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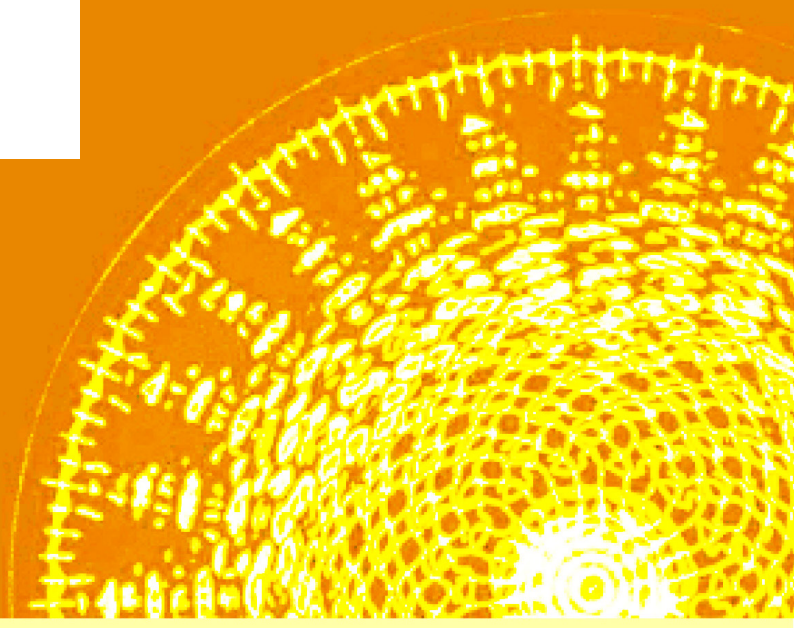

2024

Vögel, Musik und Stille
Oiseaux, musique et silence
Uccelli, musica e silenzio
Birds, Music, and Silence

Neue Folge 41

Herausgegeben von
Lea Hagmann, Margret Scharrer, Laura Moeckli und Vincenzina C. Ottomano

Gastherausgeberinnen
Helena Simonett und Patricia Jäggi

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Preface

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Welcome to Volume 41 of the *Swiss Journal of Musicology*. For the first time since the launch of the online journal, we are delighted to present a special edition: This guest edition curated by Helena Simonett and Patricia Jäggi arises from the research project *Seeking Birdscapes* (2019-2023), conducted at the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (HSLU) which focused on sound relations between humans and birds through both scientific and artistic approaches.

It seems no coincidence that the 'music-making' of non-human animals is now at the centre of a musicological publication. The growing concerns about our environment – triggered by the current climate crisis and the increasingly dwindling and changing natural habitats and their associated soundscapes – call for a closer look and listening, a radical rethinking of the role of the Anthropocene, and a search for new ways of dealing with our world. Approaches such as non-Western, indigenous cosmologies or (eco-)feminist theories can offer perspectives in this context.

Musicological research, particularly in human animal studies, sound ecologies, zoomusicology and ecomusicology, is becoming increasingly important, which has recently led to the establishment of a new study group of the International Council of Traditions of Music and Dance (ICTMD) dedicated to research on "Multispecies Sound and Movement Studies". With its focus on sound relations between humans and birds, this volume fits in well with the current research debates.

In the first part of Volume 41, we find four double-blind peer-reviewed main articles. In their introduction "Of Birds, Music, and Silence", Helena Simonett and Patricia Jäggi introduce the topic of "Birdscapes" and present the Lucerne research project. In his essay "The Anatomy of a Benign Failure: Péter Szőke's Ornithomusicology as Represented in Barátom, Bonca, a 1975 Hungarian Children's Film", Gergely Loch deconstructs Péter Szőke's anthropocentric assertion that both birdsong and human song are the result of identical neurological and physiological processes. Andrew Whitehouse's essay "Inquisitory Birds: Thinking through the Ethics and Assumptions of Playback Responses in Birds" questions the ethics of methods using birdsong playback to lure rare bird species out of hiding for research purposes. "Tùn Resùn: Walking in the Sounding Forest" by Nathalie Kirschstein and Helena Simonett, documents and categorises the multisensory experiences of various test subjects while walking through the Swiss sound forest Tùn Resùn.

In the "Times and Perspectives" section, Emily Dolittle introduces her composition *Gannetry*, a multimodal work inspired by the sounds of Scottish gannets and created in collaboration with the poet Dawn Wood: "Sharp, Loud, Fast, Fierce: Encounters with a Gannetry".

The "Workshop-CH" section sheds light on another artistic approach to the topic of birdcalls: In their article "Captured Birdscapes: Artistic Research, Research Art, and Living Cultural Heritage", Matthias Lewy and Helena Simonett present the exhibition *Birdscapes*, which is closely linked to the research project at the HSLU and was on display at the Lucerne Nature Museum in 2022. The article *"'Actualiser ' les études de musicologie"* by Florim Dupuis, as well as a book review by Philippe Vendrix and a workshop report by Helena Langewitz round off this volume.

The editorial team of the SJM consistently aims to include a broad diversity of views and perspectives. Scholars from all backgrounds, regardless of nationality, gender or religion are invited to contribute to the publication. Equal opportunities are a high priority for the Swiss Journal of Musicology.

Lea Hagmann, Margret Scharrer, Laura Moeckli and Vincenzina C. Ottomano: Preface / Prefazione / Préface / Vorwort, in: Schweizer Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft – Neue Folge 41 (2024), S. 1–8.

This diversity also applies in linguistic terms, as our stated aim is to reflect the linguistic diversity of Switzerland to some extent.

The editorial team also strives for diversity both in terms of thematic range and scientific approaches. No particular method, school or sub-discipline is favoured. Naturally, the contributions submitted determine the composition of each issue, with scientific quality and originality being among the decisive factors for selection.

Our special thanks go to guest editors Helena Simonett and Patricia Jäggi, whose focus on birdscapes and sound relations between humans and birds enabled the exciting thematic field presented in the current issue.

We would also like to thank all the authors for their contributions and the people who have contributed to the realisation of this issue, above all our new Journal Manager Luc Vallat, Cristina Urchueguía, Central President of the Swiss Music Research Society, and our contacts at the Bern Open Publishing Platform Andrea Hacker and Jan Stutzmann. We would also like to thank the members of the Editorial Board, the reviewers and the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences, whose generous support has made the publication of this volume possible.

We hope all our readers enjoy reading this report and find it stimulating!

Bern, Basel, Venice, December 2024
Lea Hagmann, Margret Scharrer, Laura Moeckli and Vincenzina C. Ottomano

Prefazione

Vi diamo il benvenuto al volume 41 dell'*Annuario svizzero di musicologia*. Siamo liete di presentare per la prima volta un numero speciale curato da Helena Simonett e Patricia Jäggi. L'dea di questo volume nasce dal progetto di ricerca *Seeking Birdscapes* (2019-2023) della Hochschule Luzern – Musik (HSLU), incentrato sull'indagine del canto degli uccelli attraverso approcci scientifici e artistici.

Non é un caso se il "fare musica" degli animali non umani sia ora al centro di una pubblicazione musicologica. La crescente preoccupazione per l'ambiente in cui viviamo – a causa dell'attuale crisi climatica, della diminuzione e dal cambiamento dell'habitat naturale e dei paesaggi sonori ad esso associati – richiede uno sguardo e un ascolto più attenti, un ripensamento radicale del ruolo dell'Antropocene e la ricerca di nuovi modi di rapportarsi al nostro mondo. In questo senso, tanto le cosmologie non occidentali e indigene tanto le teorie (eco)femministe possono offrirci un approccio e un metodo di indagine differente.

La ricerca musicologica, riferita in particolare agli Human Animal Studies, agli studi sulle ecologie sonore, la zoomusicologia, l'acustemologia e l'ecomusicologia, stanno diventando sempre più importanti, il che ha recentemente portato alla creazione di un nuovo gruppo di studio dell'International Council of Traditions of Music and Dance (ICTMD) dedicato alla ricerca "Multispecies Sound and Movement Studies". Con il suo focus sul canto degli uccelli, questo volume si inserisce bene nei dibattiti più attuali della comunità scientifica.

Nella prima parte del volume 41 pubblichiamo quattro articoli principali sottoposti a un processo di "double-blind peer review" a garanzia della qualità scientifica. Nell'introduzione "Of Birds, Music, and Silence" Helena Simonett e Patricia Jäggi presentano il tema dei "Birdscapes" legato al progetto di ricerca di Lucerna. Nel suo saggio "The Anatomy of a Benign Failure: Péter Szőke's Ornithomusicology as Represented in Barátom, Bonca, a 1975 Hungarian Children's Film", Gergely Loch decostruisce l'affermazione antropocentrica di Péter Szőke, secondo cui il canto degli uccelli e quello umano sono il risultato di processi neurologici e fisiologici identici. Il saggio di Andrew Whitehouse "Inquisitory Birds: Thinking through the Ethics and Assumptions of Playback Responses in Birds" soleva la questione etica riguardo al metodo di riproduzione del canto degli uccelli quando si tratta di attirare specie rare di uccelli fuori dal nascondiglio per scopi di ricerca. Una passeggiata nella foresta sonora svizzera Tùn Resùn è al centrodell'articolo "Tùn Resùn: Walking in the Sounding Forest" di Nathalie Kirschstein e Helena Simonett, che documenta e classifica le esperienze multisensoriali di diversi soggetti.

Nella sezione "Testimonianze"" Emily Dolittle ci presenta il suo lavoro *Gannetry*, un'opera multimodale ispirata ai suoni delle sule scozzesi creata in collaborazione con la poetessa Dawn Wood.

L'"Officina-CH" fa luce su un altro approccio artistico al tema del richiamo degli uccelli: nell'articolo "Captured Birdscapes: Artistic Research, Research Art, and Living Cultural Heritage", Matthias Lewy e Helena Simonett presentano la mostra *Birdscapes*, strettamente legata al progetto di ricerca dell'HSLU ed esposta al Museo della Natura di Lucerna nel 2022. Completano il volume l'articolo "'Actualiser' les études de musicologie" di Florim Dupuis, la recensione di Philippe Vendrix e il resoconto di Helena Langewitz.

Le curatrici puntano costantemente a garantire la pluralità degli approcci, rispettando la diversità dei punti di vista e delle prospettive di ricerca. Studiosi di ogni provenienza, indipendentemente dalla nazionalità, dal sesso o dalla religione, sono invitati a contribuire alla nostra rivista. Le pari opportunità sono una priorità assoluta dell'*Annuario Svizzero di Musicologia*. Questa pluralità si applica anche in termini linguistici, poiché ci siamo poste l'obiettivo di riflettere per quanto possibile la diversità linguistica della Svizzera. Nessun metodo, scuola o sotto-disciplina viene privilegiato particolarmente. Ovviamente i contributi presentati determinano la costellazione di ogni numero, ma la qualità scientifica e l'originalità sono tra i fattori decisivi della selezione.

Un ringraziamento particolare va alle “guest editors” Helena Simonett e Patricia Jäggi, la cui attenzione ai paesaggi sonori e ai paesaggi ornitologici degli uccelli apre un campo tematico particolarmente interessante e innovativo.

Desideriamo inoltre ringraziare tutti gli autori per i loro contributi e le persone che hanno contribuito alla realizzazione di questo numero, in particolare il nostro nuovo redattore Luc Vallat, Cristina Urchueguía, presidentessa centrale della Società Svizzera di Musicologia, e i nostri referenti presso la Bern Open Publishing Platform, Andrea Hacker e Jan Stutzmann. Desideriamo inoltre ringraziare i membri del Comitato scientifico, i revisori e l’Accademia Svizzera di Scienze Umane e Sociali, il cui generoso sostegno ha reso possibile la pubblicazione di questo volume.

Vi auguriamo buona lettura, con la speranza che navigando tra queste pagine possiate trovare ispirazione e nuovi spunti di riflessione!

Berna, Basilea, Venezia, dicembre 2024
Lea Hagmann, Margret Scharrer, Laura Moeckli e Vincenzina C. Ottomano

Préface

Bienvenue dans le volume 41 des *Annales suisses de musicologie*. C'est avec grand plaisir que nous vous présentons pour la première fois depuis la nouvelle édition en ligne un numéro spécial. Ce volume édité par Helena Simonett et Patricia Jäggi est issu du projet de recherche *Seeking Birdscapes* (2019-2023) de la Haute école de musique de Lucerne (HSLU), qui s'est consacré aux relations sonores entres les humains et les animaux à travers des approches scientifiques et artistiques.

Le fait que le 'jeu musical' des animaux non humains soit au centre d'une publication musicologique actuelle ne semble pas être un hasard. Une préoccupation croissante pour notre environnement – provoquée par la crise climatique actuelle et par la diminution et la modification croissantes de l'habitat naturel et des paysages sonores qui y sont liés – exige un regard et une écoute attentifs, un changement radical de mentalité concernant le rôle de l'anthropocène ainsi qu'une recherche de nouvelles possibilités sur la manière de gérer notre monde. Dans ce contexte, des approches comme les cosmologies indigènes non occidentales ou les théories (éco)féministes peuvent nous offrir de nouvelles pistes.

La recherche en musicologie dans les domaines des études sur les animaux et les humains, des écologies sonores, de la zoomusicologie et de l'écomusicologie, prend de plus en plus d'importance, ce qui a conduit récemment à la création d'un nouveau groupe d'étude du Conseil international des traditions de musique et de danse (ICTMD), qui se consacre à l'axe de recherche des « sonorités multi-espèces et l'étude du mouvement » . Notre présent ouvrage, qui met l'accent sur les relations sonores entres humains et animaux, s'inscrit donc parfaitement dans les débats de la recherche actuelle.

Dans la première partie du volume 41, nous trouvons quatre articles principaux évalués par des pairs. Dans leur introduction « Of Birds, Music, and Silence », Helena Simonett et Patricia Jäggi introduisent le thème des « Birdscapes » et présentent le projet de recherche de Lucerne. Dans son article « The Anatomy of a Benign Failure : Péter Szőke's Ornithomusicology as Represented in Barátom, Bonca, a 1975 Hungarian Children's Film », Gergely Loch déconstruit l'affirmation anthropocentrique de Péter Szőke selon laquelle le chant des oiseaux et le chant humain seraient tous deux issus de processus neurologiques et physiologiques identiques. L'essai d'Andrew Whitehouse « Inquisitory Birds : Thinking through the Ethics and Assumptions of Playback Responses in Birds » pose des questions éthiques concernant la méthode de playback des chants d'oiseaux lorsqu'il s'agit de faire sortir de leur cachette des espèces d'oiseaux rares à des fins de recherche. L'article « Tùn Resùn : Walking in the Sounding Forest » de Nathalie Kirschstein et Helena Simonett documente et classifie les expériences multisensorielles de différentes personnes lors d'une promenade dans la forêt sonore suisse de Tùn Resùn.

Dans la rubrique « Témoigages », Emily Dolittle nous fait découvrir sa composition *Gannetry*, une œuvre multimodale inspirée par les bruits des fous de Bassan écossais et créée en collaboration avec le poète Dawn Wood : « Sharp, Loud, Fast, Fierce : Encounters with a Gannetry ».

La section « Atelier CH » met en lumière une autre approche artistique du thème des chants d'oiseaux : Dans leur article «Captured Birdscapes : Artistic Research, Research Art, and Living Cultural Heritage», Matthias Lewy et Helena Simonett présentent l'exposition *Birdscapes*, étroitement liée au projet de recherche à la HSLU et qui a été présentée en 2022 au Musée Naturel de Lucerne. L'article « 'Actualiser' les études de musicologie » de Florim Dupuis, ainsi qu'un compte rendu rédigé par Philippe Vendrix et un rapport d'atelier d'Helena Langewitz complètent le présent volume.

L'équipe éditoriale des *Annales suisses de musicologie* s'efforce toujours d'inclure une grande diversité de points de vue et de perspectives. Les scientifiques de toutes les disciplines, sans distinction de nationalité, de sexe ou de religion, sont invités à participer à la publication. L'égalité des chances est une priorité pour les Annales suisses de musicologie. Cette richesse s'applique également du point de

vue linguistique, avec l'objectif déclaré de refléter dans une certaine mesure la diversité linguistique suisse.

L'équipe de rédaction vise également la diversité dans l'éventail thématique comme dans les approches scientifiques. Aucune méthode, école ou sous-discipline particulière n'est privilégiée. Bien entendu, les contributions soumises déterminent la composition de chaque numéro, la qualité scientifique et l'originalité faisant partie des facteurs décisifs pour la sélection.

Nous remercions tout particulièrement Helena Simonett et Patricia Jäggi, rédactrices invitées, qui, en mettant l'accent sur les birdscapes et les relations sonores entres les humains et les animaux, ont ouvert un champ thématique particulièrement passionnant à cette édition.

Nous remercions également tous les auteurs pour leurs contributions ainsi que les personnes qui ont œuvré à la réalisation de ce numéro, en particulier notre nouveau Journal Manager Luc Vallat, Cristina Urchueguía, présidente centrale de la Société suisse de musicologie, et nos interlocuteurs* chez Berner Open Publishing Platform Andrea Hacker et Jan Stutzmann. Nous remercions également les membres du comité de rédaction, les évaluateurs et l'Académie suisse des sciences humaines et sociales, dont le généreux soutien a permis la publication de ce volume.

Nous souhaitons à tous nos lecteurs beaucoup de plaisir et de réflexions stimulantes !

Berne, Bâle, Venise, décembre 2024
Lea Hagmann, Margret Scharrer, Laura Moeckli et Vincenzina C. Ottomano

Vorwort

Herzlich willkommen zum Band 41 des *Schweizer Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft*. Es ist uns eine grosse Freude, dass wir Ihnen mit dieser Online-Ausgabe zum ersten Mal eine Sonderausgabe präsentieren dürfen. Die vorliegende Gast-Edition von Helena Simonett und Patricia Jäggi entstammt aus dem Forschungsprojekt *Seeking Birdscapes* (2019-2023) der Hochschule Luzern – Musik (HSLU), das sich über wissenschaftliche und künstlerische Ansätze dem Vogelgesang widmete.

Dass das 'Musizieren' von nicht-menschlichen Tieren nun im Zentrum einer musikwissenschaftlichen Publikation steht, scheint kein Zufall. Die zunehmende Besorgnis um unsere Umwelt – hervorgerufen durch die aktuelle Klimakrise und den zunehmend schwindenden und sich verändernden natürlichen Lebensraum und der damit verbundenen Klanglandschaften – fordert ein genaues Hinschauen und Hinhören, ein radikales Umdenken über die Rolle des Anthropozäns und die Suche nach neuen Möglichkeiten, wie wir mit unserer Welt umgehen sollen. Hierbei können uns sowohl nicht-westliche, indigene Kosmologien wie auch (öko-)feministische Theorien einen Ansatz bieten.

Die musikwissenschaftliche Forschung insbesondere in den Human Animal Studies, den Sound Ecologies, in der Zoomusicology, der Acoustemology und der Ecomusicology gewinnt zunehmend an Bedeutung, was erst kürzlich zur Etablierung einer neuen Study Group des International Council of Traditions of Music and Dance (ICTMD) geführt hat, die sich dem Forschungsschwerpunkt «Multispecies Sound and Movement Studies» widmet. Unser vorliegender Band fügt sich mit seinem Schwerpunkt auf Vogelgesang dementsprechend gut in die aktuellen Forschungsdebatten ein.

Im ersten Teil von Band 41 finden wir vier double-blind peer reviewte Hauptartikel. In ihrer Einleitung «Of Birds, Music, and Silence» führen Helena Simonett und Patricia Jäggi ins Thema «Birdscapes» ein und stellen das Luzerner Forschungsprojekt vor. In seinem Aufsatz «The Anatomy of a Benign Failure: Péter Szőke's Ornithomusicology as Represented in Barátom, Bonca, a 1975 Hungarian Children's Film» dekonstruiert Gergely Loch Péter Szőkes anthropozentrische Behauptung, dass sowohl der Vogelgesang als auch der menschliche Gesang auf Grund identischer neurologischer und physiologischer Vorgänge entstünde. Andrew Whitehouses Aufsatz «Inquisitory Birds: Thinking through the Ethics and Assumptions of Playback Responses in Birds» stellt die Frage nach der Ethik der Methode des Playback von Vogelstimmen, wenn es darum geht, seltene Vogelarten für Forschungszwecke aus ihrem Versteck zu locken. Ein Spaziergang durch den Schweizer Klangwald Tùn Resùn bildet die Grundlage des Artikels «Tùn Resùn: Walking in the Sounding Forest» von Nathalie Kirschstein und Helena Simonett, in dem die multisensorischen Erlebnisse verschiedener Gewährspersonen dokumentiert und eingeordnet werden.

In der Rubrik «Zeitzeugen» führt uns Emily Dolittle in ihre Kompositionen *Gannetry* ein, ein multimodales Werk, das durch die Geräusche von schottischen Basstölpeln inspiriert und in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Dichter Dawn Wood entstanden ist: «Sharp, Loud, Fast, Fierce: Encounters with a Gannetry».

Die «Werkstatt CH» beleuchtet einen weiteren künstlerischen Ansatz zum Thema Vogelstimmen: In ihrem Beitrag «Captured Birdscapes: Artistic Research, Research Art, and Living Cultural Heritage» stellen Matthias Lewy und Helena Simonett die Ausstellung *Birdscapes* vor, die eng mit dem Forschungsprojekt an der HSLU verbunden und 2022 in Naturmuseum Luzern zu sehen war. Der Beitrag «‹Actualiser› les études de musicologie» von Florim Dupuis, sowie eine Buchrezension von Philippe Vendrix und ein Workshopbericht von Helena Langewitz runden den vorliegenden Band ab.

Das Redaktionsteam des Jahrbuchs ist stets bestrebt, eine breite Vielfalt an Ansichten und Perspektiven einzubeziehen. Wissenschaftler*innen aller Fachrichtungen, unabhängig von Nationalität, Geschlecht oder Religion, sind eingeladen, an der Publikation mitzuwirken. Die Chancengleichheit hat für das *Schweizer Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft* eine hohe Priorität. Diese Reichhaltigkeit gilt auch in sprachlicher Hinsicht, denn unser ausgesprochenes Ziel ist es, die sprachliche Vielfalt der Schweiz einigermassen widerzuspiegeln.

Das Redaktionsteam strebt ebenfalls Vielfalt in der thematischen Bandbreite wie in der wissenschaftlichen Herangehensweise an. Keine bestimmte Methode, Schule oder Teildisziplin wird bevorzugt. Natürlich bestimmen die eingereichten Beiträge die Zusammensetzung jeder Ausgabe, wobei wissenschaftliche Qualität und Originalität zu den entscheidenden Faktoren für die Auswahl gehören.

Unser besonderer Dank geht an die Gasteditorinnen Helena Simonett und Patricia Jäggi, die durch den inhaltlichen Schwerpunkt auf Vogelklanglandschaften und Birdscapes der aktuellen Ausgabe ein besonders spannendes Themenfeld erschliessen.

Ebenfalls danken wir allen Autorinnen und Autoren für ihre Beiträge sowie den Personen, die an der Realisierung dieser Ausgabe mitgewirkt haben, allen voran unserem neuen Journal Manager Luc Vallat, Cristina Urchueguía, Zentralpräsidentin der Schweizerischen Musikforschenden Gesellschaft, und unseren Ansprechpartner*innen bei der Berner Open Publishing Platform Andrea Hacker und Jan Stutzmann. Unser Dank gilt auch den Mitgliedern des Editorial Boards, den Gutachterinnen und Gutachtern sowie der Schweizerischen Akademie der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften, deren grosszügige Unterstützung die Publikation dieses Bandes ermöglicht hat.

Wir wünschen allen Leserinnen und Lesern viel Freude und anregende Gedanken bei der Lektüre!

Bern, Basel, Venedig, Dezember 2024
Lea Hagmann, Margret Scharrer, Laura Moeckli und Vincenzina C. Ottomano

Introduction: Of Birds, Music, and Silence

Helena Simonett[1] *and Patricia Jäggi*[2]*, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts*

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Keywords: birdscapes, ecomusicology, soundscapes, environmental humanities, silence

Abstract: *Birdsong has long been a source of fascination for humans. Interest in the intricate connection between human perception and the acoustic characteristics of diverse environments is prominent across various academic disciplines, as emphasized in this special issue. Employing a multi-sited ethnographic approach, the "Seeking Birdscapes" project (2019–2023) centred on examining the listening practices of individuals with ornithological and musical training. Its goal was to understand their auditory sensibilities and how they conceptualized their experiences and perceptions within so-called natural settings. Based in a music department, the project also sought to reevaluate the importance of (human and non-human made) sounds and explore the use of technological media in the context of avifauna.*

Introduction

Birdsongs have a distinctly musical quality. This is why ornithologist Donald Kroodsma referred to birds as 'nature's musicians', drawing from a long tradition of attributing musical characteristics to the vocalizations of songbirds.[3] Aristotle admired the clear and organized singing voices of birds, which he found different from the chaotic calls of other animals. Charles Darwin attributed to birds "a taste for the beautiful".[4] Recent research even indicates that the hermit thrush shows a preference for musical intervals found in Western tonal systems.[5] It is no coincidence that we refer to bird vocalizations as 'songs'. Much like human music, bird songs are often considered aesthetically pleasing to our ears.[6] This similarity may be a significant reason for our enduring fascination with these avian vocalizations.[7] They have been incorporated into musical compositions by Vivaldi, Beethoven, and Messiaen,[8] studied and analyzed by ornithologists and scientists, recorded by sound artists, appreciated by professional birdwatchers and enthusiasts alike. Humans seem to share a special connection with birds and their songs.

While most people in Western societies have a general understanding of the term 'music' and what it means to them, scholars often grapple with the concept of music defined as 'humanly organized sound'.[9] This definition has faced criticism for its anthropocentric nature as it tends to exclude the intentional sound practices and meaningful sound organization found among non-human entities.[10] Organized sound (or 'music') stands in opposition to noise — or, as Jean-Jacques Attali phrased it, music

1 Author's email address: helena.simonett@hslu.ch.
2 Author's email address: patricia.jaeggi@hslu.ch.
3 Kroodsma 2005.
4 Darwin (1871) 1981: 108.
5 Doolittle et al. 2014.
6 Hartshorne 1968.
7 Rothenberg and Ulvaeus 2011; Rothenberg 2019.
8 Doolittle 2008; Curtis and Taylor 2010; Marti 2013. See also the lecture by Christian Marti on "Vogelstimmen in der Musik", https://www.hslu.ch/de-ch/hochschule-luzern/forschung/ausgewaehlte-projekte/birdscapes/kuenstlerische-beitraege/vogelstimmen-in-der-musik [29.02.2024].
9 This definition of 'music' was coined by Blacking 1973. As a social anthropologist, Blacking was interested in music as a universal human behavioural capacity, considering it an intrinsic and necessary component of human sociality, central to our understanding of humans as social beings.
10 Martinelli 2008, 2009; Sorce Keller 2010, 2012.

Helena Simonett and Patricia Jäggi: Introduction: Of Birds, Music, and Silence, in: Schweizer Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft – Neue Folge 41 (2024), S. 9–21.

constitutes "the organization of noise".[11] In contrast, noise is frequently associated with modern phenomena, including industrialization, urbanization, global overpopulation, and transportation systems, all contributing to pervasive environmental noise pollution. The concerns arising from technology's impact on the natural environment in the 1970s spurred the fields of acoustic ecology and soundscape studies, which in turn inspired acoustemology, sentient ecology, ecomusicology, and other approaches that explore how people relate to the acoustic properties of environments.[12]

While the auditory world around us grows ever more cacophonic and threatens our very health, Rachel Carson's environmental science book, *Silent Spring*,[13] evoked a dystopian vision of a spring without birdsong due to the destructive effect of synthetic pesticides. It struck a chord more than half a century ago, initiating an environmental movement, and continues to resonate in current public discussions on the devastating effects of the global human footprint on natural environments.[14] Environmental degradation, the extinction of species, declining biodiversity, melting polar ice, rising sea levels, overpopulation, food scarcity, and air and noise pollution, among other concerns, transcend the scope of environmentalists. These challenges have also entered the broader discourse of musicology, particularly in the field of ecomusicology.[15] In 2007, the American Musicological Society approved the formation of the Ecocriticism Study Group (ESG), which has since facilitated interdisciplinary discussions on music and the environment.

The ubiquitous feeling of a looming environmental crisis has reinvigorated scientific and public attention and interest in ecologically intact natural spaces. A growing number of people not only visit nature parks and habitats but also technologically mediatize their auditory perception of 'nature' by recording and using 'wild and natural' sounds for artistic as well as scientific purposes.[16]

By investigating human's auditory relation to birdscapes, i.e. scapes inhabited by birds, the SNSF-funded project "Seeking Birdscapes"[17] aimed to contribute to understanding contemporary societal concerns regarding human impacts on the environment, shifts in people's engagement with their physical and auditory surroundings, sound reevaluation, and the use of technological media.

Exploring Listening Practices

The growing attention to acoustic phenomena and sound cultures during the past three decades has caused a veritable 'auditory turn' in the humanities. The human ear has been situated in ever wider cultural, social, and technological contexts by exploring specific, but complex, auditory spaces, sound practices, and transcultural settings.[18] Anthropological thinking in the 1980s turned toward the senses and their significance for understanding cultural experience.[19] Steven Feld's sound ecology of the Kaluli of Papua New Guinea and Anthony Seeger's musical anthropology of the Suyá people of the Brazilian Amazon stressed the priority of sound perception over vision for people living in the rainforest.[20] This

11 Attali 1985: 4.
12 Schafer 1977 (sound studies and acoustic ecology); Feld 1982 (acoustemology); Anderson 2000; Ingold 2011 (sentient ecology); Allen and Dawe 2016 (ecomusicology).
13 Carson 1962.
14 Perrings 1997; Mulhauser 2009; Sodikoff 2012; Monacchi 2015; Ryan 2015; see also *Biodiversity Exploratories*.
15 Publications that address the negative impact of environmental changes on natural resources, particularly those related to material culture, include: Allen (2012) on the endangered musical woods, like the Paneveggian spruce used in high-quality violins; Simonett (2016, 2021) on the climate-induced disappearance of giant silk moths, whose cocoons are used in making leg rattles in Mexico, Ryan (2015) on the overharvesting of eucalyptus trees, which poses a threat to gumleaf and didjeridu music-cultures.
16 Bianchi and Manzo 2016; Krause 2016; Farina and Gage 2017; Wright 2022.
17 "Seeking Birdscapes: Contemporary Listening and Recording Practices in Ornithology and Environmental Sound Art", Swiss National Science Foundation (#182813).
18 Baumann 1999; Smith 2001; Thompson 2002; Sterne 2003; Erlmann 2004; Bull and Back 2006; Samuels et al. 2010; Schoon and Volmar 2012; Volmar and Schröter 2013; Novak and Sakakeeny 2015; Sykes and Steingo 2019.
19 Howes and Classen 1991, 2014; Howes 2005.
20 Feld 1982; Seeger 1981, 1987.

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new focus on the 'auditory world-making and world-knowing', the interrelation between people and their acoustic environment, was coined by Feld as 'acoustemology'. By highlighting the auditory mode of sensorial experience of Indigenous people, he (and other acoustemologists) repeatedly criticized Western civilization as being ocularcentric.[21] Feld's rhetoric of antivisualism at that time resonated very strongly with ethnomusicologists despite calls for an integrative approach to the senses.[22] Expanding on Feld's insights into birds' role in the lifeworld of the Kaluli, we set out to also explore non-Indigenous people's auditory entanglement with their natural (particularly their avian sonic) surroundings.[23]

Sound spaces, however, pose an analytical challenge because they are not fixed objects for which a definite (de-)coding system can be applied.[24] Since sound itself has no inherent meaning, listening involves complex processes of socially negotiated sensemaking and knowing — processes that complicate any scientific inquiry into listening.

