

Geography, Music, Space

Volume 1

Samuel Horlor
James Williams

MUSICOLOGY RESEARCH JOURNAL

Issue 4

Spring 2018

Musicology Research

*The New Generation of
Research in Music*

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MusicologyResearchJournal

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Acknowledgements

It was just after the *Geography, Music, Space* conference at Durham University, now almost eighteen months ago, where Sam and I began discussing the notion of co-editing a publication on the theme of music and space. This special issue of *Musicology Research Journal* is the first of two volumes to evolve from the conference. Although the Call for Papers for these two volumes extended beyond conference presenters and delegates, I would first like to begin by thanking the organizers, Samuel Horlor, Alice Cree, and Sarah Hughes, for putting on this event. I would also like to thank Durham University for hosting, and also to the Institute of Musical Research for their support of this conference. As a co-editor for this volume, it has been a pleasure to work alongside Sam, and the process has been made evermore enjoyable due to the thought-provoking and inspiring writing offered by the contributing authors, based across the globe. So secondly, I would like to thank all of the authors in this volume – not only for their written articles, but also for their understanding, patience, and open-mindedness throughout the ongoing review process of their manuscripts. So thirdly, on this note, I would like to thank all of the academics, professors, and practitioners involved in the peer review process for their feedback on submitted papers: on behalf of the contributing authors, I express my gratitude for the commentaries and reports offered towards developing the chapters within this volume. Finally, thank you to our readers – of which the community is growing exponentially! I hope you find the papers in this first volume as thorough, and as intellectually stimulating as Sam and I do, and please do feel free to contact the authors and engage in further conversations about their fascinating research.

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Abstracts

Armstrong

Person-environment Relationships:
Influences beyond Acoustics in
Musical Performance

The music performance environment contains a vast number of influential attributes beyond those of its acoustical characteristics. Existing research in music performance studies emphasizes the impact of various acoustical characteristics on a musician's playing and is often accomplished in anechoic chambers with simulated acoustics. However, there is a lack of research towards the influence of environment on a musician's performance beyond acoustics alone. How does the surrounding environment affect a musician on an emotional and psychological level within the context of a performance? This paper explores the findings of an interdisciplinary research project into the person-environment relationships between a musician and their surroundings, combining methods of music performance analysis and environmental psychology. Current findings are presented, revealing aspects of: personal and cultural significance; past experiences and nostalgia; socio-normative expectation; and, behaviour-settings. This research demonstrates an alternative methodological approach that challenges existing studies with the inclusion of real-world environments in addition to their simulated equivalents. The individual experiences of participating musicians uncover compelling insight towards musical interactions with performance environments. Locations used in this project include a variety of spaces, modern and historical, throughout Surrey, Durham, Newcastle, and Gateshead.

Drawing on recent experiments in critical theory around a performative repositioning of realism ('On Virtual Grounds: Blueprint for a Post-mimetic Dialogical Realism', Den Tandt, 2016), I will offer an analysis of the potential of 'operatic hermeneutics' to produce spaces, using Richard Jones's 2014 production of Handel's opera *Ariodante* for the Aix-en-Provence Festival as a case study. I postulate that the processes involved in staging opera productions are 'dialogical cartographies': from deciphering the score and the conception of a design world through to negotiations with conductors and casts who embody them. I read performances of opera productions as acts of faith in production maps to hold value and interpretive meaning that are mediated by contractual parameters of reference and reality. These 'performed acts of orienteering' reverberate beyond the space of the physical stage to occupy other virtual territories in digital broadcasts, 'insight' promotional material and recorded media. With reference to the way the production design, by ULTZ, combines actual and virtual elements, I will analyze how musical, visual, and choreographic disciplines function dialogically in a contemporary realist mode. I shall further illustrate how musical and visual discourses in opera can be mutually shaping, indicating how spaces thus created extend beyond the stage to the reception of operatic performances, co-productions (in this case with Dutch National Opera and Canadian Opera Company) and their avatars in the media. I conclude the paper with an assertion that the 'truth' of realism in performance is to be sought in the interplay of actual and virtual worlds and that opera as a form is uniquely positioned to do this, because of its dialogical richness and heightened idiom.

