily online and suggests/enacts a fundamental change in artistic exhi-

bition, even if only temporarily. The posthuman metamorphosis of *Friendly Ghost* provides an interesting example of the non-site, which represents a/the site in an other (non)location (Smithson 1996, 364). Here the physical exhibition is moved to the digital/online, as the exhibition is reimagined for the internet (a transformation we will also see in *Bigger View(s)*). It provides a kind of “liveness” for the gallery and a kinship with the digital/online (artists in particular), even providing a possible “physical future” for the online exhibition, another potential remediation.

A “site” is an area of all-encompassing information and sensoria, somewhere you can inhabit, experience, go on a journey to, the “non-site” is something that contains, and an abstraction that includes (Smithson 1996, 190-2). Key to the idea of the “non-site” are translation, relocation, and maintaining meaning as a displacement occurs. A dialectic tension presents itself between what the audience experiences and what they know; in other words, hypermediacy, or engulfing awareness of the mediation, of the exhibition takes place (Grusin 2015, 130). In this case, the site of the exhibition online precludes the gallery or looks to it as a possibility in the future. The exhibition was planned to be digital, under the auspices of and to maintain the momentum and presence of a physical gallery, presenting the artworks digitally knowing that they can/will one day be presented in the physical gallery. This acts to sustain the energy and potentials (that is to say “liveness”) of the gallery – it functions as a form of “liveness” by suggesting, and making real, a possibility via media (Kember and Zylinska 2012, 160). This process is also a reversal of the much more common mode of remediation in which a physical gallery exhibition is ‘translated’ or transferred to a digital/online context.

The New Weather(s) (Phillips 2020, [The New Weather\(s\)](#)), my own work in the exhibition, doubles these ideas of remediation. *The New Weather(s)* began as physical media (drawings and xerox/photocopy), that were then modified and scanned. Creative coding was then used to engage this folio of images, presenting multiple of them simultaneously, with the potential for them to be turned into prints. Presented on the website, *The New Weather(s)* refers to the original site of the gallery, but in a way that makes it clear that this experience is being mediated. These images may or could exist there, but do not now/yet. Already framing the work within the gallery suggests the non-site and an experience of hypermediacy. As Richard Grusin describes in his 2015 essay “Radical Mediation”: “remediation’s double logic divides immediacy from hypermediacy in a formal sense, having to do with the visual aesthetics of the screen, its composition and design.” (Grusin 2015, 130) The website presentation works to both order/contain and to displace, creating a relay between here and there, open and closed, periphery and center, and so on, each haunting the other, like friendly ghosts.

The internet itself, as such a vast, complex Anthropocene entity, is not without its problems, especially as it facilitates and accelerates global cultural transformation. Paul B. Preciado points out that:

Well before the appearance of Covid-19, a process of global mutation was already underway – we were undergoing social and political changes as profound as those that transpired in early modernity. We are still in the throes of the transition from a written to a cyber-oral society, from an industrial to an immaterial economy, from a form of disciplinary and architectural control to forms of micro-prosthetic and media-cybernetic control (Preciado 2020, 79).

Hito Steyerl (2013), of the internet, adds, “It is obviously completely surveilled, monopolized, and sanitized by common sense, copyright, control, and conformism.” Luckily, Gene Youngblood responds to both, for us, answering that “No one is more aware of the current limitations than the artists themselves” (Youngblood, 2020: 191) This time of mutation is also the time to consider alternatives. *Friendly Ghost’s* exhibition text suggests: “Let’s imagine new ways of relating, of building social space, and of anticipating an alternative means of animating our social body now, while the Friendly Ghost is activated.” ([Friendly Ghost](#)) The website for *Friendly Ghost* recognizes the internet as “a powerful alternative, a virtual arena of action that, while not replacing our local situations, has revealed potentials that amplify our capacity to act collectively.” By participating in the “dynamic vitality of mediation processes” as described by Kember & Zylinska (2012, 207), *Friendly Ghost* acts as an interesting example and catalyst of exactly that.

Bigger View(s): Earth, Anthropocene, Beauty at Boulder Public Library

Bigger View(s): Earth, Anthropocene, Beauty was curated by the artist, painter, and Tai-Chi wizard Jennifer Lord. The exhibition is more of a multicentered showcase, curated to include: the artworks in the gallery, a night of performances, a cinema screening, an ikebana installation, a reading list, and a new holiday! *Bigger View(s)* was curated and planned as a physical exhibition, to be presented in the Arapahoe gallery of the Boulder Public Library in Boulder, Colorado. *Bigger View(s)* was scheduled to begin on a date that ended up being about two weeks into quarantine/lockdown. *Bigger View(s)* adapted (and is now (re)scheduled for the same timeframe, one year later, 2021). One might even say that the exhibition was “pivot ready”. As the pandemic struck, installation and exhibition dates were repeatedly deferred and, eventually, the venue (a public library) was indefinitely closed for the quarantine/lockdown.

Luckily, I was already working on a website for the exhibition (a regular component of my practice) (Phillips 2020, [Bigger View\(s\) website](#)). Once again, the (tele) presence and virtuality of the exhibition became paramount. The artworks in the exhibition, and now available remediated online, feature: dramatic mountain paintings with fabric relief additions by David D’Agostino and a collaboration between Jennifer Lord and myself. This collaboration highlights Lord’s psychedelic landscape paintings and my collage-based installations. The night of performances, known

as *X Full Moon Performance*, happened as a livestream online (rather than in the library's theater) and now exists as video documentation that maintains its charge and charm from this liveness/"liveness" (Phillips 2020, [Bigger View\(s\) website](#)). The livestream itself is a kind of non-site; multiple non-sites presented within another. The program featured an avant dance video by Irene Joyce, a new poem by Sherri Marilena Pauli with audio-responsive video accompaniment by myself, and a performance-lecture by me. Each acting as a perspective on a somehow shared virtual landscape. During the event one could see some of the audience (from all over the world) learning something else about what it means to operate and experience art in a more dense media environment. The plural formats (live and internet) make the exhibition more internationally accessible and available for (re)viewing and study.

Bigger View(s): Earth, Anthropocene, Beauty, responds to the Anthropocene as a theme – it's there in the title. One unique aspect of the exhibition involved introducing people to a holiday – one which recognizes both the Anthropocene and the posthuman – The Week of All Beings (new for the audience but practiced by the artists for years now) (Phillips 2020, [Bigger View\(s\) website](#)). Kember and Zylinska tell us:

Philosophers ... as well as many media scholars, associate media — especially television — with the illusion of liveness. Liveness is particularly linked with television news and the coverage of disaster and catastrophe. Generally, it is regarded as a sleight of hand. Yet if we regard such illusory liveness as performative — that is, as being able, to an extent, to bring about the things of which it speaks (Kember and Zylinska 2010, xvi).

If we turn this in a slightly occult direction, we can suggest that these exhibitions bring about the things of which they speak. We can see the potency and potential of the invention of a new holiday in particular in bringing about new experiences of the world. Kember and Zylinska describe the "liveness of media" as "the possibility of the emergence of forms always new, or its potentiality to generate unprecedented connections and unexpected events." (Kember and Zylinska 2012, xvii) – which may be one way of understanding what a holiday does.

The online presence created for *Bigger View(s)* is a more-or-less accurate representation of how artworks would have been and will be presented in the physical gallery space, and so acts as a kind of virtual exhibition. The collaboration between Jennifer Lord and myself presents a form of hypermediacy in viewing the paintings with "hyperlinked" imagery (from Phillips' private archive), one 'constellation' even containing a print of a photo of another of Jennifer Lord's paintings. Bolter and Grusin's notion of hypermediacy (Bolter and Grusin 1999, 34) will be more helpful to us here if it is remediated via Kember and Zylinska:

Hypermediacy is in part an aesthetic, a collage effect of different me-

dia forms and styles that often come together on a single screen. But the concept of hypermediacy also captures McLuhan's assertion that the content of media is always other media. Mediation, for Bolter and Grusin, is always the remediation of old media in other, newer media. More than that, (re)mediation is intrinsically connected to wider social and economic forces, so the question of agency is never simple, never wholly human or technological, but rather hybrid, distributed (if not evenly) and processual (Kember and Zylińska 2012, 65).

This hypermediacy can also be seen as an example of postinternet approaches and aesthetics - a mode of existing that we will benefit from heightened awareness of and ability to meaningfully engage with. This document(ation) and the virtual version of the exhibition, related assets, and multiple components, remain available online as one manifestation of the exhibition, but also as an accessible archive (a kind of non-site in itself). This archive and virtual placeholder also provides embedded content in ways that brick-and-mortar exhibitions can't. External (hyper) links, literally (inter)connect these diverse projects and related media. "Lifeness" is performed as ideas are mobilized and kept moving, even when people are isolated.

Epilogue?

These crises continue, particularly here in the U.S., where I write this essay. Coronavirus cases continue to increase and to 'spike' even as some other nations more successfully reopen and return to "normal", or not. I may speak for many involved or perhaps only for myself when I say I hope to shift normalcy, for myself and for others, through these crises. Having experienced a kind of perturbation, or even collapse, of their habitual life; many see the potential for something else to happen. "Another world is possible" to quote the Situationists again. The last thing many want is a return to what(ever) was happening before, which suggests the need to deepen and complexify our commitment to independent thought, ethical action, and radical dreaming.

Remediation is a way of engaging with the 'lifeness' of new media and adapting; maintaining multiple flows of remediation keeps media objects very viable - able to mutate based on context(s). The potential for my artworks and these exhibitions to exist in yet other forms is one way to think them as 'virtual' (a somewhat technical definition). We might also speak of their "liv/feness". We can read the exhibitions as narratives of metamorphosis, and allegories of systemic operations with antisystemic connotations. In this way remediation is a form of posthuman metamorphosis. Erik Davis remediates theorist and systems countercultures specialist Bruce Clarke's concept of the posthuman, elucidating its transformative potentials, if we can only meet the challenge of embracing paradox and our own ability to mutate. Davis tells us that according to the posthuman paradigm (post)humans are systems, observing

systems at that. We paradoxically exist in a circular process – open to novelty and closed within self-reference, oscillating between the two. Paradoxes can only ever momentarily be resolved and always mutate into others, as we move forward one way or another. We can think of this scenario rhizomatically when Davis tells us that “systems sustain themselves by branching outwards rather than returning to their roots.” (Davis 2019, 395). Clarke seems to hold a near-utopian belief that the hybrid merger of systems is the way forward, for our thinking, and our be(com)ing. Clarke suggests that so-called humanity will “earn its continuation only by metamorphic integration into new evolutionary syntheses” (Clarke 2008, 196). In a similar vein, Paul B. Preciado tells us that “The mutation in progress could ultimately catalyze a shift from an anthropocentric society where a fraction of the global community authorizes itself to exercise a politics of universal extractivist predation to a society that is capable of redistributing energy and sovereignty” (Preciado 2020, 79). If these exhibitions (artworks, ideas) seem relevant to our circumstances, it may be because art is metamorphosed by the contexts in which it is reflected upon within, as well as those in which it is created. This also means that it can help us better comprehend or relate with “these times” – “unimaginable” / “unprecedented” / “weird” / “remarkable” as they may be – and why we need to continue practicing these idea(l)s. Gene Youngblood lets us know that “Consciously or unconsciously, we invent the future. And all futures are conditional on a present that is conditioned by the past. One way to be free of past conditioning is to simulate alternative futures through the ... digital computer. This is “art” at the highest level ever known ... quite literally the creation of a new world imperceptibly gaining on reality – but not so imperceptibly as before.” (Youngblood 2020, 252) These media(tic) transformations resemble a posthuman metamorphosis narrative: the creative acts take multiple possible forms, each mutating to inhabit sites which in turn further shape them, pointing towards still other possibilities. In other words, they are resilient. Preciado suggests that “We must go from a forced mutation to a chosen mutation.” (Preciado 2020, 84) We must enact chosen remediations as well – adapting the artwork, or its exhibition/presentation, or our paradigm(s) – to survive, to thrive, to (pro)pose alternatives, and to more perceptibly help this new world gain on reality.

Art doesn’t do things, it suggests what people might do, how else they might be – like the non-site, and posthuman metamorphosis, art continues pointing to other possibilities. Here I’ve suggested that one way we can do this is via postinternet strategies, remediation, posthuman metamorphoses, “lifeness”, and the non-site; forces and ideas which have all been remediated into *this* text. I’ve also introduced a number of projects and people worthy of much deeper research. Rhizomatic approaches can act as a kind of (role) model for us. Amidst the(se) crises, be like rhizomes. This is clearly not an original idea or a phenomenon special to my experience. Rather, it is yet another example of the outcomes possible based on more multi-centered, interrelated, and inclusive approaches. And so, the rhizome continues growing. I look forward to seeing the multitude of other ways this phenomena or paradigm will

unfold and proliferate. Obviously, we will have to keep adapting, keep remediating our work, our artistic work surely but also our works altogether, and we must do this not just as artists but likely as beings on the Earth – to survive, to flourish.

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RHIZOMATIC REMEDIATION: ADAPTATION IN A WEB-BASED ART PRAXIS DURING TIME(S) OF CRISES (summary)

There's no question the world is experiencing a period of multiple simultaneous crises. In this paper I explore three very personal, subjective experiences of and reflections on an internet-based art praxis during a period of crises. My own artworks and participation in three exhibitions are explored in light of a handful of primary themes. Ideas of the postinternet, posthuman metamorphosis, as well as remediation, and the non-site help narrate these experiences and provide insight into relevance this praxis of adaptability might have for other artists, curators, and creative thinkers. These projects can all be considered broadly as part of a postinternet art practice. Postinternet art strategies engage the internet self-reflexively, celebrating and critiquing simultaneously. Each of these exhibitions has gone through its own form of posthuman metamorphosis, which, here, is also to say remediation. Bruce Clarke's idea of posthuman metamorphosis narrative, serves as a role model throughout this essay for linking different theoretical systems in symbiotic mergers. Ideas are combined and hybridized. Remediation, as updated by Sarah Kember and Joanna Zylińska, helps us to understand one of the key functions of posthuman metamorphosis in more technical terms while also continuing to highlight the importance of transformations and interconnections. Alternatives through more official channels are presented, and unconventional structures of (re)presentation and legibility are implemented to actively resist dominant/dominator modes of thought. The exhibitions and their attendant (non-)sites are presented individually, each helping think through the others in fresh ways. The curatorial project *Rhizome Parking Garage* (RPG) and its catalogue of exhibitions begin already metamorphosed, already digital, with its origins and final form existing online. Its curatorial projects began before the particular present crises as a response to more systemic concerns, and it acts as a touchstone for the other projects. *Friendly Ghost* is an example of a physical gallery space embracing the opportunity to more deeply engage the internet as an exhibition space. It functions as a personal means of reflecting on what was a ubiquitous, standard scenario throughout the pandemic: galleries shifting from analogue to digital exhibitions. *Bigger View(s): Earth, Anthropocene, Beauty* was a physical exhibition planned to open just as the pandemic first descended. While the exhibition opening has been delayed by one year, a web-presence for the exhibition was already in the works and it now also exists online as a virtual exhibition site and archive. While each of the exhibitions differs in its origins and intentions, each is transformed: from the beginning, by circumstance, or by choice. As each exhibition changes form and location, it suggests the non-site, which enables a more speculative modality for considering the changing nature of experiencing art and exhibitions, while remaining grounded in art history. Each of these mutations reveals something about an individual art practice and how it relates to larger networks, accessibility, and how radical idea(l)s are and can be forwarded in these contexts. Ultimately, rhizomatic approaches and active, conscious remediation are forwarded as potentially essential strategies for surviving and perhaps thriving in times of multiple simultaneous crises, online and IRL.

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VANITAS RELOADED: A REMOTE TABLEAU COMPOSITION FROM THE CORONA "HOME WUNDERKAMMER"

Abstract: Visuals - images - are a globally understandable exchange and copyable transmission of information. "O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space," Hamlet noticed. We also use our Coronavirus home office for experimental journeys in the Renaissance and Baroque periods. As in the 15th / 16th / 17th Century, worlds far away from us were discovered, and we embark on digital adventures that are temporary, simultaneous, synchronous, asynchronous, independent of location. We decided to work with digital photography as a visual method for mainly two reasons. First, taking photos can be done relatively easy during a shut down in the home office. We can train creativity and visual perception without being in a university's studio. Second, photographs can be analyzed and compared with paintings and therefore criticized by their motifs, aesthetic representation, and within their time frame. Our visual souvenirs are photographs and videos in the mirror of illusion, immersion, and imagination.

Keywords: visual arts, relocated design process, baroque as contemporary, Corona shut down, digital communication, home office

I. Introduction = The Pandemic Crisis

On 11 March, 2020, Berlin was completely shut down in an attempt to stop the Coronavirus pandemic. All scientific institutes were closed – the universities, libraries, museums, workshops, and studios. Conferences, field trips, presentations, and exhibitions were canceled; restaurants, bars, and shops were closed. Social, cultural, and scientific life was reduced to the so-called home office.

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Centuries before the current Corona pandemic, plague, smallpox, typhus, dysentery, and cholera marked the vulnerability of humans, their temporality, and transience. In the arts, Vanitas and Natura Morte still life paintings, as well as Memento Mori artworks, symbolize precisely this knowledge in a purely visual language.

During similar crisis times, Giovanni Bocaccio wrote the *Decamerone* about a plague-related time-out in Florence. Sir Issac Newton developed the *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (1687) when Trinity College in Cambridge was closed due to the plague, and he was in quarantine at his home office in Woolsthorpe for two years. In the 18th Century, when several epidemics were raging, Sir Wilhelm Herschel constructed his reflecting telescopes and discovered previously invisible planets, moons, nebulae, and double stars. He pushed our visual limits far to the sky.

Johann Sebastian Bach, Georg Philipp Telemann, and Georg Friedrich Händel defied deadly diseases, wars, and constant political conflicts with their compositions.

Our involuntarily Corona home office is, on the one hand, a drastic, dramatic reduction, but on the other hand, is an enormous opportunity for concentration, reduction, imagination, and the change to work with contemporary media and digital communication. The interior and its beautiful *Instagram* image become the sum and mirror of the whole world, on a computer screen – but expanded with unified communications and collaboration, in a simultaneous, synchronous, asynchronous, location-independent way. We concentrate on images because visuals are a globally understandable exchange and copyable transmission of information.

II. Wunderkammer / Cabinets of Curiosities

In the Renaissance and Baroque periods, *Wunderkammer*, wonder chambers and cabinets of curiosities stood for discovery, research, curiosity for the world, and a longing for knowledge. The Wunderkammer's spectrum of representations and knowledge consists of five categories: Naturalia, Scientifica, Artificialia, Exotica, and Mirabilia. Art and natural sciences blended to form the backbone for new cultural techniques and information components, for architecture and mathematical relations.

Our reload for a remote – not presence-based – tableau composition, not painted but photographed with digital cameras, optimized not with pigments and brushes but with digital *light spaces*, contains exactly these five categories.