From Soundscapes to Birdscapes

Perceived as a primarily biological phenomenon, bird sound production has so far not attracted huge interest in the humanities.[25] In music related disciplines, the very concept of 'music' has been the main obstacle for taking bird sound seriously. Musicological analyses of birdsong-inspired compositions tend to consider bird and animal sounds as extra-musical references and, hence, of lesser importance for the structure of the musical composition.[26] Only recently have music scholars began to question common musicological "conceptions of nature as an epistemological or musical wellspring".[27] The musical appropriation of bird sounds by humans has been found in various singing and music-making practices worldwide, but without having yet generated its own field of inquiry within musicology or anthropology.[28]

Although comparative musicologist George Herzog already questioned the idea of music as a uniquely human phenomenon in the *Bulletin of the American Musicological Society* in 1941, the idea was not been widely embraced by scholars until François-Bernard Mâche's 1983 publication *Music, Myth and Nature*.[29] Mâche, a French composer and student of Olivier Messiaen, called for a 'musicology of animals', which he coined 'zoomusicology'.[30] Zoomusicological inquiry into the musical aspects of animal sound rests upon the assumption that animals (human and non-human species alike) communicate through sound based on aesthetic decisions. However, zoomusicology sees itself as the study of the music-like aspects of sound communication among non-human animals, in particular whales and birds.[31]

While specific songs of birds may be deemed 'musical' in that they share certain features such as specific melodic intervals with human music, there is also a tendency to perceive birds as an integral part of our *natural* soundscape.[32] The study of sonic environments offers an interesting link

21 For earlier critical voices, see McLuhan 1964; Ihde 1976; Ong 1982.
22 Samuels et al. 2010.
23 Lewy 2023; Simonett 2024.
24 Winkler and Mosch 2011.
25 Thorpe 1961; Marler and Slabbekoorn 2004.
26 Rufener 1959; Harley 1995; Hill and Simeone 2007; Doolittle 2008; Curtis and Taylor 2010; Taylor 2011; Nada 2016.
27 Rehding 2011: 410.
28 Feld 1982; Baumann 1999; Simonett 2016; Brabec de Mori 2015.
29 Mâche 1992.
30 Martinelli 2008; Doolittle 2008; Sorce Keller 2012.
31 Martinelli 2002, 2009; Doolittle and Gingras 2015; Taylor 2017.
32 Doolittle 2015; The problem of Western subjectivity, namely the self-categorization of humans within their environment, can be traced back to Cartesian nature-culture dualism. This dualism gave rise to both the intellectual construct of 'nature' as something distinct from the human world, referred to as 'culture', and the perspective that the human world is an integral part of nature. See Lewy and Simonett 2022. On the other hand, Oliveira Pinto 2020, in his examination of birdsong contests in the Harz region of Germany, contends that these birdsongs are not naturalistic; instead, they are shaped by humans who raise and train the songbirds. Hence, these learned songs are considered to be products of 'culture' and appreciated as art; they thus move a finch master emotionally more than the ones that "resonate freely in nature" (6).

between the natural sciences and the humanities, and between avian bioacoustics and the recent interest in environmental sound art. Acoustic ecologists' initial interest in soundscapes was based on a concern about the negative effects of man-made noise. The Wild Sanctuary organization, for example, founded by soundscape ecologist Bernie Krause in 1968, was dedicated to recording and archiving natural soundscapes. The World Soundscape Project[33] initiative had a major impact on other scholarly fields as well, including the natural sciences. Its systematic analysis of environmental sounds within a contained temporal and geographical area was adapted by bioacousticians.[34] *Soundscape: The Journal of Acoustic Ecology*, launched by the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology in 2000, became a key academic outlet for social, historical, and artistic soundscape research.[35]

But the soundscape concept has also been criticized for its tendency to regard sound as something merely external, physical, and isolated, thereby overlooking the experiential side and multisensorialness of listening to these scapes.[36] Insisting on the sensorial complexities of listening, scholars have called attention to the power of sound to create immersive experiences as well as its medial transformation through sound-reproduction technologies.[37] The recording of sounds in the field is a phenomenon that relates to our question regarding people's ecological immersion in sound.[38]

Taking this soundscape criticism seriously, the "Seeking Birdscapes" project was inspired by cultural ecologist and philosopher David Abram,[39] who underlines the interrelatedness of living beings through their common sensory or sentient presence in the world, as well as by anthropologist David Anderson,[40] who emphasizes the communicative relationship of humans with animals and other components of the environment, a relationship that he termed 'sentient ecology'. A sentient ecological notion of communication goes beyond an anthropocentric ideal of verbal expression and understanding. Sentient communicative relationships can be understood as forms of interspecific intertwinings within multisensory sensemaking. This opens up the question of how an anthropological understanding of sentient ecology relates to current zoomusicological and zoosemiotic knowledge of animal communication[41] — in particular, whether sensemaking, understood by semioticians as a cognitive performance, allows for a consideration of non-cognitive and immersive elements such as sensory learning, experiential knowledge, or intuition.[42]

Insights into the "Seeking Birdscapes" Project

The "Seeking Birdscapes" project fits squarely into the emerging, dynamic, and multi-perspectival field that is ecomusicology. An ecomusicological approach not only takes into consideration historical and current environmental issues in relation to its core competencies in music and sound cultures, it also redirects our focus on the auditory, sonic, and musical agency of living beings.[43] Ecomusicology opens up connections to animal studies (also human-animal studies or zooanthropology), which over the last decade has gained influence in different disciplines within the humanities.[44] On the other hand, critical

33 Schafer 1977; Truax 1978.
34 Farina and Gage 2017.
35 Thompson 2002; Carlyle 2007; Samuels et al. 2010; Bijsterveld 2013; Candau and Gonidec 2013.
36 Ingold 2007; Simonett 2014, 2016; Whitehouse 2018.
37 Helmreich 2010, 2015; Guillebaud 2017.
38 Jäggi 2022.
39 Abram 1996, 2010.
40 Anderson 2000.
41 Sebeok 1972; Martinelli 2009, 2010; Maran, Martinelli and Turovski 2011.
42 Simonett 2021.
43 Rehding 2011; Allen 2011, 2013; Titon 2013; Allen and Dawe 2016; Guyette and Post 2016.
44 Haraway 2008; DeMello 2010; Chimaira 2011; Spannring 2015; Ferrari and Petrus 2015; Borgards 2016. See, for example, Simonett 2021.

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ideas developed by scholars of ecocriticism, an earth-centred approach to literary studies, have spurred an ecological thinking across the sciences.[45] While findings in ecology subvert anthropocentrism and re-evaluate the role of non-human animals,[46] posthumanist discourse contests superiority and human dominance over nature, and decentres the human by "its imbrication in technical, medical, informatic, and economic networks".[47]

Taking an ecomusicological position, the "Seeking Birdscapes" project aimed at readdressing questions about the music of Others, including other species, by exploring to what extent human auditory perception is shaped by direct and indirect experience of avian sound spaces, and conversely, how musical-sonic perceptual histories shape the sensemaking of birdscapes. Furthermore, "Seeking Birdscapes" aimed to explore the sonic companionship offered to humans by birds through auditory fieldwork in birdscapes as well as through interviews and conversations. During the project period the research team conducted 39 interviews, of which two-thirds were with individuals with field ornithological interests or professionals in the fields of ornithology, bioacoustics, and ecology and one-third with people with an artistic and musical interest in avian sound worlds. In addition, participant observation during and outside field ornithology training courses, as well as a field trip with researchers from the Swiss Ornithological Institute Sempach enabled the research team to become immersed in the auditory ecology of birdscapes.

By listening to and comparing the research team's field recordings of different birdscapes in Switzerland, Catalonia, and Iceland, the project was able to demonstrate that human perceptual repertoires have led to a cultural as well as scientific underrepresentation and auditory marginalization of a broad range of bird species and, thus, produce sonic blind spots. Iceland is a country with few songbird species, which raised awareness of the underrepresentation of the sound worlds of seabirds, waterfowl, waders, and other non-passerine birds that breed on the island. Non-passerine bird species as well as sounds of flight and other types of locomotion and movement have been largely ignored in human cultural and scientific domains. The cultural-scientific formation of a canon of bird sound which privileges birdsong of songbirds implies the need for a more holistic approach to bird sound and, ideally, a new understanding which takes a global perspective on birds' ways of inhabiting the world sonically. Here, contemporary musical works such as Carola Bauckholt's *Zugvögel* (2012) with its interest in noisy sounds of waterfowl and flight can lead the way to break up so-called perception regimes.[48]

Furthermore, the expansion of a Western or modernist perceptual culture may entail a different understanding of sound in the domains of its effects, such as in Indigenous ontologies of auditory mimesis. While the success of mimicking techniques by which birds are attracted by ornithologists, hunters or the like follows a naturalistic explanation in Western ontology (the bird is deceived), animistic ontology, as in Amazonia, attributes specific powers to the effect of uttered sounds as sound beings, based on a general understanding of a common human interiority of all animals, spirits, and humans. The ability of birds to change their auditory position thus seems to be seen as more variable and powerful in animistic ontologies than in naturalistic ones.[49] A comparative ontological perspective may therefore further illuminate specific constraints that are currently emerging in the field of human-animal studies. In this context, it should be emphasized that in Indigenous ontology, a common humanity is the basis of all descent, rather than a common animality. Therefore, certain terms such as 'non-human animals' do not make sense in this context and refer to the 'Modern's dilemma'.[50]

45 Glotfelty and Fromm 1996; Garrard 2004; Clark 2011.
46 Haraway 2008; Wolfe 2010; Ferrari 2015.
47 Wolfe 2010: xv; Ferrari 2015.
48 Jäggi 2023.
49 Lewy 2024.
50 Lewy and Simonett 2022.

Indigenous knowledge can therefore open up stimulating forms of thinking and understanding auditory-sound relationships between humans and animals.

The interview conversations about nature and bird-sound experience led to discussions about ecological crises and environmental commitment which brought to the forefront the uncanny and often humanly unperceived silence that is left behind by decimation and extinction of bird species and which echoes in personal confrontations with loss and solastalgia.[51] Musicians and sound artists who use 'nature sounds' in their creative works or who translate data of nature (such as climate data) to make issues such as the loss of bird species hearable often do so in the hopes of inspiring audiences to greater environmental connection and care. Looking critically at such works raises the question of how such musical and artistic engagement may unintentionally replicate prevalent dynamics of human dominion over and consumerist attitudes towards 'nature'.[52] Yet artistic and imaginative expressions of the environment and responses to ecological crisis are also deeply meaningful and ecologically necessary.[53] This shows once again how the ecological crises are expressions of a fundamental crisis in the human-environment relationship.

The project team's confrontation with bird sounds and birdscapes, as illustrated by these briefly summarized topics, can show how (eco)musicological research is challenged to reflect fundamentally on principles that underly this relationship and our daily perceptions, thoughts, and actions and, wherever possible, the need to radically question them.

About the Contributions

The "Seeking Birdscapes" research project included a conference under the title "Seeking Birdscapes: Musik, Ökologie und die Klangwelten der Vögel" which was held in October 2022. A selection of revised contributions from that conference makes up the main part of this special issue of *SJM*, exploring the intricate and multifaceted dynamics of auditory interactions between humans and birds. The articles examine this topic from various angles, covering musicology, anthropology, ethnomusicology, and an artistic perspective.

Main Articles

In "The Anatomy of a Benign Failure", musicologist Gergely Loch, offers a concise analysis of a sequence from the Hungarian children's film *Barátom, Bonca* (*Bonca, my Friend,* 1975), scripted by acclaimed children's book author Katalin Varga and directed by filmmaker Ilona Katkics. The film sequence portrays a dialogue between a young boy and an older man who records birdsongs in his garden. The man then plays back the tapes, significantly slowing down the songs, resulting in an auditory transformation that renders the birdsongs unfamiliar. An intriguing aspect of the film revolves around the application of a theory originally formulated by ornithomusicology pioneer Péter Szőke in the 1950s, who argued that birdsongs shaped Hungarian folk music. He supported his theory by slowing down recorded tapes and transcribing them into conventional notation, but faced criticism from fellow ethnomusicologists, including Zoltán Kodály. By integrating this already contentious theory into their film, Varga and Katkics perpetuate a problematic cycle of "wishful thinking in science, misinterpretation, misrepresentation and misidentification" (1), as rigorously demonstrated by the author. This is particularly evident in their inclusion of a birdsong that does not correspond to the nightingale song mentioned in the film. Nevertheless, Loch concludes that these errors contributed to the artistic authenticity of the final product, an authenticity inseparable from a strong sense of environmental ethics.

In his ethnographically informed article "Inquisitory Birds", anthropologist and birder Andrew Whitehouse delves into ethical questions regarding the common yet controversial technique of song playback,

51 Jäggi 2021, 2024.
52 Kirschstein 2020.
53 Kirschstein, forthcoming.

employed by both scientists and birders to elicit responses from birds. Upon hearing the recording, birds exhibit either aggressive territorial responses or inquisitive social approaches. The long-term impact of song playback on birds' behaviour is not yet well-researched, but it may lead to birds no longer responding to their species' sounds, resulting in a deviation from their presumed natural behaviour. In the current discussions regarding playback ethics which provide insights into our understanding of birds (the human-animal divide), interactions between humans and birds, and the practices and dialogues surrounding the aesthetics of birding, Whitehouse introduces an alternative perspective. Highlighting the human-bird *encounter* represents a departure from the one-sided exploitation aimed primarily at acquiring (scientific) knowledge. This shift paves the way for a more nuanced understanding of birding, especially when viewed from the birds' perspective, as it has the potential to provide enriching encounters for the 'inquisitory birds' among them.

Ethnomusicologists Natalie Kirschstein and Helena Simonett investigate the auditory practices of a dozen individuals as they 'walk and talk' in a Swiss 'sounding forest' or 'tùn resùn/Klangwald'. Initially centred on auditory practices, their conversations with their interlocutors uncovered the profound interdependence of sensory experiences, particularly in the context of walking. Rather than solely extending Ingold and Vergunst's concept of an 'anthropology of walking' by integrating the auditory aspects of walking and the practices of hearing and listening, they advocate for a 'sensory walking ethnography'. They suggest that adopting an ecological approach to perception can overcome the limitations of the solely linguistic or semiotic perspective that is common in sound-related disciplines. A recurring theme in their conversations was sound and silence, seemingly centred on hearing. However, the authors contend that these experiences in the forest, described as quiet or silent, transcend mere auditory perception, emphasizing the need to consider sound within the broader sensory context that influences perception. Ultimately, they advocate for a more inclusive sensorial approach in disciplines that deal with the realm of sound.

Times and Perspectives

Composer Emily Doolittle's reflective essay delves into a collaborative music-and-text creation, drawing inspiration from seabirds that breed in vast colonies along the cliffs of the Shetland Islands. As a composer and researcher with a fascination for the music-like aspects of sound communication in gannets, Doolittle offers insights into the multifaceted personal experiences and creative methodologies that have contributed to the development of this composition. These profound interactions with gannets find a succinct expression in the essay's evocative title: "Sharp, Loud, Fast, Fierce". The piece *Gannetry* found its inspiration in a poem by Dawn Wood and was written for clarinetist Joanna Nicholson as part of the *Modern Chants* project in 2021.

In "Captured Birdscapes", Matthias Lewy and Helena Simonett analyze the Birdscapes exhibition that took place in 2022 at the Lucerne Nature Museum in Switzerland. The central aim of this exhibition was to communicate the research procedures and outcomes of the SNSF project. Following a brief introduction to the concept of a sonorous museum space, the authors introduce the foundational concepts that underpinned the Birdscapes exhibition, providing an examination of the exhibition itself. Their discussion emphasizes the potential for extending similar endeavours beyond academic realms and underscores the significance of incorporating sound installations and objects into museum environments to promote critical reflection.

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The Anatomy of a Benign Failure: Péter Szőke's Ornithomusicology as Represented in *Barátom, Bonca*, a 1975 Hungarian Children's Film

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Keywords: aesthetics of birdsong, *musica universalis*, concepts of music, ecomusicology, zoomusicology, ethnomusicology in Hungary, children's television

Abstract: *The 1975 Hungarian children's television film Barátom, Bonca (Bonca, my Friend; directed by Ilona Katkics, screenplay by Katalin Varga) contains a remarkable scene in which a ten-year-old boy is initiated into the idea of universal music through a declaration that birdsong has musical quality. In my article I show that the scene was inspired by ornithomusicology, the one-man discipline of Péter Szőke, whose (pseudo) scientific activity in Kádár-era Hungary aimed to prove that birdsong and human music were governed by the same neurological and physical laws. Attending to the history of its genesis, I dissect the scene to demonstrate that everything one hears in it is the result of four consecutive instances of failure: wishful thinking in science, misinterpretation, misrepresentation and misidentification, of which the first can be ascribed to Szőke, the rest to the filmmakers. I show how the filmmakers' factual errors were conditioned by age-old concepts of European culture, and I conclude that these errors nevertheless contributed to the artistic authenticity of the final product. This authenticity is inseparable from a strong sense of environmental ethics, which is partly conveyed by the specific way the word 'music' is used in the film.*

Introduction

In the literature on biomusicology and zoomusicology, Péter Szőke (['pe:tɛr 'sø:kɛ]; 1910–1994) appears in a number of short references that in one way or another present him as the twentieth-century forefather of both fields (the nineteenth-century forefather being Charles Darwin).[2] Some of these references are affirmative, some are neutral, but all of them were written without access to Szőke's Hungarian-language publications or the archival materials pertaining to his activity. This is the first English-language article to be informed by both kinds of sources, and the first to point out the highly controversial nature of Szőke's work. But the latter is only one of its aims. I embed Szőke's presentation in the discussion of a small episode of his Hungarian reception, which might at a first glance seem to make a narrow subject even narrower. However, it is exactly this embedding that allows me to gradually widen the scope of my study, finally arriving at a subject as broad as the ethical semantics of the term 'music'.

"The chirping of birds is music, too". My article is centred around a single film scene whose key moment is this statement, followed by the playback of a diegetic sound recording of slowed-down birdsong, whose intended function is to prove the truth of the statement.[3] The scene is part of the 1975 Hungarian children's television film *Barátom, Bonca* (['bɒra:tom 'bonʦɒ]; *Bonca, my Friend*), directed by Ilona Katkics (['ilonɒ 'kɒtkiʧ]; 1925–2022).

What is the basis and what is the purpose of incorporating this episode in the film? I answer the question by investigating the genesis and historical background of the scene, and by contemplating the scene

1 Author's email address: loch.gergely@gmail.com.

2 Wallin 1991: 453–454; Rothenberg 2005: 83–85; Martinelli 2009: 5; Doolittle and Gingras 2015: R819; Taylor 2017: 5, 73, 190; Mundy 2018: 169, 225.; Oliveira Pinto 2020: 15–16.

3 For audio(visual) illustrations, see https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1nA6B2nPfcorwNb0oVgeVsclm10MCMS0Q [23.04.2024].

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in the context of the film as a whole. I demonstrate that the genesis consists of a chain of conceptual and factual errors. These are fruitful from a historiographical point of view, as they highlight influential factors in the wider and narrower historical background: the aesthetic appreciation of birdsong, the concept of universal music, and a politically charged debate in Hungarian ethnomusicology in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Finally, I argue that the errors were fruitful from an aesthetic point of view as well: they contributed to the artistic authenticity of the final product, an authenticity which is inseparable from a strong sense of environmental ethics. I believe that this sense is conveyed in part by using the word 'music' with a specific meaning, one that I describe by referring to a classic philosophical work of Martin Buber.

Bonca-ness, Friendship, and an Optical Revelation

The film *Bonca, my Friend* starts out with the ten-year-old boy protagonist, Bence (['bɛnt͡sɛ]; 'Bennie'; Krisztián Kovács) quickly making friends with Andris (['ɒndriʃ]; 'Andie'; Gábor Berkes), a new acquaintance, in the park. Their shared fantasies about African hunting expeditions leave no doubt about that they are kindred spirits. But Bence seems to lose Andris just as quickly as he had befriended him, as Andris does not show up in the park the following days. Bence did not have the chance to get to know his friend's name, so, inspired by his own given name, he decides his name must be Bonca. As there is no such Hungarian given name, Bence sets off to find his lost friend among people who have Bonca as a surname.

Fig. 1. Bence and Andris. Still from Barátom, Bonca (3'17")

The film follows the long journey Bence takes out in the world — that is, in Budapest — before he finally meets his friend again. The key concept of this *Bildungsroman* quest is *boncaság* (*bonca-ness*), a term from Bence's own vocabulary that refers to the Bonca-like character of someone, that is, the sense of being kindred spirits with someone. He learns soon that someone's *bonca-ness* does not depend on their family name. For example, Bálint (['ba:lint]; 'Valentine'; István Bujtor), the artist painting bald trees in the park, is not a Bonca in his name, but is undoubtedly a Bonca in his character, to the extent that he had also fantasised about African hunting expeditions as a child.

It is Bálint who gently guides Bence on his quest, and as a first and most important step of this guidance, the painter initiates the boy into what he calls "the secret of colours". As he puts it, everything in this world is a "sunlight gobbler". Firstly, the existence of different colours is due to different materials having a specific kind of "greediness" for sunlight: they "gobble up", that is, absorb one or another part of it and reflect the rest. Secondly, living organisms "eat sunlight" in a more verbatim way as well: they indirectly gain their energy from it. Bálint offers Bence a sugar cube to eat, referring to it as "a handful of sunlight": "that's what makes you move, too, believe me, you sunlight gobbler".[4]

Fig. 2. Bálint and Bence. Still from Barátom, Bonca (10'48")

The ingestion of the sugar cube gives an almost eucharistic character to Bálint's initiation scene, reifying its central message, according to which all things and beings belong together in the universal community of sunlight. For Bálint, friendship is defined as a conscious experience of this community. He says it is his friendship with the plants serving as his models that give artistic value to his paintings. When he speaks about friendship in these terms and says he and Bence are already friends, he at the same time illuminates the deeper meaning of bonca-ness: it is ultimately rooted in a much more substantial connection than a common enthusiasm for, e.g. African hunting expeditions.

The Acoustic Revelation

The screenplay was written by Katalin Varga (['kɒtɒlin 'vɒrgɒ]; 1928–2011), a writer and poet who is today primarily remembered in Hungary as a prolific author of children's books. She is especially well-known as the author of *Gőgös Gúnár Gedeon* (*Gideon, the Haughty Goose*), a reading book first published in 1962[5] that has become a classic in first grade education. It is a true literary feat, as most of the texts are written with a reduced alphabet, each using exclusively the letters that children are likely to have learned at a given stage of their studies, the consecutive texts gradually extending the set.

4 All quotes in this paragraph are from scene no. 4, for times see Fig. 3.
5 By Móra Ferenc Könyvkiadó, Budapest.

Varga had previously told the story of *Bonca, my Friend* in a book with the same title, published in 1974.[6] Whereas in the book the initiation into the idea of a universal community of being happens only through Bálint's optical revelation, Varga decided to add a symmetrical counterpart to it in the screenplay: an acoustic revelation. The optical revelation was associated with a painter, so it was probably an obvious idea that the acoustic revelation should come from a character whose everyday life is bound primarily to hearing, a blind old man called Antal Bonca (['ɒntɒl]; 'Anthony'; Antal Páger). This old man is a Bonca in both his family name and his personality, and he is the only adult besides Bálint to whom Bence comes really close — Bálint and Antal are the only grown-ups whom Bence starts to address with the informal personal pronoun *te*, the Hungarian equivalent of being on first-name terms.

The connection between Bálint and Antal and the shared function of their respective revelations are emphasized in other ways as well. In the almost perfectly symmetrical order of the film's sixteen scenes, the episode of Bence meeting Antal corresponds to the episode of Bence meeting Bálint (Fig. 3; scene nos. 4 and 12). The two scenes are accompanied with the same cue of Zdenkó Tamássy's film score. The spiritual community of the two adult men is also expressed in the fact that Bálint eventually, at Bence's suggestion, moves to Antal's house as a tenant.

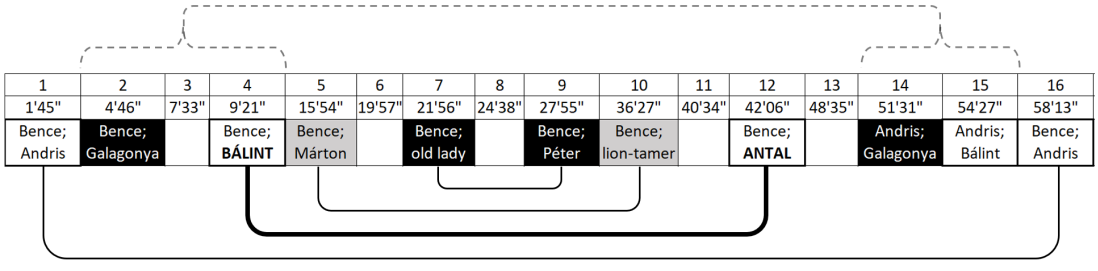

Fig. 3. The symmetrical order of scenes in Bonca, my Friend. *Cells with thick borders indicate meetings between kindred spirits. Cells with black background stand for meetings dominated by antipathy, while the ones with grey background mean meetings that are characterized by sympathy, but which nevertheless end with some kind of disappointment. The five unfilled cells stand for reflections on the preceding scene (Bence discusses the latest events with his mother in scene no. 3, and with Bálint in scene nos. 6, 8, 11 and 13).*

In his garden, Antal shows Bence his chirping cage birds and a braille book of poetry. Antal says he likes poems because of their "music", and Bence's reply to this provides opportunity for the acoustic revelation. It begins at 46' in the film,[7] and faithfully follows the text of the screenplay that I now quote:[8]

Antal: [...] Szeretem a verseket. Muzsikájuk van.	Antal: [...] I love poems. They have their music.
Bence: Nem madárcsipogás.	Bence: It's not like the chirping of birds.
Antal: Ó, a madárcsipogás is muzsika. Ott a lugasban megtalálod a magnómat a kisasztalon. Meg van?[!]	Antal: Well, the chirping of birds is music, too. You'll find my tape recorder at the trellis, on the table. Got it?
Bence: Igen.	Bence: Yes.
Antal: Kapcsold be.	Antal: Switch it on.

6 Varga 1974.
7 This excerpt from the film can be viewed at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/178P7_Gquh97IFb5zEcASbkPC0rnSk28n [23.04.2024].
8 MTVA Archives Budapest, 74/2492, Varga, Barátom Bonca, 33–34 (transl. by Gergely Loch).

Gyönyörű dallam hangzik.

.... A csalogány éneke.
Lassított felvétel.
A muzsika a legszebb dolog a világon.
Akár a csalogány énekli,
akár az ember játsza[!] hegedűn.

A wonderful melody is heard.

.... The song of the nightingale.
Slow-speed recording.
Music is the most beautiful thing in the world.
Whether sung by the nightingale,
or played by a human on a violin.

Fig. 4. Antal and Bence listening to slowed-down birdsong. Still from Barátom, Bonca (46'54")

The screenplay contains almost nothing but dialogue. There is only one descriptive sentence in the whole document, and that's the one quoted above: "A wonderful melody is heard". Using Antal as her mouthpiece, Varga claims that if we slow down its recording, the song of the nightingale is revealed to be just as musical as the performance of a violinist. This is to prove that the universal community of sunlight has an acoustic equivalent, the universal community of music. These two equally manifest the unity of all living beings.

Let me now dissect the historical reality of the acoustic revelation, layer by layer, starting with the top layer, that is, the final result of the film's genesis, the content of the audio-visual material.

Misidentification

When I asked the director, Ilona Katkics, about the origin of the birdsong recording heard in the film, she informed me that it had been one of the set decorators who had been sent to the Hungarian Institute of Ornithology, where he had been given this tape.[9] Nothing is known about what the set decorator and the unknown ornithologist said to each other at their meeting. Only one thing is sure: if we speed up the soundtrack approximately ten times, giving the sound recording back its natural speed, what one hears is clearly not the jug of the common nightingale (*Luscinia megarhynchos*), but the song of the common chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*), more specifically, a single motif of the type that

9 Katkics 2013, 2017, 2018.

finch-keeper Danube Swabians in Hungary called *Dulzier*. This is also apparent if one compares the spectrogram of the soundtrack excerpt and a corresponding birdsong recording (Fig. 5).

We are told we hear a nightingale, when we in reality hear a chaffinch: the first error found in the scene is misidentification. Both the nominal and the actual bird have a significance that I am going to discuss in the next sections.

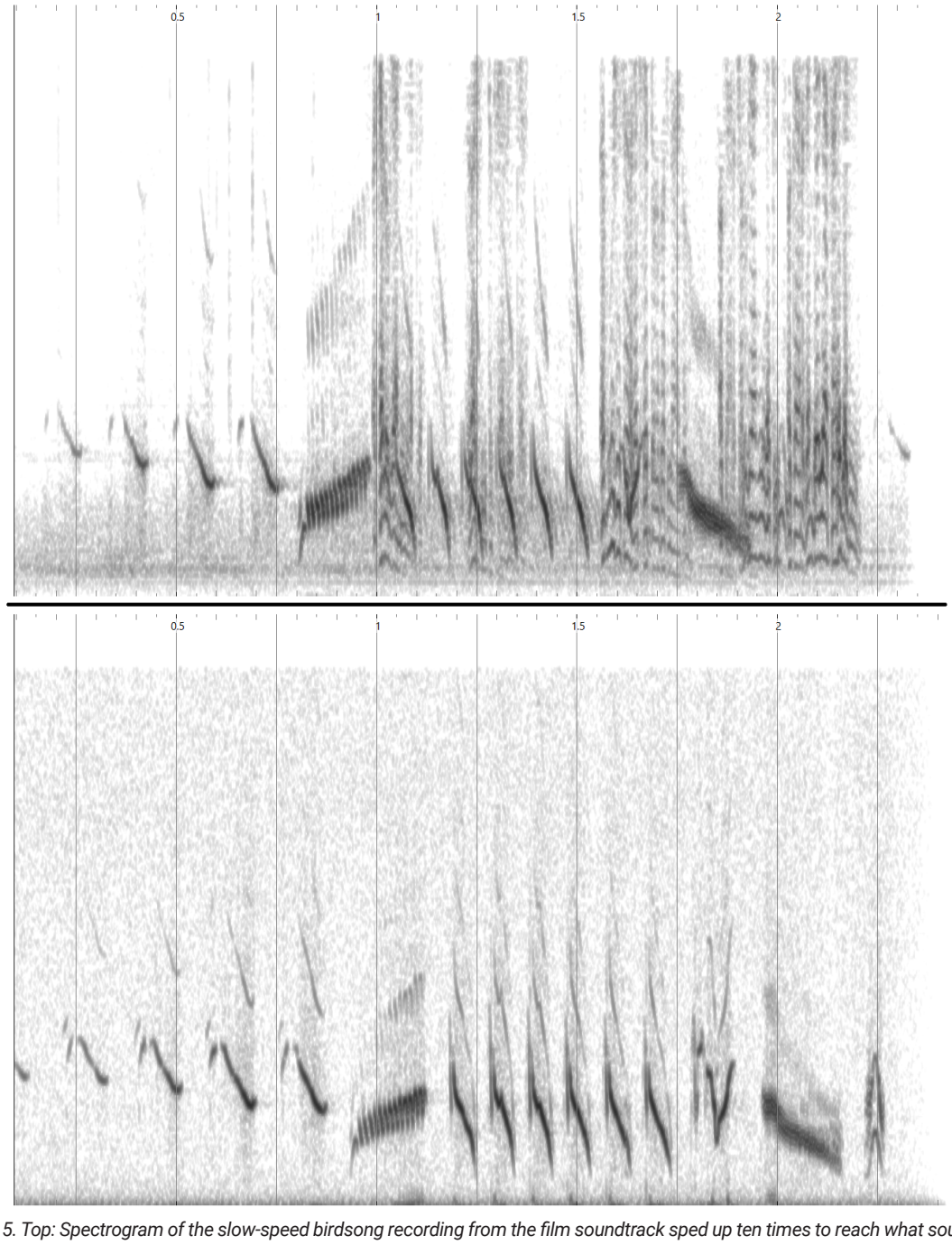

Fig. 5. Top: Spectrogram of the slow-speed birdsong recording from the film soundtrack sped up ten times to reach what sounds like its original speed. The highly fluctuating tones with lots of overtones that appear in the second half are speech sounds of Antal Páger in the role of Antal Bonca, commenting on the song. Bottom: Spectrogram of a recording of the common chaffinch Dulzier motif for reference.[10] Both spectrograms are linear, with a frequency range approximately between 80 Hz and 20 kHz. Time values are in seconds.