This paper examines the place and significance of singing and chanting in the protests on Tahrir Square in Cairo in 2011. Based on my field research conducted among the participants of the Egyptian Revolution 2011, this study emphasizes the link between embodied music cognition and transformation of urban geographies in a public space. It draws on critical urban theory and sociomusicology in order to contextualize a musical use of the human voice in the collective experience of the Egyptian Revolution. The paper argues that chanting is crucial to re-imagining functionalities of public space and to the political aesthetics of a protest as Bakhtin's 'carnival'. This conceptualization of protest chants as the music of the carnivalesque can explain how the soundscape of a street or a square in a modern city inevitably becomes contested and politicized. Ultimately, sounding of the protesters in an open square serves to create a new collective political subject emerging in the Egyptian Revolution and, more generally, in the global protests of 2011.

Despite state attempts to control the music scene by initially imposing a nearly two-decade ban on popular music and later requiring official permits for all musical activities, various Westernized styles of music have emerged and flourished in modern Iran. With a considerably large young fan base in Iran and the diaspora, Persian hip-hop, a Western yet locally meaningful musical idiom, has secured a distinct position in the music scene. In this article, exploring Iran's hip-hop scene in light of Roland Robertson's concept of glocalization (1995), I argue that the postmodern nature of hip-hop, its global appeal, mobility, and accessibility have shaped it as a translocal site for the socio-cultural contact between young Iranians and the transnational hip-hop nation. Contesting confined notions of locality, Iranian hip-hop has become a translocal contact zone encouraging new forms and meanings under the influence of the global sound and informed by the local context. Focusing on the Persian version of 'Hotline Bling' by Hamid Sefat, and through musical and lyrical analysis, I maintain that the examination of multilayered processes of linguistic, musical, and visual localization in the song demonstrates that taking advantage of malleability inherent in hip-hop music, Iranian hip-hoppers have 1) challenged the state's tight control of space, 2) introduced the face of modern Iran to the outside world, defying the representation of Iran as a promoter of war and terrorism and its people as oppressed, and 3) rejected the simplistic readings of non-Western hip-hop music as a manifestation of Westoxification and cultural imperialism.

This paper grows from research into how music shapes regional identity in Minas Gerais, Brazil, and concerns three interconnected notions of musical space: the physical places of cultural territory; the historical spaces of social development; and both the collective and personal territories of the poetic mind and memory where cognitive musical experiences bring about identities of place through spatial embodiment, emplacement, and narrative emplotment. Expanding upon these notions of musical spaces and articulating their intersections enables discussion of a deep regionalism as drawn from three contexts of music. These include the religiosity of contemporary black communities in colonial era Ouro Preto and their ritualized attitudes toward esteemed cultural territory articulated through popular Catholicism; the iconicity of the ten-string Brazilian guitar (*viola*), its representation of a cultural territory marked by social conflict, and its use by current roots music practitioners in the valorization of *música caipira*; and lyrics poetically extolling pathos of place and history in 1970s popular songs from Belo Horizonte's Corner Club collective (Clube da Esquina).

Aside from the physics of spatial pathways and acoustics of soundwaves, musical spaces are human spaces in which bonds of belonging are forged with cultural and political values. Like the sounds that surround us, musical meaning also comes from 'all around', restlessly existing among the multiple spatial relationships we routinely experience. Contrasting the fixedness of physical territory, some musical identities of place flourish unwedded to geography. The critical action and staging of metaphoric space, imagined terrain, and sites about which we dream, also stem from conflict and difference; they furnish, almost without afterthought, dialogue between these fictive landscapes of personal territories of collective and the individual mind bounded by feelings, imagination, and memory. Regarding the temporality of musical spaces, history's representational binding of communities considers their relationships to territories, fragmented social spaces, and Brazil's complex history of racial politics and social inequity. This work problematizes regional identity in examining three case studies, aiming to locate and navigate musical spaces with the intention

of more fully understanding a deep regional identity as both culturally heterogeneous and internally enacted.

Jeffery

Journeys to *Plastic Beach*: Navigations across
the Virtual Ocean to Gorillaz' Fictional
Island

This article examines from a geographical perspective the case study of a fictional rather than real location in popular music, and how fictional geographies might relate to popular music culture. The example provided of Gorillaz' *Plastic Beach* island is particularly rich in detail, and the article examines how and why this location was transmitted with an unusual amount of care and attention to users. It then argues that the range of devices used to engage the user with the setting – such as intertextual links to other fictional islands, touristic frames, and an emphasis on journeys to the island – are there to encourage users to cross ontological space between the real and the virtual. The successful transmission across this space is seen as having been vital to fulfilling the commercial imperatives of the project – selling CDs and vinyl, and gaining subscription fees. Finally, by looking at how fannish media allow users to remediate locations, and insert themselves bodily within the fictional location, it is also demonstrated how access to and control over virtual fictional locations has been democratized, allowing fans and users agency over their own (narrative) experience.