Many of the Wunderkammers form the basis for today's museums, e.g., the Green Vault in Dresden. A famous example is the collection of Sir Hans Sloane because his 71,000 objects are the founding collection of the British Museum in London. Until 2020, the collector Thomas Olbricht presented his Wunderkammer curated by Kunstkammer Georg Laue, Munich, in the Me Collectors Room Berlin, where students could visit virtually in a video. Olbricht impressively set contemporary art, e.g., photographs by Cindy Sherman and Juergen Teller, in a dialogue with

the historic and rare objects. The Feuerle Collection in Berlin is pursuing a similar concept. In a hall-like and extremely dark bunker from WWII, architecturally slightly transformed by John Pawson, the collector Désiré Feuerle shows East Asian art from the 7th to 13th Centuries together with works by contemporary artists such as Nobuyoshi Araki and Anish Kapoor. For this reason, these collections – which can only be viewed online during the pandemic crisis – serve us to link times and locations for our digital adventures.

As in the 15th / 16th / 17th Centuries, worlds far away from us have been discovered, we also embark on digital time travels and mind games. Our visual souvenirs are photographs and videos in the mirror of illusion, immersion, and imagination – as Hamlet noticed: “O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space.” (Shakespeare 1601/02). Our group consists of 88 architecture students, two lecturers, Tino Brüllke and Susanne Junker, and a media specialist as a guest lecturer, film director Tim van Beveren.

III. The Tableau-Composition = Vanitas reloaded

Vanitas still lifes, or *Natura Morte*, is a genre that spread across Europe in the 16th Century. They amaze with an almost photo-realistic and naturalistic representation of objects, which, however, are full of symbolic meanings. Collections and paintings in these cabinets and chambers were based on social representation, even demarcation and competition, and dependent on financial commitment, personal interests, and the individual hunting instinct. Specialized agents traveled the world to find and acquire unique objects.

We visited online databases, e.g. the Rijksstudio of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, great masters of painting such as Nicolas van Verendael, Balthasar van der Ast, Antonio Ponce, Adriaen van Utrecht, Juan Sanchez Cotan, Abraham Mignon, Pieter Boel, Willem van Aest, Jan Lievens, Johannes Hannot, Jan Davidszoon de Heem and Willem Kalf. In this environment and the still life category, several female painters also successfully created paintings that resemble today's photo-realistic computer renderings – around 400 years ago. These painters include Clara Peeters, Rachel Ruysch, and Maria Sibylla Merian, with Artemisia Gentileschi being the best known today with well-respected exhibitions. Regardless of the societal status and gender distinction defined in history, artists primarily acted as independent producers. They were highly valued during baroque times.

For our production of photographs, we set aside traditional memento-mori motifs such as skulls and burning candles in order to deal less with transience and death. Instead, we have dealt intensively with curiosity and depiction of the world, with a single individual and simultaneously serial aspects within a strict object specification. Our task was to take a photograph of heterogeneous composition. The objects we ask to photograph as still life are potatoes, a single shoe, a book, a timepiece, and some curry spices. Objects that at first glance have nothing to do with each

other, even appearing ridiculous and absurd in combination, should be arranged so that chaos and arbitrariness can be overcome and dissolved in favor of proportion, harmony, and dynamism, maybe even beauty.

The given objects of the five criteria are to be arranged on a table which, like the entire background, is to be covered with black cloth. Space and background disappear in the dark, so the colors of the objects, their volumes and surfaces are mounted and staged in a notably three-dimensional manner. For the metamorphosis of space, time, and appearance, we looked for mental inspiration, among others at Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*. We were particularly motivated by her portrayal of night skating on the River Thames:

*It was an evening of astonishing beauty. (...)
All the time they seemed to be skating in fathomless depths
of air, so blue the ice had become (...).
Above and around this brilliant circle like a bowl of darkness
pressed the deep black of a winter's night.
And then into this darkness there began to rise with pauses,
which kept the expectation alert and the mouth open,
flowering rockets; crescents; serpents; a crown.
At one moment the woods and distant hills showed
green as on a summer's day;
the next all was winter and blackness again.*

Virginia Woolf *Orlando*, 1928, quoted from The Gutenberg Project/
online/CC

Due to the Coronavirus, it was impossible to go on a shopping tour to search for and buy the required objects, because of closed shopping malls and deserted shopping streets. Instead, it was a matter of exploring and utilizing the potential of our own homes. Exchange transactions were just as impossible in times of hermetic social distancing. We set a time window of three weeks to grow the potatoes and another week to build up the composition and take the first photograph. After this step, we conducted a video meeting review and criticized the photographs. Then another week for revision followed where the students exchanged wrong objects, changed light sources or perspectives. They also improved the composition through compression or staggering. We allowed small improvements such as cropping and light graduation with Photoshop and Lightroom. Finally, each student had to submit a single photograph online. The cameras the students used range from smartphones to various digital high-end cameras and lenses from Sony, Canon, Nikon, and even Leica.

For the music of the video (<https://vimeo.com/426765866>) we chose a digital harpsichord version of Johann Sebastian Bach's *Aria*, Goldberg Variations, blended with computer sounds. The entire Wunderkammer becomes reloaded in further work steps.

IV. Naturalia = Potatoes

With the botanical name *Solanum Tuberosum*, potatoes represent the category of Naturalia, growing with shoots and roots and decaying to become inedible at the same time.

They are undoubtedly a basic food, so completely normal and understated in our everyday life today. The yellowish, brown, or reddish tuber can be cooked, baked, fried, or pureed in countless dishes. Potato dishes are available in countless regional variations in Europe. However, the potato did not originate as a tuber but as an exotic plant with leaves and flowers. It only came to Europe in the Baroque era. The legend says that the English adventurer Sir Walter Raleigh found it while searching for the gold of El Dorado and brought it to the court of Elizabeth I with tobacco leaves.

This plant is native to Peru, Chile, and Argentina. There is evidence that it reached the Canary Islands on sailing ships in the 16th Century and from there to Spain. These sailing ships brought artifacts and luxury goods to Europe, such as Nautilus shells, Chinese porcelain, mother-of-pearl, and ivory, which were then portrayed as representative objects in still life paintings.

The students partially peeled our potatoes and sliced them like baroque lemons and oranges. Their peels even curl like ringlets. Sprouts and germs are reminiscent of species, such as small hedgehogs. Hairy potatoes look like crossbreeds of mice and beetles, some potatoes are similar to the strange beasts, to reptiles and insects as shown in the Vanitas paintings. There are even potatoes that resemble unicorns with their drives or irritate with looks like physiognomies of bizarre characters. The collection of so-called character heads is, in turn, another spectrum in the Wunderkammer.

V. Artificialia = A Single Shoe

Artificialia denote human-made objects, but not arbitrary, instead particularly artistic, refined ones of notably admirable beauty.

As an equivalent to this category, we chose a single shoe, not a pair, because the real physical movement is difficult with just one shoe. This specific limitation is another reference to our digital mind game.

Shoes are by no means just practical aids to protect human feet from cold, wet, or sharp-edged ground, but also cultural narratives, be it to express social status, gender, coolness, or somewhat hidden codes to peer groups. A famous example is the *talons rouge* of the French monarch Louis XIV in the painting by Hyacinthe Rigaud. These royal shoes with the orange-red heels and bows and buckles look downright feminine today, just like the raised red soles designed by Christian Louboutin are undoubtedly intended for women.

The spectrum and, to put it more precisely, the fund in the home office includes slippers à la Jean-Honoré Fragonard, ankle boots with a rococo-style tapestry print, sky-heel straps with rhinestones and glitter, to rubber boots and worn-out sneakers without laces. A single ice skate spans the arc of meaning to the icy winter pictures by painters such as Pieter Bruegel the Elder and Hendrick Avercamp.

Lieutenant Willem van Ruytenburgh's boot, the front figure in Rembrandt van Rijn's *Nightwatch*, can be found as a fluffy Ugg boot. Bridal shoes and baby shoes refer to the family in the home office. They are personal mementos and emotional family treasures that symbolize the essential dates in life.

VI. Mirabilia = A Book

This category's object is a book. It represents the legacy of countless stories from all over the world. Books are the conservation of knowledge in manuscripts and portfolios for communication and the transport of information. We value books as excellent instruments to record and pass on tales, narratives, sagas, insights, and thoughts from past centuries.

Books also stand as physical counterparts to the digital cloud, as tangible objects, even perceptible with their unique paper smell.

Some of the books shown in the photographs read as direct references to the Baroque period, e.g., with sonnets by Francesco Petrarca and William Shakespeare. Other students chose speaking titles like Giacomo Casanova's *The Story of My Life* and Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

Other photographs show empty notebooks as metaphors. Some sketchbooks refer to recent field trips to Thailand and China. On the one hand, these choices express the longing to travel again to distant countries, but on the other hand, they recall the origins of so many artifacts that are portrayed in the Baroque still life paintings.

Some books are closed like the shutdown. There are also books photographed like fans at the moment of leafing through, and others are just dissolving into individual sheets and thus evoke associations with manuscripts.

VII. Scientifica = A Timepiece

Timepieces are elaborated and complicated technical and scientific devices. They measure time, show the course of time, cycles, eternity, and rhythm, structure, and order – as well as shutter speed, video meeting schedules, upload, and download traffic. Historically, they closely link to mechanics, mathematics, astronomy, and geography.

Although nobody has a sundial in their home offices, not even an hourglass à la Hendrick Hondius, all students play with the size and type of clocks. Some students

take photos of small filigree jewelry wristwatches, and others frame their compositions with plate-sized kitchen clocks and old-fashioned alarm clocks with bell ears. Gold and stucco-decorated grandfather clocks protruding as background are also striking.

The noble baroque Habsburg observatories of Empress Maria Theresia, which were constructed to discover outer space and dimensions of time, and painted by Canaletto in 1758/61, are interpreted as a Rolex wristwatch and a heavy gold link bracelet. As a visual reference, the different metal tones of these timepieces reflect baroque instruments such as astrolabes, sextants, and chronometers.

VIII. Exotica = Curry spices

Exotic spice powder such as curry, cinnamon, nutmeg symbolizes our Eurocentric view of the geographically distant, export and import, arbitrage, supply and value chains.

Curry powder is traded as a spice mixture in London from around 1784, with ingredients such as yellow turmeric, dark cumin, ground cardamom and cloves, nutmeg, ginger, cayenne pepper, chili. Therefore, this olfactory simulation extends from the Middle East to China.

In contrast to the other objects, this powder has no precise dimensions, no size nor scale. Instead, it has an ephemeral, almost transparent color shadow, like stardust in a warm, clayey atmosphere.

Golden, earthy, yellow, and orange hues are essential in the Renaissance and Baroque color concepts. These shades are similar to oranges, the legendary golden apples that, according to Greek mythology, were guarded across an ocean by the Hesperides and their dragon, giving the gods eternal youth. The choice of colors in our photographs is meant to reference the imported citrus fruits and the orangery architecture in baroque nobility courts.

IX. Light, Darkness and Chiaroscuro

When we look at Vanitas still lifes in our home offices and analyze them for our visual time travels, we feel like archaeologists or even anthropologists who are suddenly transported 400 to 500 years back in time. We move in a field of tension between seeing and perceiving, impression, experience, and memory, sense, and meaning. Further parameters are the ideas of reality, of authenticity, of perspective, of pathos and aesthetics. In order to value and read the identity and the context of the paintings, their motif history, we did lectures on iconographic descriptions as cultural-scientific analyses. The lectures also included aspects such as changing a still life painting, e.g., through other objects and details. Based on this, we discussed the iconological decryption and interpretation. It reminded us

of finding codes and hidden meanings by experimenting with digital photography and video techniques.

Creative thinking and imagination open the eyes. It resurrects scenes and even shifts or even expands reality.

With Athanasius Kircher's *Camera Obscura*, which he published in his treatise *Ars Magna Lucis Et Umbrae* in 1646, and René Descartes' eye in *La Dioptrique* 1637 as models, we studied dark rooms, chambers, chapels, and black boxes as well as the images generated therein. The effect of light only becomes evident through shadows, which can vary between soft or hard. This cognition applies to bright sunlight as well as to a flickering candle.

The paradox that an image becomes more visible through darkness led us to a further paradox in the discussion. The view is more likely to fall on an object if it is partially covered, by shadows or further objects. Dealing with this layering reminded us of the layering techniques used for digital drawings and photographs.

Darkness, twilight, and night are the backgrounds for dramatic and sublime productions, especially with the painters of the Baroque and Romantic periods. Objects depicted using chiaroscuro or low-key photography appear isolated from a dark image space. Using such methods, we reduce these objects to themselves. They appear occupied with their inner imagination in the absence of all other images.

X. Conclusion

Today almost all information is available incredibly quickly on the internet. Search engines provide a selection of answers within a fraction of a second, from images and videos, jumping across the boundaries of space and time. Nevertheless, the most impressive experience remains the perception and the feeling of all five senses.

The objects we worked with to reload Vanitas came to life through the selection and the encounter with each other and dialogue with light. Visual hierarchies and graduations are created and appear, which vary depending on the particular meaning, interpretation, and imagination and yet show concordant chains of thought.

One student, Sophie Mbaye, noticed while taking the photos that a new narrative emerges in the search for the past and its reload:

A door opens into an old attic room.

Dust falls miraculously from books.

A soirée as if frozen, a forgotten shoe, golden light, traces of former life...

This creative combination, like an analog-digital mythical creature from a baroque cabinet of curiosities, was both a concept and a strategy for us, namely to be curious and be amazed as an ongoing process, and to perceive apparently inconspicuous objects and to understand their meaning in the sense of a universal context.

Our view of the world, perspective, scale, volume, weight, value, duration, time, precision, relationships, harmony, and contrasts are observed, analyzed, and interpreted. A new look at our world is created based on more than 500 years of artistic and scientific techniques and experiences.

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VANITAS RELOADED: A REMOTE TABLEAU COMPOSITION FROM THE CORONA "HOME WUNDERKAMMER" (summary)

In the Renaissance and Baroque periods, *Wunderkammer*, wonder chambers and cabinets of curiosities, stood for discovery, research, curiosity for the world, and a longing for knowledge. Centuries before the current Coronavirus pandemic, plague, smallpox, and cholera marked the vulnerability of humans, temporality, and transience. Vanitas and Natura Morta still life paintings symbolize this knowledge in purely visual language, – visuals as a globally understandable exchange and copyable transmission of information.

The interior and its beautiful *Instagram* image become the sum and mirror of the whole world, on a computer screen, *O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space* (*Hamlet*, Shakespeare, 1601/02). As a result of the pandemic, we are all reduced to our home office chambers of wonder – temporarily – but expanded with unified communications and collaboration, in a simultaneous, synchronous, asynchronous, location-independent way. The Wunderkammer's spectrum of representations and knowledge consists of five categories: Naturalia, Scientifica, Artificialia, Exotica, and Mirabilia. Art and natural sciences blended to form the backbone for new cultural techniques and information components, for architecture and mathematical relations.

Our reload for a remote – not presence-based – tableau composition, not painted but photographed with digital cameras, optimized not with pigments and brushes but with digital *light spaces*, contains exactly these five categories. The respective home chamber was sighted for suitable wonderful objects. Nothing is bought during the Coronavirus Shut Down; everyone stays at home alone with heterogeneous to absurd finds.

Potatoes represent the Naturalia, growing with shoots and decaying inedible at the same time. Clocks measure as scientifically exact devices – Scientifica – our time, shutter speed, video meeting schedules, upload, and download traffic. A single shoe expresses human artistry to rise above mere physicality, revealing social and cultural narratives. Exotic spice powder such as curry, cinnamon, nutmeg symbolizes our Eurocentric view of the geographically distant, export and import, arbitrage, supply and value chains. The open book, Mirabilia, stands as a physical counterpart to the digital cloud, a tangible legacy of countless stories from past centuries, and the conservation of knowledge in manuscripts and portfolios for communication and the transport of knowledge.

Our view of the world, perspective, scale, volume, weight, value, duration, time, precision, relationships, harmony, and contrasts are observed, analyzed, and interpreted. A new look at our world is created based on more than 500 years of artistic and scientific techniques and experiences.

The photographs *Vanitas reloaded* were developed by architecture students in April and May 2020 during the Coronavirus Shut Down. For the music of the video (<https://vimeo.com/426765866>) we chose a digital harpsichord version of Johann Sebastian Bach's "Aria," Goldberg Variations, blended with computer sounds. The entire Wunderkammer becomes reloaded in further work steps.

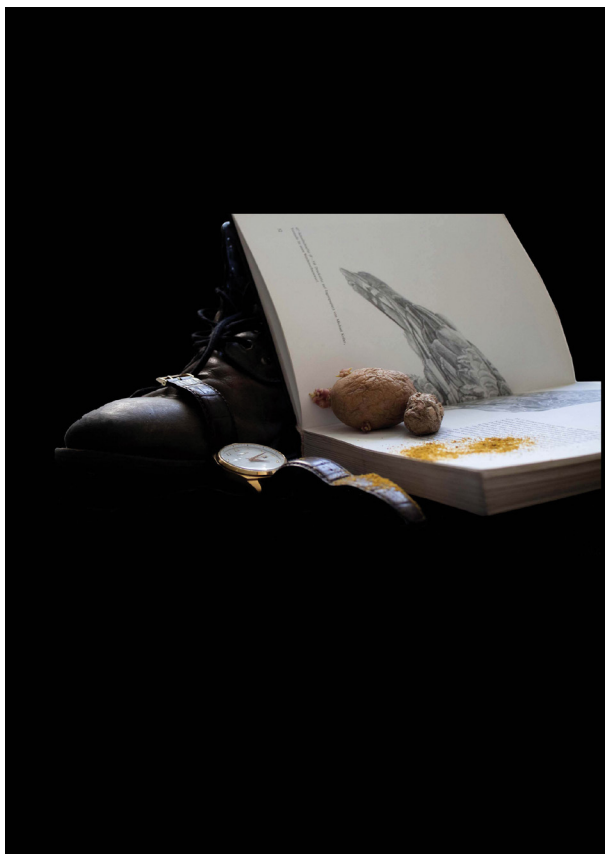
Appendix. *Vanitas Reloaded*. Prof. Dr. Susane Junker, as of August 2020.



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ON THE CONCEPT OF ‘MUSIC PERFORMANCE’ IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 LOCKDOWN: A BRIEF MUSICOLOGICAL DISCUSSION BASED ON A PUBLIC SURVEY AMONG LISTENERS IN ARGENTINA

Abstract: In this work, the concept of music performance in the context of the Covid-19 lockdown is assessed through a brief musicological discussion based on a public survey performed on the broad population in Argentina during the lockdown. Traditionally, listeners and performers interact in concert halls sharing the same space and time. During the Covid-19 lockdown, listeners and performers were obliged to stay home and thus, online music consumption in the genres of Classic, Jazz, Pop and Folk became “state of the art”. With the increasing importance of performances through the internet, the interaction between listeners and performers substantially changed. Given that the context of a live performance on the internet is so different to that of one in a concert hall, we conducted a public anonymous survey during the lockdown in July and August 2020 to question listeners in the broad population of Argentina about both paradigms. With regards to the studied sample, listeners and performers seem to agree that live emissions via the internet do

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not suit their preferences of interaction as well as a music performance in a concert hall.

Keywords: Covid-19 lockdown, Argentina, online music, live performance, community experience

1. Introduction

Since the worldwide implementation of sanitary measures to avoid the propagation of the coronavirus in Spring 2020, the strongly internationalized music business of our days could no longer be sustained. For instance, with the lockdown that shortly afterwards completely shut down public life in many countries of the world, opera houses, concert organizers and festival managers, as well as orchestras and artists, were forced to look for alternative forms of performing music live.