10 Reference recording: Szőke 1960: 25'55". The identification of the motif is based on Szőke 1982: 117.

Misrepresentation

The idea of slow-speed playback revealing musical quality in birdsong reminded me of *ornithomusicology*, a discipline invented and propagated by Péter Szőke in Kádár-era Hungary. It seemed likely that it had been the source of inspiration for the acoustic revelation. To verify my hypothesis, I asked Benedek Varga, the son of writer Katalin Varga, who as a little boy had been the model for the character of Bence,[11] and who worked as the director of the Hungarian National Museum at the time of my research. I quote his reply:

> When you mentioned Szőke's name I immediately thought of the Bonca book. I clearly remember that my mother was firmly convinced that [Szőke's] theory about slowed down birdsong was true. She kept mentioning it months (or perhaps years) before writing the book, she was so enthusiastic about it. I believe it was important for the symbolism of the novel to incorporate some kind of theory of sounds alongside the theory of colours, and she may have made use of it for that reason. It is strange, because she played the piano and the organ a lot in her childhood (in the School of the Congregation of Jesus, where she was raised, she regularly played the organ for Mass). She was learned enough in music to be able to choose some more conventional theory, yet she wanted this one.[12]

Although Benedek Varga mistakenly connected the acoustic theory with the book, when in reality it appears only in the film version, his memories about Katalin Varga's view on Szőke were firm enough to confirm my hypothesis. How does the screenwriter's representation of Szőke's theory relate to the theory itself?

By his original profession, Szőke was an official of commercial cooperatives, and did not have formal education in either musicology or ornithology.[13] He appeared on the stage of Hungarian musicology in the late 1950s as an amateur ethnomusicologist, and thanks to the exaggerated egalitarianism of the communist regime and his contacts with top politicians, he made it to professional scientific forums and institutions.[14] He wrote a bulky ethnomusicological treatise in the late 1950s that was published in 1959 by the state-owned music publishing company *Zeneműkiadó*.[15]

This intrusion into professional Hungarian ethnomusicology carried a sharp critique against Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967), the doyen of the field. Kodály believed that analogies between certain archaic Hungarian folksongs on one hand and the musical folklore of some Uralic people on the other originated in historical contact between the respective groups.[16] Szőke by contrast argued in his treatise that the analogies are caused by universal laws of neurophysiology and physics.

Kodály discredited Szőke categorically at a public debate in 1960,[17] not only because of the disagreement of their views, but also because Szőke was an outsider, and because his argument was politically charged. Szőke gave his theory a Marxist framework, embracing the prescribed dogma of the communist regime at a time when this regime took measures to deprive Kodály's Group of Ethnomusicology of its autonomy of thought.[18]

At the time of Kodály's rebuff however, Szőke thought he had found a decisive argument supporting his own theory. In 1957, he slowed down tape recordings of birdsong for the first time, and in some of them he thought he heard folksong-like patterns in the series of sounds that in their natural form had been too fast and too high pitched to be discernible by human ears.[19] The natural laws governing music

11 Szémann 1976. Bence is a nickname of Benedek.
12 Varga 2017 (transl. by Gergely Loch).
13 H-Bn, Music Collection, Péter Szőke's Estate (from now on: MCPSE), Szőke, [Autobiographies].
14 For detailed documentary evidence, see Loch 2021: 36–39.
15 Szőke 1959.
16 Historical context and bibliography: Szomjas-Schiffert 1976: 16–19.
17 Szőke 1962a: 231, fn. 11.
18 Péteri 2021: 161–162.
19 This discovery was first presented in the Appendix of Szőke 1959. The same text was published in German translation as Szőke 1962b.

seemed to be so universal as to have produced human-like musical patterns even in the vocalizations of some avian species.

This assumption led Szőke to develop the one-man discipline he called *ornithomusicology*. From 1957 until his retirement in 1978, he worked as a full-time 'bird music researcher', first at the Hungarian Institute of Ornithology, and from 1965 on at different departments of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.[20] In his publications, he used birdsong as an ideological weapon in his unresolved debate with Kodály, even long after the latter's death.[21]

As to the Marxist framework of Szőke's theory, his argument was based on a tenet of dialectical materialism that goes back to Friedrich Engels, according to which culture has a biological foundation, and biology has in turn a physical foundation.[22] This tenet holds that nothing is specifically cultural if it can be explained by biology, and nothing is specifically biological if it can be explained by physics. Therefore, according to Szőke, music has a primarily non-cultural and non-biological definition, one that lacks any functional, aesthetic, emotional or semantic content, and endows a single structural feature with the status of being essential: music is any sound phenomenon that exhibits frequency ratios approximating those of small integers.[23] He believed these frequency relationships ultimately derive from the vibrational laws of matter.[24] The vertical placement of noteheads in Western staff notation corresponds to such relationships, thus, in Szőke's view, anything can be called music if and only if it can be represented using this notation.

Fig. 6. Péter Szőke in the Hungarian Institute of Ornithology, 1965. [25]

What Szőke thought to fit his definition of music best in the avian world can be seen in Fig. 6. The notations on the blackboard are his representations of motifs of the woodlark (*Lullula arborea*) and the hermit thrush (*Hylocichla guttata*; name used today: *Catharus guttatus*), the two species among European and North-American birds respectively whose slowed-down song he considered to be the most

20 H-Bn, MCPSE, Szőke, [Autobiographies].
21 Szőke 1982: 191–197; Szőke 1990: 660. The latter article also appeared in German: Szőke 1994.
22 Engels 1954: 243–256.
23 Szőke 1982: 189.
24 Szőke 1959: 6–47; Szőke 1982: 17–32.
25 Diapositive from H-Bn, MCPSE. Szőke notated one motif of the woodlark and two motifs of the hermit thrush after recordings slowed down 32 times. For earlier notations of the same woodlark motif and the spectrogram of its recording, see Fig. 7.

"human-like", and therefore regarded as his most important discoveries.[26] He never used the song of the common nightingale as an example of music in birds, clearly because he found its frequencies were by far too unstable to be described in terms of the ratios he considered as the criterion of musicality.

As to the song of the common chaffinch, until the late 1960s Szőke presented it as musical, even if the notation of a sole chaffinch motif he used was not what he believed to be his most important example.[27] Later however, the common chaffinch disappeared from his illustrations of bird music. When it reappeared in 1982 it was no longer to illustrate musicality, but the accuracy of vocal learning in finches, with notation that no longer used noteheads but curvy lines.[28] With these, Szőke inadvertently admitted that his earlier notation had not been realistic, and the common chaffinch had not fit his own definition of a musical bird, its song consisting exclusively of glides — even if these glides were not as fast as those of the nightingale.

In short, the second error of the film scene is that it misrepresents Szőke's theory. The screenwriter chose a bird that Szőke would not have considered to be an appropriate example at all, and the soundtrack features a birdsong that Szőke most likely would not have considered to be the best example by 1975.

Misinterpretation

The unfitting choice of example was rooted in the fact that Katalin Varga misinterpreted Szőke's theory as a whole. The misinterpretation was obviously conditioned by two age-old concepts of European culture, neither of which is commensurable with Szőke's theory.

When Varga chose the nightingale as an example, describing its slow-speed recording as a "wonderful melody", she clearly related to the tradition of attributing aesthetic qualities to birdsong, the nightingale being the most emblematic European songbird of this tradition.[29] In this context, the term 'music' is used in the sense of any kind of sound pattern that is experienced as beautiful, independently of whether its frequency ratios can be expressed with integers or not. This meaning is completely incompatible with Szőke's structuralist, pronouncedly non-aesthetic definition of music. Yet Varga, together with several others,[30] were misled to believe that if people had been calling birdsong musical for centuries and Szőke the scientist called it musical too, modern science corroborated the traditional view.

Varga presented music as a token of universal kinship, which indicates that she was thinking in terms of *musica universalis*, a concept from the Middle Ages that has its roots in Antiquity. This concept is based on a tenet of natural philosophy usually attributed to the ancient Greek Pythagoras, according to which everything in the universe is governed by numbers conceived as metaphysical entities: numbers govern the movement of heavenly bodies, the change of seasons, the growth of trees, the functioning of the human body, and, incidentally, the tuning of musical instruments.[31]

To this concept of universal musicality a tripartite division was added in the Middle Ages: *musica mundana* (the music of the macrocosm: the ordered behaviour of planets, also known as the music of the spheres; the change of seasons etc.), *musica humana* (the music of the human body, i. e. the order of its construction and functioning), and *musica instrumentalis* (the phenomenon we call music today). The first two kinds of music were believed to be imperceptible without special abilities.[32]

26 Szőke 1962b: 59–60 ("von allen uns bekannten Vogelstimmen der menschenähnlichste"); Szőke et al. 1969: 431 ("the highest summit in the evolution of animal music so far known to us"; "strongly 'human-like' song forms").
27 Szőke 1962b: 58; Szőke 1963: 599; Szőke et al. 1969: 427; H-Bn, MCPSE, Szőke, *A madárhang mint biológiai zene*, 181. A recent republication of Szőke's example in an article about common chaffinch song in culture, see Oliveira Pinto 2020: 16.
28 Szőke 1982: 120.
29 Roberts 2021.
30 Loch 2021: 232–45.
31 Barbera 2001; Simonyi 2012: 49–54; Huffman 2019.
32 Haar 2001.

Szőke also considered music to be a universal phenomenon because he defined it through the vibrational laws of matter. For Szőke the empiricist however, numbers were not metaphysical entities, but mere abstractions of measurements made in the experiential world — for him, the only world there was. As the title of his comprehensive monograph *The Origin and Three Realms of Music* expresses, Szőke thought music existed on three levels: physics, biology and human society.[33] However, the three kinds of music he talked about are all perceptible, they have nothing to do with the three kinds of music of the medieval view.

Because of the superficial similarities, several people were misled to believe Szőke's theory was a rebirth or a scientific confirmation of the ancient concept, despite the two being incommensurable. He did not mean to refer to the music of the spheres and a universal kinship of metaphysical origin, yet, several people were reminded of these when hearing or reading him, including Varga.[34] As a materialist, he held that humans did not have souls as such, and if this word had any meaning at all, it could only refer to the sum of neurological processes.[35] By contrast, Varga and Katkics' film touches upon the subject of extrasensory perception shortly after the bird music episode.[36]

Wishful Thinking

Varga referred to a theory that she believed to be scientific. And that is where we come to the fourth and last error: the theory was in fact not scientific. Szőke's various pieces of evidence are products of wishful thinking. Most of them seem to have been made in good faith, some of them border on being forgeries.

Szőke proposed a valuable and pioneering hypothesis concerning the biological foundations of sonic activities, one that could have led to the birth of bio-/zoo-/cognitive/evolutionary musicology in Hungary — had he entered a more receptive milieu in a less offensive way. When looking for evidence however, he exhibited extreme naivety and arbitrariness, tendentiously selecting and interpreting birdsong recordings to match his own cultural and ideological preferences, unwittingly leaving the realm of science, becoming more of a composer working with *objets trouvés*.

Figure 7 shows one of Szőke's crown witnesses, one of the woodlark motifs he used most as evidence for what he called musicality in birdsong.[37] If one compares the notations he made by ear and the spectrogram I prepared of the recording, it becomes evident that he projected the pitch relationships of his culturally conditioned hearing into the sounds, and it was these projections that he represented in his notations. By their very nature, the noteheads correspond to pitches whose relationships form the basis of Western musical culture. None of these pitches or relationships have a distinguished role in the continuous, broad glides of the woodlark.

The frequencies are just too unstable to enable one to speak about proportions that approximate those of small integers. The structuralist rigour of Szőke's definition of 'music' here turns out to be the distorting lens of anthropocentric interpretation. The emergence of Szőke's anthropomorphic projections was aided by a phenomenon known in psychology as priming:[38] He used pitch pipes when making his notations, providing himself with stable tonal reference points while listening to the bird sounds, establishing a framework for tonal interpretation that was in no way present in the recordings.[39]

33 Szőke 1982.
34 Loch 2021: 222–231.
35 Szőke 1985, relevant excerpts quoted in Loch 2021: 421, fn. 818.
36 At 47'51" Antal Bonca "feels" that Bence's sister has arrived, without hearing her.
37 A survey of all woodlark examples used by Szőke: Loch 2021: 123–126.
38 Higgins 2000; McDermott 2000.
39 H-Bn, MCPSE, Szőke, [Notation of woodlark song, with incipit "1962/63 / Egy Lullula arborea"], p. 2. The marginal note to melody no. 23 indicates use of pitch pipe.

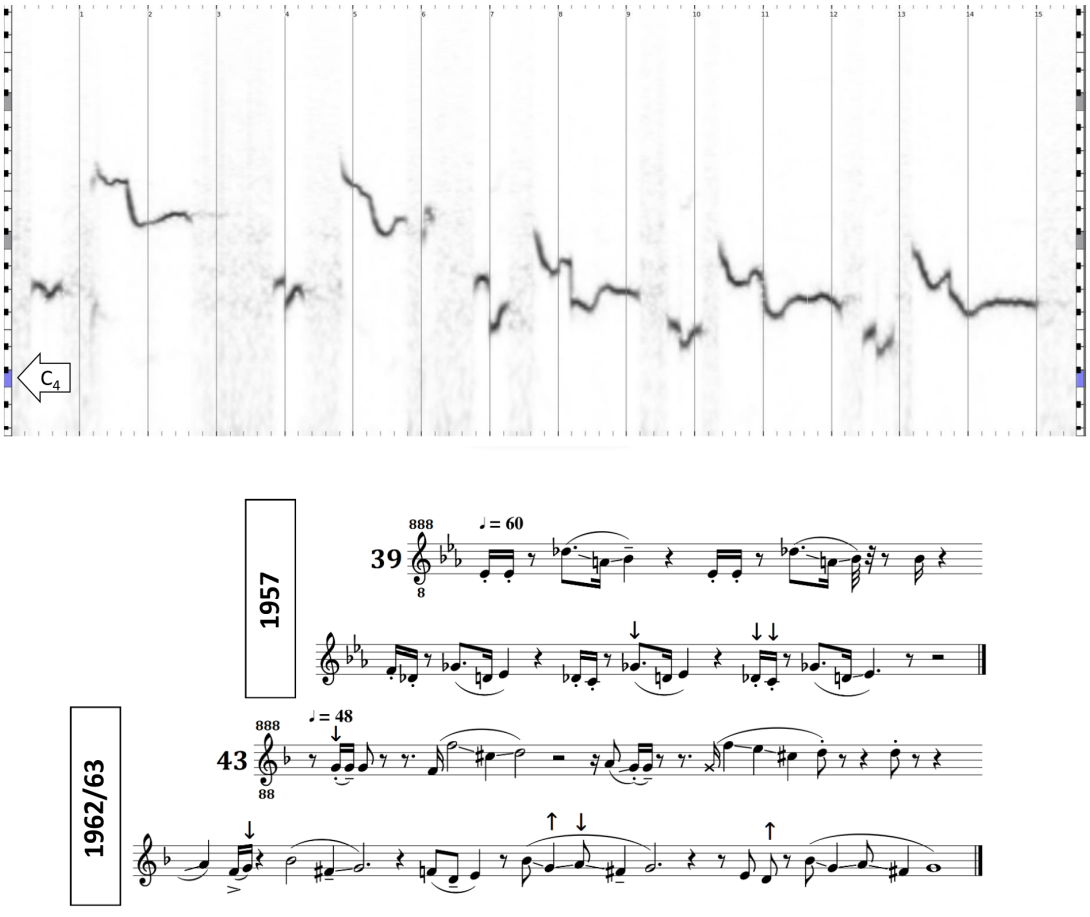

Fig. 7. Top: Melodic range logarithmic spectrogram I made of a single motif from a woodlark's song recorded by Péter Szőke in 1957.[40] Note the miniature keyboard included on both sides for reference. The pitch and time values reflect a slowing down by a factor of 8, usually used by Szőke when presenting audio examples. Bottom: notations Szőke made by ear of the same motif in 1957 and in 1962/63, after slowing down the recording 16 and 32 times, respectively.[41]

The woodlark's motifs are known for having a tendency to gradually descend in pitch in the course of their utterance[42] — the spectrogram of fig. 7 is a telling example even in this respect. When Szőke encountered utterances that exhibited just a slight descending, he interpreted these as the bird getting out of tune, a minor deterioration in the musical quality of the song, an accidental error that should be corrected in the notation.[43] However, in the case of more drastic descensions, when the repeated pattern of a motif seemed to be getting transposed to a lower scale degree, Szőke spoke of an especially advanced stage of musical evolution in woodlarks.[44] The melody of fig. 7 was one of such examples, and a particularly important one for Szőke, as he saw it analogous to the archaic fifth-shifting descending style of Hungarian folk music,[45] the question of whose origins played a crucial role in his dispute with Kodály. No wonder he chose this motif for the representative photograph of fig. 6.

40 Szőke 1957: 15'00".
41 Manuscript from 1957: H-Bn, MCPSE, Szőke, [Notation of woodlark song, with incipit "Erdei pacsirta (Lullula arborea) / 1/1/2 sz."], p. 5; manuscript from 1962/63: H-Bn, MCPSE, Szőke, [Notation of woodlark song, with incipit "1962/63 / Egy Lullula arborea"], p. 4. In the earlier notation, the melody is transposed approximately a major third downwards, probably due to a technical error in playback. The first two lines on the blackboard of fig. 6 show a simplified and transposed version of the 1962/63 notation.
42 Svensson 2009: 250.
43 Szőke 1967: 250.
44 Szőke 1982: 59.
45 Szőke 1967: 153.

In short, he interpreted the same phenomenon as accidental or as regular, as a deterioration or as an advanced feature depending exclusively on which of the two opposing interpretations supported his argument in a given case. He selected his examples with similar arbitrariness: the woodlarks he recorded sung hundreds of different motifs, the overwhelming majority of which did not conform to the patterns he favoured. The occurrences of structural features that seemed to be in line with certain regularities of musical folklore were clearly accidental, yet he presented them as proofs of a universal law.

The manipulations mentioned above were limited to the field of interpretation, but in some cases Szőke went as far as tampering with the physical audio material as well: he cut out segments that disturbed the folksong-like symmetry or the tonal feel of one or another woodlark melody, and it was these tweaked versions that he notated, published and used as audio illustrations.[46] These manipulations became known only after 2013 as a result of my doctoral research.

The Benignity of the Failure

It is because of the four errors presented above that I call the genesis of the film scene a failure. However, the failure of a genesis does not necessarily mean the result is a failure as well. I use the word 'benign' before the noun, an adjective that can mean harmless, but which can also mean favourable. I believe this particular failure is not only harmless, but also favourable, because it contributed to the artistic value of the film.

Katalin Varga wrote her screenplay in a scientific age, in a country where dialectic materialism was at the time still the only officially accepted ideology. To be able to present her thoughts, she needed an up-to-date scientific warranty, and she believed to have found one in Szőke's theory of bird musicality. The only function Szőke's theory had in the genesis of *Bonca, my Friend* was to enable Varga to say what she wanted to say. It could not possibly have carried any other function because its actual content was completely absent from the film, for the reasons presented above. One could even say that Varga misused the theory, but the film benefited from her doing so, as Szőke's work had an extremely problematic relationship with reality.

I go further: I believe that even if she had found a legitimate scientific theory, it would have been better to break away from it, because modern natural science in general has, in a certain sense, a problematic relationship with reality. It is a relationship that the Austrian philosopher Martin Buber described in his 1923 book *Ich und Du* (*I and Thou*) as the attitude of the 'I' towards an 'it', that is, something seen as separate from the 'I'.[47] Katalin Varga offered another way of thinking about the world, one that Buber would describe as the attitude of the 'I' towards a 'thou', that is, something the 'I' is connected to because of their shared place in existence.

Knowledge about this relationship comes from spiritual initiation[48] — just like the ones that happen in the film. It does not come from demonstrating facts, because such demonstrations are based on analysis, which turns everything into an 'it'. Accordingly, Antal Bonca's statement about the music of the nightingale is not based on a comparative analysis that shows the analogies between man-made and avian sounds. It could not possibly be based on it either, because — regardless of whether slow-speed or regular-speed playback is used — neither the song of the chaffinch nor the song of the nightingale is similar to anything in the musical culture of Antal, Bence, the members of the film crew and the television audience of the film.

Benedek Varga was present as a boy at the filming of this scene and shared his memories with me: "I remember that I was excitedly waiting for this scene at the shooting, curious whether the birdsong would really sound like a violin. And I remember how unusual and surreal the slowed-down birdsong sounded".[49]

46 Loch 2001: 138–139, 142–143.
47 Buber 1970.
48 About the role spiritual initiation plays in Buber's thought: Johnson 2020: 13–40.
49 Varga 2017, transl. by Gergely Loch.

The contrast between expectations and experience is evident. Katalin Varga and Ilona Katkics must have seen this contrast, too, however, it was not problematic for them to call what they heard music — if it had been, they would have asked for another tape, or would have discarded the scene altogether. I believe they accepted the strangely unfamiliar recording as 'music' because in their film Antal is in an 'I-thou' relationship with birds and their song, and the word 'music' is used in a sense that conveys this relationship.

According to the vocabulary of the 'I-it' attitude — a vocabulary used by, among others, Szőke — birdsong can be called 'music' only inasmuch as one can project the culturally determined content of one's mind into it. By calling it 'music' in this sense, one performs a mild act of appropriation, and neglects differences by emphasizing alleged analogies. In the 'I-thou' vocabulary of *Bonca, my Friend* however, the term 'music' seems to carry the following meaning: any sound that originates in the primordial kinship of things, and which, for this sole reason, is respected and valued. No matter how familiar or unfamiliar it sounds, no matter its function and structure, the sound will be accepted as an organic part of this relationship. The more unfamiliar it is, the better this sense can be demonstrated.

This meaning of 'music' carries a strong sense of environmental ethics when applied to sounds of the natural environment, one that is in sharp contrast with the anthropocentric, Eurocentric, and egocentric meaning of the same word in the 'I-it' vocabulary. Scholarly discourse relies inevitably on the latter vocabulary, and that's why I join Marcello Sorce Keller in suggesting that the term 'music' should not be used as a framework in the scientific investigation of sonic practices or behaviour.[50] Szőke's case is an especially telling cautionary tale about the errors predetermined by this kind of usage. Varga took Szőke's theory as a point of departure and neutralized his errors through her own unwitting errors of interpretation, transplanting the word 'music' from a scientific discourse where it had been misused into an artistic discourse where it was used in a valid manner.

Bonca, my Friend is one of several heart-warming Hungarian children's films directed by Ilona Katkics. I phoned the director three times over the past ten years, asking her about the subject matter of the present writing.[51] She was always very kind, and she had a good laugh when I told her during our last conversation that I had found out their nightingale was actually a chaffinch. She said she had been unaware of this, but she did not think it made any difference. I dedicate this article to her memory.

Gergely Loch studied musicology at the Liszt Academy of Music, Budapest, and at the University of Stockholm. He gained his PhD degree in 2022 at the former institution with his dissertation entitled "Péter Szőke and his Ornithomusicology: Science, Productive Misunderstanding and Reminiscence". His research concerns liminal situations of acoustic culture, in and beyond the realm of what is usually called 'music'.

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50 Sorce Keller 2010, 2019.
51 Katkics 2013, 2017, 2018.

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Inquisitory Birds: Thinking through the Ethics and Assumptions of Playback Responses in Birds

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Keywords: playback, bird song, birding, territory, ethics

Abstract: *A technique employed by both scientists and birders is the use of song playback to elicit a response from a bird. For birders, the intention is to encourage a hidden bird to reveal itself to the observer. On hearing the recording, the bird reacts with either an aggressive territorial response or inquisitory social approach. While the effects of playback on birds are incompletely understood, repeated exposure appears to influence a bird's subsequent behaviour. Where playback has been widely used, birds sometimes no longer respond to the sounds of their own species, ignore the sound, and thus deviate from their assumed natural behaviour. These effects have raised ethical questions about the use of playback in birding and in some places the practice is banned. This article examines the use of playback in birding and the wider questions this raises. Ethical debates around playback reveal ideas about what birds are, how they can potentially interact with humans, and how the aesthetics of birding are practiced and debated.*

A technique often employed by birders is the use of song or call playback to elicit a response from a bird. For birders, this is normally done to encourage a hidden bird to reveal itself to the observer.[2] On hearing the recording, the bird is thought to react as though the sound is from another of its kind and moves towards its origin, either as an aggressive territorial response or inquisitory interactive approach. Birders are very concerned with trying to see birds[3] and if they are skulking in dense habitats such as forest, the use of playback can make this much easier. In many respects this is the modern technological version of the imitation that hunters have long used to entice their quarry a little closer and into a clearer spot.[4] Birders are not the only people to use playback. It has been widely used by scientists trying to understand bird behaviour[5] and monitor bird populations.[6] Bird banders or ringers will use playback to attract specific species of bird into their traps for ringing.[7] Conservationists also use playback to try to attract birds to their reserves to settle and breed.[8]

Playback has become much easier to do in recent decades because the calls of many birds are readily available on mobile apps or downloads. Playback of almost every bird in the world is now available, often for free, via any smartphone rather than requiring numerous tapes, a player, and speakers. This digital proliferation has generated some concerns. While the long-term effects of playback on birds are not thoroughly understood and relatively few studies have investigated these, repeated exposure can sometimes influence a bird's subsequent behaviour.[9] In places where playback has been widely used, birders claim that some birds no longer respond to the sounds of their own species as previously; they

1 Author's e-mail address: a.whitehouse@abdn.ac.uk.
2 Harris and Haskell 2013.
3 Whitehouse 2013.
4 Feld 1990 [1982]: 61; Magnus and Bhattacharya 2023.
5 See De Rosa et al. 2022.
6 E.g. Marion et al. 1981.
7 E.g. Depino and Areta 2019.
8 E.g. Ward and Schlossberg 2004.
9 See Harris and Haskell 2013.

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become 'played out', ignore the sound and thus deviate from their assumed natural behaviour.[10] These effects have raised ethical questions about the use of playback in birding and in some places the practice is banned or restricted.[11] The use of playback by scientists, ringers, and conservationists is less controversial, perhaps because of the utilitarian view that the stress and disruption caused to birds is outweighed by the gains in knowledge or breeding success. Birders, conversely, are said to use playback merely to enhance their own pleasure, by seeing a new species or getting better views of a bird, and this appears to lead to the practice being viewed as more problematic than uses that are scientific or conservationist. For example, a recent article argued that "[r]esearchers have used playback as an effective survey tool for ornithological research and monitoring, but amateur use is controversial because of potential negative effects on birds."[12] The implication here is that the effects only became negative when playback is used by amateurs, while professional use is seen as ethically unproblematic because the benefits to knowledge outweigh any disturbance and stress.

A potential response to these ethical issues is to say that playback should not be used by birders at all, at least for something as seemingly trivial as seeing a new species of bird for one's list. Others have put forward guidance about how playback might be used in ways that are not harmful to the bird. My intention here is to consider the dynamics of playback use by birders, how these interactions with other species are understood, and what ethical arguments about playback use reveal. These arguments disclose ideas both about how birding should be conducted and why birds might be adversely affected, which in turn demonstrate assumptions about how humans should behave and what birds are really like. Although I do not intend to make claims on the appropriateness of playback use, in exploring its underlying assumptions, new questions can be raised that are relevant to evaluating whether playback should be used by birders.

In a recent article, Anna Tsing discusses the use of playback by birders in Waigeo, an island in West Papua.[13] There, she encountered a group of Raja Ampat Pitohuis (*Pitohui cerviniventris*), which appeared together in response to birders playing a sound recording of its call. She speculates that the appearance of a group rather than an individual suggests that the birds were curious rather than it being a territorial response to repel an invader. This paper supports Tsing's case for curious, inquisitory interactions and adds further explanation. To do this, I begin with the role of territoriality in understanding avian responses to playback. This is followed by discussion of care and skill in playback use, which is significant in explaining how playback can be differentiated into 'good' and 'bad'. I use a case study of an interaction through playback with a largely unknown species, Stresemann's bristlefront, to introduce the idea that some responses may be more inquisitory than strictly territorial. This raises further ontological questions about what the bird understands about playback and how this might differ from assumptions that are made in ethical debates around its use, particularly the concern that overuse of playback leads to birds becoming 'played out' and not responding as they should. A further concern, that playback disrupts the aesthetics of birding, is then addressed through a discussion of arguments about detachment and polite observation. I conclude by reconsidering these themes through perspectives in which birds and animals are considered as ethical subjects who make both positive and negative judgements about the sounds they encounter. The overarching aim is to use these themes to reveal assumptions about birds and human-bird interactions and to examine how the ethics of playback could be considered in new ways if these assumptions are questioned. By considering birds as ethical subjects embedded in infra- and inter-species relations, I also raise possibilities for rethinking the ethical dimensions of playback in ways that avoid Cartesian

10 Benedict 2019.
11 Sibley 2011.
12 Johnson and Maness 2018: 136.
13 Tsing 2022: 28–29.

mechanistic assumptions and utilitarian arguments that reduce birds to bodies that suffer calculable effects.