Frequently (over)used by music writers as a tongue-in-cheek explanation for emergent localized scenes and sounds, the phrase 'there must be something in the water' seeks to create an association between the lived experiences of people within a particular geographic locale, and the sonic aesthetics of their respective music scenes. Seemingly innocuous at surface level, the notion that music may offer an understanding of its site of origin suggested in the cliché also evokes the age-old question of mimesis in aesthetic theory. Using the seemingly unlikely growth of a DIY punk scene in the heart of the American Bible Belt as a case study, this paper draws on affect theory as an unlikely source in dealing with the problem of mimesis. Situating affect in the messy liminal space between lived experience and aesthetic expression, the paper seeks to reconcile some of the tension between theories of affect as pre-personal bodily intensity, versus affect as a collective mediational force. Using ethnographic research conducted amongst participants of Oklahoma City's punk scene, it traces the relationship between the feelings of local musicians living in a state strongly dominated by the Christian right, and the soundscapes of the local music scene. Conversations with local artists and textual readings of their works are used to describe how feelings of anguish and fury, as well as hope and utopianism, are embodied in the grassroots art of a small artistic community operating within the religious conservatism of America's Heartland.

Leahy

Musicians in Place and Space: The Impact of a Spatialized Model of Improvised Music Performance

This article reports on a research project entitled 'Musicians in Space' that aims, through the introduction of a spatialized approach to the performance of improvised music, to realize more fully the all-inclusive and heterarchical aspirations that are often associated with free improvisation. The research is introduced and briefly outlined, before the initial observations and findings are reported. The discussion in the final section will reflect on the connection between this model of improvised performance and deep ecology.

London's Algerian diaspora community has grown exponentially in recent years, and has generated a diverse and vibrant music culture. However, Algerians find themselves physically dispersed across the city and throughout its suburbs, without an identifiably 'Algerian' area in which to reside, work, and socialize. Music therefore plays a crucial role for Algerians in London, bringing individuals together to form a sense of community, enabling the production and negotiation of collective identities, and staking a visible and audible place for Algerian culture within the city. Algerian music-making in the city takes many forms, from *andalusi* and *chaabi* ensembles to *rai* singers and hip-hop artists. Similarly, Algerian music can be heard in many different locations: in small cafes and professional venues, restaurants and universities, Methodist church halls and on local radio stations. Yet many of these contexts remain ephemeral, and Algerian musics, like Algerian musicians and audiences, move and flow around the city. In the process, they construct a distinct concept of contemporary 'Algerian-London'. At the same time, Algerian culture in the UK remains in constant dialogue with both North Africa and France, where there are large Algerian diaspora communities in many cities. The proliferation of digital technologies, and particularly social media, has increased the circulation of music between these locations, and it is through interaction with cities such as Algiers and Paris that a distinct notion of 'Algerian-London' is formulated.

This article draws upon four years of ethnographic research with Algerian musicians and audiences in London, exploring the role of music in the daily lives of members of this community. The article asks how music enables Algerians to engage with the city in which they live and work? And considers the ways in which composing, performing, sharing, and listening to music constructs, negotiates, and articulates a shared sense of Algerian-London.

A Mongolian trio of female folk singers called Shurankhai released their first album in 2010, and two further albums over subsequent years. The members of Shurankhai are conservatory-trained *urtyn duu* (long-song) singers, but traditionally *urtyn duu* singers were rural herders and practised in the Mongolian countryside within a tradition of solo singing. The distinctive nature of *urtyn duu* has been presented as improvised ornamentation, in which elongated vowels are articulated and manipulated over a wide range, and using pressed voice, and it was only possible to keep the genre's traditional aesthetic through solo performance. Shurankhai arranged songs from this tradition into a polyphonic trio style, however, and in 'harmonizing' this traditional sound, reinforced the potential of using a variety of traditional folk vocal techniques in the current urban musical scene of Mongolia, in popular, traditional, and crossover genres.