Live concerts where musicians and listeners are present at the same time in the same place became impossible overnight. As a consequence, artists adapted their performance concepts for the online space. Because he didn't want to play without an audience, star pianist Igor Levit organized daily house concerts that everyone could listen to online. The interaction between the artist and the audience took place between the pianist's home and the private caves of the listeners. In addition, rock concerts beyond the mainstream were produced for streaming (Krogull 2020), as well as concerts of classical music. Like many other institutions, Germany's Bavarian State Opera, for instance, produced concerts every Monday available to stream on the in-house television channel www.staatsoper.tv. In doing so, no expense or effort was spared for these recordings: four to six cameras with Full HD resolution and up to 40 microphones were positioned in the hall and orchestra pit. The weekly repeated event was marketed under the hashtag #BSOforHome, which was itself a reference to the isolation experience of each individual during the lockdown (Bayerische Staatsoper 2020).

In August 2020, the lockdown was repealed and the public music life started to rise again in European countries. This was not the case in Argentina, the country of tango and an extraordinarily rich public music culture. A nationwide curfew came into force from 20th March, 2020. The 13 million inhabitants of the greater Buenos Aires area, Argentina's corona epicenter, were not allowed to leave their apartments or houses due to the lockdown. Hence, in the country particularly hard hit by anti-corona policy, the "online paradigm" remains still untouched. The *Teatro Colón* is the most famous opera house in Buenos Aires. Without thinking of a return to live performances with listeners in the hall, *Teatro Colón* exclusively made performances available online under the hashtag #CulturaEnCasa. On the homepage of the Opera House one can read: "The objective is that, as long as the suspension of artistic activ-

ities with the public in the theater continues, culture continues to be the bridge that enriches us and unites us” (Teatro colón 2020). The actuality of online performances in Argentina raises the question on how the broad population evaluates this setting in comparison to the public performance of music.

To consider the issue we conducted a public survey among the broad population of Argentina in July and August 2020. In what follows, we present initial results of this survey. We base our argument on three sections: after the presentation of the study design, we provide the most significant results by using histograms and finally, we discuss them against the background of the concept of “music performance”.

2. Experimental

To better understand how listeners in the broad population of Argentina experience the meta-dialog with performers in the context of the Covid-19 lockdown, online anonymous worldwide surveys were carried out. A survey in Spanish was performed online using SurveyMonkey. For the sake of comparison, a smaller sample was taken in other countries of the world using translated versions of the survey. Nevertheless, the results for Argentina were substantially similar to those of the other countries. The translations to English, French, and German were performed by academic native speakers. The survey was available online during July and August 2020 and it was communicated to the broad population through mailings lists and social networking by Expertcom Argentina. The surveyed subjects that spent the lockdown in Argentina answered the survey during the lockdown.

2.1 Structure of the survey

The survey is shown in Appendix A and was structured in three parts, as shown in Figure 1. In Part I, information on the subject’s demographic and musical skills are requested. The requested information was age, gender, country in which the subject spent the Covid-19 lockdown and musical skills. Parts II and III respectively consisted of questions designed for listeners and for performers. Questions in Sections A2.1, A2.2, A2.3, A3.1, A3.2 and A3.4 are not disclosed since they belong to parallel ingoing studies.

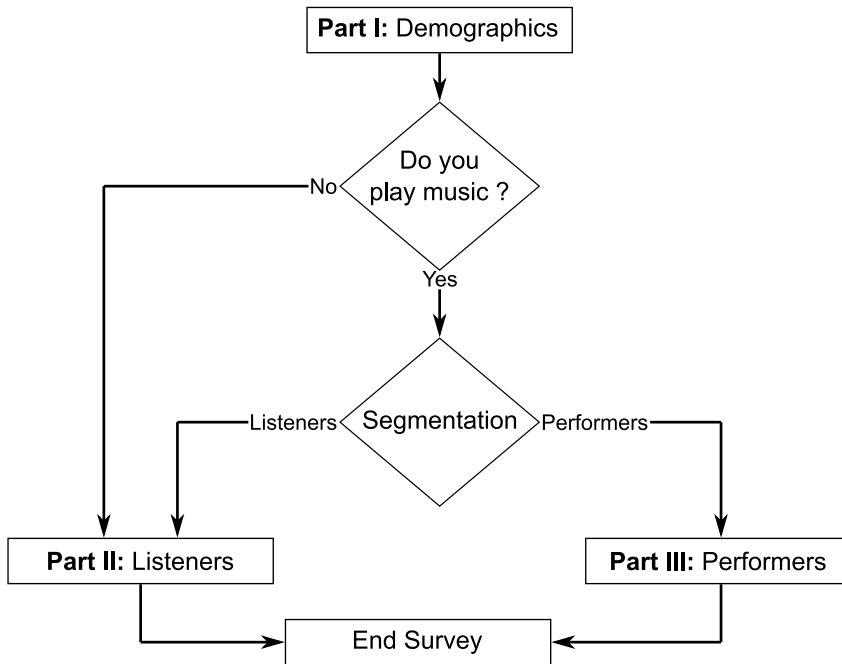


Figure 1: Algorithm for the listeners/performers segmentation.

2.2 Survey features

Three features were used in the survey: slider question, single text box input and checkbox questions. The slider question consists of a horizontal scrolling bar with which the subject is able to express his or her level of agreement with a certain statement. Depending on the horizontal position of the slider, an integer value is registered that varies from 0 to 100 and respectively corresponds to *Absolutely disagree* (left end) and *Completely agree* (right end). The default answer is *Not sure* and corresponds to a value of 50. If the subject does not interact with the slider bar, no value is registered. The single text box allows the user to introduce plain text and is completely free to articulate an answer to a given question. Finally, the checkbox question requires the subject to check one or more answers that suit better as an answer to a given question. The *Question and page skip logic* feature of SurveyMonkey allowed the segmentation to be carried out in real time of the survey assuring that each subject only answered the part of the performers or listeners.

2.3 Segmentation between Performers and Listeners

The subject's musical skills were assessed using the self-report measure of creativity achievement proposed by Carson, Peterson, and Higgins (2010) (see question A1.2 in Appendix A). The subjects in the sample were segmented between listeners and performers using a twofold criterion: those that expressed not being able

to produce music (see question A1.1 in Appendix A) and those who are susceptible of having addressed their music to a substantial number of listeners (answer 3 to 8 in question A1.2 in Appendix A). The second part of the segmentation criterion could be qualified as optimistic for the segmentation of performers and pessimistic for the segmentation of listeners. Indeed, subjects with a short experience in the act of addressing music could be qualified as performers given that they are rather listeners. For this reason, we based our analysis in the answers given by listeners. The analysis on performers should be taken with hindsight.

2.4 The sample

The distributions of the countries in which the surveyed subjects spent the Covid-19 lockdown, their ages, their gender and their resulting listener/performer segmentation are respectively shown in the charts of Figure 2a, 2b, 2c and 2d. A total of 1,463 subjects from 24 different countries completed the survey. Most subjects spent Covid-19 lockdown in Argentina (1,038), whilst the rest spent it in other countries, namely in the USA (194) and in France (152). Countries with less than five subjects were grouped in the label 'Other countries'. The age and gender distributions show that most subjects are adults between 25 and 65 years old and, despite a slight majority of women, a good balance between both genders is observed. Finally, the listener/performer segmentation resulted in a majority of listeners with a total of 92.5%.

2.5 Histogram analysis

The different analyses of the survey were conducted through the histograms of Figures 3, 4, 5 and 6, and were constructed using the values registered by the slider questions explained in Section 2.2. In the horizontal axis, the level of agreement with each statement varies from *Absolutely disagree* (0) to *Completely agree* (100). In the primary and secondary vertical axes, the relative and cumulative frequencies of each label of agreement are respectively represented in black and grey. The histograms for the listeners are represented in blue and in yellow for performers. The dashed gray lines show the cumulative frequency of each distribution. The statement is shown in the title of each histogram.

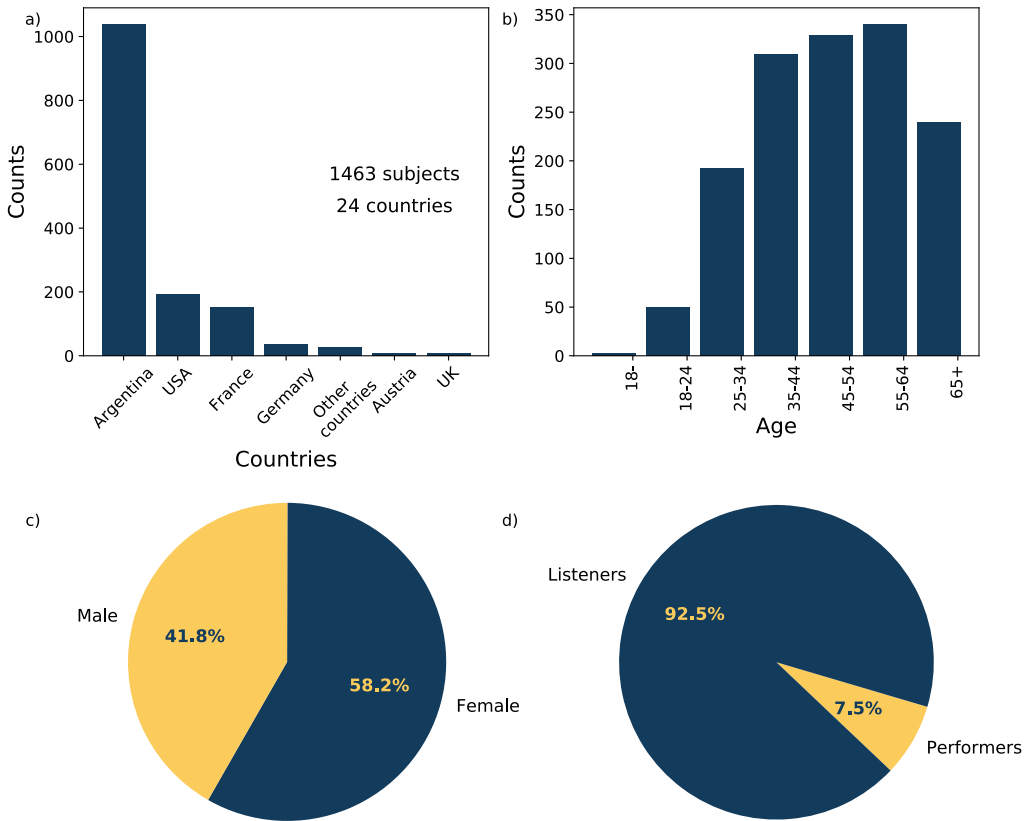


Figure 2. Distribution of a) countries in which subjects spent the Covid-19 lockdown; b) age; c) gender and d) listeners-performers segmentation for the studied sample.

3. Results

3.1 Potential augmentation of concert consumption *via* the internet during the lockdown

Attending live concerts in concert halls is not possible during the lockdown due to the sanitary measures. Internet providers claimed through Argentinian journals that the number of live emissions through social networks substantially augmented during the lockdown (Tomoyose 2020). Given this augmentation, it is of interest to study whether listeners consider having augmented their consumption of concerts *via* internet live emissions. Figure 3 shows the histogram of relative and cumulative frequencies of listeners' perception concerning their augmentation of concerts consumption through the internet during the Covid-19 lockdown, with respect to the past. The relative frequency shows that about 13% of listeners absolutely disagree and about 11% completely agree. The cumulative frequency curve shows that about 40% of them have expressed different levels of disagreement. The distribution is rather symmetric with a slight slant towards the disagreement end.

The augmentation of concert consumption *via* the internet seems very moderate. It could be claimed that, for those who disagreed, the level of concert consumption *via* the internet remained constant during the Covid-19 lockdown. Although, this disagreement may be related to the listeners preference for experiencing music performances in concert halls rather than watching them on the internet, even if they are forced to stay at home. Another plausible hypothesis is that listeners do not recognize the live concerts *via* the internet and the live concerts in concert halls as equivalents. It would be interesting to analyse the evaluation of listeners and performers with respect to both paradigms: concerts in concert halls *versus* concerts *via* internet live emissions.

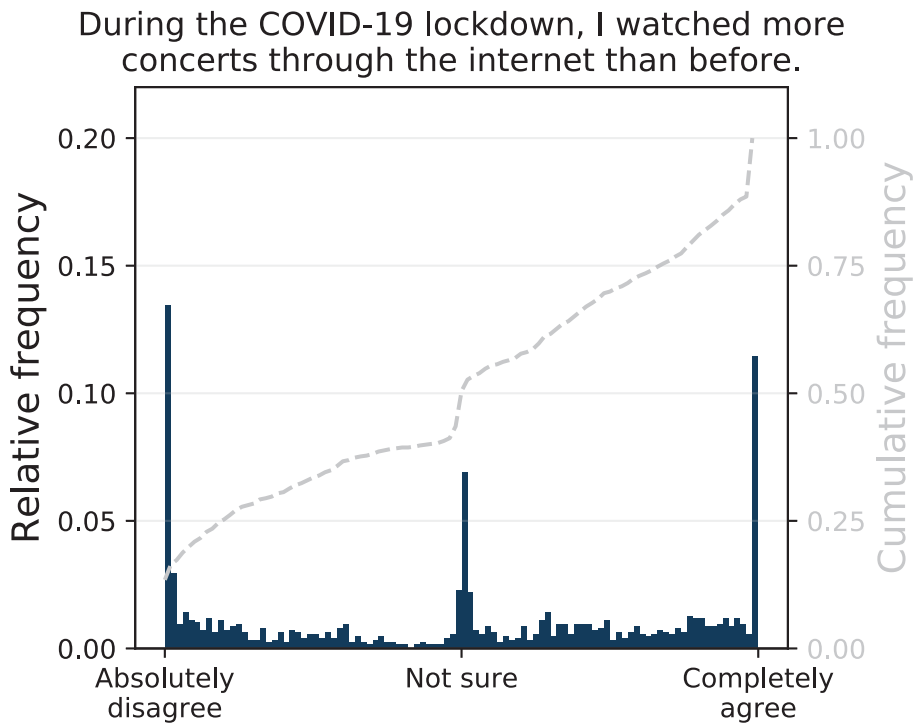


Figure 3. Histogram of relative and cumulative frequencies for the augmentation of concert consumption through the internet during the Covid-19 lockdown. Sample: all listeners.

3.2 Performances in concert halls *versus* concerts *via* internet live emissions

In Section 3.1, it was suggested that listeners might prefer performances in concert halls rather than concerts *via* internet live emissions. To analyse this further, it would be interesting to investigate which paradigm listeners and performers prefer.

Furthermore, these paradigms differ in a key aspect: the way that listeners and performers interact. For instance, applauding after a musical interpretation is a very ancient and traditional way in which listeners give feedback to performers. In performances *via* internet live emissions this is no longer feasible. Instead, one of the elementary ways in which listeners can give feedback to performers through the internet is by giving “likes”. Henceforth, it seems interesting to analyse which of these communication channels listeners and performers prefer.

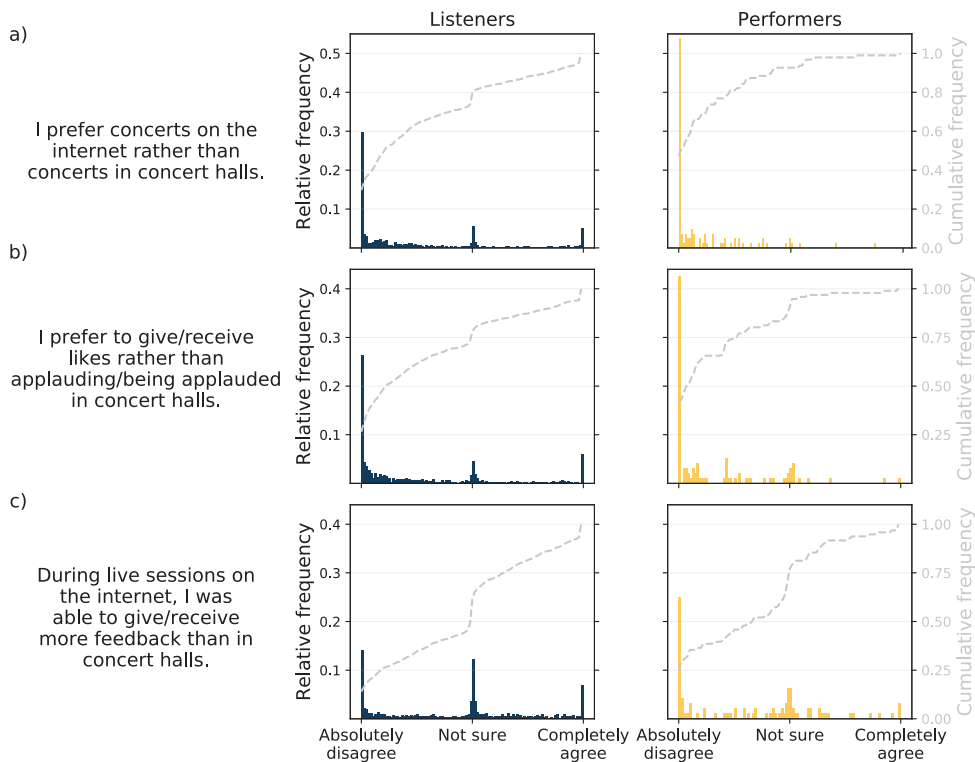


Figure 4: Histograms of the relative and cumulative frequencies of a) subject’s preference concerning the performance paradigm; b) subject’s preference between applause *versus* “likes” and c) subject’s agreement on having given/received more feedback.

Figure 4a, 4b and 4c respectively show the histograms of concert paradigm preference, the applause *versus* “likes” preference and the subject’s perceived ability of being able to give or receive more feedback through the internet than in concert halls. Concerning the preference of listeners and performers of concerts *via* internet live emissions instead of performances in concert halls, about 30% of listeners and 42% of performers absolutely disagree. About 75% of the listeners and 90% of the performers have placed their answers on the disagreement side of the spectrum. Concerning the preference on applauds *versus* “likes”, 26% of the listeners and 42% of the performers respectively prefer applauding and being applauded rather

than giving or receiving “likes”. Finally, 13% of the listeners and 25% of the performers absolutely disagree about having given or received more feedback through the internet. It is worth noting that the distributions for the listeners and for the performers are very similar (see Figures 3a and 3b). These results suggest that, for the herein studied sample, listeners and performers strongly agree on the fact that performances in concert halls suit their interaction needs better than internet emissions.

Although, in terms of giving/receiving more feedback through the internet, the listeners’ and performers’ distributions differ. Performers seem to agree on the fact that they are not able to receive more feedback than in concert halls. One possible interpretation is that unlike concerts *via* internet live emissions, performers in popular music can take feedback from listeners while they are performing in concert halls. For instance, jazz soloists often receive applause immediately after their improvisations. Indeed, in the case of “likes”, performers don’t have access to the listeners’ feedback immediately, instead they can have access right after their performances finish or even much later. This could explain the strong disagreement claimed by the surveyed performers concerning their ability of taking more feedback through the internet.