To address these questions, I draw on a widely read argument about the ethical use of playback by the well-known American ornithologist David Sibley.[14] I also use three recent articles on the use and ethics of playback, the first by David Watson, Elizabeth Znidersic, and Michael Craig[15] on the wider dimensions of playback use in Colombia, the second by Riin Magnus and Sugata Bhattacharya[16] on the use of playback by Estonian birders, and the third by Lauryn Benedict[17] aimed at giving birders an ornithologist's perspective on playback use. My analysis is influenced by the work of Vinciane Despret[18] on the conceptualization of territory in ornithological research. Since responses to playback are normally construed as territorial, how territories and territoriality are conceived has implications for what these responses entail and what lasting effects they might have. The discussion is augmented by my own experiences of playback use, both as a birder myself and together with experienced bird guides, and research conducted as part of the "Listening to Birds" project, which investigated people's relations with birds through sound.[19]

Territorial Responses

Although it is widely assumed that birds sing to establish and maintain a territory, this is challenging to demonstrate scientifically.[20] Various complex experiments have been attempted involving the capture of territorial birds and either removing them altogether and replacing their singing with recordings, or surgically muting the birds. The scientists can then observe whether there are more incursions into territory than previously. What this seems to show is that singing works to repel rivals from a territory. When birds are muted their territories are much more frequently invaded. Interestingly, the recordings of bird song only work to discourage rivals for a short period of time. Eventually other birds realize that although they can hear singing, the male bird is nowhere to be seen. This suggests that song is a first line of defence that needs reinforcing by the physical presence of the bird that is assumed to be its source. This territorial response often makes playback very effective, with birds coming closer to confront what they think is an apparent intruder in their territory, even if they eventually realize that 'the bird' is not really there. The responses of different birds (both individuals and species) can vary a great deal however, and this requires knowledge of the birds for it to be used effectively. By 'the bird', I refer to what is often considered the ontologically 'real' material creature rather than manifestations of its presence, such as the sound itself, or the human/sound unit in combination. These ontological assumptions about what 'the bird' really is have implications that are examined later.

Although using playback effectively is sometimes a straightforward case of pressing a button to play a recording, it is not necessarily lacking in skill. During fieldwork in Brazil in 2008 and elsewhere, I spent a lot of time talking to bird guides about how they use playback. In many cases, this is not simply a matter of playing the sound and waiting for the bird. The most effective use comes through close attention to what the bird is doing and from previous experience of that species or even of individual birds. Guides talk about whether a bird will respond quickly or slowly, whether it will come in low or high or stay for only a short time, and about whether the bird would respond or show at all. This is particularly important if the guide wishes to show the bird to their clients. Sometimes birds will make themselves obvious when they respond to playback but on other occasions the bird will still be elusive by coming

14 Sibley 2011.
15 Watson et al. 2019.
16 Magnus and Bhattacharya 2023.
17 Benedict 2019.
18 Despret 2022.
19 Based in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, this two-year project was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. *Listening to Birds* 2024.
20 Despret 2022.

in quietly or only for an instant. Knowing where and when to look is critical, as are the specifics of when to play the recording, how loud and where to position the speakers. In one case I was given detailed instructions on how I could use playback to see a uniform crake (*Amaurolimnas concolor*), a bird I was informed was among the hardest to see in South America. I should find an open area between two bits of marshy ground and play the call once every five minutes or so to try to replicate the normal pattern of calling from the birds. I should otherwise be very quiet and still and preferably be concealed. I would probably have to wait for at least an hour for the bird to show. I tried it and it never appeared.

So, what if there is no response from the bird? Most discussion of playback revolves around the effects on birds that respond, for example if they become physically stressed.[21] But often, there is no response. Of course, this could be because the bird is not there, but what if it is and chooses not to respond? Naturally, this is something difficult to assess scientifically. The stress of an imperceptible bird cannot be measured. But we must suppose that the effects of playback include these birds. To consider this possibility, I invoke Despret[22] and her discussion of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of deterritorialization. If responding to playback is territorial, could not responding be a form of deterritorialization? This happens, according to Despret, to create possibilities for reterritorialization. Do non-responsive birds begin this process, remaking relations and creating new territories, given the potential new arrival? As Despret puts it, "[o]n reading Deleuze and Guattari, I begin to realize that there is in fact nothing more '*dynamic*' than a territory, no matter how stable its borders might be or how faithful to it the residents may be".[23] The relational ripples of playback through a forest may elicit deterritorializations, even when there is no perceptible response. This is a reminder that playback introduces sounds that can both disrupt and build relations and that, even when care is taken over its use, there will always be effects that are hard to follow. This uncertainty is exacerbated by the ontological questions raised earlier about what the bird takes playback to be and is partly a question of what 'another bird' is to the bird. This may potentially be the sound as much as the physical creature but how convincing the sound itself can be as 'another bird' will vary. As the example above illustrates, sounds that manifest other birds will come from certain places but not others, will emerge in certain patterns and at a particular volume, and will also move in specific ways. This highlights the role of care and skill in playback and its significance to what is deemed to be good practice.

Care and Skill in Playback

Care and skill are essential elements of ethical playback, according to both Sibley[24] and Benedict.[25] Sibley emphasizes that birders should plan ahead, select the right spot, play the recording quietly, check for responses, and stay calm. Skill is thus linked to 'good' playback, which is inherently knowledgeable and responsive. But can playback still be used skilfully in complex encounters with birds that are from poorly known species that the birder has never encountered before? To illustrate this, I recount a story from fieldwork into bird sounds I conducted in Brazil in 2008.

Dave was an English birder who was staying at REGUA, a nature reserve and lodge in southeast Brazil where I was doing fieldwork. He suggested that I go with him on a trip to look for a bird called Stresemann's bristlefront (*Merulaxis stresemanni*).[26] I had never heard of the bird but thought it sounded like an adventure. After two days driving over 1,000 kilometres north, we find ourselves in Mata de Balbina, a small forest remnant and the only place on Earth that Stresemann's bristlefront is still known to be found. Although I had only recently learnt of this bird, I quickly came to know that it is almost mythical: nearly no one has seen it and virtually nothing is known about it. Until the mid-1990s it was only known from two museum specimens. In

21 E.g. Benedict 2019.
22 Despret 2022.
23 Despret 2022: 93.
24 Sibley 2011.
25 Benedict 2019.
26 Cf. Whitehouse 2015.

1995 it was rediscovered at a reserve in Bahia province, but it wasn't seen again at this site. Then in 2005 it was found by a Brazilian scientist at Balbina, and here we were three years later trying to find it.[27]

We have some idea of what the bird might look like from some bad illustrations in field guides, presumably drawn from museum specimens, and one recording of its song downloaded from the Internet.[28] This had been recorded a year earlier by Nick Athanas, an American tour guide who had conducted a trip to stake out the site. But this is all we know. I had listened a few times to the recording and not long after arriving in the forest I think I hear it. I avoid saying anything, and Dave thinks it could be something else. A couple of hours later the bird still eluded us, and so I play the song out through my iPod. We both look at one another and realize this is the sound we had heard earlier. We march back to where we had previously heard the bird and give the song another blast. Not long after we hear a response, initially distant but then closer. We both make recordings[29] of the sound we hear, which is coming from a dense area of scrub by the side of the trail. We play back our own recordings a few times, but it seems like the bristlefront is not going to come out whatever we do. "We'd better go in", says Dave and we scramble through the thick branches and a few metres through the trees.

Dave, who was very experienced at looking for birds in the Brazilian forests, is very precise about how we should go about playing the recordings. We play our recording occasionally, and rather quietly, to fit into a normal pattern of singing without scaring a wary bird with frequent, loud bursts of song. It seems to have a strategy of singing every minute or so for a while, before going quiet again for several minutes and then singing again from a different place, as if it is circling us at a distance. It keeps doing this for perhaps an hour but does not show itself. We decide to switch to the downloaded recording to see if that will work better. Earlier, I had noticed that this sounded different to our bird because it lacked the stuttering, alternating finish. Maybe its response would change with a different song. And, yes, this seems to encourage it to respond more quickly. What's more, it begins to overlap its own song with the recording, coming in at a particular point as if it's duetting.

Eventually I see it, first very briefly, running along the ground, but then much better as it sings. I am surprised to see that the bird is female, or at least has female type plumage. Perhaps this is why it responds in the way it does. I begin to speculate that Stresemann's bristlefront has a duetting song in which the male and female sing different parts. Maybe the bird is more interested in responding to a male song than to its own female song. Could it be that it recognized itself when we played our recordings back to it? Could it be that it recognized the song of the male bird we had downloaded? Perhaps it was its mate and they had sung together in the past. Because there are no descriptions in books of how this species sings, I feel unusually free in my speculation. This was not the 'well-trodden territory'[30] of the international birding community that Tsing describes in Waigeo, which renders most birds and places knowable in advance for globe travelling birders. What developed in the playback encounter was, it seemed, a meeting of songs in which two 'birds' interacted with one another's sound-making to produce a new, overlapping melody. Our jointly inquisitory interaction with the bird had produced a new performance and, it appeared, one the bird liked.

This inquisitory encounter with a poorly known species demonstrates the importance of responsiveness in successful playback use. It also shows that prior experience of elusive birds can suggest possible ways of encouraging a shy species to become curious enough to come in. There was an emphasis on not overdoing playback and changing the approach when things initially failed. These are the kinds of techniques that Sibley[31] emphasizes for 'good' playback. Successful playback, of course, does not mean ethical playback but the emphasis on skill and responsiveness shows an attentiveness to how

27 *Birdlife International* 2024.
28 This recording can be heard at https://xeno-canto.org/15283 [29.02.2024].
29 This recording can be heard at https://xeno-canto.org/22834 [29.02.2024].
30 Tsing 2022: 27.
31 Sibley 2011.

the bird perceives the encounter that is a prerequisite to knowing when playback might be harmful. The resulting inquisitory response suggests an encounter that avoided stressing the bird.

The Ontology of Sound and Bird

An assumption that could be made about the use of playback is that the bird is being fooled. It thinks it is hearing another bird, in most cases of its own kind, and is responding to this as a threat. Of course, what it 'really' hears is a recording played by a human. This rests on assumptions about what the bird can understand about an interaction with humans, or with sound, and these assumptions are also critical to interpretations by humans about those interactions. People, at least birders and scientists, tend to assume that they understand the reality of the interaction much better than the bird, although they must still be careful, knowledgeable, and attentive in what they do to be successful in bringing out the bird in the desired way.

After the encounter with the Stresemann's bristlefront, I was struck by the care we took, the different strategies we attempted, and how we had to constantly think about how the bird might respond to what we were doing. There was a real feeling that, rather than us fooling the bird, we were beholden to the choices it made. It was hearing sounds that it wanted to respond to, that it was interested in, but it was conflicted by its own wariness and its unwillingness to break from cover. It ended with us being surprised by the bird apparently being a female and by the way it was interacting with the sounds we were playing it. The bird's response was seemingly less because of aggressive territoriality than a desire to interact with the sound it could hear.

Perhaps we were still fooling the bird but in what way? The bird was correct to think it was hearing the singing of its own species. One might instead assume it was unable to connect the sound it was hearing and what we took to be its real source: a recording being played through speakers. The bird, we assume, could not understand the way that the sound is being produced and because of this it was being fooled into doing something it would normally avoid, i.e. coming out from cover in the vicinity of human beings. What we were doing was a kind of inquisitory play, in which the sound recording did not represent what the singing would normally stand for. The bird, we assume, took all this literally and had no appreciation either of our understanding of the interaction or even that we are involved in it at all. Unlike a conjuror deceiving an audience with a trick or sleight of hand, there is no amused recognition from the bird that it has been deceived. The idea that this was just a recording is not assumed to have any meaning to the bird. But for both parties to the encounter, their understanding was partial and ambiguous. The bird understands the sound better than the human, but the human understands the source of the sound and the 'deception' involved.

A further ontological dimension concerns the relationship between the sound and the bird. The sound, it is assumed, is made by the bird rather than being the bird. This distinction between doing and being is, I would argue, central to the desire birders have for seeing rather than hearing the bird, that is the reason they use playback in the first place.[32] To perceive 'the bird', birders expect to see it as a discrete and identifiable object. Perceiving only things the bird does, such as making sounds or moving foliage, are not enough for this. These are 'untickable' in birding parlance.[33] More significantly, in this interpretation the bird is assumed to have the same ontological understanding of the relationship between the sound and the bird. The supposed problems with playback are a result of this relationship between the sound and its expected source in another bird being confounded. If this confusion happens regularly then the sound comes to mean something different to the bird and its response becomes

32 See Whitehouse 2013.

33 Birders refer to a new species for them as a 'tick', i.e. to tick off a bird on a list. In many cases, birders do not tick a species if they do not achieve a clear view in which the bird can be identified visually, i.e. 'untickable views'. Species that are only heard may also be 'untickable'.

unnatural to its assumed ontology, i.e. it becomes 'played out' and the song is deterritorialized. This problem is more likely to arise when playback lacks skill because the sound is less likely to emerge in the right way from the bird's perspective, i.e. it will come from the wrong place, move the wrong way, be the wrong volume or the wrong pattern. It will thus become less 'bird-like' for the bird.

The above example of the Stresemann's bristlefront also raises the question of whether this kind of interaction through playback can be understood as communication, and on what basis should such a claim be justified. This was a question that various respondents to the "Listening to Birds" project discussed. In this research, many people wrote to me with stories of their experiences of listening to birds. One wrote:

> I was driving and a blackbird quickly flew just above my car from right to left, but another blackbird flying slightly lower, and following the first, took evasive action to prevent hitting my car. It flew alongside my car, just below my window and gave off the usual displeased call before flying off in a different direction. I took this as my first experience of a bird verbally abusing me over my driving.[34]

Here there are assumed to be two important elements: that the sound the bird made is being directed at the human and that there is a shared understanding that the sound signifies annoyance. In a similar example, a birder I met during the research claimed he only ever properly communicated with a bird on one occasion. This was when he intruded into the territory of a herring gull. The gull flew towards him giving a low, gurgling call, which the birder knew meant he was unwelcome. The bird was telling him to 'get away'; a message he thought he understood in exactly the way the bird intended. This interaction involves both parties assuming a shared idea of what the communication is about. The event was mutually framed not just by the call but by the actions of both the birder and bird. Framing – that is, the tacit communication about communication that emerges through interaction and contextualizes it – is not a capacity unique to humans. Indeed, when Gregory Bateson[35] first introduced the concept, he mainly used examples of animals signalling that 'this is play' through the way that they bit one another. "The playful nip denotes the bite, but does not denote that which would be denoted by the bite",[36] as Bateson puts it. Map and territory are both equated and differentiated.

Bateson's examples explore framing in different species, but he says less about framing in interactions between species. He does, however, note that play amongst animals tends to look like play to us. Of course, anyone who has ever played with a dog or cat will know that the frame 'this is play' can often be shared in interactions between humans and other animals. But what about birds? Do they play? Do they understand playback as a kind of play? If they do not understand that this is a deception, does it mean that this is not real communication between human and bird? Following Despret,[37] I would argue that play can look like aggression but is in fact something else. This gives on to the potential for territorial displays to be 'good play' for birds, and this could include apparently 'aggressive' responses to playback.

Certainly, communication with birds through interactions in sound is imperfect, but it can still enchant. In an interview I conducted with a skilled bird imitator, John 'Jake' Ward, he discussed his experience of interacting with a bird through mimicking its call:

> I'd really love to know, what are these avian colloquialisms we're exchanging… To know really what I'm saying to them… It's great to feel that you can communicate with something that responds to you, albeit fleetingly or briefly. For that little while, you're on the same level as this creature. And that's wonderful.[38]

To Jake there was something profound being exchanged but its meaning, to him at least, remained elusive. The bird presumably had a better grasp of what the interaction involved than he did, even if it was being

34 Anonymous, 2007, E-mail correspondence with the author.
35 Bateson 1972.
36 Bateson 1972: 183.
37 Despret 2022: 121.
38 Ward 2007.

deceived in some respects. Despite the ambiguity of the encounter, Jake felt a kind of enchantment akin to that felt by Veronique Servais's[39] collaborators who swim with dolphins. I too have felt a kind of elation when interacting with birds through sound, particularly when I am able to generate the sounds myself, but also in careful and skilled encounters such as that with the Stresemann's bristlefront.

Playback and the Aesthetics of Birding

The theme of the aesthetics of birding is prominent in ethical discussions of playback, particularly in terms of whether the 'right' way to do birding is to experience nature as a detached observer or through engaged and responsive interaction, as described above. In discussions of the appropriate use of playback, some emphasize that the presence of other birders needs taking into consideration, while others suggest that playback may be regarded as 'cheating'.[40] These concerns arise because the use of playback could confuse other birders (who may wrongly think they are hearing the 'real' bird) or it could disrupt their own experience and ideals of birds and birding. The latter suggests that, in a related way, playback use goes against the proper practice of birding. Playback is, perhaps, impolite, both to birds and other birders. This is echoed in Magnus and Bhattacharya's[41] work with Estonian birders, in which many of the ethical practices discussed involve avoiding disturbance to other birders.

These tensions around politeness and the aesthetics of birding are exemplified in ornithologist and birder Lauryn Benedict's discussion of her own use of playback.

> In my scientific role, I favour the use of playback. We have learned much about the personal communications of birds by using this technique. As a birder, though, I prefer not to use playback. For me, it isn't a moral issue. I recognize that birders can use playback ethically and I support anyone's choice to do so. Instead, it's because when I go birding I just want to see what happens in the natural state of the world. My field experiments are always tightly controlled with a clear process to follow and specific observations to collect. On birding excursions, I want the opposite of that. I want to imagine I'm not a player in the avian dramas that unfold in front of me. I want to spend whatever time it takes to observe whatever I can. Often, I see the most exciting and intimate details by making myself inconspicuous.[42]

Here, there is an acknowledgement that bird sound science needs the interactions that follow the controlled use of playback to elicit revealing behavioural responses, but that birding should, for Benedict at least, involve a sense that the birder is outside 'uncontrolled nature' looking in and the birds behave as if there was no human watching them. As such, playback is partly problematic because it confounds the idea of birders as detached observers. Birding was actively constructed in the middle of the twentieth century, particularly in Britain, as a kind of amateur science in which birders, aided by binoculars and often sitting in hides, would observe the actions of birds in as natural a way as possible because the observers would be invisible to the birds.[43] Birders should be inconspicuous, and the visual technologies of binoculars, telescopes, and cameras create a perceptual experience of birds as separated objects for study in nature rather than as interacting subjects in a shared social world. This aesthetic of birding creates the sense that birds should not be disturbed by skilled birders. Even though there is always likely to be disturbance, particularly where hides are not used, the sense that nature is being experienced without human interference is built into the idea of the birder as detached observer and into the visual emphasis in birding that 'puts the world at a distance'.[44]

39 Servais 2005.
40 Sibley 2011; Benedict 2019.
41 Magnus and Bhattacharya 2023.
42 Benedict 2019: 50–51.
43 Macdonald 2002; Davis 2020.
44 Willerslev 2007.

Comparison can be made here with the scientists who study meerkats, described by Matei Candea.[45] They maintain a polite distance from the animals and do not intrude even when individual lives are threatened. Playback, conversely, is a deliberate intrusion into the bird's life to elicit interaction. Sibley[46] argues that this kind of intrusion is not necessarily a problem, and may even be a good thing, so long as it is done sensitively and not too frequently. Proliferating digital technologies threaten 'good playback' because it becomes easily accessible to large numbers of unskilled users who will play sounds in the wrong way and too frequently to the same birds. Rather than being an occasional, subtly presented intrusion that resembles encounters a bird will sometimes respond to, playback potentially becomes a relentless onslaught of unnaturally loud songs, played too frequently. For Sibley, if playback is not done with care, it can disturb both the bird's nature and the birder's experience of nature. Playback needs to be courteous to both.

Politeness may not necessarily be about detachment, as Barbara Smuts[47] and Donna Haraway[48] have argued. For Smuts researching baboons, she needed to engage with the baboons and be acknowledged by them to allow the baboons to relax. In this context, the baboons perceived the human researcher as a social being in their world and for the researcher to act as if they were outside of that world looking in was the height of impoliteness. But do birds, particularly the small, unobtrusive birds that are often the focus of playback, see humans as part of their social world in the way baboons saw Smuts? The answer to the question might change when we consider birds and humans as interacting in sound rather than through visual perceptions of other bodies.

Birds, even those that are rather solitary, create social worlds through sound. Indeed, by singing their territories, birds collectively as well as individually create a relationally organized space in which different songs give a sense of positionality. Here, I am reminded of Candea's discussion of meerkat calls:

> All the while, however, a constant pattern of quiet calls produces a sort of social echolocation system, keeping individuals aware of each other's position. Crucially, this loose, relaxed form of environmental co-presence is not unlike the kind of tolerant relationship these meerkats have with members of other species: some birds, cattle, and, indeed, human researchers.[49]

Singing is not simply aggressive territoriality[50] but also creates relations of tolerance. In this argument, Despret, following ornithologist James Fisher, emphasizes that birds are social, and that territoriality is thus also inherently social. The 'dear enemy' hypothesis that arises from the sociality of territory means that creating territory also means creating a neighbourhood that can have mutually beneficial effects across territorial relations. As such, being tolerant of neighbours is necessary. Playback can either fit in with these neighbourly relations or it can disrupt them and deterritorialize spaces. In doing so, it can enable new social relations with humans who, for the bird, sound like they themselves do.

There is still a widespread assumption in discussions of playback ethics that birding should involve detached relations that, while creating a sense of observational engagement, do not disturb the birds and do not test their tolerance. Interactions, as happens with playback use, have effects, although these effects can be hard to follow, particularly in the short-term. But effects in more detached observational practices are also hard to detect. Birds may appear tolerant but could be stressed. They may also leave an area unseen simply because of the presence of humans. Indeed, Watson et al.[51] emphasize that although playback may cause disturbance, it can potentially reduce other kinds of disturbance. Since it

45 Candea 2010.
46 Sibley 2011.
47 Smuts 2001.
48 Haraway 2008.
49 Candea 2010: 247.
50 Despret 2022.
51 Watson et al. 2019.

speeds up the process of seeing a species and can be directed at one species alone, birders will spend less time in areas and will potentially disturb the ecosystem and other birds much less.

Birds as Ethical Subjects

Much of the discussion about the ethics of playback and the aesthetics of birding that surrounds it is vague about how birds should be understood and related to. Since the predominant philosophical approach is utilitarian, there is an emphasis on the degree of suffering and disturbance that birds endure because of playback use. In this kind of approach, the effects need to be quantifiable to be knowable. This raises two questions. First, what happens when effects are not measurable? Second, what if birds are not just bodies that are affected in quantifiable ways but ethical subjects that have their own *ethical* view on the interaction? This raises the further question of how birders might come to understand such a view.

Sibley[52] emphasizes that not all birds respond in the same way to playback and sometimes it can attract birds to breed and increase numbers. Even within the same species there are variations, with young birds responding more vigorously than older birds. There are also what appear to be inquisitory birds, such as the female Stresemann's bristlefront I described earlier, who are curious and seem to interact with the sound rather than trying to aggressively repel an intruder. As such, there is no one way that birds will respond, even within the same species. Even if effects are measurable, they are not easily generalizable. This is partly why playback use needs to be careful and responsive.

The question of birds as ethical subjects has the potential to shift the way playback is understood and evaluated. Elizabeth Oriel[53] has considered how animal ethics could develop if principles of other than human subjectivity are introduced, for example along the lines of many indigenous ideas of personhood. In these principles, other-than-human beings of various kinds can be regarded as persons with moral agency who make judgements and act ethically, e.g. in relations of reciprocity. As Paul Nadasdy[54] reports from his research with Kluane in Alaska, they regard it as quite matter of fact for animals to give themselves to hunters, as an injured rabbit apparently did for Nadasdy himself when it appeared at his house having initially escaped a snare that he had set. For many Indigenous peoples, animal personhood emerges relationally through observation of how animals respond to actions.[55] Building on relational ideas of nonhuman personhood and the work of Oriel, I argue that in considering ethical responses to playback it is possible to go beyond models that see animals as either Cartesian machines that react instinctively, or as animal bodies that measurably suffer in response to human actions. Instead, we could begin with different premises that concede that birds may have a view on the sort of interactions engendered by playback and that they respond to playback as part of their own inhabitation of a world that they and their territorial neighbours have relationally established. If we consider the possibility that interactions between humans and wild birds can be viewed positively by birds rather than starting from the premise that it is inherently bad to interfere in nature and natural processes, then new ways of assessing playback could arise. Following Oriel's own encounters with bears,[56] playback could be reimagined as a means of making acquaintance with a bird, and of the bird making our acquaintance. This does not mean that the encounter is inherently good, but it begins by assuming that it is a situation in which both parties are trying to learn something about one another and the sounds they are interacting inquisitively through. What are brought into being through playback are not simply measurable effects on animal bodies but new relations, with all their potential for deterritorialization and reterritorialization. As Anna Tsing notes in her work on matsutake mushrooms, "[d]isturbance can

52 Sibley 2011.
53 Oriel 2014.
54 Nadasdy 2007.
55 Ingold 2021 [2000]: 123; Bird-David 1999.
56 Oriel 2014: 56.

renew ecologies as well as destroy them."[57] What is being disturbed through deterritorialization and reterritorialization is a relational field, but this disturbance can be productive and regenerative if playback is conducted skilfully and in ways that facilitate inquisitory approaches by birds who are curious about their neighbours rather than demonstrating aggressive territoriality.[58]

These themes can also arise when considering the technique known as pishing, another form of human sound-making that elicits an inquisitory response from birds. Pishing is an onomatopoeic term for an easily made 'spish' sound that mimics some scolding alarm calls and encourages a variety of species to investigate. Some authors[59] and birders[60] imply that pishing could be more problematic than playback because it is inherently about getting birds overexcited and stressed and is also general rather than species-specific in its effects. Conversely, the American birder Pete Dunne[61] has written about 'the art of pishing' and claims that investigating the sounds breaks up what is otherwise a boring life of seeking out food. In this sense, humans become a kind of entertainment for birds, as much as they are entertainment for birders. This is a reminder that we can consider the human-bird relations of birding and sound-making as inquisitory and playful rather than inherently stressful and intrusive. The interventions of playback might then be reconceived, if practiced skilfully, as offering potential for a more convivial understanding and more positively interactive relations between humans and birds.

Although responses to playback are assumed to be primarily territorial, the nature of territoriality itself is complex. As Despret has argued through her analysis of ethological research, territoriality is not necessarily aggressive but can involve curiosity and tolerant, relational neighbourliness. Territories are dynamic, so territorial responses to playback are also dynamic and sometimes unpredictable. This means that care and skill are required to use playback effectively and, perhaps, to avoid damaging disturbance. This is because the sound needs to emerge in the right way, by moving correctly, having the right pattern and volume, and being in the right kind of place. The common assumption that the bird is being 'fooled' because it fails to understand the 'real' source of the sound underpins the principal ethical concern of playback use: that overuse leads to birds becoming 'played out' and thus not naturally responsive to territorial intrusion. This argument arises from the ontological separation of the sound and its source, which leads to the bird rejecting the sound from playback because it fails to coincide with the presence of a 'real bird'. However, if the sound is understood ontologically as 'the bird' as much as the material organism is, then playback can be reinterpreted as an inquisitory interaction in sound that is embedded in the intra- and inter-species relations of neighbourly territoriality. Arguments put forward for 'good' playback emphasize that appropriate use of sound is more likely to be taken as a manifestation of a bird because the sound will emerge in a convincingly bird-like way. Another kind of ontological separation is implicated in a second ethical argument against the use of playback: the intrusion of a human into the natural dynamics of bird behaviour. Though in part this reflects a concern to avoid impoliteness to other birders, birding is often envisaged in terms of detached observation in which birds are unaffected by human actions. Thus, ethical arguments about playback reveal an anxiety about the loss of nature, both from a bird that is played out and from an experience of birding that disturbs nature. By reconfiguring birds as ethical subjects, however, new ways of understanding playback encounters with birds emerge. Encounters between two sound-making subjects interacting responsively can build new relations and can be playful, inquisitory and potentially good, for both humans and birds.

57 Tsing 2015: 160.
58 Despret 2022: 143.
59 Johnson and Maness 2018.
60 Magnus and Bhattacharya 2023: 15.
61 Dunne 2006.

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Tùn Resùn: Walking in the Sounding Forest

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Abstract: *This paper is based on interviews and conversations conducted while walking through the 'Klangwald', a 'sounding forest' in the Swiss mountains that features various musical instruments. While our initial intent was to reflect on hearing and listening to all the sounds of the forestscape, our walking conversations revealed a much more holistic sensory experience, and we began to ask the broader question of what it means to sensorially be in and move through the forest. Drawing on anthropology of the senses (Le Breton 2017 [2006]) and expanding on Tim Ingold's work on movement, knowledge, description, and being in the world (2011), we propose a 'sensory walking ethnography'. By walking alongside people as we interview them, the conversation – like the walking itself – becomes an experiential and sensorial process rather than a purely linguistic and semantic one. Thus, we explore not only people's perceptions of the forest environment but also a methodology for investigating that perception. Accompanying interviewees as they articulated what they were sensing – particularly in the liminal spaces and concepts between within and outside of the forest, sound and silence, and constancy and change – provided a deeper understanding of how people relate to, experience, and perceive their lived environment.*

Introduction

Located on the southern slope of an alpine valley in Switzerland at an elevation of 1,600 meters, *tùn resùn* – 'Klangwald' or 'sounding forest' – was created by the mountain farmers of Lohn two decades ago to attract more visitors for their newly built restaurant. The trail leads through a forest of larch and spruce trees and is outfitted with various musical instruments such as litho- and xylophones and other sounding items, including windchimes made of cow rib bones and a stack of different-sized cowbells. Visitors are encouraged to engage with their surroundings by making and listening to all the sounds in the forest, including those that are not human made.

Tùn resùn, the name of the trail in the local language of Romansh, is literally translated as 'resonating sound'.[3] It reflects the sounds of the locals' lives with the forest and represents how they hear *tùn resùn* (Fig. 1). Our initial intent was to take up this focus on hearing and listening in our research, in order to add an often-neglected sonic element to the small body of existing work on anthropology on foot.[4] For example, in *Ways of Walking: Ethnography and Practice on Foot* edited by Tim Ingold and Jo Lee Vergunst, a variety of walking behaviours are considered, but the sense of hearing and the act of listening to the sonic environment are largely absent. Where sound is mentioned, it is often reduced to verbal sound: the 'listening' in Katrín Lund's chapter, "Listen to the Sound of Time", refers to listening to a story – a narrative text – rather than to sounds (the sound of bells is mentioned, but only as part of the background description). In the introduction, Ingold and Vergunst argue that ethnographers do much of their work on foot, but do not contemplate the walking itself. We would add to this that anthropologists and ethnomusicologists

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3 The Romansh word *tùn* means 'sound'; *resùn* means 'echo', Lia Rumantscha 1993.
4 See for example Ingold 2010; Ingold and Vergunst 2008; Legat 2008.

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do much of their work through talking and being in a sounding environment, but often do not contemplate those environmental sounds themselves. We therefore intended to pick up where Ingold and Vergunst left off, to foreground not only the act of walking itself, but also its sonic context. This would include not just the sounds of the surrounding forest, but also the sounds of the walking itself – footsteps, breath, clothing – and therefore of humans' sonic presence in the forest.

Fig. 1: Bell tree with wind harp in background, Photograph by Helena Simonett 2023.[5]

Being *in* the forest is, in many ways, an ideal setting for this type of work on sound and hearing. In comparison to looking at a panorama, which one is outside of and separate from, it is immersive, much as hearing is. It is also a space where vision is limited. Being in the forest may thus be understood as a way of 'being *in* rather than *on* the world'; being an *in*habitant rather than an *ex*habitant.[6] This feeling of 'being in the world' rather than 'looking at the world' surfaced at the very beginning of our work, expressed by the first participant in the pilot study, and the idea persisted throughout our interviews even though we never explicitly asked our interlocutors to describe their feelings of the world as being here (Fig. 2).