In my analysis and interviews, I have observed that Shurankhai's process of 'harmonizing' (*öngö niilüülekh*) is conceptually quite different from that found in Western harmonization, being closely related to the spatial sense and geographical awareness developed from Mongolia's nomadic culture. The lives of Mongolian nomads are based on a critical interaction of humans, non-humans, and the ecological landscape, and the purpose of this paper is to show how these interactions are often manifested through the sounding of the geographical space. This article, then, through the case study of Shurankhai, looks particularly at the perception of singing among Mongolian *urtyn duu* singers in relation to their spatial senses, which have developed out of their role as nomadic herders and which is still ingrained among urban *urtyn duu* singers.

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Introduction: Geography, Music, Space

Samuel Horlor

1. Introduction

The room on the top floor of one of the tallest buildings on Durham's campus has an uninterrupted view over this small university city in the North East of England. To say that one particular building dominates the scene is an understatement; the eleventh-century Cathedral lies less than a kilometre from here, and its size and situation on the city's highest land leaves little room for other structures to even register an impact on the skyline. This view was the backdrop for Geography, Music, Space, a one-day conference held in January 2017.¹ It was a fitting setting; the combination of the building's material forms and its ubiquitous presence in the city's history and contemporary life exemplify many of the intersections between place, space, and

¹ Special thanks are due to my co-organizers Alice Cree and Sarah M. Hughes, and to funders of the event, the Institute of Musical Research.

music practices that filled the day's discussions, and that have developed further into this themed set of articles.

Durham Cathedral's presence is indeed felt in many ways. Most obviously, its weight as a religious and political institution over the centuries has co-evolved with the city's economic and cultural life, not least through the tradition of scholarship that followed it with the foundation of the university in the nineteenth century, and through the international tourism that it continues to inspire. Much local musical life is bound up with the acoustic and experiential characteristics of the building, through the religious meaning found in the interplay of architecture and church music, but also as Cathedral space is reimagined whenever the building takes on the 'secular' role of concert venue. Furthermore, that it acts as a destination for colliery brass bands' marches during the annual Durham Miners' Gala hints at its embeddedness in a range of wider musical practices and soundscapes.

The word 'geography' in the title of the conference and of this themed issue points to the *place* of music, and to the construction of local identities bound up in matters of religion, ethnicity, gender, politics, and power. But this set of essays is also about *space*; how music-making is part of performing certain kinds of spaces into being, and the wider significances of people's direct engagements with the material (including sonic) qualities of musical environments.

By now, many of these issues are widely familiar in musicology and ethnomusicology; work by Born (2013), Grimley (2006a),

Stokes (1994), Wrazen (2007), and Whiteley, Bennett, and Hawkins (2005) represents just a small selection that might give a sense of these themes' development trajectory (and much more besides). Perhaps less familiar to readers of *Musicology Research*, however, is a substantial body of work on music from the discipline of geography. On the way to introducing the contributions of this set of papers, then, it is worth spending some time presenting an overview of some of this literature. Part of my purpose is to consider how scholarship in music and geography has, in many ways, run parallel, sometimes at the expense of fruitful mutual engagement. It was among the purposes of the original conference, which was organized jointly by researchers in music and geography, to contribute to dialogue between the two. That is not meant to imply, though, that pertinent work is only found in these two disciplines. Indeed, although the conference showed that the issues at stake are also of clear interest to scholars of anthropology, sociology, marketing, public policy, and various others, it is perhaps significant in itself that this wide range of voices has translated into the majority (but not all) of the contributions in this issue coming from researchers most at home with the word 'musicology' appearing in this journal's title.

The sketch that follows is a partial and limited one written from my point of view as an ethnomusicologist. Where I try to identify points on which cross-disciplinary understanding seems potentially most shaky, this probably says much about the limitations in my own training and experience (but they might still be worth mentioning in case the observations strike a chord with readers of this journal). My outsider's critiques of music

geography literature are, though, offered in the spirit of contributing to the shared language of collaboration in keeping with the aims of *Geography, Music, Space in Durham*, and they are meant to encourage readers of this issue's papers to keep firmly in mind their orientations to wider scholarship.