Moreover, no substantial trend is observed in the listeners’ distribution. The fact that as many listeners agree as those that do not agree may be related to the difficulty of precisely defining the concept of giving feedback. In other words, maybe listeners understand the concept of giving feedback differently. To better understand this, in Figure 5, we plotted the distribution on the opinion of having been able to give more feedback through the internet to listeners that prefer giving “likes”, i.e., listeners that claimed “Completely agree” on the preference of giving “likes” rather than applauding. The subsample is constituted by 64 subjects. In Figure 5, 33% of the subjects in the subsample claimed “Completely agree” on their preference for giving “likes”. Considering that they are at both extremes of the preference of giving “likes” and being able to give feedback, this clearly shows that for these subjects, to give “likes” is a possibility of giving more feedback. In other words, listeners who preferred giving “likes” attributed to them the value of giving feedback. Conversely, 15% of the subjects in this subsample completely disagree on having been able to give more feedback. There are two possible interpretations of this. The first is that giving “likes” does not increase the feedback they give and the second is that giving “likes” is not recognized as a proper means of giving feedback. Nevertheless, in this interpretation we analysed the extremes of the spectrum which led to a subsample of negligible size therefore these interpretations should be taken with a degree of skepticism.

During live sessions on the internet, I was able to give/receive more feedback than in concert halls.

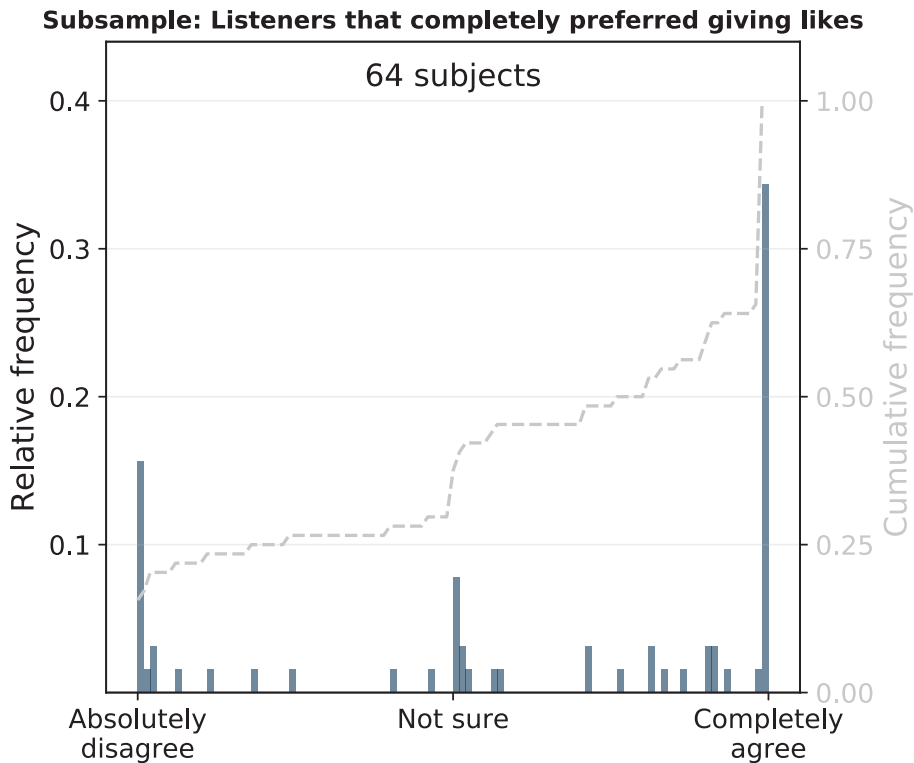


Figure 5. Histogram on the opinion of having been able to give more feedback through the internet for the subsample of listeners that completely preferred giving “likes” (listeners at the right end of the histogram of Figure 4b).

The analyses presented in this Section clearly show the preference of both listeners and performers in the studied sample for applause in the concert hall as being the best suited interaction paradigm during live music performances. Conversely, the analysis of the amount of feedback given by listeners requires a more profound study since it raised many fundamental questions about the interaction between listeners and performers in the context of live emissions through the internet during the Covid-19 lockdown. Nevertheless, even if the interaction between listeners and performers is of primary importance, there is another reasonable question that arises: how does the novel paradigm affect the interaction between performers and listeners during a music performance. Thus, instead of pursuing the analysis of feedback, in the following Section we will focus on the community experience as a whole, including not only performers but also the entire population of listeners.

3.3 Nearness to performers *versus* lack of community experience

The traditional form of live music performance covers the spatiotemporal co-presence of both performers and listeners, as well as each listener sharing time and space with many other listeners. In contrast with the paradigm imposed during the Covid-19 lockdown, both performers and listeners are obliged to stay at home and interact through internet live emissions. This may lead listeners to develop feelings of missing the community experience. Compared to concerts in concert halls, two aspects are significantly different in internet live emissions. First, each listener listens to the music performance either on his own or with his room-mates, physically separated from the other listeners that listen to the same performance but from elsewhere. In other words, for each listener, the awareness of the presence of other listeners is substantially reduced. Second, given that performers play in a private setting, it could be claimed that, in internet live emissions, each single listener might feel closer to the performer than in a concert hall. Therefore, increasing the feeling of nearness to the performer might also be related to the feeling of distantness to other listeners. In this Section, we further the study of potential trade-off between the nearness to performers and the feeling of a lack of community experience.

Figure 6a shows the histogram of the feeling of nearness to the performers for all listeners. About 15% of the listeners absolutely disagreed with the claim of feeling closer to the other performers and about half positioned their answer on the disagreement end of the spectrum. About 7% of the listeners completely agreed on feeling closer and about 15% seem not to be sure. This suggests that subjects in the studied sample tend to feel more distanced via internet broadcasts. It is interesting to note that, unlike what was previously supposed, there is no striking cumulation on the agreement side.

Figure 6b shows the histogram of level of agreement with having had the feeling of missing the community experience for all listeners. About 15% of the listeners completely agreed with the claim of missing the community experience for all listeners, whilst 10% of the listeners absolutely disagreed. The lack of striking univocal opinion is puzzling. Nonetheless, if one considers that the smartphone is the triumphant means for music consumption,² it could be stated that having about half of the population in the agreement spectrum of missing the community experience in concert hall performances gains some importance.

It seems important to better grasp the relation between the feelings of having felt closer to the performers and having missed the community experience. In Figure 6c, the histogram of level of agreement with the feeling of having missed the community experience for the listeners that felt closer to performers is shown. By taking this subsample, it can be seen that the distribution is quite different than that

² Cf. Michael Bull, "Investigating the Culture of Mobile Listening: From Walkman to iPod," in *Consuming Music Together: Social and Collaborative Aspects of Music Consumption Technologies*, ed. Kenton O'Hara (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), 131–148.

of the entire population (see Figure 6b). This suggests that these two feelings are not independent. A trend is observed. For the subsample of listeners who felt closer to performers in live internet emissions than in the concert halls, most subjects identify with the claim of having missed the community experience. This suggests that these subjects missed the awareness of the presence of other listeners. In other words, these listeners felt closer to the performers but clearly missed the community experience which, to a large extent, relies on interaction with other listeners.

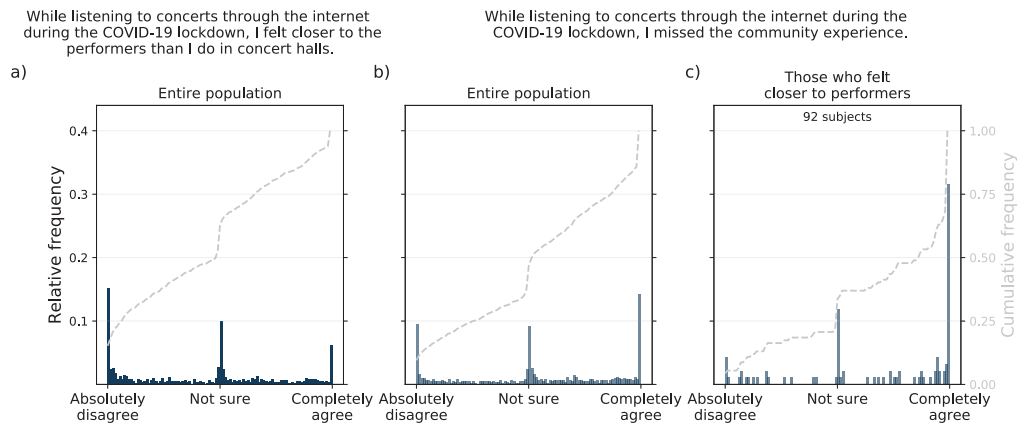


Figure 6. Histogram of level of agreement with the claim of a) having felt closer to the performers and of b) having missed the community experience, for all listeners. c) Histogram of level of agreement with the claim of having missed the community experience, for the listeners that felt closer to performers.

4. Discussion

4.1 Limitations of the survey

The main questions with which the survey is explicitly and implicitly dealing with are the following: (1) Do listeners in the population of Argentina welcome the change of paradigm from the traditional music performances in concert halls to music performances *via* the internet? (2) Do live concerts on the internet, where individuals interact separated in space and time, comply with their notions on music's *meaning*? Other scientific insights were relegated to the background, with the above questions taking priority. There are two questions in particular that the survey leaves unanswered. First, the aforementioned questions do not inform on whether a measurable shift to the use of online music took place as a result of the lockdown in Argentina. Our interest is not on the measurable increase of online consumption. Instead, we focused on the appreciation given by the surveyed subjects with regard

to the pre-pandemic time. Second, the use of online music is not compared to the use of other technologies of music transmission such as radio, television and sound storage media. The survey provides no information on the weighting of online use in relation to other media consumption in the surveyed subjects' lives. In contrast, the focus of our study is on the interaction between listeners and performers, and the interaction between listeners-listeners in this novel paradigm.

4.2 The affordance of concert hall performance

Concerning the focus of analysis, the results shown in Section 3 express that the surveyed subjects, namely in Argentina, long for a return to concert hall performances. *Why* do they prefer music performances in concert halls rather than concerts *via* the internet? The hypothesis with which we designed the survey was that, potentially, the population would feel a substantial rejection towards live emissions *via* the internet, the novel paradigm of music performance.

A look at the history of big revolutions in media technology shows that a new medium has rarely been capable of replacing an existing one. Although we recently started to use e-books, the “old” book in its paper form still exists and, although the smartphone is the most common technical device for music listening today, vinyl lovers are still numerous. The situation regarding the public music life during COVID-19 pandemic seems to be similar. At the beginning of lockdown, a lack of alternatives meant many concert organizers and artists all over the world had to come to terms with the online environment. Voices were heard who predicted the online medium as a path forward for the way we think of musical liveness in the future. Opinion-forming “gatekeepers” (Lippmann 1922) of the public discourse, such as journalists and media scientists, as well as data analysts and representatives of the music industry, propagated the idea that Corona would bring about a lasting change in the way we think of communication between performers and listeners. Their argument related to the ‘Corona effect’, according to which streaming music consumption habits change with the coronavirus lockdown (Cole 2020; Future-source Consulting 2020; Peoples 2020). Why, they seemed to consider, should this tendency not be continued in the future?

Shortly after the lockdown in European countries was over, however, many musicians and their audiences were loudly advocating for a return to a performance idea they were largely familiar with. “When will we finally be able to come together in the crowd again?” one could hear from advocating music lovers all over the world.³ The survey conducted among the Argentinian population provides results that confirm this trend. A considerable number of listeners, almost 50 percent, rather missed the community experience of listening and dancing together in the public

³ See, for instance, Daniel Koch, “Konzerte und Corona: ‘Keiner ist Nummer eins, alle sind gerade der Letzte’,” August 25, 2020, in *musikexpress*, <https://www.musikexpress.de/konzerte-und-corona-keiner-ist-nummer-eins-alle-sind-gerade-der-letzte-1594319/> (Accessed September 15, 2020).

sphere of spatiotemporally shared reality, which is a substantial number considering the current mobile listening culture of the smartphone. Arguably, the simultaneous existence of the smartphone culture, the traditional culture of concerts in music halls and the striking existence of several technologies can be explained by the fact that each means has different social affordance and its own concepts of aesthetic, thus, the replacement of one by the other cannot easily occur.

Hence, it could be argued that the “internet” medium is not able to replace the “concert hall” medium in music culture during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is probable that the affordance of concert hall performance is precisely the above-mentioned experience of *being in a community* that the online world does not create in the same way. This community experience can be concretized as to be *at the same time at the same place* in a community with other individuals. It is out of the question that digital worlds provide community experience as well, but they break up the spatiotemporal reality of the physical space that is traditionally located in the center of a public music performance.

It is exactly this special form of community experience that neuroscientists frequently mention as being music’s main cultural role. As suggested by many studies, the feeling of being together is facilitated greatly if there is spatiotemporal co-presence among individuals. Considering the balcony concerts during the lockdown in place of online performances, the authors Jessica Grahn, Anna-Katharina R. Bauer and Anna Zamm stated in April 2020: “Music-making brings us together during the coronavirus pandemic” (Grahn, Bauer, and Zamm 2020). These famous balcony concerts, brought up by the authors, *de facto* represented a variation of performance in a concert hall where everybody is sharing the same physical reality of time and space.

4.3 The parameter of *nearness* versus the parameter of *being in community*

Among the surveyed subjects, few answered that they feel closer to performers during live sessions on the internet than is the case in concert hall performances. What is striking is the fact that the vast majority stated at the same time that they nevertheless miss the community experience to the maximum. This appears paradoxical at first glance, because the feeling of closeness and the experience of being in a community converge in some way in conventional understanding. The results even show a fascinating correlation: the closer the listeners feel to the performers the more they miss the community experience. The feeling of nearness (in relation to the performers) and the experience of being in community seem to be for them two different sides of the same coin named “musical performance”. What does it imply for them when they say that they feel *in community* while listening to music?

According to the results, the experience of being in community does not primarily relate to the performers. Rather it seems to be linked to another group of actors,

namely the other listeners. The social experience of *inter homines esse* during music listening seems to be dependent on the co-presence of other persons acting in the same way by *listening*. Although people feel closer to performers who are in concert halls, where they are hierarchically superior to listeners because of the sharp separation between the stage and the audience, they seem to miss the presence of those individuals who are practicing the same auditive act. To get to the heart of their notion of community experience, the following equation may serve as an illustration:

community experience = *my* listening + *your* listening + *her or his* listening etc.

The aforementioned small subsample of surveyed subjects who feel closer to performers but miss the community experience values a factor that musicologists usually neglect as being a “minor matter” of musical performances. It is the case that not only for this small group of listeners, but for one half of the surveyed listeners, the community experience in concert halls seems to be a key point in their concept of a musical performance even if they refer to an aspect of musical performances that, unlike music, remains always *inaudible*. The public act of listening cannot sound itself. Listening remains silent and the only way to become present is in its transformation into visible and discursive orders: the neighbors’ listening *as* his concentrated face, *as* his restlessness that arises in boredom etc. In that way, when they are in a community with other listeners, listeners are constructing metaphors of inaudible actions. Their concept of music performance substantially entails such transformations of the inaudible.

4.4 The *meaning* of music performance

Regarding this ritualistic aspect of coming together at the same time and in the same place to listen to music, one cannot so easily apply the theory of progress pointed out by the music philosopher Theodor W. Adorno in his *Philosophy of New Music* on performance history (Adorno 1998, 38–42). For sure, our performance concepts have evolved over the centuries. In the course of these changes, even the meaning of “live music” has been transformed. As the media scientist Philipp Auslander emphasizes, a radio broadcast (‘live broadcast’) and even online music (‘live streaming’) can nowadays be described as ‘live’ (Auslander 2012). New approaches have replaced traditional concepts of liveness. Not only value judgments of individuals are reflected in the preferences for a certain concept of liveness, but also philosophical considerations on the *meaning* of music performances. This seems implausible because, unlike philosophers, listeners do not usually think about the meaning of music in an explicitly articulated philosophical manner.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, the Austrian philosopher who dealt intensively with music, put the philosophical issue of the meaning of music in this way: “How, when

and for what purpose do we use the term ‘music?’” (Eggers 2011, 78). With Wittgenstein’s eyes, we could discuss the results of the survey with the following question: *When* do listeners perceive music *as* a music performance? The results of the survey show that the answers that listeners implicitly gave to this philosophical question are different. But it seems evident, that those who stated that they missed the community experience do not understand music performance as “music alone” (Kivy 1990), as the 21st Century music philosopher Peter Kivy proposed. Rather they specify the meaning of music performance as a *social event* of gathering together in spatiotemporal co-presence among audiences.

5. Summary

This article dealt with the increase of online music performances during the COVID-19 lockdown. While the lockdown that paralyzed public music life in European countries is over, the Argentinian population is still affected by a curfew. When they want to listen to a live concert, consumption on the internet remains the only way. With the context of live performances on the internet being so different to that of concert halls, we questioned listeners’ evaluation of both settings. To analyse this issue, we conducted a survey among the Argentinian population during July and August 2020. The questionnaire, based on a scientific model developed in empirical research on creativity, was communicated to Argentina’s broad population through mailing lists and social networks.

For the studied sample, the results of the survey highlighted the main following conclusions:

1. Performers and listeners agreed on the preference for music performances in concert halls.
2. About half of surveyed listeners missed the community experience during online sessions.
3. During the concerts *via* the internet, the closer the listeners feel to the performers, the more they miss the community experience of music performances in concert halls.

Furthermore, the discussion of the results suggests that for half of the questioned persons the meaning of ‘music performances’ lies in a social event, where listeners are acting in spatiotemporal co-presence with performers and other listeners. This means at the same time that the openness to the novel online paradigm of live transmission seems to be limited.

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Appendix A: English version of the online anonymous survey

A1. Demographics

A1.1 General information

- What is your gender?
- What is your age?
- In what country did you spend the COVID-19 lockdown?
- Do you sing, play an instrument or produce music?

A1.2 Creative Achievement in Music over the last 10 years (Listeners/performers segmentation)

1. I have no training or recognized talent in this area.
2. I play one or more musical instruments.
3. I have played with a recognized orchestra or band.
4. I have composed an original piece of music.
5. My musical talent has been critiqued in a local publication.
6. My composition has been recorded.
7. Recordings of my composition have been sold publicly.
8. My compositions have been critiqued in a national publication.
9. None of the above.

A2. Part II. Survey for performers

Question in Sections A2.1, A2.2 and A2.3 are not disclosed since they belong to parallel ongoing studies.

A2.1 Music adressée (not disclosed)

A2.2 Musical activities during the Covid-19 lockdown (not disclosed)

A2.3 Music adressée during the Covid-19 lockdown (not disclosed)

A2.4 Open-Ended questions to express agreement or disagreement

A2.4.1 Online concert vs. performance in concert hall:

While performing through the internet during the COVID-19 lockdown, I felt closer to the listeners than I do in concert halls.

A2.4.2 Interaction with listeners:

Through my internet live performances during the COVID-19 lockdown, I have been able to interact and take feedback from listeners more than I do when I perform in concert halls.

A2.4.3 Feedback from listeners

I prefer listeners to give me likes or thumbs up through the internet rather than being applauded by them in concert halls.

A2.4.4 Internet Concert Vs. Concert hall

I prefer to perform comfortably at home and to broadcast my concerts through the internet rather than experiencing live performances on stage.

A3. Part III: Survey for listeners

Questions in Sections A3.1, A3.2 and A3.4 are not disclosed since they belong to parallel ongoing studies.