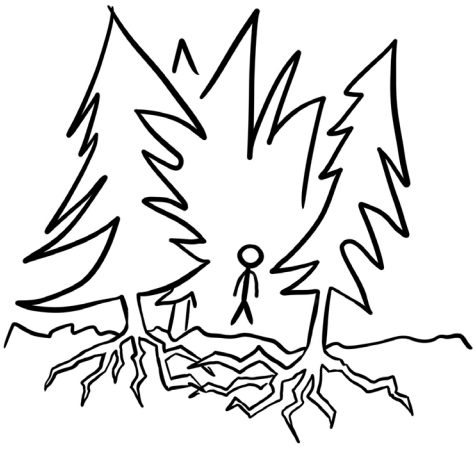

Fig. 2: 'The inhabitant of the tree-world', adapted from Ingold's drawings of the inhabitant vs. exhabitant of the world.

5 https://www.youtube.com/shorts/0AVWe0IYKAs [29.02.2024]. Notice the bells of the cows that forage in the woods. They can also be heard in the last video, see footnote 38.

6 Ingold 2011: 120.

While we will indeed consider sound, hearing and listening, our paper is a very different paper than was anticipated at the outset, both in terms of methodology and in terms of content. Those expectations and their evolution will also be part of our discussion. The paper is thus divided into sections devoted to each element: first, a consideration of form and methodology, in which we propose a sensory anthropology of walking; second, a more content-focussed section based around excerpts from our conversations and what they reveal about experiencing the forest, both sonically and otherwise; and finally, a return to methodology, integrating content into method to expand our initial ideas into a sensory ethnography of walking.

Method and Theory

Why walking with people? Walking as a method has been theorized in anthropology,[7] as well as in the social sciences. While Margarethe Kusenbach has stressed the advantages of the 'go-along' technique over traditional ethnographic methods such as participant observation and interviewing, Penelope Kinney has highlighted how walking creates better conversation flow.[8] The method of discursive walking thus offers a rich and immersive experience that goes beyond traditional forms of conversation or analysis. Fasting and Høyem's work expanded the focus from the walking conversation itself to take into account context and surrounding landscape as the subject of their walking interviews.[9] Yet these perspectives are all focussed on the method of walking while interviewing (foregrounding the interviewing), rather than interviewing while walking (foregrounding the walking), and none deal specifically with sound. Ethnomusicologist Ama Oforiwaa Aduonum's recent article on walking as a method does address sound and the senses, working from the premise that "Walking is a full bodily experience".[10] Aduonum maintains that "[b]ecause all our five [*sic*] senses reinforce each other to provide the intricate ordered and emotion-charged world in which we live […] it is critical to pay attention to our senses and those of the people we walk with or meet along the way".[11] She argues for walking as a crucial part of fieldwork methodology that has been absent from previous discussions of methodology. Expanding on these approaches, in particular Ingold's work on movement, knowledge, description, and being in the world,[12] and integrating work on sensory ethnography,[13] we propose a sensory anthropology of walking.

Our method consisted of walking conversations with people who often spend time outdoors walking and in forests, many of whom know the Klangwald intimately. There were seven women and two men, two of whom were residents, three long-time visitors, and four guests in the village. We casually invited them to participate and walked with each person for about an hour.[14] We accompanied them, with recording devices, and always took the same route. As we walked together, the interlocutors were invited to talk about what they sensed, and to pause when they felt they needed time to either savour the place or try to verbalize their sensations, compare this forest to others they had experienced, or recall memories. Pausing also offered an opportunity to focus on the senses in a different way – in the absence of walking sounds

7 Ingold 2010; Ingold and Vergunst 2008. See also Legat 2008.
8 Kinney 2017. For other work in social sciences, see Anderson 2004; Edensor 2008, 2010; Kusenbach 2003; Middleton 2010; Oppezzo and Schwartz 2014; Wherton et al. 2019; Wunderlich 2008.
9 Fasting and Høyem 2022.
10 Aduonum 2021: 240.
11 Aduonum 2021: 224. The debate concerning the number of human senses has been a subject of contention. While traditionally, the five senses – sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch – have been widely acknowledged, other senses such as movement (vestibular sense) and bodily position (proprioception) are increasingly considered as well, and it is often these senses that are foregrounded when walking in a forest environment.
12 Ingold 2011.
13 See, for example, Pink 2009.
14 The interview quotes are not attributed individually, but rather, presented as a collage. All interviews were conducted on fair-weather days in the snow-free months between spring and the end of summer 2022. We express our gratitude to our interlocutors for accompanying us through the forest.

and the sensory attention needed for movement and navigation. We only asked questions to follow up on something they said during the conversations.

Accompanying interlocutors as they articulate what they are sensing provides a deeper understanding of how they relate to, experience, perceive, and interpret their lived environment. Place and the individual are intricately intertwined and mutually constitutive. By being there together and trying to hear the things they described, we could understand what they were referring to much better than if they reported on it afterwards, especially if they used different descriptors than we ourselves might have chosen. Accompanying them during their experience also allowed us to observe non-verbal communication, whether designed to convey something to us (such as pointing) or not (such as turning to look in the direction of a sound or brushing their fingertips over grasses on the edge of the trail).

Previous work on the anthropology of walking supports our own observations, from Tim Edensor's assertion that narrative alone cannot capture the embodied experience of the walker[15] to Ingold and Vergunst's foregrounding of the real-time aspect of walking and their argument that the parallels between walking and talking makes for an ideal marriage of the two.[16] Being mobile affords a different engagement with spaces,[17] and there is an acknowledged potential of walking interviews for exploring the link between self and place[18] and interviewees' understanding of place.[19] Kinney argues that, from a purely functional perspective, talking flows more easily while walking because interviewees have natural pausing spots in which to think (e.g. navigating obstacles or crossing a road) rather than building in unnatural pauses common to stationary interviews. Her work recognizes that "[t]he walking interview provides the researcher with an opportunity to observe and not just hear an account".[20]

By walking alongside people as we talked with them, the conversation – like the walking itself – became an experiential and sensorial process rather than a purely linguistic and semantic one. We found that being present with people in real time as they describe their experiences offers an immediacy that is not possible in a decontextualized interview. We believe that exploring an ecological approach to perception might avoid some of the pitfalls inherent in a purely linguistic or semiotic perspective so common in disciplines concerned with sound.

Walking Conversations

Sound, Hearing, and Listening

Despite the forest's framing as a 'sound trail', most people we walked with chose not to play the instruments along the way; those who did made carefully considered choices about which ones to play, based on how they perceived them to fit into the forest soundscape as well as on the tactile feel of the instrument. However, sounds certainly received attention along the trail. One person noted "there's a tomtit" and his wife added "wee-wit" in imitation of the bird. The same couple mentioned the funny sound of walking on dry pinecones, noticed that "[t]he wind is loud in the larches and pines", and commented extensively on different water sounds:

— It's different than the Platera [creek next to their house in the village], which is much more even because it's steeper and has more water.
— Here it gurgles [pointing to a specific spot].
— The murmur of the brook, for me, is Lohn [village].
— The splishing sounds almost like summer rain – strong rain.
— Water splashing on stones sounds different.

15 Edensor 2008.
16 Ingold and Vergunst 2008.
17 Moles 2008.
18 Evans and Jones 2011.
19 Jones et al. 2008.
20 Kinney 2017.

The sounds of mobile elements, such as the chirping of birds and the buzzing of insects, or the rumbling of vehicles passing by on the adjacent road, tended to draw special attention. This heightened awareness could be attributed to their movement as they traverse the comparatively more constant sonic atmosphere of the forest itself. Moreover, people's nuanced and ecological understanding of sound, which takes into account its relational and experiential dimensions, underscores Ingold's critique of the soundscape concept which tends to reduce sound to a mere object of analysis, akin to the study of visual landscapes or images.[21]

Instead of being viewed merely as a soundscape, the sonic environment of the forest may be better understood and conceptualized as an atmosphere. Musicologist Friedlind Riedel has argued that "atmosphere directs attention to the ways in which a rhythm or sound translates itself into the environment, and in doing so, modulates a situation in its entirety and pulls all bodies within reach into a relation".[22] The term encapsulates the intricate interplay and entanglement of various entities, whether human or nonhuman, within the surrounding context.[23]

As various of our interlocutors pointed out, sound is immersive, locating the listener *in* rather than *on* the world. In *Sensing the World*, anthropologist David Le Breton captures the unique aspect of the sense of hearing: "Sound possesses the virtue of being able to interrupt the existing temporality and instantly create a new ambiance delineating and unifying an event's manifestations. A change in sound demarcates and transforms the atmosphere of a place".[24] Furthermore, building upon Riedel's proposition, it is emphasized that sounds (and music) are not merely objects within the world, but rather they serve as modes of experiencing and engaging with the world.[25] Sounds (and music) have a unique capacity to facilitate atmospheric relations and afford particular experiences.

From Hearing to Holistic Sensory Experience

Hearing and listening do indeed have certain characteristics and possibilities, which were very much foregrounded by the 'auditory turn'. By highlighting the significance of sound and listening as essential components of human experience, the auditory turn challenged the visual bias that had dominated many fields of inquiry, particularly in the humanities.[26]

Nonetheless, the newfound emphasis on the sense of hearing inadvertently resulted in further dividing the overall sensory experience. The issue with such dichotomization and hierarchization of auditory and visual perception arises from the longstanding history of dualistic thinking in Western philosophical and scientific discourses.[27] Singling out sound just reinforces this false dichotomy. It also gives an incomplete picture because sensory experience does not occur as isolated senses, but rather is integrated. As Ingold posits, "the environment that we experience, know and move around in is not sliced up along the lines of the sensory pathways by which we enter into it".[28]

Our initial focus on hearing was largely a product of our discipline and of the context within which this work began: a project titled "Seeking Birdscapes: Contemporary Listening and Recording Practices in Ornithology and Environmental Sound Art".[29] With the project's clearly defined focus on sound and sonic

21 See his essay titled "Four Objections to the Concept of Soundscape", Ingold 2011: 136–139.
22 Riedel 2021: 29.
23 Riedel and Torvinen 2021.
24 Le Breton 2017 (2006): 83.
25 Riedel 2021: 4.
26 One important precursor to the auditory turn was the rise of sound studies as an interdisciplinary field of inquiry (Schafer 1994 [1977]). Sound studies gained traction in the 1990s and early 2000s, drawing attention to the social, cultural, and historical dimensions of sound. The exploration of auditory phenomena is evident in various interconnected disciplines, including anthropology, ethnomusicology, musicology, and phenomenology (see Allen and Dawe 2015; Bull and Back 2003; Born 2013; Ihde 1976; Steintrager and Chow 2019).
27 See Simonett 2014.
28 Ingold 2011: 136.
29 The project "Seeking Birdscapes: Contemporary Listening and Recording Practices in Ornithology and Environmental Sound Art" (2019–2023) was sponsored by the Swiss National Science Foundation (#182813).

relationships between humans and birds, it is unsurprising that the first of questions we asked people centred on sound. However, over the course of our fieldwork in the Klangwald, we became aware that this approach was likely way too narrow and might perhaps even be a trap of sorts: asking only about the acoustic relationship yields answers that single out hearing. By contrast, without prompts, people did not only focus on the sonic (even if they knew about our project). Our intention is thus not to make a new hierarchy where hearing takes the place of vision to supersede other senses, but rather to argue that all the senses are entangled with each other to make what – in visual terms – would be referred to as the 'big picture', and all the more so in the context of moving and walking. While considerations of sound certainly remain important, our walking conversations revealed a much more holistic sensory experience, and we began broadening our scope from the purely auditory to be more generally interested in what it means to sensorially be in and move through the forest.

Our Klangwald conversations revealed just how inextricable all the senses were, especially when engaged in the act of walking. People touched plants or tree bark as they passed by, or they were bent down to touch the moist moss on the forest floor; one mentioned seeking big rocks or surface roots to step on and feel in the palm of her foot "like a little massage"; a few spoke of the feel of the sun on their backs when stepping out of the tree cover into a more open part of the trail. While some descriptions were about just one sense, more often they were about multiple senses at the same time:

— Walking on rocks I'm aware of the sound, but also of proprioception – I'm focusing on not slipping, while also feeling the size and shape of individual large rocks under my feet.
— The buzzing of insects plus the sun plus the grass smell feels like summer.
— I really like waterfalls. It's constant noise that drowns out other noise. And it's pleasant. And it's usually shady and it's usually cool.

Moving into the forest, the path narrows and angles downwards. There are surface roots to navigate, forcing one to pay close visual attention to foot placement, balance, and proprioception. Attention to the ground was not only visual but also auditory, leading people to hear *into* the earth – the hollow sound between the dense roots. One person commented: "Walking over the roots is a very hollow sound. Surface roots sound very different" (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3: Photograph by Helena Simonett 2023.

Shortly after entering the forest there is a stream. People consistently paused at that spot as well as at another water crossing later along the trail. Most stooped to feel the coolness of the flowing water. Footing across the damp rocks needed careful visual and proprioceptive attention (Fig. 4–6). The smell – of freshness, of mud, of shade-growing plants and mushrooms – was uppermost in people's minds. Although a number of people talked about the different burbling and gurgling sounds, most only mentioned hearing the water once they had talked about other senses.

Fig. 4–6: Photographs by Helena Simonett 2022.[30]

Walking was simultaneously heard as sounds and felt as surface textures. One person noted: "Stepping on this soil here feels great because of the water – there's moss and grass and it's soft. It's not hard and sharp and dry" and when asked whether it sounded different, he replied: "Oh yeah. You hear crunching but it's when you step on something, not the constant crunch crunch crunch. And you're constantly changing the texture that you're walking on – sometimes it's mud, sometimes it's grass, sometimes it's soil like this, sometimes it's rock" (Fig. 7 and 8).

Fig. 7 and 8: Photographs by Helena Simonett 2022.

Walking on different surfaces was also accompanied by different smells, and the sense of smell was primary for many interlocutors. One commented: "It smells like pine needles. Not like grass. It smells different because it's pine needles… It also smells different when we walk [crushing dried pine needles and cones]". The people who reached out to touch and brush the foliage as they moved often brought their hands to their noses to smell the grasses and plants. Thus, the forest experience spirals and weaves from one sense to another and back in a non-linear and non-hierarchical manner. A number

30 https://www.youtube.com/shorts/qvCrGzw8PLQ [29.02.2024].

of people even said this explicitly: "You can't isolate one sense, perception is holistic. And in terms of walking there's different ground. It would be awful if you did nothing but listen to the forest. Forests are made of far more than just birds!" One long-time resident even proposed that "[m]aybe there should be a new station on the sound trail about general perceptions, not just sound. For example, touch. If it said 'Sinneswahrnehmung' ['sensory perception'] instead of 'Klangwald' people would go through very differently".

Hearing in any environment is not just hearing because the other senses are still there and active. Moreover, not only can the senses not be disentangled and isolated, but it was also the act of walking itself that revealed these sensory connections. Moving and walking in the forest may also serve to foreground senses other than vision because the eyes are already busy with the act of walking itself, as portrayed by one interlocutor:

> I feel like when I'm walking, I have to be looking at where I'm walking just because of not falling over. For me, seeing the woods is from being still, because my eyes can't do both of those things at the same time. Like just now, I thought to myself, 'maybe I should look at some things' but then realized 'oh I can't do that when I'm walking'.

In *Sensing the World*, Le Breton maintains:

> 'I sense therefore I am' is another way of saying that the human condition is not only spiritual or mental, but first and foremost, embodied. An anthropology of the senses implies being immersed in the world, being within, not in front of it, and allowing sensuality to inform one's writing and analysis. The body is a profusion of sensory experience. It is absorbed in the movement of the world and mingles with it through all its senses.[31]

Walking along with our interviewees allowed us to observe first-hand their experience of integrating different senses, in a way that would likely not have been conveyed through a purely verbal exchange. The foregrounding of sensory experience as we encountered all these aspects of walking ethnography lead us in the direction of sensory ethnography, described by anthropologist Sarah Pink as a "way of doing ethnography that takes as its starting point the multisensoriality of experience, perception, knowing and practice" and "accounts for how this multisensoriality is integral both to the lives of people who participate in our research *and* to how we ethnographers practice our craft".[32] Later on, Pink argues that if knowing is rooted in practice, then "to 'know' as others do, we need to engage in practices with them".[33] Walking interviews, where we could observe people's interactions with their surroundings, was precisely this type of engagement *with*, and helped bring us closer to 'knowing as others do'.

Over the course of our interviews and theorizing, our method therefore came to rest at the nexus of walking anthropology and sensory ethnography, not just a sonic, but a sensory walking ethnography.

Analysis, Reflection, and Interpretation

The interaction and inextricability of the senses was essential to two themes that arose while we walked: 'liminality, transition, and threshold' and 'sound and silence'. These came up unprompted throughout and also in the responses to a few questions we asked at the conclusion of the walks, such as:

— How would you describe the experience of moving into the forest and moving out of the forest?
— Was walking with us a different experience than when you walk alone, and if so, how?
— We've talked a lot about 'natural sounds' – what makes a sound 'natural'?

31 Le Breton 2017 [2006]: 1.
32 Pink 2009: 1.
33 Pink 2009: 34.

Liminality, Transition, and Threshold

The descriptive language used by many interviewees implies a sense of entering and exiting the forest – 'being *in* the forest'; 'going *into* the forest' – and therefore crossing a threshold of sorts. It was very clear to people when they were in and when they were not in the woods. One commented that "approaching the water feels like approaching a little private place, like going into something. Not like a little hole, but it feels like going into something". Another stated definitively "now we're leaving the Wald". One response to the question "How is it to step out of the forest?" was:

> I feel like in my brain I started to step out of the forest when we got down there. I feel like there's a direction, so then my brain sometimes goes ahead. Maybe because I saw the village or the mountain. Maybe that or maybe because it was already along the road. Or because it was a gradual because you started to be 'out of the forest' maybe […] there's a line. There's a feeling like you're going into something. It's not secret, but smaller and quieter and private in a way – although not literally, of course, because it's public land. And stepping out there feels like opening and a breath somehow. Open and light. That's partly just a fact of what I see, but those things feel very different.

In our walking interviews, this act of 'entering the forest' was very much sensorily defined. Within the forest, the smell changes from the warmth, resin, and larch needles of more open areas to the damp, moist smell in the darker and cooler areas. Outside the forest the scents of hay and diesel reigned: "It smells different in the forest. Outside the forest, in the village, it smells like cut hay; in the forest, it doesn't". One person used the evocative term 'Waldduft' – 'forest scent' – to describe the forest smell. In the forest, sounds were muted, the trees blocking sound from outside and the constancy of the flowing water or wind muting other sounds. One participant commented: "I like going into the forest because it's cooler, it's shaded, it smells nicer. It's more sheltered". Someone else felt the opposite, immediately mentioning the enjoyable feeling of the sun on her back when stepping out of the tree cover in contrast to the darker cooler feeling within the forest. A third person compared different parts of the forest, saying: "This side definitely has that more whooshing wind. It feels much more on the edge here than where the water is. Here you're only sort of in the forest". The forest's threshold was thus as much a sensory as a physical material one.

From the Edges to the Centre

In counterpoint to the edges of a space is its centre. Crossing a threshold and entering into a space – moving towards its centre – implies a certain immersion based on physical distance from the edges. But like the threshold, the centre – being in the forest – can also be defined in sensory terms:

> This spot here feels really quiet. It feels like even the wind is quiet. If there are no other people in here, it's sheltered on all sides. There's the water over there but it's muted. If I'm focused, I can hear a vehicle, but it seems in the distance. It feels very like 'oh it's somewhere else' even though it's not much further away than when we're over there, even though it's not really further away.

It is the distinction between being in and being on the world, theorized by Ingold and mentioned by our very first pilot participant, with which we began above, in the context of listening, hearing, and sound. It is Le Breton's "being immersed in the world, being within, not in front of it".[34]

Sound and Silence

A second theme that flowed through multiple conversations was that of sound and silence. Although at first glance this seems to foreground the sense of hearing, it in fact highlights the fallacy of isolating individual senses. Sound and silence are, on the surface, about the sense of hearing, but the forest reveals them to be about so much more. Being in the forest was described as quiet, sometimes even as silent. But that silence

34 Le Breton 2017 [2006]: 1.

and quiet was not only – or not even – about the decibel level or the actual sense of hearing. This was expressed by English speaking interviewees as well as German speakers, but is perhaps best demonstrated by German, where the word 'ruhig' has the double meaning of 'quiet' and 'calm'. Likewise, 'Stille' means both 'silence' and 'tranquility'. Probing beyond people's initial responses revealed this conflation of the sonic with the overall sensory perception: "It is calming for me but not always quiet."[35] When asked if she considers the loudness of the stream as 'Stille' (silence, calm), one person said "yes, because it's grounding and gives you peace". She continued: "Stille isn't always external quiet, but internal, for oneself".[36]

There was also a sense in which noise, when constant such as the stream, came to be experienced as a type of silence, and natural sounds, even if on the louder side (not *ruhig*), were still felt as calming (*beruhigend*):

> — There's something calming about seeing the water going. It's kind of similar to looking up through the trees – not like the pine trees here but deciduous trees that dance a bit. So relaxing – constant but different. Water flowing feels like that – constant but different. Mesmerizing.
> — Sounds were really even and faded in and out. Getting closer to the waterfall, getting further away from the waterfall. The forest has a constant noise that's interrupted by other noises that are random but quickly just turns into the noise that's there, even when it's birds or it doesn't have a pattern.
> — After a while of being in the forest sounds from outside faded away, receded […] at a certain point the balance shifts of what you're hearing outside or inside. It felt a little bit like that there. And then I feel like to fit with that new feeling I get a little bit quieter or slower.

Silence and quiet (*Ruhe*) were also intimately connected to movement: "The world isn't quiet [*ruhig*] at all because everything moves – plants, trees". This connection between sound and movement extended to human movement. One person said, "When I'm walking there are always sounds", referring to her own sounds in addition to those around her. This individual found the sound of some instruments pleasant enough but said she wouldn't play them herself because "I find the Wald has enough noises [from our walking]".

The 'silence' of the forest was thus more about a sense of internal quiet and peace derived from the surroundings than from sound: a holistic sensory and emotional experience expressed as a sonic one by condensing it into a word associated with the sense of hearing. Indeed, the German word for feeling or 'vibe' or 'mood' is also sound-related: 'Stimmung' ('Stimme' means 'voice'). Thus, linguistically, sound serves as a stand-in for sensory experience overall.

The Klangwald's sound-based name and the presence of the instruments also influence how many people experience it, whether (selectively) playing instruments or being prompted to think about sound where they might otherwise not have done so. We found that the instruments, when played by others, made one aware of *other people's* sonic presence in the forest, and in response, one's own presence became more noticeable (although one's own sounds – walking, breathing, etc. – were audible all along). When asked how the walk might have felt different without the instruments to engage with, one person said: "There wouldn't have been the same purpose. It would have been just being in the woods to experience the woods. The absence of those things would have probably allowed me to think more about the actual woods part. […] Knowing there's another thing, you want to go see the next thing". We have thus come full circle to the sonic, not in the way we first anticipated but rather in a way that highlights how hearing and listening are inextricably bound to the other senses, and how the idea of sound (through the understanding of silence) often refers to something beyond that which we hear.

Conclusion: Walking, Sounding, Sensing, Talking

We had initially hoped to expand Ingold and Vergunst's 'anthropology of walking' to focus on and include the sonic context of walking and the acts of hearing and listening to it. As we walked, we found that it was

35 "Es ist beruhigend für mich, aber nicht immer ruhig".
36 https://www.youtube.com/shorts/76W2DS83JZQ [29.02.2024].

necessary to broaden our scope to include all the senses. Thus, rather than advocating for a sonic walking ethnography, we instead propose a sensory walking ethnography.

Putting words to knowing and sensing and then conveying them to another individual is an enormous challenge in studying ecological perception. Walking alongside people as they encountered the forest did not eradicate the semiotic and linguistic challenges, but it did allow us to move just a little closer to their experience by witnessing in real time a different perspective than our own. In a way, our methodology occupies the liminal spaces between the experiential and semantic, just as the experience itself does. Indeed, one participant noticed and reflected on the difficulty of verbalizing this type of sensory experience:

> While we were talking, I noticed the feet noises and rustling etc. but really didn't pay attention to it. I would've also ignored quiet bird noise. It's kind of magical it does that. When I'm talking and thinking then I'm a little bit out of that magical 'being-in-the-forest' feeling. I don't know if I would have ignored it or moved at that same pace if it was just me alone. Talking and being are different ways of knowing – even though I'm very verbal, it's different to be verbal to someone else. So even if I have an internal monologue, it's different.

Moving through the forest – and the world – each sense provides a partial perspective on a complex whole that is perceptible through the coordinated use of multiple senses, integrated differently by each individual. In Le Breton's words:

> Perception is not conterminous with the objective world but a form of interpretation. Every individual navigates a sensory universe tied to a personal history born of his or her education. Walking in the same forest, different individuals are sensitive to different stimuli. […] [A] thousand forests in one, a thousand realities in a single mystery that remains hidden and yields its secrets only in fragments. There is no true forest, only a multitude of perceptions based on one's perspectives, expectations, and social and cultural affiliations.[37]

Walking ethnography became both our method (in that we were doing ethnography while walking) and our content (in that walking was the means through which people sensed the forest *while walking*). Walking means sensing in a very specific way whereby the walking itself becomes a means of sensing and knowing, and walking ethnography as a method allows us to sense *with* people.[38]

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37 Le Breton 2017 [2006]: 1–2.

38 Walking "with *other* persons" opens yet another perspective of sensing the world: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9rZHB9Zbo8 [29.02.2024]. See also Markus Wild's philosophical reflections on perceiving the environment differently when walking with his companion dog Titus (Wild und Hunderich 2018).

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Sharp, Loud, Fast, Fierce: Encounters with a Gannetry

Emily Doolittle, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland[1] *(essay and music) and Dawn Wood (poetry)*

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Keywords: music, composition, poetry, clarinet, collaboration, creativity, birds, gannets

Gannetry is a collaborative music-and-text piece by poet Dawn Wood and me, composer Emily Doolittle, written for and with clarinettist Joanna Nicholson as part of the *Modern Chants* project in 2021. *Modern Chants*, a large-scale multi-disciplinary collaboration conceived and organized by composer Rūta Vitkauskaitė and funded by Creative Scotland and the PRS Foundation, explores contemporary, historical, mythological, and linguistic connections between people and nature in Scotland through an interweaving collection of musical works, poems, stories, artwork, and soundwalks. It has been performed in an ever-evolving series of formats including online, in person, and through participatory workshops, and also includes composers Gemma McGregor and Ellie Cherry, violist Katherine Wren, and sound designer Chris Adams. All participants have longstanding interests in connecting with the natural world through the arts: this project thus provided the opportunity for us to develop our pieces in dialogue with one another.

I came to Scotland as an adult, first as a short-term resident in 2007, 2010, and 2014, then permanently, beginning in 2015. As such I have particularly strong memories of some of my first encounters with Scottish nature: indeed, it is these encounters that kept drawing me back here, and eventually led me to make it my home. One such memory is of singing to the grey seals at Scalpsie bay on the Isle of Bute and hearing them respond with their soulful, wolf-like howls; another is of wandering the windswept beaches of the Isle of Barra, the sole human, but surrounded by a glorious cacophony of kittiwakes, gulls, oystercatchers, guillemots, and seals, all snuffling and breathing and splashing and calling. Never have I felt so alone, yet simultaneously so deeply enmeshed in the wondrous web of life. *Gannetry* explores my memory of my first encounter with the nesting colony of gannets at Hermaness in Unst, at the north of the Shetland Islands.

The (human) approach to Hermaness gannetry is from inland, a 2-hour walk over well-maintained gravelled and boardwalked paths, all fairly level: nothing prepares one for the sudden appearance of the sea cliffs, which descend 170 metres to the rocky sea below. Thousands of pairs of crying seabirds cover the cliffs, while the air teems with swirling skuas, fulmars, shags, puffins, and, above all, gannets – up to 60,000 of them. The largest seabird in the UK, gannets are also one of the fastest, dropping from the air at 100 kilometres per hour to hunt. They can spot a fish from 40 metres up, and can dive to 20 metres below the ocean's surface to get it.[2] The gannetry resounds with their guttural calls and the visceral clacking sound of beak against beak. People sometimes say 'birdlike' to mean small, delicate, and fragile, but in this context the descriptors that come to mind are sharp, loud, fast, fierce. The feeling of being greatly outnumbered by a powerfully Other kind of life stayed with me.

Our initial planning meetings for *Modern Chants* included some free-form sharing of ideas about our varied relationships with the natural world. I mentioned my fascination with both the sound and presence of gannet colonies, as well as with the word 'gannetry' itself. Simply describing my experience with the

1 Author's e-mail address: e.doolittle@rcs.ac.uk. Thanks to Dawn Wood and Joanna Nicholson for their contributions to and feedback on this essay, and to Rūta Vitkauskaitė and the entire *Modern Chants* team for creating the environment which allowed *Gannetry* to come into being.

2 Garth et al. 2014; Brierley and Fernandes 2001.

Emily Doolittle and Dawn Wood: Sharp, Loud, Fast, Fierce: Encounters with a Gannetry, in: Schweizer Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft – Neue Folge 41 (2024), S. 67–74.

Hermaness gannetry to the other members of *Modern Chants* – the swirling, the diving, the clacking, the sense of being a tiny speck amongst such an alien form of life – brought me back there, and the germ of a piece to come into being. My experience resonated with the experiences of Joanna, who can see the gannets from her home in Aberdeenshire, and Dawn, who watches gannets diving from Kinshaldy Beach in Fife. While encounters with gannets are rare and special for me and Dawn, they make up part of the fabric of Joanna's life. She writes,

> Every day, I look out on gannets from my kitchen window. Their nesting site is a couple of miles away at Troup Head, and domestically, they are quite disgusting. Those cliffs stink, they are overcrowded during residential season, and the noise is perpetual and ugly to human ears. But in flight, what machines. Clinically beautiful in dazzling white, precision killers as they drop into the ocean at theoretically possible speeds of up to 288 kilometres per hour. Interior nostrils, cushioning air sacs under the skin, and skull bones that flex apart are some of the adaptations that preserve their bodies from obliteration as they torpedo into the concrete-like surface of the water. Meanwhile, humans fall over, crash their cars, and then get into arguments about it all.[3]

From the first discussion of gannets and gannetries, the creative process began to take on a life of its own, and it is a bit hard to retroactively deconstruct which ideas came from where. As I recall it, I described a musical idea related to gannetries, Dawn came back with words that resonated perfectly, and Joanna experimented with the sounds she could make to illustrate these on the clarinet. I chatted with a gannet researcher, Jana Jeglinski, for further insight into gannet vocalizations, and the contexts in which they make them. Empirical observations suggested musical ideas, musical ideas suggested poetry, poetry suggested clarinet sounds, clarinet sounds suggested musical structures and timbres, which in turn suggested poetic content. Records of my correspondence with Dawn during *Gannetry*'s creation tell a slightly different story, however: I had already completed the musical score when Ruta asked Dawn if she might write a poem to go with it. Thinking back on this time, I realize I must have been feeling quite uncertain about my composition, as I was experimenting with some musical and notational ideas that were then new to me. The musical score may have already existed, but it was only when Dawn wrote her words that it started to seem real to me.