2. 'Doing Geographies of Music'

This phrase occurs consistently in research on music from the discipline of geography, including in a prominent article framing its methodologies by Wood, Duffy, and Smith (2007). What, though, do scholars mean when they talk of 'doing geographies of music'? In the context of popular music, Connell and Gibson lay out their task as shedding light on 'the many ways in which popular music is spatial – linked to particular geographical sites, bound up in our everyday perceptions of place, and a part of movements of people, products and cultures across space' (2003: 1). As Lily Kong demonstrates, though, just as much of the focus falls on understanding space as it does on music-making: 'Music is also a medium through which people convey their environmental experiences – both the everyday and the extraordinary' (Kong, 1995a: 184). But lest this should give the impression that interest ends at how music communicates something *about* experiences of space, the introduction to a landmark volume edited by Leyshon, Matless, and Revill sets out an agenda of considering,

space and place not simply as sites where or about which music happens to be made, or over which music has diffused; rather, here different spatialities are suggested as being formative of the sounding and resounding of music. Such a richer sense of geography highlights the spatiality of music, and the mutually generative relations of music and place.

(1998: 4)

In other words, a basic concern is studying music to facilitate 'different ways of knowing and getting at space' (Morton, 2005: 661). The constellation of interests that emerges from these foundations includes many that are widely familiar across the cultural disciplines, and that indeed might be considered within the core concerns of (ethno)musicology: national identities (Gold and Revill, 2006; Kong, 1995b; Leyshon, Matless, and Revill, 1998; Wood, 2012), the mechanisms of political power (Hancock-Barnett, 2012; Hughes, 2016; Kong, 1995c; Leyshon, Matless, and Revill, 1998), mobilities and circulation (Milburn, 2017; Revill, 2010), the soundscapes of localness (Boland, 2010; Brandellero and Pfeffer, 2015; Hudson, 2006; Matless, 2005), new technology and virtual spaces (Milburn, 2017), and the economics of the music industry (Florida, Mellander, and Stolarick, 2010; Leyshon, 2001, 2009, 2014; Power and Hallencreutz, 2002). Other concerns chime strongly with more specific corners of recent work emerging from music, for example in the connections between landscape and music (Hirsch, 1995; Knight, 2006; Revill, 2012) that have also interested historical musicologists (Grimley, 2006a, 2006b; Hicks, Uy, and Venter, 2006). Other key issues, such as the roles of affect (Anderson, 2005; Bennett and Rogers, 2016; Inwood and Alderman, 2018; Leyshon et al., 2016; Watson and Ward, 2013; Wood, 2012) are also increasingly noted in musicological scholarship on place (Impey, 2013; Magowan and Wrazen, 2013; Stokes, 2017).

How far, though, does work on similar topics from these two disciplines speak to each other? The background to this question is, as Edward Casey notes, that 'we are never without emplaced experiences... Human beings – along with other entities on earth – are ineluctably place-bound' (1996: 19). If, as a result, music is firmly a geographical concern, then what unique set of perspectives do geographers bring to understanding the complexities of the local and the global? In work I discuss below where the contributions of these perspectives are made the clearest, there is left no doubt that place and space matter beyond the simple fact that the phenomena being studied are fundamentally place-bound. On the other hand, certain criticisms come to mind when geographers talk about 'the social and cultural space that music occupies' (Milburn, 2017) to refer to different modes of interacting or feeling that prevail in particular contexts. Phrases such as 'spaces of access', 'spaces of knowing and communicating', and 'spaces of music therapy' (Morton, 2005) are typical of those referring to these realms of social experience. But when music studios are called 'emotional spaces' (Watson and Ward, 2013), or when an archive researcher works in 'an affective space' (Inwood and Alderman, 2018) and searches for 'new methodological spaces' (Morton, 2005), is there a substantive or just a language difference from when, for instance, a sociologist divides experience into similar realms? In each of these examples, say, dramaturgical 'metaphors' might be equally effective as spatial ones, and these 'spaces' could become emotional, affective, or methodological 'frames' instead (Goffman, 1974).

If much work uses spatial reference points to talk, like scholarship from music does, about issues such as gender (Impey, 2013; Magowan and Wrazen, 2013) and ethnicity (Stokes, 1994), how though has geography taken advantage of being ‘uniquely positioned within the social sciences to be able to contribute to research on some of the more geographical issues of concern to musicologists and ethnomusicologists’ (Jazeel, 2005: 239)? How has it elaborated on the very nature of the connections between place and space and these wider matters in people’s engagements with the world?