A3.1 Music adressé (not disclosed)

A3.2 Music adressé during the Covid-19 lockdown (not disclosed)

A3.3 Open-Ended questions to express the level of agreement with claims

3.3.1 Concerts through the internet

During the Covid-19 lockdown, I watched more concerts through the internet than before.

A3.3.2 Concerts through the internet

I discovered more artists and music genres during the Covid-19 lockdown than in the past.

A3.3.3 The concert experience

While listening to concerts on the internet during the Covid-19 lockdown, I missed the community experience with the performers and other listeners.

A3.3.4 Interaction with performers

While listening to concerts on the internet during the Covid-19 lockdown, I felt closer to the performers than I do in concert halls.

A3.3.5 Interaction with performers through live sessions in internet

During live sessions on the internet, I was able to give more feedback to the performers than I am in concert halls.

A3.3.6 My feedback to performers

I prefer giving likes or thumbs up to performers rather than applauding them in concert halls.

A3.3.7 Online concert vs. performance in concert hall

I prefer listening to a concert comfortably on the internet rather than experiencing music live in a concert hall.

A3.3.8 Music and your mood during the Covid-19 lockdown

Music influenced my mood during the Covid-19 lockdown more than before.

A3.4 Open questions concerning personality and feelings (Not disclosed)

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OFICINA DE CRIATIVIDADE SONORA: CONCEPTS ABOUT MUSIC, IMAGES AND SOUNDS IN A COLLABORATIVE EXPERIMENTAL PODCAST IN NORTHERN BRAZIL

Abstract: What is sound experience? How does it relate to our interpretation and perception of art and daily life? Oficina de Criatividade Sonora – Sound Creativity Workshop – is a collaborative experimental podcast created by composer Heitor Martins Oliveira, from Brazil, in order to generate online content and interact with his students, other artists, and the community, during the global pandemic of 2020. Musician and visual artist Leonardo Luigi Perotto joined as a close collaborator. Every week, from April to June, they released an image/score on social media and received audio files – created and sent mostly via smartphones – from followers. The audio – including singing, talking, instruments, and soundscapes – was edited by Oliveira to create sound compositions or narratives. Some contributors were asked to comment on their reading of the scores. The weekly podcast episodes featured commentaries and the resulting sound experiment. Since contributors are free to interpret the images/scores, they construct their own criteria and structural principles for sound creation. Their choices are related with their life experiences in music, other arts, or any other fields. These sound experiments reveal how contributors think about images and their relation to sound and music, their cultural, political and educational significance.

Keywords: sound experience, visual culture, musical notation, collaboration

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Podcasting as an artistic pedagogical strategy

What is sound experience? How does it relate to our interpretation and perception of art and daily life? The podcast *Oficina de Criatividade Sonora*² (Sound Creativity Workshop) proposes to deconstruct ordinary ways of thinking about music and sound production, to expand our understanding of creative action as a critical and sensorial exercise on things, based on everyday acts and the assimilation of facts from reality. The interaction between the artists who created the podcast and the other participants is mediated by social media and electronic devices that permeate our daily lives, particularly during the social isolation measures adopted in the face of the Covid-19 global pandemic.³ Using these digital platforms and their resources to produce and share images and audio clips, we established a collaborative protocol implemented in a series of weekly episodes released between April and June 2020.

At first, we created original images/scores, as a trigger mechanism for the proposal. These scores used images and other content with visualities that are different from what would traditionally be perceived as a musical score. Due to this choice, we worked with theoretical contributions from visual culture and cultural studies to rethink the descriptive values of the image, how they lead us to create visualities and ways of thinking, as well as characteristic reflections on the reality that a given image can incorporate (Walker and Chaplin 2002).

The image of a traditional musical score immediately refers to a specific cultural practice, evoking musicians and their context. When we rework these images, we invite other ways of conceiving sound production, creating new bonds and possibilities. By rethinking musical notation as an expanded way of making music, we provide immersive scenarios for creative processes. Participants can perform a free interpretation of each image/score, using them as a starting point to create sounds. From that moment, the participants create their own rules and define the structural concepts behind their creation, bringing their own life experiences into this process – whether in music or other fields of practice and knowledge.

The experimentation with images/scores is based on the participants' visuality, on how they observe contexts, objects and actions related to the sound universe. In this way, their visualities become critical links of their experiences with music as a cultural, political and educational artifact, which reflects societal actions and changes in ways of doing and thinking (Geertz 2006, Attali 2011).

In a second step, the sound material sent by the participants was integrated into a sound composition realized through digital sound editing. The diversity of audio clips generated from each of the image/scores required a comprehensive listening

2 Available at <<https://anchor.fm/heitor-ocris>> and podcast platforms.

3 In Brazil, social isolation measures were adopted as of March 2020, according to Ordinance No. 356 of March 11, 2020, published on the Brazilian Government's National Press portal, available at <<https://www.in.gov.br/web/dou/-/portaria-n-356-de-11-de-marco-de-2020-247538346>>.

attitude, which admits its multiple referentialities and materialities. At the same time, the editing device allows (re)composing an imaginary soundscape, in which different sound sources, recorded in isolation, share a virtual space. In this sense, we reflect on listening, admitting its link with visuality as expressive potential and virtuality. This listening attitude refers not only to the perceptual registration of the audible, but also to an evocation of our sensitive experience of the world (Caznok 2008).

Thus, the relationships between sound materials and image/score readings admit what we understand as distinct layers of the sound experience, of which we highlight six. A first layer of sound experience, causal listening, refers to the identification of sound sources, relating them to objects and beings. The second layer is called semantic listening, focused on messages conveyed by the signs of spoken language. The third layer is reduced listening, in which sound materials are analyzed in terms of their typologies and perceptual properties, regardless of their origins, messages conveyed or other information (these first three layers correspond to the listening attitudes defined by Chion 2011, which, in turn, is based on Schaeffer 2003). In a fourth layer, sounds constitute natural and cultural environments. Listening to these soundscapes corresponds to the sensation of acoustic immersion in a world of climatic phenomena, living beings, machines, music. It provides a critical perspective in the face of human presence and interference in places and history (Schafer 2011). A fifth layer of the sound experience refers to musical listening, in which sound events are organized in rhythmic, melodic and harmonic syntactic processes (Zbikowski 2017). Finally, a sixth layer of the sound experience is aligned with narrative intentionality, subjecting sounds, words, environments and music to the fabric of a plot, of a sound dramaturgy (Tragtenberg 2008).

The purpose of sound editing is to manage these listening attitudes, establishing relationships between sounds considered to be referential, semantic, typological, environmental, musical and narrative, with the expressive intention of proposing a continuous and coherent aesthetic experience. Thus, a cycle of creative collaborative dialogue is completed in the publication of each episode. The creators of the images/scores receive sound materials resulting from different interpretations of their visual propositions. And they return to the participants an aesthetic product that mediates various sound materials with a compositional gesture.

The creation of scores as images is part of a transdisciplinary educational thought, which aims to interweave concepts of musical composition, visual arts, cultural studies, performance studies and the history of contemporary music and art. An artistic perspective is proposed to think about the reading of images and the elaboration of arguments for sound interventions. In other words, the intention of the scores is to deconstruct the technical and historical paradigm of musical notation and to develop new artistic proposals that unite the conditions of the individual's life experience in relation to sounds. In this sense, we seek to interweave concepts of musical studies and Visual Culture to build and share knowledge about

creative processes and sound media.

Therefore, we use images/scores specifically created for the *Oficina de Criatividade Sonora* podcast. Participants must observe these images, develop an aesthetic argument and transform this argument into a sound process. Thus, the images/scores provoke the participants to adopt a new conceptual sound perspective, thinking about the sounds from parameters suggested by a non-linear writing.

Notação musical, linguagem e visualidades

In a historical perspective, music and language share similarities, since both present intrinsic manifestations based on the production of sounds. However, the ways in which both are circumscribed in time and in collective memory follow progressively different paths, developing specific devices and actions to ensure the transmission of the information produced, according to their social, cultural and historical contexts. On one hand, writing revolves around the description of a state of things. Statements refer to different actions that take place within a certain time-space (Austin 2013). On the other hand, musical notation tends to translate aspects of sound such as pitch and duration, describing a sound production method that does not necessarily show a communicational concern, but rather a musical sense that individuals give to these sounds through their social experiences (Blacking 2010). This is part of a complex network of behavioral ordering, which have been generated over the centuries and are inserted in the ways we organize ourselves in society (Geertz 2006).

Since antiquity, the emergence of writing and musical notation has been consolidated by structuring technical procedures, that is, by developing a symbolism based on technical specificities for the reading and practice of what has been written. In the midst of these technical issues, individuals accumulate qualities of experience and transmit the legacy of existing ideas at different historical moments. The need for registration is a latent impulse that prevails within any society. It is linked to the conservation of knowledge and the development of mechanisms for the reproduction of such knowledge, with abstract or concrete principles that are organized and standardized on different material supports (Burke 2010, Geertz 2006, Sousa 2012).

The “Seikilos epitaph” (Fig 1) is a funeral monument dating from the 1st Century, which features one of the oldest recorded musical notations. There is a standardization between signs, letters and graphics that indicate how to proceed to perform the music. In addition, the epitaph contains a poem dedicated to the memory of Seikilos' dead wife, giving a sense of proximity between orality and musical sounds and suggesting a declamation accompanied by music.

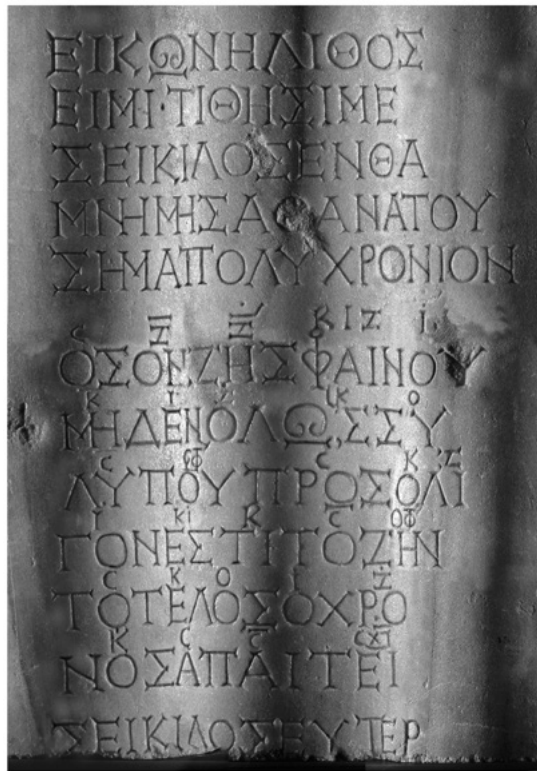


Figure 1. Seikilos epitaph, 1st Century. Source: Nationalmuseum. Licensed under Creative Commons BY-SA 3.0 <<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Seikilos2.tif>>.

This monument records two important processes. First, the individual's sensitive lived experience, evident in a narrative of what he is going through at the moment, in accordance with the cultural rules of the society in which he lives. Second, the characteristic and symbolic writing created by this culture, as a specific means of recording its world experiences (Dewey 2008, Larrosa 2016). These two aspects indicate the search of individuals to symbolically articulate their thoughts, linking themselves to their time to leave a legacy of their passage through the world. However, before individuals achieved these deeper writing processes, visually and symbolically structured, there were previous exercises to constitute an adequate repertoire of actions for the writing practices. And this is due to visual experience, which arises from individual practice with communication and orality, within daily living spaces. That is, before any writing is possible, there is a previous thought process. Sounds are linked to ideas and require images that speak through other images. There is simply no way to conceive different ways of thinking without some kind of mental image, just as there is no processing of mental images without previous human experience (Manguel 2001, Dewey 2008).

Then, in antiquity, there is a parallel between the procedures of communication-

al writing and musical notation, since both belong to the sphere of everyday experience. However, during the medieval period, there is a gradual rupture between the procedures of writing and musical notation, consistent with aesthetic searches peculiar to each cultural field. Different paths are developed to support knowledge and teaching canons. Musicians begin to record melodies using neumes (Fig 2) and progressively emphasize measurable aspects of sounds to support more specific and specialized methods of musical coding (Lovelock 1987). Thereafter, this approach will also require that individuals who come into contact with this type of musical writing have prior knowledge for its decoding, which will end up solidifying as a defining practice for the Western music tradition.

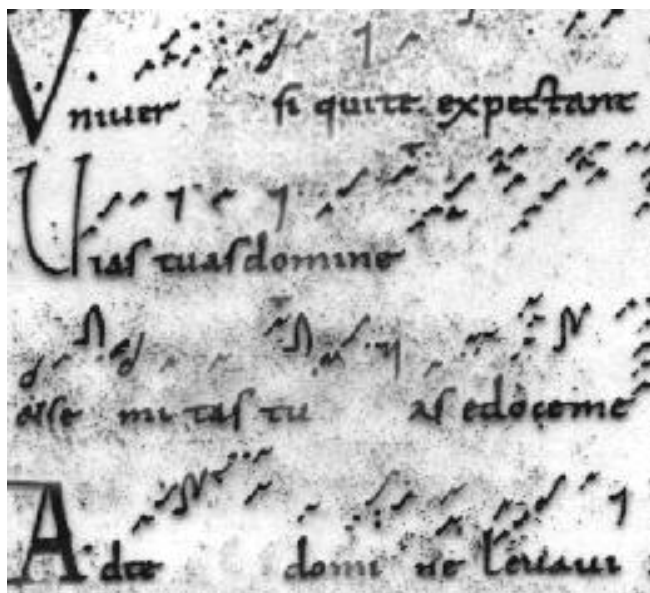


Figure 2. Neumes. Fragment from Laon, Metz, 10th Century. Source: Wikipedia Commons. Public Domain.
<<https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuma#/media/Ficheiro:Neumasincipiais.JPG>>.

Within this tradition, musical notation systems involve a tension between two functions: on the one hand, analytical knowledge about musical principles; on the other hand, support for memorization, directly associated with musical performance. Western musical notation, in the period of tonal common practice, successfully combines these two demands under the same system. However, even in this period, the musical text would not have the same autonomy as the literary text, remaining inseparable from its function as a script of instructions for performance. Perhaps that is why, from the end of the 18th Century onwards, composers and publishers felt the growing need to add verbal instructions parallel to the coded musical notation itself, intensifying the role of the score as a mediation between the com-

poser's intention and sound performance (Lebrave 2015). This approach to notation is connected to the aesthetic conceptions of that period, in which musical creation was understood and practiced within the sound scope of instrumental timbres. The compositional gesture turned to thematic exposition and development, harmonic relationships, structural plans and formal solutions.

In the 20th Century, exploration of new sound resources, new techniques for structuring sound material and even new proposals for musical performance correspond to the development of new music notation techniques. Musical scores from this period to the present contain several possibilities explored by composers to relate sound, image and performance. Thus, there are scores that use an approximate notation, in which the structure of traditional notation is present, but interval and rhythmic relations are indicated by approximation. There is also the script notation, based on a range of signs prepared by the composer himself, which provides an explanatory caption for its realization. In graphical notation, visual elements are arranged on the page, as in a collage or abstract visual composition. Finally, there are also verbal scores, which are limited to verbal instructions, usually using poetic writing to inspire musicians based on their content. In many of these scores, there is an increasing degree of indeterminacy for interpretation and decoding, a characteristic aspect of their aesthetics (Caznok 2008, 61-67). Our images/scores for the *Oficina de Criatividade Sonora* podcast, since they are disseminated as a starting point for sound processes, can be classified under the graphic notation label. However, its meaning is not limited to this classification, but includes different links with musical traditions, visual culture, cultural contexts and our individual expressive intentions (Hernández 2010).

It should be noted that scores, like books, have never been dissociated from images, highlighting human experience and its sensitive condition (Fig 3), the complexity of which is described or recreated on a given medium. It can be a musical notation, a poem or a drawing, contemplating information the individual re-inscribes based on the meaning attributed to life experiences (Goffman 2006). The creative individual claims his place in the world through an expressive and unique experiment. He/she starts with an action resulting from everything he lives and thinks, from his perceptive link with the environment, with others and with himself, transforming these relationships into meaningful actions (Bruner 2006, Silva 2014).

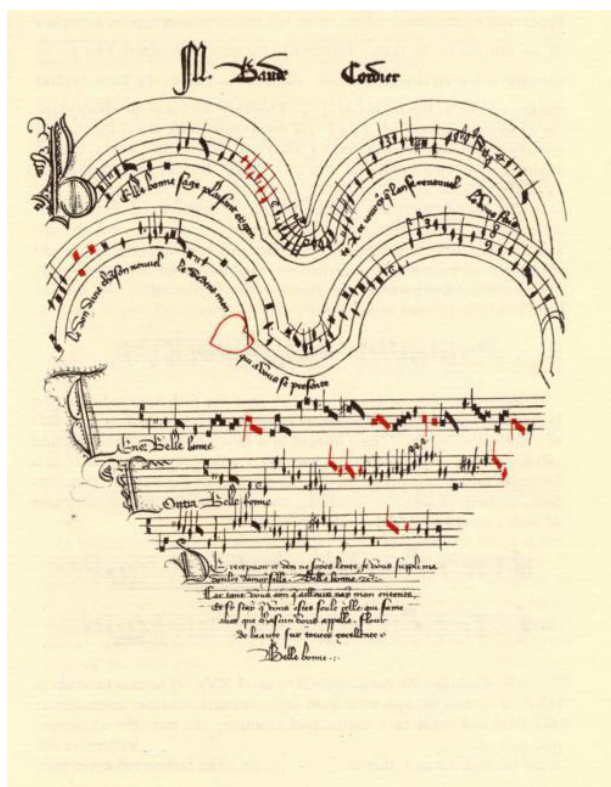


Figure 3. Score for the *chanson* “Belle, Bone, Sage”, by French composer Baude Cordiers (1380-1440).

Source: Chantilly Manuscript - Wikimedia Commons. Public Domain.

<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:CordierColor.jpg>>.

In Western music of written tradition, the composer, as a creative individual, uses notation as a support for recording and mediating his expressive intentions and experiments. In this context, written production suspends time and creates a visual space in which an inscription of time and working memory is projected. Sketch studies analyze how composers work in the two-dimensional space of the page and how they associate verbal comments and graphics with musical notation as complementary ways of recording their ideas. This allows researchers to understand different stages in the genesis of a work (Lebrave 2015).

Therefore, the composer's creative process consists in a web of choices. The musical work, in turn, is gradually constituted, crossing different stages and procedures. At the origin of this process, there is the expressive intention of a technical or metaphorical nature and also a sound material or formal idea that concentrates the essence of the sound characteristics and formal relations of the piece (Reynolds 2002). Reports by composers like Kaija Saariaho (b. 1952) reveal how thought in images is often associated with the early stages of conceiving a musical work. Saariaho (1987, 107-108) explains how the first sketches (Fig 4) for her work *Verblendungen* (1984) for orchestra and magnetic tape describe a virtually impossible formal idea of sonic realization. According to the idea contained in the image, the

piece should start at its maximum point of tension and develop as a continuous and irreversible process of dispersing this energy. Based on this concept, the composer writes the notational realization of the piece, organizing the dynamics of different sound parameters and their interactions at structural levels.



Figure 4. Kaija Saariaho's first sketches for the global form of her piece *Verblendungen* for orchestra and tape. Fonte: Saariaho (1987).