As a composer, I most often write traditionally-notated (stave-based) music for acoustic instruments. Stave-based notation has the advantages of accurately communicating to the instrumentalist which notes I want them to play and when, but for me wouldn't have expressed the sense of wild energy, the sense of predictability-within-chance and chance-within-predictability of a gannet colony. Indeed, I did not want to structure this piece around notes at all – I wanted to give noisy, unpitched sounds precedence in this piece, with any appearance of pitched sounds being optional and surface-level rather than structural. I realized that a more pictorial approach, 'graphic notation', would in this case best convey the sounds, textures, and structures that I was imagining. Though I'm not a trained visual artist, I had a clear idea of the strokes and patterns that would best represent these ideas, and practised until I was able to execute them. Using the graphics software Inkscape, rather than drawing directly on paper, meant that I could draw and redraw a line or gesture hundreds of times if I needed to get it exactly right, without affecting any past or future gestures on the page. Text supplements the visuals, offering suggestions of how to realize the sounds – layered breaths make waves and wind, keyclicks evoke rain, the clarinet mouthpiece alone suggests seabirds overhead. But the score is not prescriptive: *Gannetry* can be, and has been, interpreted in any number of ways, and by any instrument or group of instruments. For the premiere, composer/performer Ellie Cherry helped us realize the piece by creating a MaxMSP patch to layer Joanna's clarinet playing.[4] Ellie made a pre-recorded soundbank of Joanna's clarinet sounds, which she drew on during the performance, as well as live-processing some of Joanna's sounds. Subsequent performances have included Eileen Walsh performing solo on

3 Nicholson 2023.

4 *Gannet Rock*/*Gannetry* (premiere), performed by Joanna Nicholson (clarinet), Dawn Wood (spoken word) and Ellie Cherry (live electronics).

bass clarinet with a live looping machine,[5] and the Alkali Ensemble performing as a mixed-instrument acoustic quartet.[6] These three realizations of the piece are all very different from each other, but they all hark back to the densely textured, animalian sounds and the spaciousness and rawness of the cliffs, water, and wind of the gannetry.

For me, the piece is about gannets themselves, and about the sense of awe their community inspires. For Joanna it is about the multi-faceted viscerality of living with them daily. For Dawn, it is about these things too, but also has another hidden layer of meaning. Dawn wrote her poem, which is called *Gannet Rock* when read on its own, short days after surgery for breast cancer, when she was experiencing intense nerve pain. She writes:

> The poem *Gannet Rock*, on the surface of things is about seabirds and gannets in particular, because that was your focus, but for me it is about pain. I wrote it during a day of severe pain after my mastectomy, so for me the poem is the unexpectedness of bolts of nerve pain. I had never had a day like it before, nor, I am glad to say, since. From my perspective it was really quite uncanny how the writing of the poem coincided with that particular day and gave it that sort of "energy" for me.[7]

The words of *Gannet Rock* fit so perfectly with my aural and emotive reimagining of the gannetry that it had not occurred to me to ask Dawn if they meant something different to her, though I certainly felt their power. Dawn states that 'this reading of the poem is not foregrounded or made overt in the piece because that wasn't part of the remit of the project, but I'd hope, and suspect, that listeners would bring their own meanings into the words'.[8] Imbuing a poem with multiple levels of meaning, both surface and obscure, is an approach she uses regularly in her work. She continues: 'When I'm writing poetry, sometimes it's helpful to map something that's going on (e.g. the "pain") against the overt subject that needs to be tackled ("gannets") and it's the oscillation between the two that gives creative possibilities and an extra dimension'.[9]

Gannetry grew out of a three-way collaboration between me, Dawn and Joanna, and in discussion with all the *Modern Chants* creators. We each brought our own experiences, aesthetic voices, and artistic visions to bear on the eventual form of the piece. Just as Dawn uses multiple layers of meaning to develop depth in her poetry, the multiple layers of meaning contributed by all three co-creators, as well as by our colleagues, are what gives this piece substance and meaning. Awe, mundanity, disgust, precision, pain, strength, wonder, annoyance, danger, fragility, beauty – all clamouring together like a noisy colony of gannets.

Gannet Rock

Fate whispers to the warrior, 'you cannot withstand this storm' and the warrior whispers back, 'I am the storm'

Maybe at birth, I was a boat setting sail
on the sea of the waves that happen to me
or maybe I was the wave itself,
connected with all the water there is,
and I could aim for that rock, over there
and see what the weather brings my way.

There used to be shamans who worked with the wind,
they'd carefully gather it into knots
and you could pay them for a string
and you'd undo the knots, at sea,
to brace yourself, to get your breath
on the crest of a wave of the shocking nerve

5 *Gannetry*, performed by Eileen Walsh.
6 *Gannetry*, performed by The Alkali Collective.
7 Wood 2023.
8 Wood 2023.
9 Wood 2023.

that you'll withstand, you are the wave,
you tell yourself that there's no harm
in the unexpectedness of rain,
though the randomness of where and when
a drop might fall has been described
in an equation, here and there,

since nothing ever comes from nowhere
and there's no sound without a source –
the circling seabirds contain the proof,
the way that knot could store the wind,
the puffins and the cormorants,
the Leach's petrels, herring gulls,

the fulmars, all fulfil the energy
invested and released in them;
but gimlet eyes make up the rock
where clacking, prehistoric beaks
of gannets guard their modicum of space,
before they plunge through you, the wave.

Dawn Wood, 2021

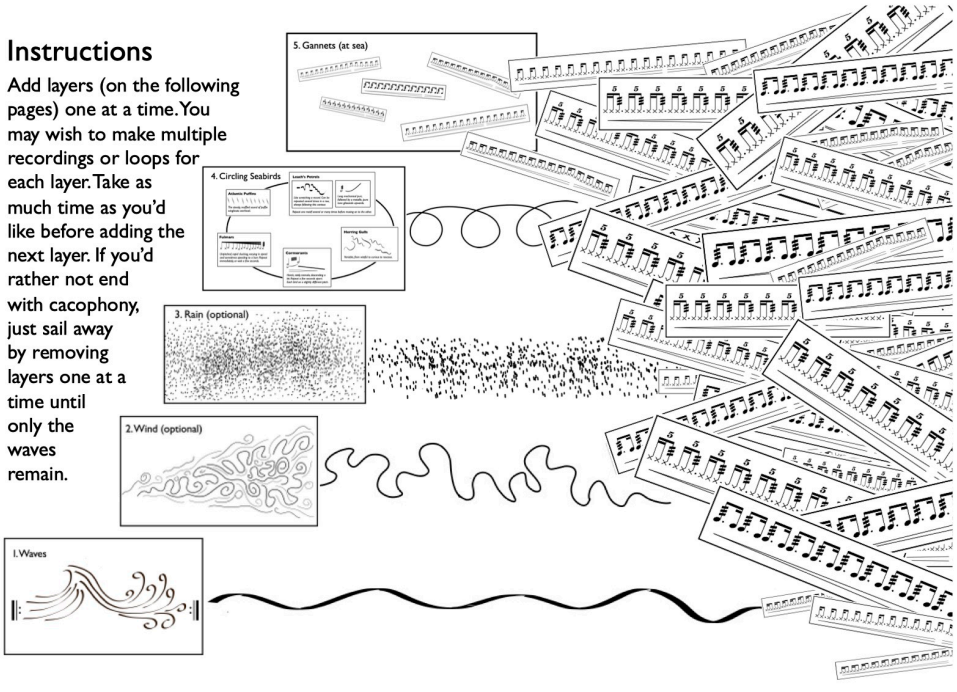
Gannetry

for solo clarinet (any clarinet, or multiple clarinets) and looper or recording device
commissioned by Ruta Vitkauskaite/Modern Chants for Joanna Nicholson, with funding from Creative Scotland and the PRS Foundation

duration: variable

Instructions

Add layers (on the following pages) one at a time. You may wish to make multiple recordings or loops for each layer. Take as much time as you'd like before adding the next layer. If you'd rather not end with cacophony, just sail away by removing layers one at a time until only the waves remain.



1. Waves

Repeat as many times as you can. Loop to create a continuous background of wave sounds.

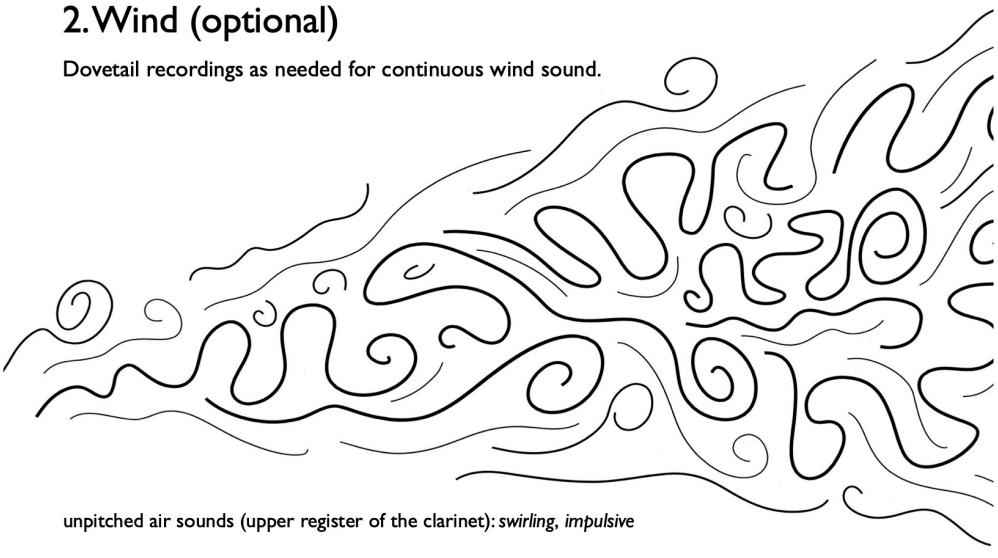
unpitched breath in (through clarinet): *slow, airy*

unpitched breath out (through clarinet): *turbulent, then diffusing*

Layer multiple wave tracks for a richer sound. Align in and out breaths (by recording subsequent wave tracks while listening to the first) for the cyclical sound of waves on the shore. Or don't align tracks, for the less predictable sound of waves at sea.

2. Wind (optional)

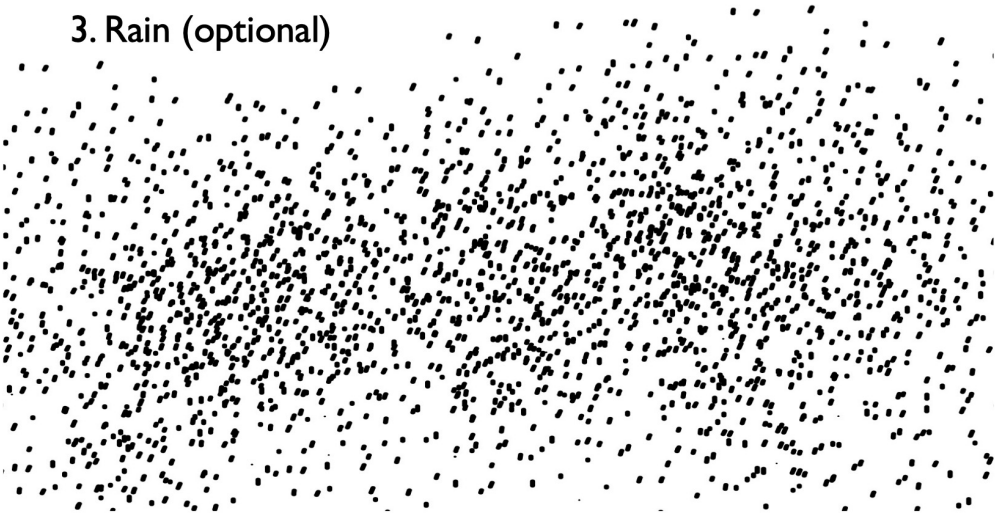
Dovetail recordings as needed for continuous wind sound.



unpitched air sounds (upper register of the clarinet): *swirling*, *impulsive*

This can be a light breeze, a dangerous storm, or anything in between.

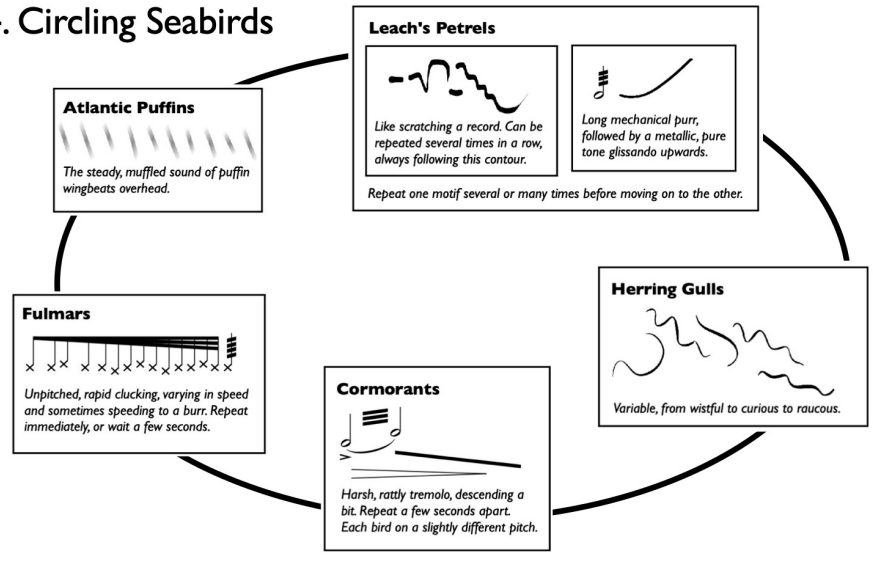
3. Rain (optional)



unpitched key clicks (perhaps the upper notes on the bass clarinet), with a stochastic distribution

Rain can be continuous or sporadic.

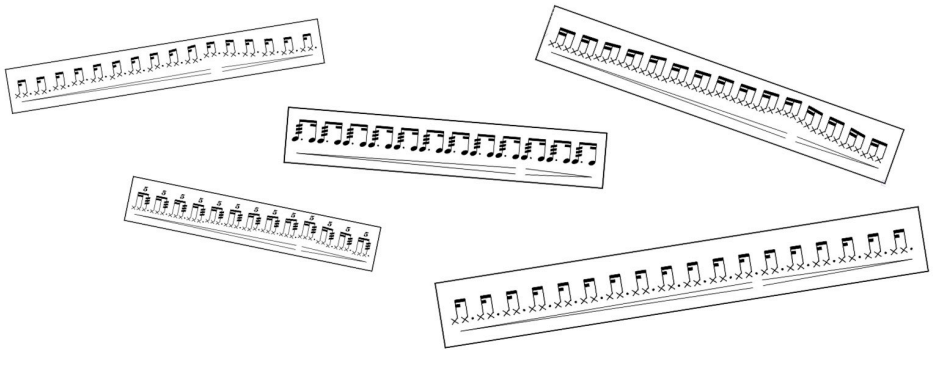
4. Circling Seabirds



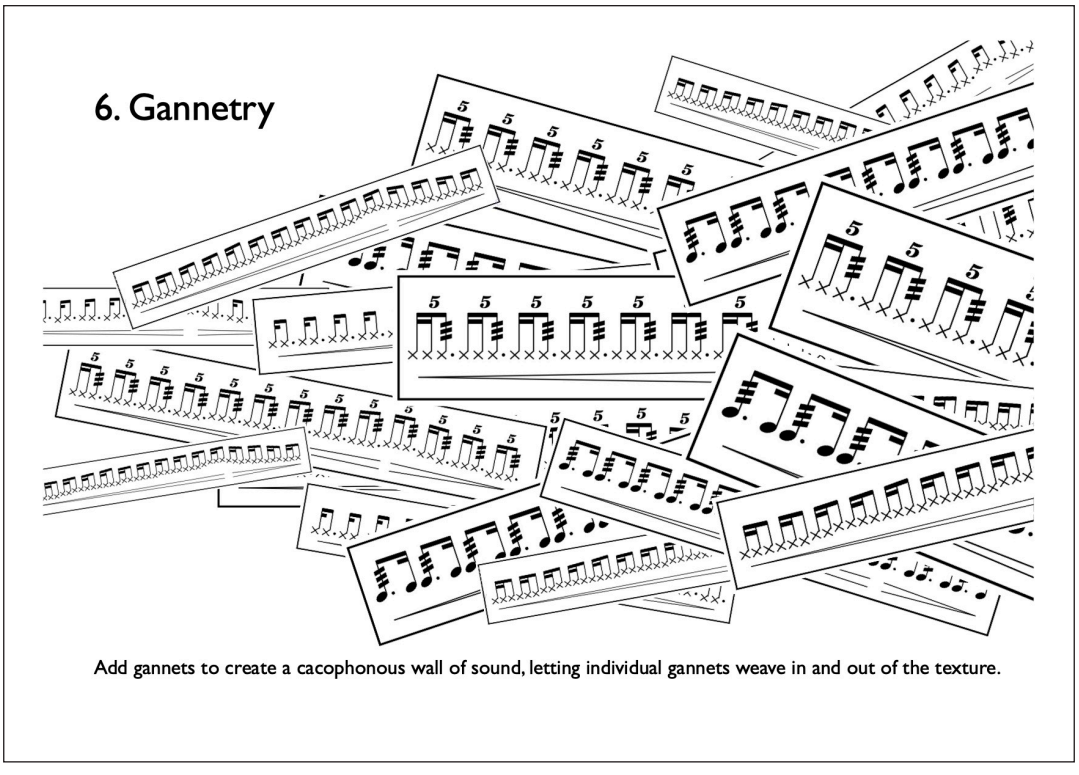
Some or all of these birds may appear, singly or in groups. Play ad lib., or loop each species separately.

5. Gannets (at sea)

Each figure ♩ = 80-144 (stay the same tempo within each phrase, but vary the tempo between phrases). All phrases are made of repeated guttural, rhythmic, semi-pitched clacking figures. Each phrase can stay on a steady semi-pitch, or rise and fall slightly. You can vary the rhythmic figures between phrases, but keep them (mostly) regular within a phrase. Number of figures in a phrase can vary.



Introduce the gannets one at a time at first, then with increasing frequency as you approach the gannetry.



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Captured Birdscapes: Artistic Research, Research Art, and Living Cultural Heritage

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Abstract: *This article centres on the Birdscapes exhibition held in 2022 at the Nature Museum in Lucerne, Switzerland. The exhibition's primary objective was to convey the research processes and findings of a project that explored human-nature connections, with a particular emphasis on the auditory, sonic, and musical dimensions of people's interactions with their physical environment. The paper underscores the potential for expanding similar initiatives beyond academic boundaries and highlights the importance of integrating sound installations and objects within museum spaces while also fostering critical reflections.*

Introduction

Between September 16 and November 3, 2022, the Lucerne Nature Museum featured an exhibition exploring the auditory connection between humans and birds. This exhibition was the result of a project initiated in 2018, which included a mobile 'birdscape listening room'[3] whose primary goal was to disseminate the team's findings to a broader audience and raise awareness of the distinct soundscapes that surround us as part of our intangible heritage. The university's Interdisciplinary Clusters programme (ICs) allocated funding for two members from the School of Design, Film, and Art, one of whom was sound artist Martina Lussi (Fig. 1). Their role was to assist the research team in developing new formats for research mediation.

Fig. 1: Sound artist and ICs project member Martina Lussi in front of the Nature Museum Lucerne, Photograph by Helena Simonett, September 2022.

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3 The project "Seeking Birdscapes: Contemporary Listening and Recording Practices in Ornithology and Environmental Sound Art" (2019–2023) was funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (#182813) and carried out by four research associates from the Competence Centre Music Research Education, School of Music, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts.

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In this article, we explore the diverse conceptual underpinnings of the Birdscape exhibition, providing a comprehensive exploration of the exhibition itself. This examination will also highlight the challenges faced during its realization, offering insights for future endeavours. Lastly, we will share introspective reflections and pertinent considerations about the process of exhibition-making.

Sound in the Museum

Museums have long been integral to (ethno-)musicology, primarily in the realm of archival work. The discipline of comparative musicology emerged in the wake of technological advancements in music recording, marking the inception of musical archives. In the era predating fieldworkers like Bronisław Malinowski,[4] extensive expeditions adopted a holistic approach to data collection. This involved ethnologists, linguists, adventurers, and missionaries recording music worldwide, followed by analysis and evaluation conducted by the so-called 'armchair' musicologists.[5] Over time, the comprehensive approach to data collection gradually evolved into a fragmentation across various specialized disciplines. This shift mirrored the gradual compartmentalization of knowledge into distinct academic fields, a trend also reflected in the establishment of academic departments within universities.

This persistent division also highlights the differentiation between sound phenomena, regarded as intangible cultural aspects, and tangible objects suitable for presentation in a museum. The effort to bridge this gap presents a challenge within the field of comparative musicology. Significant initiatives in this realm have been spearheaded by institutions like the Museum für Völkerkunde (Museum of Ethnology), and later the Ethnological Museum Berlin. Notably, Kurt Reinhard, director of the Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv from 1952 to 1968, created pioneering radio programmes that broadened the accessibility of early recordings to a wider audience.[6] However, this can be seen as an exception in that period.

To this day, museums typically prioritize human visual perception and material culture. They have a rich history of music iconography dating back centuries. Music, as an exhibition theme, is predominantly featured in the musical instruments section of universal museums or in independent musical instrument museums.[7] Even in music museums dedicated to composers or famous bands, visual aspects such as devotional objects dominate. The integration of sound objects into visual arts, exemplified by performances like Jean Tinguely's Méta-Harmonie music machines, represents a more recent phenomenon.[8] Over the past twenty years, some museums have been exploring new approaches, such as the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, England, which invites artists to present the music archive.[9] This topic is also addressed at the Musée d'ethnographie de Genève (MEG), where a current project focusses on developing ethical protocols for archival recordings and their use within exhibition contexts.[10] There are two main approaches to the incorporation of archives and contemporary ethnographic recordings into soundscape installations within exhibition settings. They are either housed in specially designated spaces, such as the Nordamerika Native Museum in Zurich,[11] or integrated directly within the exhibition halls themselves.[12] The latter trend aims to reunify ontological entities of sound and related objects, extending beyond solely musical instru-

4 Malinowski was one of Europe's most important anthropologists of the first half of the twentieth century and an eminent, yet controversial, fieldworker. His writings on anthropological field methods laid the groundwork for early anthropology by popularizing the concept of participatory observation. See Delgado Rosa and Vermeulen 2022.

5 The term 'armchair' implies a passive, non-participatory approach, associated with scholars who analyse and write about music and cultures from a distant or theoretical standpoint, without actively engaging with the people, communities, or contexts they are studying.

6 Koch, Wiedmann and Ziegler 2004.

7 Meyer 2018.

8 De Visscher 2018: 14.

9 De Visscher 2018: 17.

10 „Resocialization of Sound: Collaboration in Research, Archiving and Dissemination with Amazonian Collectives", Swiss National Science Foundation #220198.

11 Schoer 2014.

12 Lewy 2021; Alonso Amat et. al 2021.

ments. This process can be interpreted as a form of decolonization insofar as 'music' concepts based on a unity of the material and immaterial are considered.

There has been a growing interest in incorporating music and sound within museum spaces. However, numerous challenges persist, mirroring some of the hurdles we encountered in our project. Yet, the integration of sound installations stands out as effective means to elevate the auditory experience for museum visitors, fostering a heightened awareness and appreciation of the sonic elements within the curated environment.[13]

Research Period: Fieldwork and Interviews 2019–2021

At the beginning of the project, the research team created a database with interview recordings, field notes, and soundscape recordings. The data were analysed using MAXQDA. The majority of the qualitative data collection took place in Switzerland. To gather comparative material, two field studies were conducted in Iceland and the Ebro Delta in Spain. Both locations have a unique avifauna, with the avifauna in Iceland differing significantly from that of Central and Western Europe.

The Covid-19 pandemic made it challenging to have in-person interactions with people, impacting interviews and observations of participants in 2020 and 2021. Nevertheless, a total of 39 interviews were conducted, with about two-thirds of the respondents being individuals with ornithological interests or professionals in the fields of ornithology and bioacoustics. The remaining third of the respondents had an artistic and/or musical interest in bird soundscapes. Participant observation also included attending various ornithological field courses, conducted by organizations such as Birdlife Luzern and Birdlife Barcelona, and an excursion with researchers from the Swiss Ornithological Institute in Sempach. Additionally, there was a focus on autoethnographic work and field recording.[14] During fieldwork, we recorded the biospheres we individually or collectively visited. The Wauwilermoos nature reserve emerged as the primary study site for our team, leading to the creation of a documentary film (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2: Léon Hüsler and Martina Lussi recording the dawn chorus in the Wauwilermoos, Photograph by Helena Simonett, April 2022.

13 See, for example, Schoer 2014; Schoer, Brabec de Mori, and Lewy 2014; Lewy 2015; Alge and Wilkins 2023.
14 Jäggi 2022.

Various themes and core areas emerged during the research process of the four main project team members, resulting in diverse insights that needed to be integrated into the exhibition.

Helena Simonett continued her eco-musicological research, with an emphasis on Indigenous traditions in the context of global ecological crises.[15] She lectured and wrote on the ways in which Indigenous peoples interact with the human and non-human components of their environment, challenging the dualistic thinking in Western philosophical and scientific discourses.[16] Based on an analysis of interview data from the Birdscapes project, she was particularly interested in explaining Indigenous ontological perspectives to a Western audience and questioning the concepts of 'nature' and 'culture'.[17] The shift from the 'auditory' to the 'ontological turn' brought about a rethinking of the habitual dichotomies of our senses. Together with Matthias Lewy, she also curated the exhibition at the Nature Museum Lucerne.

Lewy conducted field research in Catalonia and Switzerland, focusing on the distinct perceptions of sight and sound, as well as the various forms of communication between humans and birds. In his work on Birdscapes, he emphasized that, unlike the transspecific communication observed among Indigenous specialists in South America, European epistemologies are rooted in intra- and interspecific forms of interaction. Utilizing grounded theory to analyze the European field research data, he developed a naturalistic ontology primarily articulated within the conceptual realm of nature/culture. To compare modern (European) and Indigenous sound ontologies, human-bird relationships in animistic cultures were further explored.[18] This comparative analysis led to a novel understanding of how sight and hearing intersect with different 'auditory knowledge cultures'[19] concerning bird sounds and the concept of 'birdness'. A particular research focus was placed on comparing anthropological discourses on mimesis with the bioacoustic conceptual world of the naturalistically oriented modern era. To effectively convey such complex scholarly topics to museum audiences, Lewy employed artistic and experiential methods (see 'Sound Installation I' below).

Natalie Kirschstein initially focused on the auditory aspects of well-being techniques such as mindfulness and deep listening and how these practices impact human responsibility towards the environment.[20] The creative exploration of bird calls through songs, stories, and sound art also reveals much about the human relationship with the so-called natural world – both the tangible and the imagined. The ecological potential of this type of engagement became an ongoing interest. Her work on sound evolved into a multisensory approach towards perception that also raised methodological questions and culminated in a method based on a 'sonic ethnography of walking'.[21]

Patricia Jäggi's fieldwork in Switzerland and observations of the Icelandic avifauna in the summer of 2021 led to a re-evaluation of conventional perspectives on the bird sound worlds (or birdscapes). Ethnographic experiences with wild living birds and conversations with numerous people emphasized the need to expand the traditional focus on the songs of songbirds – prevalent in ornithology, bioacoustics, music, and sound art – to include 'noisy' bird species as well as sounds of flight and other movements.[22] Discussions, autoethnographic experiences, and field recordings yielded yet another key insight: the concept of 'silence'.[23] The audio-technological aspects of bird sound recording were among Jäggi's other interests as she conducted extensive recordings in Iceland.

Exhibition Space

Drawing from the subprojects of each research team member and their varied theoretical perspectives on the collected data material, the planning of the exhibition commenced, taking into account space and financial resources as crucial planning factors. The spatial conditions were determined

15 Simonett 2021.
16 Simonett 2024a, 2024b.
17 Lewy and Simonett 2022.
18 Lewy 2024.
19 Brabec de Mori and Winter 2018.
20 Kirschstein 2020.
21 Kirschstein and Simonett 2024.
22 Jäggi 2023.
23 Jäggi 2021a, 2021b.

by the museum. Our project was assigned two rooms on the upper floor: a larger one for temporary exhibitions and a smaller, dark one for film screenings (Fig. 3). The rooms are connected by a spacious area displaying vitrines on various topics, such as the geology and mythology of the Lucerne region. To guide the visitors from one room to the other, we used some of the museum's exhibition specimens of prepared birds, suspended from the ceiling. Given that temporary exhibitions like ours require adaptability, and easy instalment and removal of room dividers and exhibition materials in a way that does not damage the infrastructure, we chose to construct a division wall using wood fibreboard, as well as sturdy wooden boxes to safeguard the audio equipment. All elements had to be securely fastened and child-proof, as the rooms were not monitored by museum personnel. Essentially, the exhibit had to operate autonomously.

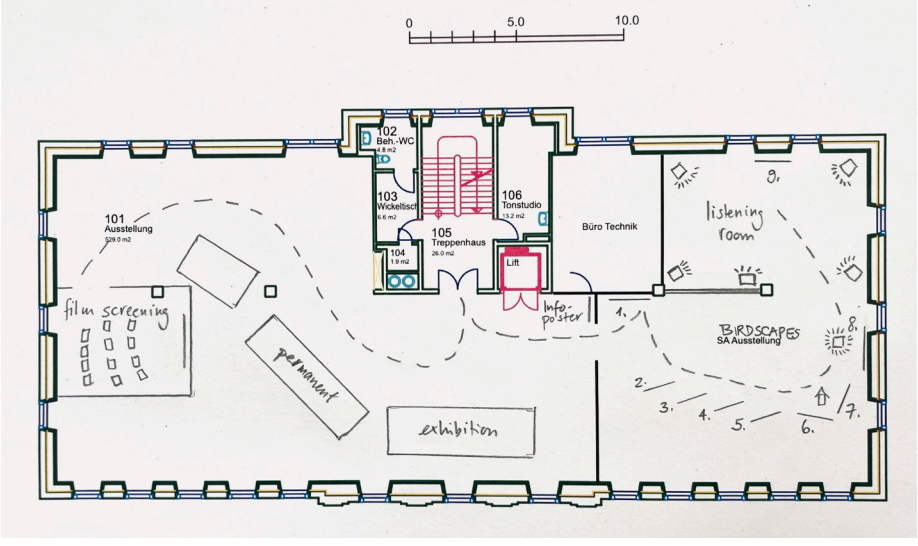

Fig. 3: Floor plan: temporary exhibition room of 100 square metres (right) and film screening room (left).

Fig. 4–7: Dividing the exhibition room with a temporary wall and mounting the audio installations and posters, Photographs by Helena Simonett, September 2022.

We brainstormed various exhibition formats with the aim of informatively presenting our research. However, we quickly realized that a comprehensive representation within an exhibition format would not be feasible. Due to budget constraints, we eventually chose to create posters featuring introductory texts and questions for each individual subproject (Fig. 6). QR codes on the posters allowed visitors to access additional information on the project's website, providing avenues to explore articles, images, videos, and sound compositions.

In addition to our research primarily conveyed through posters, we also sought a sensorial exploration of the human-bird sound relationship with two sound installations. One of them was Lussi's *Subpolar Birdscapes in Transformation*, played through speakers, creating an atmosphere throughout the space as visitors viewed the posters. In-depth listening became possible behind the dividing wall, where visitors could sit on stools or rugs and immerse themselves in the 4-channel soundscape (Fig. 7). The second installation, linked to Poster 8 (What do you hear?), was audible when standing underneath a holosonic speaker positioned on the ceiling with a limited sound radius of about one square metre. Both will be discussed in more detail later.