3. More-than-representation

Non-representational theory is perhaps the single most prevalent approach from wider human geography to inform geographical research on music in this century. Emanating from the work of Nigel Thrift (2008), Arun Saldanha sums up non-representational theory as:

a catch-all term for a heterodox range of approaches emphasizing material process and practice over semiotics and cognition, it now seems to stand for any (British) geographical work influenced by actor-network theory and theorists writing broadly in the wake of Deleuze.

(2005: 708)

Its strength, for Nichola Wood, lies in that it ‘brings together and develops a range of philosophical positions (such as pragmatism, phenomenology and existentialism) in order to explore practices at the moment of their doing’. This leads to ‘an awareness of the social, cultural, political and emotional geographies through and in which social practices are negotiated and performed’ and a focus on ‘the contextually specific processes through which both

“familiar” and “new” representations are (re)created’ (2012: 201). Non-representational theory is all about a focus upon process over product, and upon understanding how the multiplicity of non-human material things is implicated in the forms and effects of musical practice.

Some of the most notable manifestations of these approaches come in a series of papers on street music performance by Paul Simpson (2011, 2012, 2013). He advocates an ‘ecological approach’ (2013) that seeks to illuminate the complexity of relations between human and non-human actants, and focuses on the body in performance.² Simpson’s aim is to show ‘the sociospatial context in which the performing body take place [sic] (here the street) can act to choreograph (though not necessarily dictate) the activities of the performer and so the impact upon the performance-space produced’ (2013: 188). He offers the example of how, in his own experiences of busking, the sunshine that he encounters on one particular day is a key factor in the ecology of the performance. First, it lifts his and spectators’ moods, providing an atmosphere that boosts his playing, but later, it gives him the dehydration and sunburn that bring to an end the session: ‘the literal-meteorological atmosphere of the performance ecology affected my capacities as an embodied being’ (ibid.: 192).

Simpson’s uses of non-representational theory, I think, are effective answers to a recent observation from George Revill,

² For other geographical work on embodiment and materiality see Morton (2005), Payne (2018), Revill (2004), Saldanha (2005), Wood, Duffy, and Smith (2007).

another leading music geographer. Revill notes that ‘little sustained attention has been paid to the processes and practices by which sound actually makes space’ (2016: 240-1), and criticizes work in which there is little attempt to explain ‘how particular characteristics of sonic phenomena engage with particular spatial dynamics’ (ibid.: 242). I interpret this as a call for more questions explicitly interrogating why space is an illuminating lens through which to view musical practices. A good example is one posed by Dylan Trigg (2006) in the title of an article on music played in hotel lobbies: ‘Can we speak of a disinterested space?’

Where I take issue with Revill, however, is regarding his foregrounding of sound in this project. Music geographers sometimes relate what they do to the ‘sonic turn’ in geography and wider cultural studies (Dillane et al., 2015; Duffy, 2005: 678). An article by Arun Saldanha on the rave scene in the tourist spot of Goa in India, however, is effective demonstration that this need not always be the case. Saldanha asks about the early-morning phase of a rave that has seen through the night: ‘What are the material conditions for race to become a differentiating factor when the sun starts shining on dancing bodies?’ (2005: 710), noting that foreign and domestic tourists here tend to end up differentiated spatially in their dancing and other activity. Rather than focusing entirely on the distinctive characteristics of sound and their implications in these processes, Saldanha acknowledges that studying music here also involves attention to a ‘visual economy’ (ibid.: 713). Foreign and domestic rave-goers respond differently to the bright sunlight in the morning hours late on in an event, with Indian tourists usually seeking dark

corners or returning to bed and leaving white visitors to dance in conspicuous positions. This is linked to cultural phenomena built up around the physical characteristics of different bodies; the tanning of skin is a marker of prestige and a display of status earned through longevity in the scene, and is primarily available to those with light skin. What enables Saldanha to demonstrate the benefits of looking beyond the sonic is a theoretical basis in proxemics, 'the study of the use of space across and in-between cultures' (ibid.: 711). The distribution of Indians and Europeans in space is shaped by 'differing incorporated ideas of privacy, intimacy and crowdedness' (ibid.).