Thus, the technical realization of a musical work, its unfolding and detailing, is guided by mental images established in previous moments of the compositional process. The images serve as impetus and reference in the search for singularity and expressive coherence (Belcastro 2010). This discussion of images and written records as part of musical composition enables framing the creation of the images/scores for the *Oficina de Criatividade Sonora* podcast as a personal creative exercise on the frontier between tradition, everyday experience and imagination. Its significance cannot be dissociated from the creative experience it intends to unleash.

Likewise, this same creative experience may cause ambiguities in musical notation, due to two factors: on the one hand, the objectivity expected from a specific and targeted notation scheme, ensuring the score contains unique and specific relationships for its interpretation and decoding; on the other hand, what the score determines as a class of interpretation pertaining to the work and referring to its own notation system (Goodman 2010). These two factors are not sufficient to cover all types of existing sound poetics, despite contemplating and attending to a good part of the Western classical music repertoire. Traditional musical notation often does not include sound aspects related to individual forms of experience, creation and

perception that might establish other categories resulting from their own creative processes. In an artistic pedagogical project such as the *Oficina de Criatividade Sonora* podcast, this ambiguity becomes productive, fostering possibilities for individual contributions, creative dialogue, exchange of knowledge and, finally, production of a truly collaborative experimental content.

Collaborative sound experiments

First Epifany

Heitor: On April 10, 2020, early in the morning, I sat down in front of a blank sheet of paper. On the table, magazines, scissors, glue, pens and pencils. That was the date I had set to release the first image to get started with collaborative experiments for the *Oficina de Criatividade Sonora* podcast. The podcast itself was a new project, an alternative that I had envisioned to generate online content and interact with my students, other artists, and the community, during the global pandemic. My plan was to intervene in the social media environment, providing interactions and exchanges of knowledge about the relationship between visuality and sound creation. But the uncertainties were many. Despite having planned the conceptual framework and procedures for the podcast, creating images/scores was a new self-imposed challenge. And, in a broader context, at that time, we did not know how long the measures of social distance would last, nor the magnitude of their impact on the arts and educational institutions. I started flipping through the magazines, not sure what I was looking for. Gradually, words, phrases, images began to capture my attention. I cut out some of them, embracing the idea of referring to the very subject of uncertainties. So, from the clippings, I selected the question "A gente tá como?" ("How are we?") and the image of a domino piece, both in red and white. I positioned the two fragments in opposite bottom corners of the sheet, connecting them with a red baseline. From then on, the space on the sheet seemed to me organized, acquiring directionality, from left to right, and verticality, presenting a region above the baseline that I felt the need to fill by drawing with colored pens. In the end, I filled this region in two sections: on the left, a pointillist and monochromatic cloud; on the right, wavy and colored figures. Working from my compositional perspective, I understood this image as a structural frame, referring to gestures, sound textures and a temporal organization. At the same time, in a more subtle way, the image captured my feelings and uncertainties in the face of a global crisis and the beginning of a new artistic and educational project. When I published the call for the experiment, I felt that I was sharing a page from a private notebook, an outline of impulses and ideas that I decided to make public, exposing and opening up the initial stages of a creative process for others to participate.⁴

⁴ The quotes that we authors present within dialog boxes throughout the text are epiphanies, defined by Norman Denzin as part of autoethnographic methodology. According to Denzin (2014, 28) "the subject matter of interpretative autoethnographic research is meaningful biographical experience [...]. Interpretative studies are organized in terms of a biographical meaningful event or moment in a subjects life [...]. This event, the epiphany [...], how it is experienced, how it is experienced, how it is

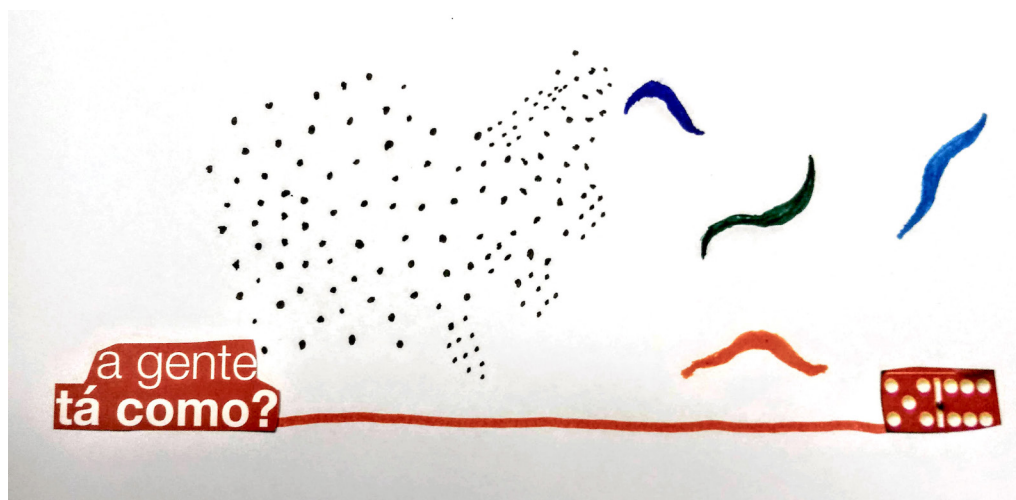


Figure 5. “A gente tá como?” (How are we?), image/score by Heitor Martins Oliveira. Creative Commons 4.0 license. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Heitor_Martins_Oliveira_-_A_gente_t%C3%A1_como%3F.jpg>

The image/score “A gente tá como?” (How are we?) (Fig 5) was prepared by Heitor Martins Oliveira and shared on social networks on April 10, 2020, starting the collaborative sound experiment no. 1 for the *Oficina de Criatividade Sonora* podcast. Four people sent in their audio clips, including domestic soundscapes, voices, guitar, static noise, whistle and mandolin. The podcast episode published on April 16, 2020 includes a sound composition lasting 4 minutes and 40 seconds, as well as commentaries on the reading of the score-image by two contributors.

The guitarist Renan Simões presents an interpretation of the image as a score in graphic notation, assuming recognized conventions in musical notation, such as: representation of temporal directionality from left to right, approximate representation of bass and treble regions on the vertical axis and analog representation of durations – short sounds like dots and sustained sounds like lines. From the domino piece, it decodes the suggestion of a rhythmic structure, alternating groups of five and six pulses. Theatrical director Bárbara Tavares is compelled to answer the question posed in the image, immediately relating it to the pandemic and social isolation, which separates people physically, while uniting them in order to prevent the spread of the disease. She proposes a symbolic reading of the pictorial elements of the score, identifying the representation of a sun that breaks into colorful birds. He sees in the domino piece an allegory for the role of chance in human life. She associates all these elements of meaning with the challenges that humanity faces and with the poem *A Estrada* by the Brazilian writer Ariano Suassuna.

defined, and how it is woven through the multiple strands of a person’s life, constitutes the focus of critical interpretative inquiry [...]”.

Sound editing seeks to preserve the integrity of the audio clips as they were sent, valuing the momentum of each recording. The organization of the whole is not in accordance with the bipartite structure initially imagined by the author of the score-image, but arises from the concrete work with sound materials and corresponding listening attitudes. In large part, it is a simple sequencing of the different clips. The complete repetition of the material sent by the guitarist is the main subversion of this pattern, with the second iteration occurring as an accompaniment to the declamation. In this simultaneity, each sound layer remains independent most of the time, except for a confluence in the final stretch. Both guitar and spoken voice grow in intensity and rhythmic density that culminates in a break. The compositional gesture behind sound editing selects the overlapping of layers that enables this confluence and invites the listener to imagine an interaction between semantic listening and musical listening, also taking into account the musicality of the spoken voice.

Second Epiphany

Leonardo: For me it is very important to be part of the *Oficina de Criatividade Sonora* project, because I put into practice some ideas that I have been developing on musical creation and performance, through the production of specific images. Despite knowing that there are different methods and procedures for graphical notation, it still seems to me that they always lean towards the ultimate goal of musical writing, which is to provide a list of detailed rules for the performer to be faithful to what is written. I believe that one can create different readings of images, decoding their values to transform them into sounds through the individual's own experience. That is, when you propose that someone should observe and work on a certain image, thinking how it might sound, you propose an exercise in creation and experimentation, deconstructing the canonical idea of music notation. In this case, for example, a square shape can symbolize countless types of sounds, just as a square shape of yellow color can mean countless other types of sounds, even silences or bubbling sounds. It will depend on how the individual will relate to this image from his repertoire of actions, memories and previous behaviors, defining sound criteria for each element of the image. I, for example, became a musician not only by listening to music, but also because I saw many images of other musicians. Of course, I did not see them as a score, something like a specific notation, not least because I was very young and did not understand these things yet, but I observed these images as an invitation to music, a call to experience it. The fact that I wanted to imitate the poses of my childhood idols, try to dress like them and, later, understand the way they played, are part of a unique experience with music that encompasses several aspects of being in front of others. In addition, they provide you with a critical reading about this

type of action and what it represents socially. Nowadays I think of this performative issue as a very important aspect in music education, something that deconstructs myths and helps to understand sounds beyond the clichés and paradigms launched by the cultural industry. When I created the score for “Esquinas”, I was thinking about these issues, but I was trying to produce an image that proposed a dialogue with something that you don't see every day. I ended up being influenced by the works of the Russian artist Kazimir Malevich (1879-1935), founder of the suprematism movement that developed a unique work based on geometric shapes, dissolving everyday images into shapes and patterns. As a first procedure for the sound workshop, I thought of developing small shapes that were connected by lines and in different colors, configuring asymmetric patterns. Then, in an intuitive reflection, I ended up finishing the image so that it was possible that anyone could read it from anywhere, like a palindrome. I hadn't thought of a name for the image itself, but listening to what one of the participants commented, that the score looked like “corners” and that it resembled their city – I don't know if in the sense of a map or the architectural geometry of the place – this reading seemed very interesting, a look from the memory of another person who saw in the score a device to relive his memories. A creative fluke that worked well.

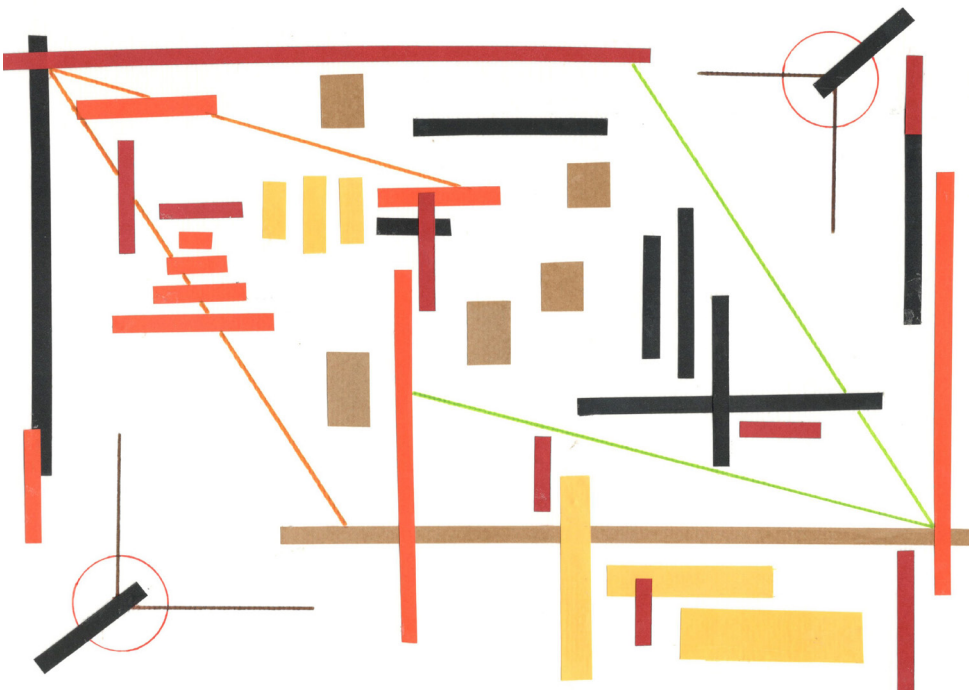


Figure 6. “Esquinas” (Corners), image/score by Leonardo Luigi Perotto. Creative Commons 4.0 license. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leonardo_Luigi_Perotto_-_score_Esquinas.jpg

The image/score “Esquinas” (Corners) (Fig 6) was the first one created by Leonardo Luigi Perotto for the *Oficina de Criatividade Sonora* project. It was originally shared on social media on May 1st, 2020 as a starting point for collaborative sound experiment no. 4, which generated a podcast episode published on May 7, 2020. Three people sent audio clips for this experiment, consisting of electronic sounds, percussion and voice. The episode contains comments from two participants and the sound composition lasts 5 minutes and 20 seconds.

Percussionist and *capoeira* practitioner George Augusto based his contribution on the general idea of street corners, evoked by the image/score and the title used in its dissemination. Instead of devoting himself to a close reading of forms, he jumped from this association to his childhood memories and his cultural formation in *samba*, *ciranda* and *capoeira*. For actress and theater pedagogue Renata Ferreira, the shapes and colors of the image suggested the opening of a kind of abstract animation. Her vocal sound creation was of a playful character, as she imagined that the shapes gained movement as the sounds were uttered.

The editing sought to mediate the sound materials disparity: the electronic sounds were sustained and characterized by gradual transformations, while the percussion instruments proposed pulsating ostinates and the voice, sudden and playful gestures. The sound editing of the composition makes use of resources such as the spatial distribution and movement of sounds, the control of relative intensities, the variety in sound density and, from a rhythmic point of view, the construction of polyrhythms and the adjustment of synchrony points. Without aiming for a strict correspondence, the compositional gesture embodied in editing emulates the multiple lines, blocks and groupings of the image/score.

In describing these two collaborative sound experiments, we reveal how different conceptions about the sound experience were realized in the creation and interpretation of images/scores, in the production and editing of sounds. The intervention of each agent in these creative processes was permeated with subjective and intersubjective meanings that represented unique contributions to the collaborative endeavor. The coincidences, the confrontations and the confluences repeatedly resignify the contributions and enable experiences of pedagogical value, as well as the creation of peculiar sound products. The fact that all interactions between participants take place through digital platforms, using smartphones, also allows us to reframe these means of communication and devices as places for cultural participation and knowledge exchange in the artistic field.

Conclusion

Epiphanies as a conclusion based on tentative answers for the questions posed at the beginning of this paper: What is sound experience? How does it relate to our interpretation and perception of art and daily life?

Leonardo: Sound experience is inherent to everyday life, and disregarding the previous experience individuals have with sounds and music, seems to me to be a mistake. There is a paradox about art and everyday life that cannot be denied, which is how we transform and reframe our experiences into new narratives, in this case based on sound possibilities.

Heitor: One of the outstanding characteristics of my artistic output is working with materials from different or even fragmentary origins, composing connections, collages and overlays. Many scores that I write for musicians to play in concert halls contain games with independent or interrelated musical modules or cells and sometimes literary excerpts or even actions without acoustic implications. My images/scores for the *Oficina de Criatividade Sonora* podcast's first season always start from clippings of images available in my surroundings during the social distancing period: magazines, product packaging, old photographs. I look for consistency criteria to arrange these cutouts on paper, mixing texts, shapes, figurative images. The free format of image/score - as opposed to traditional musical notation - allows for the exploration of subjective and discontinuous criteria to establish these connections. The results are sketches, images that suggest gestures and groupings of actions that could be unfolded in different ways.

Leonardo: I think the secret would be to rethink the links between people's performances and visualities in a creative context. And when I talk about performance, I don't mean musical performance, but performance as a daily action, I don't even consider performance as performance, because nowadays performance encompasses everything. As much as there are technical issues to be developed, nothing should go beyond the experience of individual performance. It may sound a little complicated, but this is a field that we still have a lot to explore ... at least, in education, it has a long way to go.

Heitor: I quickly realized the diversity of audio clips contributors sent to the podcast called into question listening habits and conventions associated with genres of sound and music creation. Each sound experiment cannot be neatly classified as concrete music, nor as a soundscape or accompanied declamation. By admitting contributions based on multiple cultural references and structural typologies, I end up generating sound compositions that play with listening attitudes: sometimes allowing the parallel simultaneity of independent layers, sometimes suggesting unusual connections. Paradoxically, the experiments highlight, at the same time that they question, the segmentation of the sound experience, having the unusual as one of its main aesthetic traits. Initially, the elements simply sound out of place. Gradually, I allow myself to accept the imaginary soundscapes they compose. And I hope that podcast listeners will do the same.

Leonardo: Whenever I talk about performance and everyday life, I remember how I enjoyed family moments with music, how I was very fond of looking at album covers. And that was an important aspect: to imagine the musicians and how they played. The images made me think of music not in a technical way, but in a way incorporated into my experience of the world, remaining in a loop that resignifies itself from time to time. I believe that the *Oficina de Criatividade Sonora* podcast allows this connection, starting from the individual's commitment to himself, that is, from the very desire to incorporate sound and musical objects, from his corporeal connection with the act of doing and putting it in motion, and not the other way around, starting from what is already instituted towards a mono nuclear practice.

Heitor: Moving forward, the *Oficina de Criatividade Sonora* episodes will incorporate other formats and explore other possibilities for creative interaction with sounds and images. One possibility is to ask participants to send their own images/scores. But the protocol for collaborative sound experiments will remain one of its most stimulating and characteristic proposals. It also demands deepening our theoretical reflections, to analyze its visual artifacts and sound poetics.

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**OFICINA DE CRIATIVIDADE SONORA: CONCEPTS ABOUT MUSIC, IMAGES
AND SOUNDS IN A COLLABORATIVE EXPERIMENTAL PODCAST IN
NORTHERN BRAZIL
(summary)**

The *Oficina de Criatividade Sonora* podcast is part of a transdisciplinary educational thought, which aims to interweave concepts of musical composition, visual arts, cultural studies, performance studies and the history of contemporary music and art. An artistic perspective is proposed to think about the reading of images and the elaboration of arguments for sound interventions. We use images/scores specifically created for the podcast. Participants must observe these images, develop an aesthetic argument and transform this argument into a sound process. Thus, the images/scores provoke the participants to adopt a new conceptual sound perspective, thinking about the sounds from parameters suggested by a non-linear writing. We realize sounds are linked to ideas and require images that speak through other images. There is simply no way to conceive different ways of thinking without some kind of mental image, just as there is no processing of mental images without previous human experience. We also reflect on listening, admitting its link with visuality as an expressive potential and virtuality. This listening attitude refers not only to the perceptual registration of the audible, but also to an evocation of our sensitive experience of the world. Traditional musical notation often does not include sound aspects related to individual forms of experience, creation and perception that might establish other categories resulting from their own creative processes. In an artistic pedagogical project such as our podcast, this ambiguity becomes productive, fostering possibilities for individual contributions, creative dialogue, exchange of knowledge and, finally, production of a truly collaborative experimental content. In describing our collaborative sound experiments, we reveal how different conceptions about the sound experience were realized in the creation and interpretation of images/scores, in the production and editing of sounds. The intervention of each agent in these creative processes was permeated with subjective and intersubjective meanings that represented unique contributions to the collaborative endeavor.