Upon entering the room, visitors were visually guided from the first poster, on the left, which provided an overview of the Birdscapes project and the subtopics, along a series of posters on the right, all visible from the entrance. Poster 1 bore a lenticular image featuring two types of swallows: the Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*, which was central to Jäggi's fieldwork in Iceland and Lussi's sound installation, and the *Elanoides forficatus*, discovered in the Venezuelan Gran Sabana by Lewy.[24] The latter bird is perceived by the Indigenous people living there as the embodiment of the *mawarí* spirit woman named Kumarak Pachi (see poster 8). The oscillating images represented the different forms of perception and the attribution of meaning to bird bodies and calls that emerged from our research. Thus, one of our objectives was to illustrate the modern Western method of classifying beings, which differentiates between categories such as humans and birds, based on specific assumptions about their internal attributes (such as subjective and mental properties) and external characteristics (such as material properties), and to encourage visitors to question these assumptions.[25]

Mediation of Research Questions

The Conceptual Dilemma

The notion that birds sing challenges the deeply ingrained Western concept that music and the sonic arts are exclusive to humans.[26] Since most birds living in urban areas belong to the category of so-called *songbirds* (*Singvögel*), there is a widely embraced notion that birds sing or partake in musical activities, as conveyed in the lyrics of the well-known German children's song where birds both sing and make music (*singen und musizieren*).[27] Hence, we confront a conceptual dilemma – what constitutes 'music'?

Strangely enough, music seems to be one of those phenomena that are omnipresent but most difficult to grasp. Music scholars have made various attempts, producing books such as *Was ist Musik?*

24 Seren Simonett created the drawings of the swallows and the lenticular image, which can be viewed in action on the project website: https://www.hslu.ch/de-ch/hochschule-luzern/forschung/ausgewaehlte-projekte/birdscapes/?sourceurl=/%20birdscapes [29.02.2024].

25 The French anthropologist Philippe Descola has outlined the four major types of ontologies in his seminal book, *Beyond Nature and Culture* (2013 [2005]): naturalism (scientific or modern ontology), animism, analogism, and totemism. These ontologies arise from the interplay of similarities and differences between humans and non-humans in terms of interiority and physicality. See "Acoustic Mimesis" below.

26 Ullrich and Trump 2023: 2. See also Brabec de Mori 2017; Sorce Keller 2010, 2012, 2019.

27 The spring song, "Alle Vögel sind schon da" (All the birds have arrived), was written by August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben in 1835 and set to music by Ernst Richter.

(What is Music?),[28] *Contemplating Music*,[29] *Disciplining Music*,[30] and *Rethinking Music*,[31] all without arriving at more than a vague definition. Joseph Kerman, one of the prominent American musicologists of his generation, for example, holds that "Music is composed, performed, and listened to".[32] A similar Eurocentric view is expressed in Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht's entry in the *Riemann Musik Lexikon*: "[Music] is — within the scope of this word: in the Occident – the artistic creation of sound […]".[33] In the updated 2012 edition, he acknowledges the difficulty of formulating a single definition of music due to the variety of styles and functions, and the pluralism of conceptual ideas. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* assigned Bruno Nettl, a prominent ethnomusicologist, to craft the entry on music, presenting a perspective distinct from musicological definitions.[34] In the subheading "Music as a universal phenomenon", Nettl briefly addresses the issue of "whether music is human-specific or whether other species have music too".[35] He then quickly asserts that ethnomusicologists view music as a *human* universal – only to once again question fixed conceptualizations of music in the last sentence of his entry: "Thus, one may argue whether the sounds of an orchestra tuning up are music; or John Cage's work, *4'33"*, in which no sound is heard; or the sounds produced by computer programs, any more than the 'singing' of birds".[36]

Indeed, most music scholars appear to deliberately avoid undertaking the task of defining music, emphasising that the concepts of music are culturally dependent.[37] As Philip Bohlman states,

> The ethnomusicologists of the 1950s had brought about a radical new way of disciplining music, of determining even what music might be. Music could no longer be understood simply as an expressive phenomenon only of the self, for it ineffably reflected the presence of the Other in a world that both self and Other inhabited.[38]

Early ethnomusicologists aimed to investigate the music of 'all cultural strata of mankind'. The term 'Other' in this context did not extend to other-than-human entities.[39] While musical expressions of non-Western (Indigenous) people, particularly the ones related to rituals, challenge the Western notion of 'music', Bohlman recognizes that "Western art music has been our music all along, and it therefore refracts the language with which we describe another music".[40] Simonett elaborates on this predicament on her museum poster:

28 Dahlhaus and Eggebrecht 2001 (1985).
29 Kerman 1985.
30 Bergeron and Bohlman 1996.
31 Everist and Cook 1999.
32 Kerman 1985: 20.
33 The whole sentence in the original is: "[Musik] ist – im Geltungsbereich dieses Wortes: im Abendland – die produktive Gestaltung des Klingenden, das als Natur- und Emotionslaut die Welt und die Seele im Reich des Hörens in begriffloser Konkretheit bedeutet und das als Kunst in solchem Bedeuten vergeistigt 'zur Sprache' gelangt kraft einer durch Wissenschaft (Theorie) reflektierten und geordneten und daher sinnvollen und sinnstiftenden Materialität" (Eggebrecht 2012: 441). Similarly: "Musik im europäischen Sinne ist mathematisierte Emotion oder emotionalisierte Mathesis" ("Music in the European sense is mathematical emotion or emotionalised mathesis") (Dahlhaus and Eggebrecht 2001 [1985]: 41).
34 "Selecting from a number of alternative viewpoints, this article addresses issues and approaches to perspectives that exhibit the great variety of the world's musics and of the diversity of cultural attitudes and conceptions of music" (Nettl 2001: 425).
35 Nettl 2001: 435.
36 Nettl 2001: 436.
37 In fact, Kerman's ethnocentric view is also espoused in his assertion that "Western [art] music is just too different from other musics" (1985: 174) that it can be compared with non-Western musics or studied with ethnomusicological methods.
38 Bohlman 1996: 117. He continues to explain: "The ancestors against whom the new ethnomusicologists of the 1950s turned were clearly identifiable because of the disciplinary rubric *vergleichende Musikwissenschaft*, comparative musicology. The problem posed by comparative musicology that so plagued ethnomusicologists in the 1950s was one of distance, namely, the gap between our music and the music of the Other. Comparative musicology, by its very nature, took that gap as a given, as a fixed element in a skewed cultural equation in which the canonic presence of Western art music was also a given. In essence, the study of another's music began only after its hypothetical relation to Western art music had been established" (120).
39 Sorce Keller 2012: 168.
40 Bohlman 1996: 133.

> Although the musical practices of non-western (Indigenous) peoples had been acknowledged as music [by comparative musicologists], they were often characterized with the adjective "primitive".[41] The distinction between "natural man" and "civilized man", now considered evolutionary and Eurocentric, was advocated, among others, by the comparative musicologist Curt Sachs in his 1930 book *Musik der Fremdkulturen* [Music of Foreign Cultures].[42]

The idea of Indigenous people as 'natural men' had also solidified in the United States, where the vast collections of Native American recordings were housed at *nature museums* – as was our Birdscapes exhibition. Simonett provocatively encourages visitors to contemplate the implications embedded in the concept of the songbird as 'nature's musician'.[43]

> Does it suggest that, unlike the (civilized, cultivated) human, the bird belongs to nature, and consequently, its vocalizations are purely genetic (biological)? In other words, is birdsong to be understood solely as a function for attracting mates and defending territory?[44]

Interestingly, the question of whether animals possess music was raised in the early years of the discipline. In 1911, musicologist and experimental psychologist Erich M. von Hornbostel queried whether birds' sonic production could be considered songs in a musical sense.[45] George Herzog, who had served as Hornbostel's assistant in the Phonogramm-Archiv Berlin before emigrating to the United States in 1925 to study anthropology, reflected on the matter, stating, "If music may be defined (excluding the functional aspect for the moment) as patterning of sound, then it can hardly be denied that animals and birds make music. Music is, of course, a particular type of sound patterning".[46] Several decades later, British anthropologist and ethnomusicologist John Blacking proposed a concise definition of music as "humanly organized sound", limiting musical capacity exclusively to humans. Furthermore, he stated, "Music comes from the core of culture, but music can itself also affect the culture's other domains".[47] The influence of anthropology, particularly the writings of Alan P. Merriam, on its emerging sister discipline is apparent in Nettl's condensed definition of ethnomusicology as "the study of music in and as culture".[48] According to Merriam,

> [m]usic sound is the result of human behavioural processes that are shaped by the values, attitudes, and beliefs of the people who comprise a particular culture. Music sound cannot be produced except by people for other people, and although we can separate the two aspects [the sound aspect and the cultural aspect] conceptually, one is not really complete without the other.[49]

More recently, zoomusicologist and composer Hollis Taylor has challenged the prevailing belief in human exceptionality which denies musical agency to birds.[50] She argues that birdsong is often excluded from definitions of music due to the pervasive influence of ideas associated with art music and the insistence on a rigid separation between nature and culture, which neglects more contemporary concepts like the natureculture continuum. She and her colleague Dominique Lestel have analyzed the songs of the Australian pied butcherbird and concluded that

> [b]irdsong may be relevant to inquiries into a range of issues on the natureculture continuum, including memory; music cognition, perception, and auditory processing; music's evolutionary origins and biological basis; the search for universals; and the comparison of the faculties of music and language.[51]

41 See, for example, Nettl 1956.
42 Excerpt from poster 2, our translation.
43 Kroodsma 2005. See also the Introduction to this issue (Simonett and Jäggi 2024).
44 Excerpt from poster 2, our translation.
45 Hornbostel 1986 (1911): 86.
46 Herzog 1941: 4.
47 Blacking, 1973: 116.
48 Nettl 1980: 1.
49 Merriam 1967: 6.
50 Taylor 2010; 2013; 2017.
51 Taylor and Lestel 2011.

However novel, these concepts still operate within the Cartesian nature-culture dichotomy, as scholars in both the social sciences and humanities persist in working within the established parameters, tethered to a Western scientific ideology. The definition of culture, for example, still revolves around "the non-genetic transmission of traditions across generations" – hence, "[C]ulture, in humans and in animals, is learned and not inherited", as the two authors conclude.[52] The distinction between innately acquired and learned songs, or 'natural' and 'cultural' birds, is also made by *Finkers* (finch masters) in the German Harz region of Saxony-Anhalt. Young finches are trained in a specific song repertoire in order to be eligible to participate in singing contests (*Finkenwettkämpfe*) – a tradition that has been documented by ethnomusicologist Tiago de Oliveira Pinto. Since his work fits squarely into the themes addressed in our Birdscapes project, we decided to incorporate his findings into our multiperspective exploration of the human-bird-sound relationship at the museum.

To participate in competitions a finch requires a minimum of three years of preparation, during which the finch master is his primary caregiver and mentor. "During this learning period, no contact is allowed between the future contestants and the sonic outer world of the wild and free singing finches in the surrounding forests".[53] The relationship between the birds and their owners becomes very close. Young birds need regular sonic input to acquire skills that do not develop naturally or automatically. Birders use recorded birdsongs to teach their mentees the 5 or 6 songs needed for competing.

There are three types of competitions: beauty singing (solo), distance singing (in two rows), and circle singing (in concentric circles) (Fig. 8). The beauty criteria encompass syllabic accuracy, slow and even delivery, and pitch accuracy. Songs that do not meet the beauty criteria, called *Latscher*, are considered 'ear-insulting'. This dichotomy between beauty songs and *Latscher*-songs clearly shows the difference between 'culture birds' (*Kulturvögel*) and 'nature birds' (*Naturvögel*) since the latter songs are mainly found in nature. Ultimately, humans transform natural sounds into cultural soundscapes, and the stories surrounding birdsong among the Harz birders unveil insights more about humans than the songbirds themselves. Birdsongs are evaluated based on well-defined aesthetic principles established by human judgment.[54]

The focus in the *Finkenwettkämpfe* is on the auditory experience since the primary participants, the singing finches, remain hidden from the audience (and the judges) and perform inside a cage covered in white cloth adorned with embroidered images of the birds. Our exhibit featured an older bird cage (see Fig. 5–6), which served to problematize not only the birding tradition in the Harz, but also the general treatment of birds by humans.[55] The second poster, dedicated to "Birdsong as a Living Cultural Heritage" thus thematizes the keeping of wild birds in captivity (Fig. 8).

Towards the end of the twentieth century, bird and nature conservation activists took a stance against the finch tradition in the Harz. These efforts nearly led to the dissolution of the *Finkenwettkämpfe*. To save the tradition, finch enthusiasts founded the Harz Finch Guild and submitted a proposal for the finch competitions to be recognized as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage in Germany in 2011.[56] Nevertheless, there is a growing concern that the finch-whispering tradition may not survive in the next decades, given the dwindling number of younger bird keepers. In addition, the *Finker* face an unprecedented loss of songs as a result of the rapid decline in the natural bird population in their region due to "modern mass and industrial agriculture, environmental pollution, as well as a general increase in noise on the ground and in the air".[57] However, the exploitation of natural resources, neglect of ecological balance, and a prioritization

52 Taylor and Lestel 2011: 58.
53 Oliveira Pinto 2020: 5.
54 Oliveira Pinto 2020: 19.
55 When discussing birds in this context, there is a tendency to focus on songbirds, overlooking the remaining other avian species: of all birds on the planet, the biomass of farmed poultry makes up 70%, with just 30% being wild (Carrington 2018).
56 https://www.unesco.de/kultur-und-natur/immaterielles-kulturerbe/immaterielles-kulturerbe-deutschland/finkenmanoever-harz [29.02.2024].
57 Oliveira Pinto 2020: 21.

of human-centric concerns that contribute to the ongoing crisis are a product of the modern Western worldview that, simply put, separates 'culture' from 'nature'.

VOGELGESANG ALS LEBENDIGES KULTURERBE:
DAS BEISPIEL AUS DEM HARZ (DEUTSCHLAND)

Tiago de Oliveira Pinto

Zum Schutz der Singvögel / Tierethik

Seit dem Mittelalter bis zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts ist belegt, dass den besten Singvögeln vielfach das Augenlicht mit Säure genommen, bzw. die Augen ausgestochen wurden. Der Gesang der blinden Vögel galt als besonders inbrünstig und ästhetisch wertvoll.

Für den Wettbewerb wurden jedoch bald keine erblindeten Mitbewerber mehr zugelassen. Die Kritiker gegen die Grausamkeit an den Tieren stuften vor allem die Singvögel als besonders natur-, daher auch als Gott-nah ein. In kulturphilosophischer Manier waren einzelne Vogelkundler immer wieder davon überzeugt, dass sich der Mensch bei der lebendigen Anschauung der Natur einer befriedenden Wirkung aussetzte, die sich am Ende auch gegen soziale Aggressivität würde durchsetzen können. «Blutige Kriege selbst» würden an Bedeutung verlieren, weissagte Pernau 1754, denn diese «lieblichen Geschöpffe Gottes», die Vögel, vermögen es, den Menschen besondere Freude zu bringen. Tierquälerei oder das Töten von Singvögeln wurde bald als verwerflich betrachtet und entsprechend geahndet.

Kurz vor der Wende zum 21. Jahrhundert waren es Verbände und Vogel- und Naturschutz-Aktivist:innen, die sich ganz gezielt gegen den Finkenbrauch im Harz positionierten. Bei Aktionen im Rahmen der Gesangswettbewerbe drückte sich allerdings nicht nur der Einsatz für das Tierwohl aus, sondern auch das Unverständnis jüngerer Generationen, was die tiefere Bedeutung des Finkenmanöver als gelebte Tradition betrifft. Die Tierschutzaktionen führten zuletzt dazu, dass sich der Harzer Finkenbrauch in den 1990er Jahren kurz vor seiner endgültigen Auflösung befand. Im Versuch, diesem Niedergang entgegenzuwirken, schlossen sich einige der aktivsten Finker 2011 zur «Buchfinkengilde Harz» zusammen. Diese Gilde reichte den Antrag um Aufnahme des Finkenmanöver in das UNESCO Bundesdeutsche Verzeichnis des immateriellen Kulturerbes ein. Die Forderungen der Tierschutzverbände führte bald zu grösseren Käfigen und verbesserte die häusliche Haltung der Singvögel. Schliesslich fand auch eine Auseinandersetzung des Expertenkomitees der Deutschen UNESCO Kommission mit den Forderungen des Tierschutzes statt. All dies zusammen führte dazu, dass heute wieder ca. 100 Vogelfreunde im Harz von Sachsen-Anhalt und Niedersachsen die Wettbewerbe von Gesangsvögeln weiter aufrechterhalten. Sie tun dies im Einklang mit den neuesten Kriterien des Tierwohls, ohne dadurch den historischen Kulturbrauch einschränken zu müssen. Dieser wurde im Jahr 2015 als UNESCO immaterielles Kulturerbe in Deutschland anerkannt.

Wenn dennoch die Sorge gross ist, dass die Tradition um die Singvögel und deren Schönheitsgesänge keine weiteren 10-20 Jahre überleben wird, so hängt dies damit zusammen, dass es kaum mehr jüngere Halter der Singvögel gibt. Somit geht auch das Wissen um die Schönheitsklasse der Vogelgesänge verloren, was dazu führt, dass es bald keine «Kulturvögel» mehr geben wird, sondern nur noch «Naturvögel».

Der österreichische Ornithologe Ferdinand Adam von Pernau beschreibt 1754, wie Singvögel am besten zu «fangen, einzustellen, abzurichten, zahm zu machen» sind, vor allem auch wie «ihnen fremden Gesang zu lernen» sei. Alles beginnt und setzt sich im Vogelkäfig fort.

Im Harz nennt man den Käfig, mit dem Vogelliebhaber ihre Finken zu Hause halten, das Bauer. In diesem Bauer werden die Singvögel auch zum Wettkampfplatz befördert. Für den Transport und für den öffentlichen Wettkampf werden die Bauer in weisse und bestickte Tücher eingewickelt. Dieses Einwickeln erfolgt derart, dass die vier Enden des Tuchs zu einer Tragetasche über dem Käfig verknotet werden. Die Vögel, die zum Wettstreit antreten, sind daher für Aussenstehende nicht zu sehen, nur zu hören.

Noch um die Wende zum 20. Jahrhundert waren die Bauer ca. 15 x 15 cm hoch und breit. Heute müssen sie mindestens 50 x 60 cm gross sein. Der Hauptunterschied zum Vogelkäfig liegt wohl darin, dass die Bauer relativ kompakt, vor allem auch schmucklos sind. Sie sind reine Gebrauchsgegenstände, frei von jeglichen ästhetischen Details. Diese beschränken sich alleine auf die Stickerei des sie umhüllenden weissen Tuches.

Fig. 8: Poster 7, "Birdsong as Living Cultural Heritage", also gives voice to the critics of this tradition.

With a specific emphasis on Lewy's research among Indigenous people in Venezuela, we aimed to question the ontological privilege of Western thinking and knowledge.

Acoustic Mimesis

In his seminal book, *Beyond Nature and Culture*, the French anthropologist Philippe Descola argues that the Western scientific way of differentiating between classes of beings is based on specific assumptions about their interiority (such as the mind, the soul, or consciousness: intentionality, subjectivity, reflexivity, feelings, and the ability to express oneself and to dream) and physicality (such as external form, substance, the physiological, perceptive and sensorimotor processes) — assumptions that may not be shared by other societies.[58] He proposes four fundamental generative principles that impart meaning to the various possibilities of human existence: naturalism (modern scientific ontology), an-

58 Descola 2013 (2005): 116.

imism, analogism, and totemism. An animistic ontology is incompatible with a scientific (naturalistic) one, as animists hold that the physicalities of various classes of beings are discontinuous from one another, while their interiorities are continuous. From an animist perspective, animals have bodies that are different from human bodies, but their souls, minds, and cultures are similar to those of humans.

Lewy's posters (3: "Acoustic Mimesis" and 8: "What do you hear?") illustrate these concepts through the medium of sound. To avoid the conceptual dilemma outlined by Simonett, Lewy adopts the term 'modes of existence', suggested by the French philosopher Bruno Latour.[59] This approach broadens the scope of thought and language to encompass not only humans but also a myriad of other entities. Through two examples, poster 3 illustrates how the perception and intentionality of perceived sounds are not exclusive to humans. Firstly, baby burrowing owls (*Athene cunicularia*) utilize auditory mimicry, imitating snake sounds as a deterrent against predators. This sonic strategy underscores the dilemma encountered by Westerners who dismiss the idea of intentional and reflective vocalizations in animals.[60] From an animal-philosophical perspective, one might ask: How do the baby burrowing owls acquire the knowledge that their enemies are frightened by the rattlesnake? Is this not also a form of empirical knowledge passed down through generations among the particular species? Does it not represent a kind of reflection that is usually reserved exclusively for humans?

Secondly, Lewy relates a story in which sound plays a pivotal role in healing a girl bitten by a rattlesnake. The Indigenous healer utters a magical incantation in the ritual language of the Pemón, saying, "I am a pawik" – referring to a pawik bird (*Mitu tomentosum*). This formula is used to manipulate the snake venom to which the pawik is immune. In Pemón ontology, snake venom is understood as an entity capable of hearing and seeing like a human being. All animals and plants are perceived as human-like in terms of their interiority, with all entities equipped with the same senses as humans. Transspecific communication, therefore, occurs on a human level. Since healers have received their songs and magic formulas from animal or plant spirits, the language used is comprehensible to all entities, both humans and other-than-humans (such as the snake venom). Furthermore, the formula "I am a pawik" is also used as a form of mimicry. In contrast to Western thinking, this Indigenous ontology emphasizes a different appreciation of the senses. While sight is assigned a higher value in the Western world, Indigenous people place more faith into auditory perception than visual. Since the pawik is impervious to snake venom, the healer's continuous repetition of the formula leads the snake venom entity to believe it is in the body of a pawik bird rather than a human, prompting it to leave the body.

Lewy's poster on acoustic mimesis was related to the lenticular image on poster 1, as well as the sound installations on poster 8 (Lewy) and poster 9 (Jäggi and Lussi).

Sound Installation I

The sound installation associated with poster 8 was only audible when standing beneath a holosonic speaker positioned on the ceiling in front of the poster (Fig. 3). In contrast, Lussi's sound composition could be heard throughout the room. Lewy encouraged visitors to contemplate what they were hearing while reading the poster text (Fig. 9). Indeed, without Lewy's background explanation, one would not comprehend the soundscape, produced by what the listener would simply perceive as a male voice embedded in various environmental sounds. It is a recording of a song addressed at the spirit woman Kumarak Pachi, sung by a well-known Pemón singer and recorded by Lewy in 2005. The spirit woman is renowned for her capacity to abduct human souls. To retrieve such souls, shamans need to establish a connection with the spirit woman by singing the song of the swallow-tailed kite. According to the Pemón, this bird has the spirit woman's interiority (soul).

59 Latour 2013 (2012).
60 Donald 2015.

Fig. 9: Poster 8: "What do you hear?"

Through song, shamans create a timescape which encompasses both the mythological world and the present.[61] Shamans must be careful to prevent their own soul from remaining with the spirit woman during the transformation, as otherwise their physicality (body) would die. The issue of physicality and interiority, in terms of body and soul, is visually reflected on the poster: the image on the left depicts the interiority, i.e., the form of the spirit woman's soul. To healthy non-shamans, the spirit woman appears as a bird, as shown on the image on the right (Fig. 9). However, sick people who gaze at the mountains and perceive the spirit woman instead of birds are close to death: their souls have already departed from their bodies and can only be brought back from the world of the spirits by a shaman's singing to the Kumarak Pachi.

The concept of integrating sound and storytelling was derived from the concept of 'sound stories', a collaboration between Lewy and his colleague Bernd Brabec for an exhibition on Amazonia in the Musée d'ethnographie de Genève.[62] This concept was subsequently expanded and refined in collaboration with Indigenous communities for a permanent exhibition at the Humboldt Forum Berlin.[63]

61 Lewy 2023.
62 Lewy 2018.
63 Lewy and Brabec 2023.

Sound Installation II

Lussi's 25-minute 4-channel birdscapes composition offers a purely auditory experience that may not require extensive explanation. Nonetheless, poster 9 presented background information on the source materials and the creation of the piece *Subpolar Birdscapes in Transformation*[64] to enhance visitors' understanding. Most sound samples were taken from the corpus of recordings made by Jäggi in Iceland during the summer of 2021, comprising over 34 hours of recorded environmental sounds from various bird habitats around Lake Mývatn and the seashores, providing a rich collection of sound material for artistic exploration, for analysis, or for simple listening pleasure.[65] The recordings, captured with ambisonic microphones to represent the sound environment in three dimensions, provide insight into the audible life, diversity, and variety of water, sea, and coastal birds, including those in large breeding colonies.

Lussi explains her composition as an assembly of a variety of sounds emitted by the birds, including not only calls but also the sounds of their movements in water and air. She also integrated elements such as wind, rustling grass, waves, human voices, jackets and tents, passing cars, and even a distant open-air concert. The piece aims to offer room for diverse auditory perspectives on the boreal bird world by arranging birdscapes from Jäggi's field recordings and enriching them with synthetically generated sound textures through filtering, processing, layering, and other techniques. Lussi translated Jäggi's Icelandic sound experience by manipulating recordings made on land to evoke the sensation of submersion underwater and by incorporating artificial wind sounds that sweep across the four speakers. What may initially appear as genuine wind noises to the audience is generated from noise and a dynamically shifting bandpass filter. A gradual transition towards lower frequencies orchestrates an immersive journey, leading the audience through moments of effortless fluidity and unforeseen disruption. This intentional manipulation of auditory perceptions seeks to disorient listeners, as astutely noted by one visitor.

This composition thus diverges from ambient soundscapes tailored for relaxation, serenity, enjoyment, and overall well-being, as presented in Kirschstein's work in poster 5. Bird recordings frequently serve as a conduit for mindfulness practices, aiming to heighten concentration, stimulate creativity, enhance vitality, and alleviate stress and anxiety. Publications like *The Art of Mindful Birdwatching*[66] indicate a burgeoning interest in this pursuit, a trend that predates the Covid-19 lockdowns. In contrast, Lussi's composition aims to create a unique auditory journey, prompting reflection on the potential implications of bird and human sounds and silences amid the ongoing ecological crisis and humanity's interconnectedness with the surrounding environment. Accordingly, Jäggi (poster 4) advocates for redefining the concept of 'soundscape' as an active auditory-sonic practice, transcending the notion of a mere assemblage of sound-producing entities. This paradigm shift suggests that practices involving listening and sound art could play a pivotal role in fostering an auditory-sonic cohabitation that spans across species boundaries — the perpetual dilemma of the modern world.

Live Performances at the University's Music Department and the Nature Museum

To conclude the project, we convened a two-day conference in Lucerne, gathering a diverse array of participants.[67] The conference also served as a platform to explore the enduring fascination with bird vocalizations by contemporary composers and sound artists, featuring two live concerts. *Gardenscape* (2020), by Canada-born, Glasgow-based composer and researcher Emily Doolittle, drew inspiration from a wood pigeon that had made its home in her garden during the Covid-19 lockdown. It was performed by violinist Hannah Schoepe, a master's student at the music department. Patricia Jäggi provided the accompany-

64 https://soundcloud.com/hochschuleluzern-musik/subpolar-birdscapesin-transformation-binaural [29.02.2024].
65 Samples are available at https://soundcloud.com/user-505460012 [29.02.2024].
66 Thompson 2017.
67 https://www.hslu.ch/de-ch/hochschule-luzern/forschung/ausgewaehlte-projekte/birdscapes/konferenz/ [29.02.2024].

ing electronically generated soundscape.[68] *Þráhyggjufugl (Obsession Bird)* (2019), by Icelandic composer Hildur Elísa Jónsdóttir, was premiered by Maral Yerbol, a Kazakh flautist and master's student at the music department.[69] The composition was inspired by the medieval saga of Queen Gunnhildr, a woman skilled in magical arts who transformed into a swallow to confront her enemy.

Before and during the conference, the sound installation *Pirol* (2017) by Marie-Cécile Reber was exhibited at the music department. The piece involves the reconstruction of melodic fragments from recorded songs of the oriole. The intention was to create a disorienting auditory experience for the listener, as the melodic sequences, although not occurring in nature, still bear a resemblance to a bird's singing. *Pirol* was showcased in one of the music department's 'sound towers', occupying a 20 square meter, 7-story-high space of concrete and glass.

Within the context of the university's Interdisciplinary Clusters program, a live performance was developed for the museum, the aims of which are described by Marie-Louise Nigg in "Art Mediation: Non-/human dialogues and imagination spaces".[70] Artists Anna Lena Eggenberg and Sophie Germanier created a piece called *Of Decay & Friends*.

Fig. 10: Anna Lena Eggenberg and Sophie Germanier dancing for the sparrows and the museum visitors, Photograph by Helena Simonett, September 2022.

68 https://www.hslu.ch/de-ch/hochschule-luzern/forschung/ausgewaehlte-projekte/birdscapes/kuenstlerische-beitraege/gardenscape-und-prahyggjufugl/ [29.02.2024].
69 https://www.hslu.ch/de-ch/hochschule-luzern/forschung/ausgewaehlte-projekte/birdscapes/kuenstlerische-beitraege/prahyggjufugl/ [29.02.2024].
70 https://www.hslu.ch/de-ch/hochschule-luzern/forschung/ausgewaehlte-projekte/birdscapes/art-mediation/ [29.02.2024].

Audio-visual Arts: Films at the Nature Museum

Situated on the same floor as the Birdscapes exhibition, tucked into the back corner to the right of the entrance, is a smaller room designated for film screenings (Fig. 2). Given the availability of this space for showcasing films, we decided to commission bachelor students from the university's School of Design, Film, and Art to create short films as part of the project. The first one, the documentary *Ganz Ohr: Akustisches Erwachen des Wasser- und Zugvogelreservats Wauwilermoos* (*All Ears: Acoustic Awakening of the Wauwilermoos Water and Migratory Bird Reserve*), was produced by Léon Hüsler, together with Martina Lussi.[71] This film emphasizes the aesthetics of data collection and explores themes such as attention, sonic habitat, and the use of technology. The documentary depicts the researchers at dawn in the Wauwilermoos nature reserve, showcasing the acoustic impressions of the morning birdlife and the use of various recording devices and microphones, including the Zoom H4, the 'Shot Gun', and the parabolic and ambisonic microphones. The film allows viewers to experience what each device captured acoustically.

A second film, titled *Vogelstimmen in der Musik* (*Birdsong in Music*), was produced by Maya Baur and Samuel Röösli.[72] This film presents a condensed version of ornithologist and amateur musician Christian Marti's lecture of the same title.[73] It showcases the biological and musical facets of birdsong through musical performances, singing, and whistling.

Conclusion: Reflections on Content and Presentation

Because sound itself has no inherent meaning, people's conceptualizations of sound (and ultimately music) may differ quite drastically, even if they have been socialized in the same world. At the outset of the project, we assumed that people listen differently to 'nature sounds' such as bird vocalizations, depending on their training (e.g., ornithologists and musicians) as well as their personal biographies. Indeed, the study of sonic environments offers an interesting link between the natural sciences and the humanities, and between avian bioacoustics and the recent interest in environmental sound art and in Indigenous sound ontologies.