Saldanha, however, is one of several scholars to offer serious critique of non-representational theory. He takes issue with an idea from the theory's originator Nigel Thrift that dance (and music) transcends debates about political power by virtue of being a form of experience less mediated by intellectual and linguistic description. In this work on the rave scene in Goa, Saldanha demonstrates that even the acts of dancing, archetypal celebrations of the immediacy of embodied practice, are shaped of specific forms of power relations that play out on intellectual levels (Saldanha, 2005: 716). Revill supports this advocacy of nuanced applications of non-representational theory that acknowledge multiplicity in the modes of experience bound up with music and dance. Analyzing his own experiences of learning French folk dancing, he notes that 'making categorical distinctions between the representational and the nonrepresentational and regarding them as discrete ways of constituting meaning was ultimately unhelpful for me' (2004: 206). The latter, he argues, is too strongly focused on corporeality

and offers fewer ways of linking bodily experience to matters of identity through culture, history, and social values. A major challenge in this scholarship, then, seems to be about balancing and linking these two foci, perhaps to access what have been called ‘more-than-representational’ approaches (Anderson, Morton, and Revill, 2005).

4. Researching Music across Disciplines

The centrality of non-representational theory in this literature points to some notable features of how research from geography and music has intersected. Interest in music from geographers begins in the 1960s (Carney, 1998: 1), but by the mid-1990s, scholars start to note serious limitations in the work of the intervening period. They highlight, in particular, that work up to that point has mainly been concerned with understanding the diffusion of styles of music and how place is represented in lyrics (Kong, 1995c: 186; Leyshon, Matless, and Revill, 1998: 4; Nash and Carney, 1996). Incidentally, similar themes seemed to have made a resurgence recently (Knight, 2006; Milburn, 2017; Spencer Espinosa, 2016). Leyshon, Matless, and Revill’s 1998 volume on *The Place of Music* begins a period that has been described as ‘the high point for geographical engagement with music’ (Milburn, 2017: 5). Throughout the 2000s, there follows a phase of reframing new non-representational directions, and this throws up several notable issues for understanding how geographical and musicological work speaks to each other. First, it is worth noting the limited range of literature from music that is cited by geographers. Two classic pillars have certainly been influential: R. Murray Schafer’s idea of the soundscape (1977), and Steven Feld’s acoustic epistemology, or ‘acoustemology’ (1982, 2015).

Also regularly cited is Georgina Born's work on space and public and private modes of experience (2013), Martin Stokes' modelling of the construction of ethnicity (1994), Sara Cohen's studies on musical cities (1991, 2007), and Alan Lomax's attempts to map musical cultures (1976). The relatively limited extent to which music literature seems to have bridged the disciplinary divide, however, appears to have left room for significant misapprehensions. As recently as in 2005, Anderson, Morton, and Revill suggest that it is only in the preceding decade that from 'a substantially empiricist and elitist endeavour, the practice of musicology has broadened out to embrace social and cultural theory' (2005: 639), and that this has brought a shift in interest away from composers and towards the 'doing' of performance (Duffy, 2005). While it must be acknowledged that musicologists have certainly been equally slow or possibly slower to absorb insights from the other discipline, it does seem problematic that geographers' responses to work from music seems to be based on an impression that does not, for example, take account of the substantial body of performance analysis literature that has developed since the 1970s (Bauman, 1975; Berger and Del Negro, 2002; Brinner, 1995; Herndon and McLeod, 1980; Qureshi, 1986; Stone, 1982; Waterman, 1990).

These arguably outdated preoccupations about moving away from analyzing music as texts also seem linked to persistent self-examination in relation to what are perceived to be 'elitist' traditions in cultural geography, and the field's orientations towards 'high art' and 'elite knowledges' over 'subaltern, commonsense and quotidian forms' (Revill, 2012: 201; see also Kong, 1995c). Non-representational theory is seen as a route for

opening up new genres and contexts, and a focus on musical processes. In concerns about transcending both textual approaches and elitism, it seems that the first reference point for geographers is historical musicology. In a 2012 article, Wood expresses concerns about ‘scholars working within their various musical disciplines... [distancing] themselves from the embodied and intimate experiences of participating in musical events’ (2012: 199), and cites as an example work from scholars best known for their historical investigations on European classical music (McClary and Walser, 1990). Considering the common interests that seem to link the two together, it is perhaps surprising that geographers have not looked more consistently to ethnomusicology, where understanding the wider implications of the processes of ‘doing’ music and embracing non-elite forms are some of the defining concerns of the field. In the last decade or so, though, a book about the European classical canon with the subtitle ‘Space, Place and Time in the World’s Great Music’ (Knight, 2006) seems to be an exception rather than a rule. Indeed, in this period there is an increasing number of works on varied contexts of music performance, listening, learning, recording, and other practices and contexts.³ These issues also have a methodological dimension, and there is significant recent discussion about new ways of dealing with the more-than-representational (Revill, 2016; Simpson, 2012; Wood, Duffy, and Smith, 2007), particularly in relation to practice-based research (Morton, 2005) and the use of video analysis (Payne, 2018).