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PERFORMING AND PREMIERING IN SPITE OF A GLOBAL CRISIS: GERD KÜHR'S *CORONA* *MEDITATION* AND ITS USAGE OF ONLINE PLATFORMS

Abstract: Through the challenges that can arise in connection with a global crisis, in which live performances are prohibited, musicians and music institutions, such as concert houses, have to find solutions in order to give the recipients the opportunity to convey music through a different medium. Gerd Kühr's *Corona Meditation* for any number of pianos was especially composed to adjust to the recently changing situation concerning the typical structures of concert life. The concept offers a direct connection between technology – here in the form of using a conference programme and a livestream platform – and music itself, as the composer was aware of difficulties that can arise through using an online medium. By examining the mentioned composition, this paper focuses on the aspect of relocating music to a virtual space, using online platforms as potential temporary alternatives to real-life performances and reflection of the streaming culture in general. Connected to all that matters are problems and difficulties during these types of concerts deriving through the existing technological limits.

Keywords: contemporary music, Gerd Kühr, global crisis, technological opportunities, streaming, online content, classical concert life, virtual concert

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Introduction

A global crisis, as we experience it at close quarters, caused by a pandemic, has a great impact on everyday life. As one has to adapt to new and ever-changing regulations, institutions have to as well. In some cases, human interaction can be put to a minimum by working at home, which is not easy on some areas such as the cultural sector. Institutions, which mainly focus on live concerts, such as classical concert houses or opera houses, have had to think of other ideas on how to bring music to its recipients, in order to prove that musical events can exist even in these times.

Many quickly transferred their musical content to the virtual space of the internet – sometimes even for the first time – as it was the only possibility to reach others without having them be physically present. It included, for example, “ghost-concerts”, in which the audience was not present in the respective room itself, but instead was listening and/or watching at home, transmitted through radio or online livestreams.

Composers have also had to think differently in that special time, being linked to cancelled premieres of their works or their then work-in-progresses that could not be completed in the intended way. As such, new ideas have had to be formed. One of these was the work “Corona-Meditation” by the Austrian composer Gerd Kühr. It was specifically composed in and for that time to not only meet the regulations of the government by being wholly devised for the virtual space, but also to reflect on collective music making, traditionally and contemporary speaking.

In this paper the composition will be used as a starting point to look further into the sphere of making online music content, particularly live content. As opposed to pre-recorded music, other parameters have to be considered and online production has its own problems that can occur before or during livestreams. The question arises if current online platforms in their current state can be seen as proper alternatives to real-life classical concerts.²

Combining traditional concepts with current events

Gerd Kühr’s “Corona-Meditation” for any number of pianos³ premiered on 30th April, 2020, just about one and a half months after regulations in Austria prohibited live art performances. As quickly as the pandemic had changed the cultural life or life in general, as suddenly Gerd Kühr had the idea for this piece. Coming back from

² I’m hereby only focusing on the classical music sphere, as popular music has its own relationship to social media or other types of internet content and was always connected with the shifts in media culture, to be, in that sense, popular in the first place (see more in Anastasiadis 2019).

³ That it is also not limited to that specific instrument can be seen already at its premiere, where also a guitarist was playing along with the other pianists. The performance can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQ7e2twU1Ig&t=2467s>.

Berlin to his home in Austria, currently working on an opera, he had to go into a 14-day quarantine, during which this composition came to his mind:

By watching the news in Austria, I noticed how the situation here already developed, and then suddenly, during a coffee break, the idea occurred to me: Yes, apparently an incredible number of people are now at home, a lot more than usual – also during the day and during the week. What are they doing? They have more time to think and reflect on how life has changed or with the uncertain prospect how things will continue. And at the same time, as a musician myself, it was of course obvious that I thought very optimistically: Time for domestic music [Hausmusik]. It has to be (Kühr, Chepovetsky and Wagner 2020).⁴

The old tradition of making and playing music at home that has resurfaced before in the genre of popular music, and is here reflected anew by the current situation, as it is one of the few possibilities to perform music, be it privately or even publicly by uploading it onto different social media platforms. Thus, the term “Hausmusik” is expanded from a local to a global reception as well. Connected to this focal point is the idea of non-professionalism, where families or other social groups could perform together outside of the professional realm. To take this into account, Gerd Kühr had to compose something that can be played by professionals and amateurs. This was accomplished by having a simple fundamental tonal musical structure, using all twelve notes of the chromatic scale, classical periodical structures, and a 4/4-time throughout the work. Not every single note has to be played by everyone. Each pianist can decide how many and which notes he/she would like to play, thus creating a performance integrating every level of piano skills.⁵ This alludes back to the previous – and even today’s – existing isolation, being held at home or in a small radius, limiting direct social interactions. The piece offers a short escape out of this bubble to musically communicate with other people all over the world through us-

⁴ The press presentation was held in German, thus I translated it for this paper, as are all non-English references. Original German wording of Gerd Kühr was: “Ich habe durch das Nachrichtenschauen in Österreich mehr mitbekommen, wie die Lage hier schon ist und dann ist plötzlich während einer Kaffeepause mir die Idee gekommen: Ja, offenbar sind eben jetzt wirklich unglaublich viele Menschen jetzt zu Hause, viel mehr zuhause als sonst – eben auch tagsüber, unter der Woche etc. Was machen die? Die haben mehr Zeit, Zeit wahrscheinlich auch zum Nachdenken und zum Besinnen, wie sich das ganze Leben jetzt geändert hat, oder mit der unsicheren Aussicht, wie es weitergeht. Und gleichzeitig als Musiker war das natürlich ganz naheliegend, dass ich mir ganz optimistisch gedacht habe: Zeit für Hausmusik. Das muss es sein”.

⁵ This linkage of both the professional and the non-professional field can also be seen as a reflection of today’s online content creation in general, on platforms such as YouTube, where this dichotomy is blurred, as everything from professional content, e.g. orchestral concerts or opera productions, to user-generated music by individuals or collectives outside of the institutionalized music industry, can be viewed and listened to at such sites, concerning not exclusively popular music alone (cf. Werner 2018, 138).

age of the internet.⁶

The second point that was mentioned by the composer himself was the aspect of reflection and meditation, as the title of the work already explicitly suggests. As people have more time to think or reflect on their lives and do other things that “have to do with muse and leisure” (Kühr, Chepovetsky and Wagner 2020), a meditative atmosphere or state would be beneficial. Therefore, the music itself should be quiet and calm, which is in this case achieved by a constant quiet playing (*sempre pianissimo*) and a very slow pulse (quarter note = circa 37) throughout the whole composition. To instigate this meditation, to collect oneself in silence as much as possible before playing the first note, a fermata is used. Herein lies an ambiguity itself, as the word *corona* was an old terminology referring to this specific music symbol and its now present relevance regarding the Coronavirus (Kühr, Chepovetsky and Wagner 2020).

The slow pulse is not only related to Gerd Kühr’s basic idea of the work regarding social interaction and personal reflection, but also to the technical aspects of the composition. The composer knew of the boundaries of the currently available online communication platforms, such as Zoom or Skype, especially when playing live together with others in different places, for which these programmes were not primarily designed.⁷ By playing in a slow pace, it can be extremely difficult to play very closely together, but can also ensure that every note has enough room to expand “similar to the expansion of the cosmos” (Kühr, 2020a and Kühr 2020b, 9) by gradually accumulating more and more notes to create a tone soundscape. This expansion of time and space is also achieved as a result of the nature of online content that can be viewed after its initial run on demand. Thus, it is possible to not only re-watch it again and again, but the composition also gives the opportunity to play along even after its premiere, creating a work of art that is unlimited in its framework regarding time and space.

The delay between the different musicians by playing over the internet cannot be fully erased, therefore making a perfect live performance is impossible. Kühr was already aware of this during the compositional process. With this in mind, combining the slow pulse and the imperfect soundscape – not only caused by technical parameters, such as latency that leads to metric fluctuation or various good and poor audio inputs by the musicians, but also by different tunings of each piano – a “shift in the time axis” and the “spatial axis” is created (Kühr, Chepovetsky and Wagner 2020). Today’s streaming culture of music and differentiating it from the classical live-concerts, where other expectations have to be met to please the audience, concerning

⁶ Here can be seen the direct connection of music and society that was always important for Kühr’s compositional work: “If art does not see itself politically as a direct expression of society in the broadest sense – and the artist has to make this claim first and foremost – it becomes decorative, replaceable, ultimately meaningless: it loses its meaning” (Kühr 1995, 312).

⁷ As live streaming systems used today evolved from video conferencing technologies it is not that odd that such programmes are utilized for other activities than just vocally communicating with other people at other locations (cf. Robinson 2014, 33).

sound or general atmosphere, is thus being emphasized once again.

Escaping the physical sphere. The possibilities of digital content delivery and its drawbacks

While having mostly negative consequences for individual lives and ubiquitous areas, a global crisis can also have a positive impact on other fields, where, in this case, stronger development has occurred in online technologies and their broader utilisation. While they are often the only alternative to conventional concerts, the use of platforms and programmes for different communicative purposes has risen. This is particularly noticeable in the area of classical music. Even before the pandemic, various recordings of live concerts and tracks from different CDs could be easily accessed through platforms, such as YouTube. In recent months even more musical content has been produced with specific attempts to expand the range of it livestreaming performances. Here, two types have to be distinguished: the first being concert livestreams, where musicians perform together in one room, where such events took place before too, exemplified by the so-called “ghost-concerts”. The second being like Gerd Kühn’s “Corona-Meditation”, where many input signals from different sources, located at different geographical positions, are coming together and form one performance at the end-user’s side. Both types need a sound engineer to control the audio signal, but it is much harder when there are several sound inputs with a wide range of quality, which is typical for the second type. This stems from the bandwidth of the individuals playing and from their respective audio-visual setup. Even if someone has a great microphone and webcam, the connection on his/her side can be poor, creating issues with the repercussion on the image and sound for the audience.⁸

Furthermore, a sometimes small or large delay can be present, caused by the speed of light, as data is sent from the input of the user to a content delivery network (CDN) or the server used for the programme or webpage, from where it is distributed to the end-user (see Robinson 2014, 36).⁹ This has to be taken into consideration, which was already shown by the previously mentioned compositional work. Even though the recipients, at the end of the connection, perceive it as a live event, it technically does not directly take place in real-time: Transmitting the data packages takes time, but most of the time we cannot distinguish it, as we do not know or see

⁸ The model “garbage in garbage out” (“GiGo”) can describe such discrepancy of “poor source signal from the encoder to the point of origination on the distribution network”, hence the bad quality for the audience. (Robinson 2014, 40).

⁹ More precisely the delay is caused by the combination of propagation delay and latency, the latter known better under the terminology in the online gaming world as “lag”, when greater discrepancy between input and output commands can be perceived by the player. “Propagation delay is a simple physical effect, specific to the length of network link that the transmission occurs over, and caused by the time the electrons or photons carrying the signal take to traverse that length, whereas latency also includes delays caused by intermediate processes within the network.” (Robinson 2014, 36).

the real input at the other side. Only when multiple signals are being bundled, like in the case of “Corona-Meditation”, can it be quite noticeable.¹⁰ Because of this, playing perfectly together in this scenario is impossible.

Whilst traversing the field of classical music and its connection to online content, the aspect of the respective demographics of such audiences comes to mind. One of the biggest assumptions is that the audience that visits conventional classical music events, such as concerts or operas, is relatively old and tends to get even older. Most studies concerning the audiences of different events in that musical sphere show that the average age lies higher than the average of the respective countries or cities. That has to do with more factors than just the increasing interest in classical music at a higher age, e.g., general demographic changes.¹¹ In this light, the question occurs whether, the demographics of these concerts differentiate themselves from online/live concerts of the same musical repertoire. Though no study has been conducted for this matter, the general belief is that younger people will perceive these types more than the elderly. For example, grandparents in their sixties or seventies (speaking from my point of view as someone in her twenties) are using less technological mediums, such as the internet or computers. Nevertheless, smartphones can give simple access to online content that do not need any other devices. Taking into consideration that middle-aged people were experiencing the evolution of the internet in its commercialisation, this discrepancy is likely to dissolve.

Without speculating, one can perceive that a global crisis, such as the current situation, can alter these hypotheses. With no alternatives in real-life, the only possibility for people in general – besides making phone calls, though the visual component cannot be replaced – is to communicate via video chat or attending the same events through the internet, recreating somewhat of the social aspect. Because of this, the elder’s usage of digital content might increase, though it is more likely that this is just a temporary change and may dissipate when real-life social gatherings are allowed again, and concerts are being held in their former conventional manners.¹²

As discussed, the internet offers alternatives to the traditional cultural landscape, which takes place more in the physical room rather than the digital, thus pushing this conservative sphere more out of its comfort zone and experimenting with new concert ideas. Like the potentially higher internet use of older people within this special situation, these concepts only provide temporary replacement from real-life

10 This case is further special, as the initial video conference tool, Zoom, is the first instance used to give the ability for all different user signals to be combined in one programme, which is then sent to YouTube, where the livestream is being broadcasted. Thus, causing perhaps even more of a delay.

11 See for example the nation-wide study of orchestral audiences in the season 2013/2014 conducted by the Association Française des Orchestres (AFO). Or Reuband’s survey of the audience in Düsseldorf’s cultural institutions between 2002 and 2004, in which also classical concerts were included. There, the average age for classical concerts was 60, therefore the oldest one of all studied events, e.g., of opera, theatre, museum, or cinema. (Reuband 2019, 164).

12 This can be the case when the attendance of opera productions or classical concerts is purely or mostly because it is part of a cultural lifestyle, linked to the respective circle (in regard to this social aspect see Reuband 2019, 178).

concerts, in a time where performing together or having a full audience is not possible.¹³ The two greatest differences lie in the already mentioned sound quality and the social aspect. Surround sound, similar to a concert room, can be achieved at home, though it needs the right audio setup. Furthermore, the sound received by the end-user depends on the quality of the input and transmission signal, significantly reducing the audio quality for the audience, sitting in front of the screen. The social component cannot be fully emulated either, as music itself is just one element of the whole concert experience. Other things include the general atmosphere caused by the concert house itself (or any other physical room) combined with the gathered audience, or the direct or indirect interactions with other attendees.

Assigning different values to real-life and livestream concerts can be also examined in popular music events. Online accessibility to songs of all genres is even better in that musical sphere, as artists are primarily distributing their work by uploading music videos on YouTube, making it available on respective music platforms, such as Spotify, or even by sharing audio and/or visual snippets on different social media sites. Nevertheless, people still attend live concerts of various bands or artists, regardless of whether they come to a particular town or city, just to get the opportunity to see them live, be it to perceive their music differently or to be part of a collective that listens to the same music as oneself. Seeing that live concerts still exist and have their significance in the popular music industry, despite the huge amount of content (live and pre-recorded) that can be easily accessed at home, this ambivalence (real-life and digital) of classical music life will be unlikely be dispersed given its historical traditions.

New developments regarding online joint music making

Searching for other ways of playing together, be it because of geographical long distances or regulations that prohibit human interactions, musicians switched to virtual rooms. Existing conference programmes can host a large group of people; however, they are not well suited for playing or rehearsing music as they are only primarily voice optimized. Thus, new programmes were created, or already available ones became popular that appealed to joint music making over the internet. In the following section I want to list a few.

The open-source software “Jamulus”, developed by Volker Fischer in 2006, was already used by music groups, which had to virtually bypass a spatial distance (cf. Kurtz 2018). Not known to many people, it became more popular during the pandemic, reaching 2.000 downloads in April 2020 (Kurtz 2020). The audio data is sent

¹³ These views are not uncommon if reading newspaper articles during the pandemic. For example, the German composer Moritz Eggert (2020) describes it in a similar way: “Above all, there is one thing we must not: get used to it [virtual music events] as a full replacement for the previous musical life because it is irreplaceable – the experience of a live concert, opera and orchestral performance, choir singing, club concert ... wherever people come together to make music, not only musical life arises, but life itself.”

to a single server, where it is mixed and sent back to the users. This requires a minimum connection speed of 200 kpbs and a maximum ping time of 40 ms.¹⁴

Emerging from the hackathon of the German Federal Government “Wir gemeinsam gegen das Virus” (transl. “Together against the virus”) during the pandemic, experts and various artistic institutions cooperated together to create “Digital Stage”.¹⁵ As the name suggests, it was developed to enable online rehearsals and performances of music, dance, theatre and performative arts. Three currently prototypes are available: web-based, locally installed or utilising a stand-alone device. It promises to have adaptive audio compression without automatic voice optimization, a capacity of users between 10 and 20 at once, and a broadcast-capable streaming interface, thus combining a conference tool with a livestreaming platform, as this had to be used for Kühr’s “Corona-Meditation”.

As well as the shutdown to the cultural landscape, universities were forced to close as well, therefore switching to online lessons. Especially in art universities solutions to work and play together were sought after. The Institute for Electronic Music of the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz developed a virtual rehearsal room specifically for group practices of the study programme “Performance Practice in Contemporary Music” (PPCM). It virtually simulates an acoustic room and the teacher can control the audio of each musician, therefore creating dynamic sound. Not only does it offer an opportunity to rehearse in a group, but it can also be perceived as a project in its own right to “teach musicians [or students] how to work virtually”, as it is “an increasingly important competence, and at the same time a requirement that many outside of the corona-situation rarely want to face.” (Kunstuniversität Graz. Ein virtueller Proberaum für neue Musik 2020).

Final Notes

The current pandemic still wields influence over our everyday lives and the cultural landscape. Admittedly, regulations and curfews have been loosened over the last few months, although the currently rising numbers of people infected by the corona virus hints to stricter rules again and/or another shutdown phase. As the end of this global crisis cannot be accurately estimated, further adaptation is necessary. Therefore, the effect of this pandemic on cultural life should not be diminished, be it its bad side by paralyzing whole seasons in opera or concert houses, or its good by developing new concert ideas or using online platforms more often, thus creating a better digital global music network.

Corona-Meditation by Gerd Kühr is both reflecting on old music traditions within the present timeframe and using new media (in a sense that beforehand it wasn’t primarily targeted by musicians) to further reflect on today’s streaming culture and

¹⁴ See for these requirements the project homepage: <http://llcon.sourceforge.net/>.

¹⁵ More information about the project can be found on their homepage: <https://digital-stage.org/?lang=en>.

online content-making with its participatory and connecting elements. The utilisation of programmes not suited for this application clearly demonstrates the imperfections and problems of this kind of music transmission, but also illustrates the different reception approach between real-life and live online concerts distinctively.

Only time will tell what this global crisis means for the future of the cultural landscape in general, and perhaps how much it will alter. At the very least, it has showed us that shutting down the cultural sector did not keep institutions and individuals from finding solutions to the cultural emptiness that had struck us. These ideas can still be employed after the pandemic, perhaps leading to further technological progress especially in the field of performing classical or contemporary music.

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PERFORMING AND PREMIERING IN SPITE OF A GLOBAL CRISIS: GERD KÜHR’S CORONA MEDITATION AND ITS USAGE OF ONLINE PLATFORMS (Summary)

Associating a global crisis with just the negative effects that occur at that time and can have severe repercussions, one has to also look at the positive developments, in this case focusing on the online output of classical music that has risen, whilst, for example concert life as it has been known, was shut down. During this time, solutions had to be found, in order to reach audience at home, either by recording music even if musicians were dispersed from each other, or by livestreaming music in different formats. At the latter problems and technological parameters have to be taken into consideration, especially if musicians aren't playing together in one room, as it can be seen in the work of Austrian composer Gerd Kühr. *Corona-Meditation* for any numbers of pianos faces the limits of using online platforms, like conference tools, and directly embraces the imperfection of joint music making through the internet. Aesthetically using delay (that throughout streaming occurs, but is not always perceivable) and mixed quality audio signals (caused by the several audio inputs from the musicians that can vary due to the respective audio setup and the bandwidth), Kühr reflects

on the special situation today and its impact on conventional concert life and the emerging importance of live online content as an temporary alternative to real-life joint music making. It shows, how these platforms can be used, though a full replacement of concerts cannot be achieved by these options. But as can be seen by different projects that emerged during this global crisis (“Digital Stage”) or were even developed beforehand but gained popularity through these times (“Jamulus”), the interest of improving the possibilities of joint music making beyond the conventional way is getting stronger and can perhaps lead even after the end of the current situation to new ways of playing music together and give new classical concert ideas the technological foundation to prosper.