Tweaking Taylor's question "Why do musicians engage with birdsong" to make it more provocative, we ask: Why do musicians engage with birdsong, even though birdsong is not directed at the human species?[74] Human fascination with birdsong indeed has a long history, as does the tradition of creating compositions inspired by birdsong. Prior to the invention of recording devices capable of capturing sound audibly or visually (sonogram), composers necessarily relied on a finely tuned ear for analytical field transcription of bird vocalizations. The French composer and ornithologist Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992) is a notable example. Despite the advanced sound recording technology available in the 1950s, Messiaen preferred to manually transcribe the songs of birds in their natural habitat. His "imaginative transmutations"[75] of birdsongs reached their zenith with two scenes in the opera *Saint François d'Assise* (1983).[76] An analysis of the 'little bird concert' as well as an audio sample were included on Poster 2.[77]

71 https://www.hslu.ch/de-ch/hochschule-luzern/forschung/ausgewaehlte-projekte/birdscapes/kuenstlerische-beitraege/ganz-ohr/ [29.02.2024].
72 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9UdIGRjg_qs [29.02.2024]. The film is accessible with either German or English subtitles.
73 https://www.pronatura.ch/de/2023/interview-christian-marti [29.02.2024].
74 The original text is: "While birdsong is not directed at the human species, we (from philosophers to just plain folk) have a long history of being charmed by it. Why do musicians engage with birdsong?" (Taylor 2011: 2).
75 Trevor Hold (1971: 122) argues that Messiaen's birdsongs represent "imaginative transmutations" rather than "authentic transcriptions".
76 Michaely 2006.
77 The poster included a QR code to the audio link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZIsxP9xcqG4 [29.02.2024].

With the incorporation of Oliveira Pinto's examination of the finch whispering tradition in the Harz region into the exhibition, our intention was to provide an additional perspective on "a very intimate and fundamental human relation to [birdsong]" – albeit one also rooted in "aesthetic knowledge and natural values"[78] prevalent in the Western world. Visitors were appalled to learn that until the early twentieth century, caged songbirds had their sight impaired either by the application of acid or by gouging out their eyes. This practice was driven by the belief that the songs produced by blind birds held a special fervency and aesthetic value. While such treatment may no longer be practiced, the object status assigned to animals (including birds such as chickens) remains, continuing to allow for other practices, such as shredding billions of male baby chicks alive because they are deemed worthless to their owners.

Addressing the human-animal relationship, cultural anthropologist and philosopher Barbara Noske advocates for self-reflection and critical examination of one's assumptions, quoted on poster 2:

> Much as we would like to free animals from their object-subject status by showing that the human-animal discontinuity is far from absolute and that animals do indeed resemble us a great deal, we may nevertheless remain trapped inside anthropocentric bias. We may fail to acknowledge and respect animals' Otherness. Basically we face a dilemma in that there seems no option to imposing upon animals either object status or *human* subject status.[79]

It was one of our primary objectives to draw visitors' attention to such dilemmas and encourage them to contemplate more deeply their own relationship with birds, bird vocalizations, and the birdscapes that surround us as part of our intangible heritage. During numerous team meetings, we analyzed exhibitions featuring alternative museum-like experiences and discussed both feasible and unfeasible ideas.

We faced multiple challenges, not least the question of how to present three years of research on birdscapes in a museum setting. With a focus on the auditory, we were reluctant to write long texts, although studies have shown that museum visitors welcome additional explanations, stories, models, or illustrations as a helpful context for objects in exhibits.[80] Financial constraints, an odd museum space, and a shortage of personnel and time presented further challenges for planning the Birdscapes exhibition. However, we turned necessity into an advantage by opting for an audio-visual presentation that would spark the imagination of museum visitors and allow ample space for listening. Our goal was to foster curiosity and ambiguity by placing objects, including sound objects, in unconventional contexts, while also providing opportunities for diverse sensory experiences. To provide additional context for exhibition objects such as the bird cage and sound installations, we supplemented them with texts and media, weaving stories around these objects.

Modern museums, such as the Lucerne Nature Museum, are exploring innovative approaches to deepen the museum experience and enhance its impact by connecting objects with individuals' experience outside the museum. To foster a comprehensive 'visitor-object experience', museologists Wood and Latham advocate for the establishment of a 'web of connections' by the exhibit team.[81] This involves integrating diverse viewpoints from within the museum (such as those of the Birdscapes research team members) and beyond (including an appreciation of visitors' diverse existing knowledge about the topic) to create significance. Within this framework, visitors are encouraged to interact with objects intended to challenge their perspectives and foster meaningful connections. While limited resources prevented us from conducting a survey study with a larger sample of visitors about the Birdscapes exhibition, we did have the opportunity to engage in conversations with some of them during their visit. Whether it was the Covid-19 lockdowns amplifying people's awareness of their

78 Oliveira Pinto 2020: 20.
79 Noske 1997: 157.
80 Schwan and Dutz 2020.
81 Wood and Latham 2016: 11.

surroundings or a growing concern about the decline in bird populations, visitors in general appeared attuned to the soundscapes we share with avian species.

The processual nature of creating the Birdscapes exhibition, which ranged from conception and planning to realization and evaluation, repeatedly led to new insights. Our goal was to visually emphasize the ontological discrepancies in the perception of bird bodies using a lenticular image. At the same time, we aimed to convey this symbolic visual differentiation through auditory means. While Lussi's composition filled the entire 100-square-metre space, a shamanic chant resounded in a limited area of one square metre, deliberately obscuring animistic sound ontologies within the Western paradigm. Thus, the modern individual can only detach themselves from their human body through the realm of imagination, envisioning themselves, for instance, inhabiting the body of a bird. In a naturalistic ontology, this necessitates the invention of 'art', whereas it constitutes a fundamental principle in animistic ontologies.

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‚Actualiser' les études de musicologie ? Enjeux à la lumière du multimédia

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En septembre 2023, l'Unité de musicologie de l'Université de Genève introduisait ses nouveaux plans d'études. La révision prévoit, entre autres, un renforcement des savoir-faire mobilisés dans les métiers du domaine (travail d'archive, transcription, édition, médiation). S'y ajoute une démarche dite "d'actualisation" : dans un module dédié, les étudiant-es de master sont désormais invité-es à s'approprier les enjeux soulevés par les phénomènes musicaux d'aujourd'hui, à prendre position et à faire preuve de créativité dans les outils et méthodes déployés. Partant de ce contexte, le présent article se concentre sur ce second ajustement : en tant qu'enseignant-e, pourquoi encourager une telle actualisation, et comment ? Au milieu de quels enjeux scientifiques et pédagogiques navigue-t-on ? L'omniprésence de la musique dans les supports multimédia (films, séries, jeux et autres) et les problématiques qui y sont associées offrent une piste pertinente pour explorer ces questions.

La plupart des cursus européens en musicologie partagent deux axes forts, dits *historique* et *systématique*, issus de l'héritage adlerien. Ce couple est généralement complété par des apports interdisciplinaires, s'étendant de la psychologie à la linguistique, en passant par les *gender studies*, la sociologie ou encore l'ethnologie. Cette ouverture, parfois partie intégrante du cursus, parfois laissée au choix des étudiant-es, permet à ces derniers/-ères de complémentariser leurs grilles de lecture de la musique en tant qu'objet socioculturel.

Toutefois, la multiplication des outils et des méthodes ne s'autosuffit pas : elle doit s'accompagner d'une actualisation des savoirs, notamment, mais pas exclusivement, dans le but de décortiquer les rapports variés et changeants que les auditeurs/-trices d'aujourd'hui entretiennent avec la musique. Cette démarche permet aux étudiant-es de développer un regard critique sur leurs expériences musicales, encourageant ainsi l'appropriation des compétences et l'autonomisation. C'est avec cet impératif à l'esprit que j'interroge ici la pertinence d'intégrer la question du multimédia – et notamment de la musique de film et de jeu vidéo – dans les cursus musicologiques. Comment cette ouverture peut-elle servir l'actualisation en question ?

Aujourd'hui plus que jamais, l'écoute musicale implique une médiation technologique, et cette dernière associe largement la musique à l'image. Aux films et séries s'ajoutent une multitude de genres audiovisuels, tels que les formats propres aux réseaux sociaux ; disponibles sur une grande variété de supports, les jeux vidéo sont également un médium majeur par lequel certains groupes sociodémographiques font l'expérience (interactive) de la musique. Le phénomène n'est pas marginal ; c'est plutôt l'idée de la musique comme objet esthétique autonome, héritée des XIXe et XXe siècles et de nos jours encore un présupposé de nombreuses formations universitaires, qui paraît désormais datée.

La recherche musicologique n'a pas ignoré ce phénomène. Dès la fin des années 1980, les perspectives narratologiques et sémiotiques sur la musique de film se multiplient, et dans les deux décennies suivantes, les musicologues y participent activement, en y apportant notamment leur outillage analytique. Au début des années 2000 paraissent les premières publications *ludomusicologiques* – un

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Florim Dupuis: ‚Actualiser' les études de musicologie ? Enjeux à la lumière du multimédia, in: Schweizer Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft – Neue Folge 41 (2024), S. 95–97.

sous-champ se focalisant sur la musique de jeu vidéo. Ce dernier est alors en quête de légitimité et se construit sur la base des recherches précédemment menées sur la musique de film, tout en théorisant les modalités d'interaction permises par le médium vidéoludique. Au cours des années 2010, il s'étend à l'histoire culturelle et à l'analyse musicale et affirme sa qualité interdisciplinaire et sa diversité méthodologique. De nos jours, *film music studies* et ludomusicologie sont animés par une communauté de recherche quasi commune, ce qui favorise un dialogue dynamique et l'étude des interconnexions historiques entre ces médias.

La littérature scientifique l'a démontré : l'omniprésence de la musique dans le multimédia soulève des questions aussi larges qu'importantes. En les examinant, on peut esquisser les implications esthétiques et sociales de cette ubiquité dans nos rapports aux objets musicaux. Comment la musique, associée à l'image, produit-elle du sens ? Comment analyser une certaine combinaison audiovisuelle ? Quelle est la trajectoire culturelle d'un motif musical donné, et des associations qu'il convoque à l'écran ? De quelles manières la musique nous amène-t-elle à interagir dans un jeu ? Au vu de l'historique qui précède, il est clair que la musicologie a sa contribution à apporter à ces problématiques, notamment en offrant les outils philologiques et analytiques qui lui sont propres.

Somme toute, tant les ressources scientifiques disponibles que la conjoncture socio-technologique de nos écoutes justifient d'inclure, dans les cursus, une introduction aux enjeux du multimédia. Cet apport est d'ailleurs bien reçu par une grande part des étudiant-es, qui manifestent un enthousiasme certain à la perspective de poser un regard critique sur leurs pratiques et expériences musicales quotidiennes, de conscientiser un rapport au son qui ne l'était pas jusque-là, et d'étudier, dans leur qualité esthétique, des objets jusqu'alors largement négligés (un problème en voie d'être résolu).

Aborder la musique et le multimédia dans les cursus est à la fois possible et pertinent ; mais comment le faire de façon à en tirer une plus-value pédagogique globale ? L'étude de la musique à l'écran permet de sensibiliser à l'interdisciplinarité, du fait de la nature multimodale du matériau traité. Intégrer cette composante à l'offre de cours ouvre un espace pédagogique permettant non seulement d'actualiser les outils musicologiques par l'application, mais aussi d'associer ces derniers aux capacités explicatives d'autres disciplines. En analysant une séquence et la fonction qu'y occupe la musique, on convoquera des outils issus de la narratologie ou des études cinématographiques ; lorsqu'on cherchera à identifier le type d'interactivité que la musique promeut dans un jeu, l'apport technique des *media studies* pourra compléter une théorie de la sémantique musicale ; enfin, le trio de la philologie, de la sociologie et des *media studies* pourra servir à interroger comment, à travers son déploiement dans des formats audiovisuels spécifiques, le sens musical est produit, transformé, amené dans les discours, et permet aux spectacteurs/-trices une projection de leurs identités socioculturelles.

De telles approches ont été adoptées par des étudiant-es en musicologie de l'UNIGE, à l'occasion d'un séminaire d'analyse de la musique à l'écran dispensé au printemps 2022, puis dans un autre enseignement thématique en 2024. Dans une série de présentations, ils/elles ont questionné des théories et méthodes analytiques variées, les ont comparées, ont jaugé leurs pouvoirs explicatifs respectifs, et les ont testées sur les objets audiovisuels de leurs choix. Les étudiant-es ont ainsi été encouragé-es à définir leurs propres terrains, et à confronter leurs observations à leurs acquis musicologiques : comment expliquer que, dans *Les Dents de la mer* (Spielberg, 1975), le célèbre motif du requin devient un objet référentiel très précis – alors que, par comparaison avec le langage, la musicologie a longtemps insisté sur l'imprécision du sens musical ? Par quelle méthode analyser la bande-son dynamique de *Halo : Combat Evolved* (Jones, 2001), qui, à l'inverse d'une partition ou d'un enregistrement standard, est instable, évoluant au fil des actions des joueurs/-euses ? Enfin, par quels phénomènes de réception les musiques de jeu vidéo ont-elles transité de leurs supports d'origine aux salles de concert ?

Les cursus musicologiques équipent déjà les étudiant-es avec le bagage historiographique et analytique nécessaire pour aborder ces questions. Ainsi, il n'est pas pertinent, tant pour la cohérence de la

formation que pour la recherche future, d'introduire exclusivement les *film music studies* et la ludomusicologie sous l'angle de leurs particularismes théoriques et méthodologiques. Au contraire, il est essentiel d'explorer ces champs au travers des synergies explicatives qu'ils tissent avec le noyau dur des cursus, dont l'apport n'est pas contesté ; les problématiques listées ci-dessus illustrent les interconnexions possibles. Les avantages d'une telle démarche sont multiples : les étudiant-es sont stimulé-es dans le développement d'un regard réflexif et critique, ce qui se traduit par un engagement accru ; la capacité de la discipline à traiter des pratiques musicales dans leurs formes les plus actuelles, parfois très différentes des modalités du concert ou de l'écoute unimodale, est affirmée ; les professionnel-les de demain sont formé-es et incité-es à questionner et réviser leurs grilles de lecture et leurs discours sur les rapports de nos sociétés au matériau musical.

Pour être mené à bien, ce projet d'actualisation des objets d'études et des compétences doit être implémenté de manière globale et cohérente, et non pas limité au seul champ du multimédia, sous la forme d'un cours unique et ponctuel. A cette fin, deux recommandations peuvent être formulées. Tout d'abord, un dialogue soutenu entre les enseignements fondamentaux et ceux d'ouverture doit être mené, à l'exemple des problématiques listées plus haut. Dans un second temps, les étudiant-es doivent être encouragé-es (par les enseignant-es et les plans d'études) à faire l'exploration de ce dialogue dans leurs travaux, présentations et discussions, ce en résonance avec leurs observations et affinités propres. Une telle démarche sera à la fois au bénéfice de la musicologie, en tant que discipline dynamique et pertinente de nos institutions, et à la société civile, dans le développement d'une vision consciente et critique de nos écoutes et pratiques musicales changeantes.

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Compte rendu

Walsdorf, Hanna (2023): *Für Gott und die Welt. Musik zu den Statuspassagen Ludwigs XIV (1638–1662)*. Beeskow: Ortus Musikverlag.

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Hanna Walsdorf nous offre avec cette étude une démonstration profonde, charpentée, documentée d'une hypothèse qui n'avait jusqu'à présent jamais été déployée dans le domaine de la musicologie : il existerait un troisième état du corps royal. L'idée des deux corps du roi exposée par Ernst Kantorowicz s'est amplement diffusée dans les histoires de la musique, et a débouché sur des travaux remarquables notamment autour de Louis XIV, depuis l'ouvrage de Isherwood jusqu'à celui de Cowart. Il s'agissait pour ces chercheurs de montrer comment la musique renforce l'image du roi comme incarnation de la puissance infinie de l'État absolutiste. Hanna Walsdorf nous introduit dans une dimension supplémentaire. Certes le corps du roi est naturel dans son incarnation mortelle, il est politique et ne meurt donc jamais. Il est en plus, sa troisième nature, en construction permanente tout au long de son existence. Cette construction est essentielle pour émouvoir ou pour impressionner : chaque étape constitue un passage.

Encore convient-il de ne pas réduire ces passages à la manifestation de la double nature du corps royal. Hanna Walsdorf reprend alors tous les moments de la vie de Louis XIV, de sa naissance en 1638 à son mariage en 1662. Et pour montrer comment la musique contribue de façon essentielle à la construction de ces moments de passage, elle revisite des événements sonores et spectaculaires en en entrecroisant les dimensions rituelles, représentatives et divertissantes. Le corpus peut ainsi embrasser un ballet (*Le Grand Ballet du Soleil*, 1660), une chanson (*Nous avons un Dauphin*, 1638), un Te Deum (1649), une messe (1660), un opéra (*Ercole amante*, 1662) pour n'en citer que quelques exemples. Le lecteur traverse à plusieurs reprises Paris, mais aussi de nombreuses villes du royaume, pénètre même en Italie.

La démonstration de cette hypothèse requiert également d'organiser les informations et les analyses de façon à ne pas enfermer le propos dans une système unique de causalités. Ce n'aurait alors été que l'extension au domaine de la musicologie d'une théorie d'historiens. Hanna Walsdorf procède donc de façon diverse pour chacune des nombreuses sections qui alimentent sa démonstration. Certes, elle ne peut échapper aux passages eux-mêmes : le premier est la naissance (1638), le deuxième l'incarnation du corps royal, de la mort de Louis XIII à la déclaration de majorité (1643-1651), le troisième la mutation en corps sacré jouant de l'onction et de la rédemption, jouant avec le clergé et la couronne (1649-1659), et enfin le quatrième enrobe le mariage du roi (1660-1662).

Donc pour que chaque passage soit marqué musicalement, il faut donner sens à l'ensemble des manifestations sonores. C'est avec virtuosité que Hanna Walsdorf emporte alors son lecteur qui à son tour passe d'une messe (1638) de Giovanni Rovetta à Venise au *Ballet de la Félicité* à Paris (1639) en s'arrêtant à une chanson sur timbre qui envahit les rues de la capitale. Chaque fois, l'œuvre ou le

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Philippe Vendrix: Walsdorf, Hanna (2023): Für Gott und die Welt. Musik zu den Statuspassagen Ludwigs XIV. (1638–1662), Beeskow: Ortus Musikverlag, in: Schweizer Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft – Neue Folge 41 (2024), S. 99–100.

spectacle (liturgique ou profane) est déconstruit, mis en relation avec une documentation abondante et subtilement exposée, analysé dans ce qui en fait sa singularité dans la définition de chaque passage.

Chacune des sections du livre reprend ainsi cette richesse d'approches entrecroisées. Le déploiement simultané d'une démonstration conceptuelle, d'analyses historiques et musicales détaillées, d'une riche iconographie faites autant d'images que de sources donne une force remarquable à cet ouvrage : il contribue à renouveler en profondeur la façon dont désormais nous pourrons penser les manifestations musicales qui marquent tous les moments d'un règne. Au-delà d'un apport à une meilleure connaissance d'œuvres musicales marquantes des premières vingt-cinq années de Louis XIV, *Musik zu den Statuspassagen Ludwigs XIV* pose les fondations d'une nouvelle façon de concevoir la relation complexe qui existe entre musique et pouvoir.

SJM-NF 41 (2024), S. 99–100.

Workshop Bericht

„Spielstätten und musikalische Praxis in historischen Gärten als kulturelles Erbe“

Helena Langewitz, Universitäten Bern und Mainz [1]

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Der Workshop „Spielstätten und musikalische Praxis in historischen Gärten als kulturelles Erbe“ fand vom 5. bis zum 6. Juli 2024 in Kooperation mit der *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur* in deren Räumlichkeiten in Mainz statt. Als Bestandteil des von der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) geförderten interdisziplinären Forschungsprojektes „Garten und Musiktheater am Dresdner Hof des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts: Mediale und funktionale Wechselbeziehungen im Dienste herrschaftlicher Metaphorik und fürstlicher Repräsentation“ wurde die Veranstaltung von Klaus Pietschmann, Matthias Müller, Helena Langewitz, Sebastian Herold und Leonie Matt konzipiert und organisiert.[2] Die Workshopthematik aufgreifend erfolgte am Abend des 6. Juli die halbszenische Wiederaufführung von Christoph Willibald Glucks *Le nozze d’Ercole e d’Ebe* im Rahmen der Abschlussveranstaltung der Gluck-Gesamtausgabe. Das Dramma per musica war 1747 anlässlich der sächsisch-wittelsbachischen Doppelhochzeit im Garten des sächsischen Lustschlosses Pillnitz uraufgeführt worden, weshalb es die Workshopthematik in idealer Weise reflektierte.[3] Die Aufführung wurde am 7. Juli im Garten der Akademie wiederholt (vgl. Abb. 1 und 2).

Unter der Beteiligung von Vertreter*innen unterschiedlicher Disziplinen wurde an den zwei Workshop-Halbtagen das theatrale Potenzial historischer Gartenanlagen und der darin angelegten oder ephemer errichteten Bühnen erörtert, das dort gespielte Repertoire verhandelt sowie Aspekte der heutigen Inanspruchnahme dieser Spielstätten diskutiert. Folgende Leitfragen wurden während des Workshops thematisiert: Wie verhalten sich die konzeptuelle Idee der Gartentheater als typische Gestaltungselemente barocker Boskettanlagen und ihre Präsentation im Schau-Medium des Gartenplans zur tatsächlichen Realisierung derselben? Wie sollten wir historische Gartentheater verstehen, wenn ihre (regelmässige) performative Nutzung nicht zwangsläufig angestrebt wurde? Welche Aspekte machten und machen ephemere und dauerhaft errichtete Freiluftbühnen damals und heute interessant? Was kann das für unsere heutige Inanspruchnahme und Pflege historischer Gartentheater bedeuten? Wer waren die Zuschauer*innen der damaligen Freilichtveranstaltungen in Gärten und welches Publikum besucht vergleichbare Aufführungen heute? Welche Inhalte und Erlebnisse sollen dabei vermittelt und ermöglicht werden?

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2 Das am Institut für Kunstgeschichte und Musikwissenschaft (IKM) der Universität Mainz beheimatete Forschungsprojekt https://www.kunstgeschichte.uni-mainz.de/garten-und-musiktheater-am-dresdner-hof-des-17-und-18-jahrhunderts/ wird geleitet von Prof. Dr. Klaus Pietschmann und Prof. Dr. Matthias Müller. Gefördert wurde der Workshop durch die DFG. Das Workshopprogramm ist einsehbar unter https://www.musikwissenschaft.uni-mainz.de/workshop-spielstaetten-und-musikalische-praxis-in-historischen-gaerten-als-kulturelles-erbe/.

3 Christoph Willibald Gluck: *Le nozze d’Ercole e d’Ebe*, Emilie Jönsson (Sopran), Jara Kanzler Hemmet (Mezzosopran), Anna Nuytten (Alt), David Schläger (Tenor); es spielte die Mannheimer Hofkapelle unter der Leitung von Florian Heyerick, Regie und Gestik: Sigrid T’Hooft, Kostüme und Ausstattung: Niels Badenhop.
Das Programm der anlässlich des Abschlusses der Gluck-Gesamtausgabe organisierten Veranstaltung «Christoph Willibald Gluck – Sämtliche Werke«. Zum Abschluss des Akademievorhabens: Vorträge und Aufführung von Glucks Oper »Le nozze d’Ercole e d’Ebe« ist unter folgendem Link einsehbar: https://www.adwmainz.de/kalender/eintrag/christoph-willibald-gluck-saemtliche-werke-zum-abschluss-des-akademievorhabens-vortraege-un.html.

Helena Langewitz: Workshop Bericht: Spielstätten und musikalische Praxis in historischen Gärten als kulturelles Erbe, in: Schweizer Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft – Neue Folge 41 (2024), S. 101–104.

Der Workshop brachte Referent*innen, Moderator*innen und Diskutant*innen aus Deutschland, Italien, Österreich und der Schweiz aus den Bereichen Musik- und Theaterwissenschaft, Kunstgeschichte, Akustik, Szenografie, Gartendenkmalpflege und -vermittlung sowie Augmented Reality zusammen und beinhaltete neben neun Präsentationen eine abschliessende *Roundtable*-Diskussion. Die aufgezeigte disziplinäre Bandbreite und die damit einhergehenden verschiedenen theoretischen und methodischen Zugriffe auf die Thematik waren ausschlaggebend für die fruchtbaren Diskussionen, indem historische und denkmalpflegerische Aspekte der Wiederherstellung und des Erhalts von Gartenbühnen und ihrer Soundscape mit aktuellen Zugängen zu historischen Gärten u.a. durch verschiedenste Veranstaltungs- und Vermittlungsformate in Austausch gebracht werden konnten.

Einführend gab Leonie Matt (Mainz) einen Überblick über Anzahl und Gestaltungsvielfalt der in sächsischen Gärten des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts geplanten und ausgeführten Gartenspielstätten, zeigte unterschiedliche Aspekte ihrer Nutzung auf und entwickelte daraus impulsgebende Leitfragen für den Workshop.

Als Auftakt der von Ursula Kramer (Mainz) moderierten ersten Sektion „Gartenspielstätten als kulturelles Erbe – Nutzung und Inszenierung damals und heute" am Nachmittag des ersten Workshoptages erörterte Patrick Primavesi (Leipzig) den vielseitigen ephemeren Charakter und die Ereignisqualität der auf Gartenspielstätten des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts dargebotenen musiktheatralen Werke sowie die Überlieferung dieser Freilichtaufführungen. Mathias Gebauer (Rheinsberg) zeichnete zunächst die Nutzungsgeschichte des von Prinz Heinrich von Preussen im Park von Schloss Rheinsberg angelegten Heckentheaters über die Jahrhunderte nach, um zuletzt aus denkmalpflegerischer Sicht die Herausforderungen zu skizzieren, die angesichts heutiger Ansprüche an eine (gut ausgeleuchtete, szenisch eindrückliche, akustisch durchgängig befriedigende) Aufführung auf einer aus vegetabilischem und lebendigem Material gebildeten Spielstätte mit hohem Zuschauer*innenaufkommen entstehen. Im dritten und letzten Beitrag der ersten Sektion stellte Ottavio Anania (Mailand) sein Forschungsprojekt für ein auf historischen Vorbildern basierendes mobiles Bühnensystem vor und beleuchtete dessen Potenzial für den facettenreichen Einsatz im Freien, namentlich in Gärten und auf Gewässern, als Konzert-, Theater- und Opernbühne auf der einen und als Forum für einen wissenschaftlichen und demokratischen Austausch für ein durchmischtes Publikum auf der anderen Seite.

Die zweite, von Rüdiger Thomsen-Fürst (Schwetzingen) moderierte Sektion „Klänge im Freien – Der Garten als Soundscape" widmete sich der akustischen Dimension von Gärten. In Stefan Schweizers (Benrath) Beitrag stand die aufs hörende Erleben der Gartenbesucher*innen abzielende Konzeption historischer Gartenanlagen im Zentrum, die den von wasserbetriebenen Automatophonen wie Wasserorgeln generierten Sound ebenso vorsah wie gelegentliche Musikdarbietungen, die mit der Soundscape der Gärten interagierten bzw. konkurrierten. Gemeinsam mit Timo Grothe (Detmold), Samuel Huber (Detmold), Malte Kob (Detmold/Wien) und Jule Winkler (Paderborn) stellte Vera Grund (Rom) die Ergebnisse der unter verschiedener Expertise gemeinsam mit Studierenden vorgenommenen akustischen Vermessungen u.a. des Ruinentheaters in der Eremitage bei Bayreuth vor und eröffnete damit die Diskussion zu den Möglichkeiten des heutigen Nachvollzugs der damaligen akustischen Bedingungen von Freilichtspielstätten.

Am Vormittag des zweiten Workshoptages widmete sich die von Vera Grund moderierte dritte Sektion „Historische Gärten in der Vermittlung – live und virtuell" unterschiedlichen Aspekten der Vermittlung an ein Publikum. Auf den Spuren der die Verbindung von Kunst und Natur repräsentierenden neun Musen betonte Hartmut Troll (Schwetzingen/Wien) die Relevanz eines vielfältigen Vermittlungsangebotes für das kulturelle Erbe historischer Gärten und diskutierte am Beispiel des Schwetzinger Schlossgartens die Möglichkeiten eines klanglichen Auslotens historischer Strukturen und Ausstattungselemente vermittels musikalisch-klanglicher Interventionen durch ein gemischtes junges Publikum. Susanne Rühling (Schwerin) erörterte das Potenzial einer derzeit in der Weiterentwicklung be-

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findlichen kostenlosen digitalen App, die unterschiedliche multimediale Inhalte bereitstellt, um den Besucher*innen den historischen Kontext der Entstehung und Genese verschiedener Garten- und Parkanlagen in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern während des Aufenthalts im Grünen sowie anhand eingespielter historischer Originalkompositionen Eindrücke von der Schweriner Hofmusik zu vermitteln. Der Einsatz von Augmented Reality (AR) im Hinblick auf die multisensorische Vermittlung u.a. von historischen Garten- und Landschaftsräumen wurde von Tobias Matter und Christian Schnellmann (beide Luzern) vorgestellt und dahingehend diskutiert, in welcher Weise AR sowohl hinsichtlich der Wiederherstellung und Erhaltung ausgewählter Gartenelemente und -ausstattungen als auch in Bezug auf partizipative Prozesse bereits jetzt eingesetzt wird und wie sich ihr Einsatz in Zukunft gestalten liesse.

In der von Helena Langewitz (Bern/Mainz) moderierten *Roundtable*-Diskussion wurden die Ergebnisse des Workshops abschliessend zusammengetragen und die experimentelle Komponente historisch informierter Aufführungspraxis als Möglichkeit ins Spiel gebracht, Gartenbühnen auch ohne künstliche Klangverstärkung mit einem für das Publikum befriedigenden Ergebnis zu bespielen und dabei die gegebene Soundscape des Gartens verstärkt mit einzubringen. Dabei kam auch die Berücksichtigung eines Repertoires zur Sprache, das im Hinblick auf die Darbietung im Freien komponiert wurde und das hörbare Zusammenspiel zwischen künstlicher, in der Musik zum Ausdruck gebrachter und realer Natur beispielsweise in Form von Vogelstimmen bereits mitdenkt.

Die im Innenraum und im Garten an zwei aufeinander folgenden Tagen realisierten Aufführungen des von Gluck im Hinblick auf die Realisierung im Garten komponierten Dramma per musica *Le nozze d'Ercole e d'Ebe* ermöglichte in idealer Weise einen Vergleich der durch die verschiedenen Örtlichkeiten bedingten Aufführungs- und Wahrnehmungsmodalitäten. Die visuelle und auditive Durchlässigkeit zur Umgebung während der Gartenaufführung (Abb. 1 und 2) trug in der Wahrnehmung sowohl des Publikums als auch der Musiker*innen zu einem verstärkten Erleben des Aussenraumambientes bei und machte die im gesungenen Text angesprochenen Elemente der Büsche, Bäume, Felsen bzw. einem Stein und raschelnden Blättern zu aktiven Bestandteilen des Aufführungserlebnisses.

Als Diskutanten ergänzten Michael Walter (Graz) und Sascha Winter (Mainz) den Austausch um eine musikhistorische und kunstgeschichtliche Perspektive.

*Abb. 1: Ercole (Jara Kanzler Hemmet) und Instrumentalist*innen der Mannheimer Hofkapelle vor der grünen Kulisse des Gartens der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur Mainz, Foto: Ernst-Dieter Hehl.*

Abb. 2: Giunone (Anna Nuytten), Giove (David Schläger), Ercole (Jara Kanzler Hemmet) und Ebe (Emilie Jönsson) beim Schlussapplaus im Akademiegarten, Foto: Ernst-Dieter Hehl.