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REVIEWS



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Ivana Medić

***Theory and Practice of
Gesamtkunstwerk in the 20th and 21st
Centuries – Karlheinz Stockhausen’s
Operatic Cycle LIGHT / LICHT***

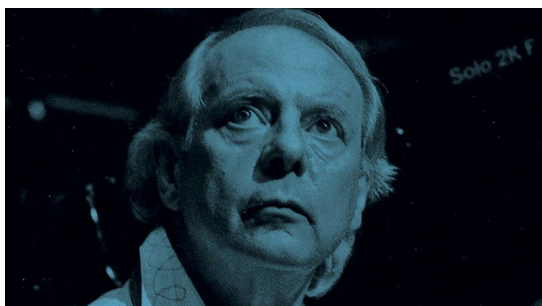
Belgrade: Institute of Musicology SASA, 2019.

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In the book *Theory and Practice of Gesamtkunstwerk in the 20th and 21st Centuries – Karlheinz Stockhausen’s Operatic Cycle LIGHT / LICHT* Ivana Medić upholds the idea that *total artwork* or *Gesamtkunstwerk* is a golden thread that connects Richard Wagner, Alexander Scriabin, Arnold Schoenberg and lastly, Karlheinz Stockhausen. To the author’s knowledge, very few publications in the Serbian language can be found that address the Stockhausen’s work in this comprehensive manner and with this vigor. Medić takes an innovative approach to the complex and challenging subject of the book, constructing an intricate theoretical apparatus that allows her to approach *Gesamtkunstwerk* and observe it to a great extent in various lighting. Notably, the theoretical apparatus consists of interpretation of *Gesamtkunstwerk* using the key of romanticism and modernism, as well as the theory of avantgarde in art and, particularly, that of musical avantgarde. The apparatus is also built on the knowledge from various disciplines such as literature studies, history of theatre, theatre studies and other discourses that greatly influenced the evolution

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Ivana Medić
**TEORIJA I PRAKSA
 GESAMTKUNSTWERKA
 U XX I XXI VEKU**
 Operski ciklus
 SVETLOST / LICHT
 Karlhajncza Štokhauzenna




 Muzikološki institut SANU

of *total artwork* and helped the author underline the multifacetedness of the said concept.

This book is a natural extension of the author's interest in Gesamtkunstwerk and her fascination with Stockhausen's work (fascination that was prompted by the composer's pieces and concept of *intuitive music*, and lasts to this day). Actively researching and documenting her findings regarding the two subjects, Ivana Medić wrote several papers and publications² during the course of her research that ultimately resulted in union of the two in this book. A fact worth mentioning is the author's active participation in *The Stockhausen Composition and Interpretation Courses* in Kürten organized by the *Stockhausen Foundation for Music* (*Stockhausen-Stiftung für Musik*). During these summer courses, Medić had the opportunity to inter-

view and work with Stockhausen and his associates and had access to scores, audio, and video recordings as well as published and unpublished texts on the development of *Licht*. The analytical part of the book, dedicated to Stockhausen's *Licht*, stems from these experiences, a fact that, in itself, enriches this publication.

This book is separated into two parts. The first part deals with the sources and predecessors of Gesamtkunstwerk as an idea, the predecessors of Wagner's theory and practice of Gesamtkunstwerk. After that, the author dedicates pages to the evolution of Gesamtkunstwerk, Alexander Scriabin's *Mysterium* and Arnold Schoenberg's *Die glückliche Hand*, as well as the development and status of Gesamtkunstwerk in the interwar period. The second part of the book is dedicated to Karlheinz Stockhausen and his monumental cycle *Licht*, a piece of cosmic-ritual theatre. A fine addition to this book are the interviews the reader can find in the appendix – one with Stockhausen that took place in Kürten during the summer courses and one with his assistant and associate, composer and musicologist Richard Toop.

Medić explains that there are two types of theoretical and practical approaches to Gesamtkunstwerk: the former follows the line of a "particular need for synthesis of arts or media and is focused primarily on the art world" (66). The latter follows

² Visit Ivana Medić's website for more information on this book and other publications: <http://ivanamedic.com/publications/>

the “utopic vision of creation of the new universe or linking of the arts with the other systems and is focused on the ideological background of the project” (66). Her criteria for identifying a work as Gesamtkunstwerk are the following: in the formal sense, the work needs to be created as a synthesis of as many arts/media as possible; as an idea, the work should connote archaic and/or transcendental utopian project; the artist that is creating Gesamtkunstwerk must be in continuity with the image of the romantic-era creator; the work must possess a certain mimetic quality (68–69). These defined qualities influenced Medić’s choice of composers that fulfilled the abovementioned criteria and approached Wagner’s legacy in a different manner, respectively (69). She also explains that every theatrical work was followed by a theoretical explanation in the form of multitude of autopoetical texts of its creator.

With Gesamtkunstwerk, there is more than meets the eye. Addressing the philosophical origins, ideological background, the status of art and artists and thoroughly documenting the evolution of this concept in the interwar period, Medić recognizes one fascinating key moment that took place during the development of Gesamtkunstwerk, particularly, the transformation of this concept into a sociopolitical utopia that took place mainly in German speaking areas and in Russia (129). The evolution of this concept was affected by the changes in an understanding of the elements that constitute the idea of *total artwork*, as the author points out (55). Equally important is the formation of new theatrical forms and genres (132) and the establishment of continuity with the projects from the beginning of 20th Century, the continuity that was broken by the outbreak of World War II. Medić recognizes this tendency towards continuity in the work of Karlheinz Stockhausen and agrees with Mladen Dolar’s claim that the composers who are *classics of contemporary music* had an urge to crown their achievements with an opera, the *ultimate genre*.³

Medić underlines the often overlooked and forgotten (even deliberately ignored) fact that Stockhausen’s mystically driven visions of global understanding and togetherness have their roots in his experiences as a war orphan. Those experiences fueled his desire to find spiritual strength in Catholicism, New Age ideas and teachings, Zen Buddhism, various religious scrolls, Urantia book etc. and understood that he is one of the enlightened Ones (much like Scriabin and Schoenberg) who have the responsibility thrust upon them – a role Stockhausen is willing to accept (153, 206). Be that as it may, Stockhausen religiously followed his stellar vision manifested in the opera cycle *Licht* and thoroughly documented his path towards realization of this vision. Medić argues that there is a particular incompatibility between Stockhausen’s understanding of theory and practice of Gesamtkunstwerk with the postmodern techniques he used. As she explains, Stockhausen used postmodern techniques (primarily citation of various textual sources and virtual signs) contrary to their intended use in order to achieve his ultimate goal: unity and spiritual progress of the human race (204). She further elaborates that Stockhausen based his philosophy on the spiritual movement of New Age (203) and the ideas of unification and

³ Mladen Dolar in: Ibid, 132.

spiritual progress humanity should undertake in the Age of Aquarius. Additionally, she finds that Stockhausen's compositional thought gives an impression of a revived avantgarde musical thought in the postmodern era. Although Stockhausen's pieces carry hallmarks of modernism, he demonstrated that Gesamtkunstwerk is possible in the postmodern era (205–206).

Medić's comprehensive, thought-provoking monograph gives clear answers to numerous questions that arise when one is encountered with Gesamtkunstwerk and, particularly, with the multilayeredness of Stockhausen's complex work. This monograph provides an excellent starting point for any researcher who is determined to grasp the idea of Gesamtkunstwerk fully and any researchers who are interested in viewing Stockhausen's works in a different light.

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**International Conference
Young Musicology Belgrade 2020:
Shaping the Present by The
Future. Ethno/musicology and
Contemporaneity**

Institute of Musicology SASA

Belgrade, 24–26 September 2020

The third volume in the biannual Young Musicology conference series was organized in Belgrade from 24 to 26 September 2020 by the Institute of Musicology, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. This conference series is dedicated to PhD students and young scholars interested in presenting their current research to an international audience. Topics of the conference predecessors were “Czech and European music Avant-Garde between the World Wars” (Prague 2016) and “The East, the West, the In-Between” (Munich 2018). The organizers of this conference decided to place focus on the issue of contemporaneity in the humanities, that is, on contemporary methodologies in musicology and ethnomusicology. Thus, the conference title was “Shaping the Present by the Future. Ethno/Musicology and Contemporaneity”.

Having in mind that this conference was scheduled before the outburst of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was planned to take place at the Institute of Musicology, SASA, in Belgrade. Due to the lack of possibilities for travelling because of the pandemic, the conference was the first in the region which took place completely online. All sessions, including two keynote lectures and two accompanying concerts (classical and traditional music), were pre-recorded and premiered on YouTube, while the discussions and one book promotion were held as live online events.¹

¹ The content of the conference is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8eiprTfGayG-5mqckvk1wog>

Dr Jelena Jovanović, Senior Research Associate, Institute of Musicology SASA, Correspondent Member of SASA and Dr Ivana Medić, Senior Research Associate, Institute of Musicology SASA opened the conference. On the first day, two keynote lectures were held. Dr David Beard from School of Music, Cardiff, UK, held a lecture titled *Musicology, Crisis and Contemporary, Or: Musicology's Oedipus Complex*. The second keynote lecture was held by Dr Selena Rakočević from Faculty of Music, Department of Ethnomusicology, University of Arts in Belgrade, Serbia, titled *Challenges of ethnomusicological and ethnocoreological research within the ever changing world. A view of a scholar from Serbia*.

The first session was dedicated to the relationship between music or musicology and media. Marija Maglov presented a paper titled *Radio art in Musicology: Challenges and Methodologies*, David Cotter presented research on virtual reality and performance *2020 vision: The Future of Musicology Through Virtual Reality*, and Milan Milojković presented his research on music and computing: *Not Just Blips and Blops – Music and Musicology in Home/Personal Computing Revolution (1974–1988)*.

The first session was followed by a concert of classical music titled: *Shaping the 20th Century Music: Slavenski, Peričić, Marić* in the Princess Ljubica's Residence in Belgrade. The concert was supported by the Organisation of Music Authors of Serbia – SOKOJ.

The topic of the second session was performance analysis in musicology and ethnomusicology. Gabriel Jones presented a paper *Performance Analysis and Performance: Towards a Productive Relationship*, Jenifer Asnari explored the issues on string quartet performance in the paper *JEDUF Jitters and Justification – Qualitative Exploration of a Contemporary String Quartet Performance Phenomenon*, and Ana Petrović was concerned with performance analysis in ethnomusicology: *Ethnomusicology Echoing Sound – An Example of a Doctoral Research of the Components of Musical Articulation*.

A live book promotion took place between the second and third session. A col-



lective monograph *Made in Yugoslavia. Studies in Popular Music* edited by Danijela Š. Beard and Ljerka V. Ramussen) was presented by several authors of the chapters: Danijela Š. Beard, Jelka Vukobratović and Marko Zubak. The edition was published by Routledge.

The third session contained papers on contemporary ethnomusicological methodologies. Jelka Vukobratović presented a paper *On Constant Looking Back – is (Croatian) Ethnomusicology Oddly Hiding from Contemporaneity and What Can Be Said in Its Defense?* Maja Radivojević presented a paper titled *Examining Contemporary Fieldwork Challenges: Researching Minority Music in Serbia*, and, Borislav Miljković presented a paper *Application of an Action Research Model in Ethnomusicology*.

The topic of the fourth session was focused on new methodologies within the interpretation of composers' opera and the history of institutions. Miloš Bralović presented a paper *On Developing a Methodology for Research of Musical Borrowing. Case studies: Serbian Composers of the 1950s*, David Vondráček presented several compositions in the context of Czech history around the year 1968 in the paper *What Music Tells Us about Prague Spring 1968*, and Vanja Spasić showed us a piece of history of the National Theater in Belgrade in the paper *Creating the Repertoire of the Opera of the National Theatre in Belgrade (1970–1990)*.

The fourth session was followed by a concert of the traditional music *Tradition and Youth: Musical Heritage of Serbia*.

The fifth session was dedicated to film music and teaching musicology. Ana Djordjević researched post-Yugoslav cinema in the paper *Artless Singing in Post-Yugoslav War Cinema*, James D. Mc Glynn explored several issues regarding the film studies in the paper *Crisis? What Crisis?: Film Music Studies as a Hopeful Paradigm of Interdisciplinarity in Musicology*, and the last paper in the session was by Richard Louis Gillies, titled *Teaching Between the Lines: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Historical Musicology in Higher Education*.

The final sixth session contained only two papers. Adriana Sabo presented a paper *Postfeminism and Feminist Musicology* and Bojana Radovanović researched methodologies of popular music research in the paper *Musicology and Metal Music Studies: Thoughts on Themes, Methodologies, and Research Results*.

In a total of six sessions, young scholars presented issues, problems and methodologies which concern their current research. Each session was followed by live fruitful discussions, the exchange of ideas and experiences and possible additional suggestions and remarks. The conference ended with a short live closing remarks session with honorable mentions of all the participants, keynote lecturers and performers who, together with the program committee, organizing committee and all the aforementioned institutions, made this conference possible.

CONTRIBUTORS' BIOGRAPHIES



Marcello Messina is a Sicilian composer and academic based in João Pessoa, Brazil. He holds a PhD in composition from the University of Leeds (UK), and is currently Professor Visitante Estrangeiro (Foreign Visiting Lecturer) at the Universidade Federal da Paraíba.

Valério Fiel da Costa is a composer, performer and researcher. Lecturer at the Federal University of Paraíba, he develops research on musical open forms under a morphological view. In 2016, he published the book *Morfologia da obra aberta: Esboço de uma teoria geral da forma musical* [Morphology of the Open Work: sketches for a general theory of musical form].

Marco Scarassatti is a sound artist, improviser and composer. He develops research and construction of soundsculptures and sound installations. He is a lecturer at the Federal University of Minas Gerais - UFMG, and the author of the book *Walter Smetak, o alquimista dos sons* [Walter Smetak, the alchemist of sounds] (Perspectiva / SESC publisher), published in 2008.

Milena Jakanović is a research associate within the Seminar for Museology and Heritology at the Art History Department, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade. She also works as an educator at the Museum of Yugoslavia. She holds a PhD in art history with the focus on museum and heritage studies and a master's degree in cultural policy and management. Her interests, therefore, span museology, culture of memory, use of historical models of collecting in modern and contemporary art practice, interpretation of heritage through new media and cultural management. She is the author of numerous papers, several exhibitions and the manager of few cultural projects.

Noah Travis Phillips is an interdisciplinary artist, scholar, and educator; (BA, Naropa University, Fine Art and Environmental Studies; MFA, University of Denver, Emergent Digital Practices). Their research and creative interests integrate personal mythology, the anthropocene and the posthuman, engaging appropriation and digital/analog collage and montage strategies with the assistance of algorithmic systems. They create adaptable and multicentered artworks incorporating 2D / 3D digital fabrication, videos, books, performance, and the internet. Phillips is Visiting Teaching Assistant Professor in Emergent Digital Practices at University of Denver. They live and work in Boulder, Colorado. They can be found online at noahtravisphillips.com.

Professor Dr. Susanne Junker is a professor at today's Beuth Hochschule für Technik Berlin lecturing design, interior planning, and virtual media visualization, with numerous photography awards, books, essays, and critics on contemporary architecture, design and art.

She received her Ph.D. (her thesis dealing with the Bauhaus photographer Walter Peterhans) at the University of Fine Arts of Hamburg. Prior she completed a research stay at the IIT Chicago in the USA and participated in the academic lectures of Daniel Libeskind, Kurt W. Forster, and Jerzy Rosenberg at the Academy of Arts Berlin. After completing her architectural studies at the Technical University of Berlin, she worked for several years with Prof. Josef-Paul Kleihues to convert and expand Berlin's "Hamburger Bahnhof" into a museum for contemporary art and as a freelance architect in and around Berlin.

She is currently researching the importance of baroque space and image concepts for visualization in architecture and art, e.g., photography and graphic story-telling.

Magdalena Zorn is an Assistant Professor at the Institute for Musicology at LMU Munich. She recently obtained her habilitation to conduct research and is currently working on a new research project on music in digital culture.

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Leonardo Luigi Perotto holds a bachelor's degree in Music / Classical Guitar from the Federal University of Santa Maria (UFSM - 2003), specialization in Art, Education and Contemporary Technologies from the University of Brasília (UnB - 2012), and master's degree in Music from the Federal University of Goiás (UFG - 2007) . He is a PhD student in Arts and Education at the University of Barcelona (Spain), where he researches on performance, education and the visual arts. He is currently a music professor at the Cultural Foundation of Palmas (Brazil). He has experience in the area of Arts, with emphasis on Musical Composition, acting mainly on the following themes: chamber music, music education, music, interpretive practices and musical performance.

Susanne Göttlich is a musicology student currently enrolled in the MA-programme at the University of Graz and the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz. She was working from 2017 to 2019 as student assistant at the Archive of the University of Music and Performing Arts coming also into contact with contemporary music of composers working at the institution. Since 2019 she is a student assistant at the Institute of Musicology at the University of Graz. Her fields of interest encompass different topics beginning with music from the 19 th century onward, for example development of the Lied genre up until today, or postmodern music and its elements of neo-romanticism and neo-tonality, both of which are being further examined in her master thesis that is currently in the making.

GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS



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Authors must submit original, unpublished articles.

All the manuscripts should be accompanied by author's name, affiliation, e-mail address, and a short biography (up to 150 words per author). Articles can be submitted in English (preferably) and Bosnian.

Manuscripts should be written in .doc or .docx format, in Times New Roman font, font size 12 with 1.5 line-spacing.

Original scholarly paper intended for sections The Main Theme and Beyond the Main Theme should include a short abstract (100-200 words), 5-10 keywords, as well as the summary (500 words). For articles in Bosnian, summary must be written in English. Do not include citations in the abstract. Keywords must be chosen appropriately in order to be relevant to the subject and content of the paper.

Regarding the citations, authors should use the author-date system with the separate bibliography, following the guidelines given in Chicago Manual of Style (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010; http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html). Please note that the list of references (bibliography) given at the end of the article must only include works that are cited in text.

Book, conference, and festival reviews should bring to attention relevant and valuable contributions or events that are in interest scope of our Journal. Reviews must contain a dose of critical appraisal instead of being written merely as summary. The title of the book review should include necessary information regarding the volume, as in following example:

- William Myers, *Bio Art – Altered Realities*. London: Thames and Hudson, 2015, 256 pp., ISBN 9780500239322
- *Margins, Futures and Tasks of Aesthetics*, Conference of the IAA, Helsinki, Finland, July 5–7, 2018.
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- Book, conference, and festival reviews – 1000-1500 words
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