³ For example, Canova (2013), Froneman (2015), Hancock-Barnett (2012), Jazeel (2005), Liu (2014), Liu and Cai (2014), Liu and Yang (2017), Lonie and Dickens (2016), Makkonen (2014), Power and Hallencreutz (2002), Saldanha (2010), and Spencer Espinosa (2016).

As I mentioned at the outset, one of the main purposes for giving this partial and limited sketch of geography research on music topics has been to expose some of the challenges in finding common ground across disciplines. The geographer Tariq Jazeel makes the point that 'for social scientists with little or no musical or musicological training (such as myself), this requires the building of new research networks and collaborations' (2005: 239). He specifically notes that musicologists and ethnomusicologists can add to social scientists' expertise in 'exploring what music (re)creates in and through the world' by bring 'technical knowledge of what musical practice is' (ibid.). In light of evidence that geographers can indeed be motivated to reach out to those in music departments, rather than simply echoing the mantras of the contemporary university and call for more 'interdisciplinarity', it is hoped that this review might give genuine encouragement that there is a fruitful dialogue to be had, and that shared understandings about what we do when studying geography, music, and space can be forged.

5. Space and Place

Through the literature already discussed and beyond (for example Whiteley, Bennett, and Hawkins' book *Music, Space and Place* (2005)), the words 'space' and 'place' seem largely inseparable in the language of the topic, occurring extremely often as a pair whose distinctions are rarely entered into explicitly. What, then, are the differences between them and why are these differences significant here? A brief glance at wider scholarship exposes a number of broad debates. The anthropologist Eric Hirsch, for example, reports that a formulation with wide currency has been to understand place as

being about 'a specific (subject) vantage point' while space has been 'divorced as much as possible from a subject-position' (1995: 8). It would appear, however, that nearly the opposite has been understood by other scholars. Andrew Eisenberg, for instance, suggests that 'place might be described as another modality of space... It is a human engagement with the world that stands apart from, and indeed prior to, space' (2015: 198). Louise Wrazen seems to support this position when describing place as 'fundamentally concrete', while space is 'socially constructed in practice' (2007: 186). Perhaps emerging most strongly from these discussions, though, is a sense of the interrelatedness and complexity of the relationships, as the geographer Yi-Fu Tuan summarizes: 'In experience, the meaning of space often merges with that of place... The ideas "space" and "place" require each other for definition' (1977: 6).

6. Geography, Music, Space

While these concerns about the relationships between space and place may not have been at the front of the minds of authors in the present issue, several of them certainly do shed light on the overlapping of the two concepts. In fact, taken as a whole, I see this issue's main contribution as resting in elaborating on the nuances of how these two concepts rely on each other, and in showing a multiplicity of ways in which music is significant in these questions.

This issue is organized, then, to reflect the goal of exploring the significances of relations between place and space. It begins with emphasis more on the former, before gradually moving towards articles that tackle the relations between the two most directly,

and then closing with work that is most clearly aligned with space and spaces. The emphasis on place begins with Shabnam Goli's account of Iranian hip-hop, with a multitude of discussions built upon a focus on Hamid Sefat's Persian cover of Drake's song 'Hotline Bling'. It is a nuanced view of the construction of place, however, which strongly argues against the global/local dichotomy that has dominated scholarship on this national context. By showing the 're-emplacement' of this song in Tehran, Goli responds to geography's more-than-representation agenda by not only discussing how local landmarks and cultural reference points are represented in the lyrics, dialects, and instrumentation of this song, but also how various issues to do with locality play out in the experiences of musicians. The main place that is the focus of attention in Oscar Galeev's essay that follows is Cairo's Tahrir Square. But in showing how the distinct 'carnavalesque' soundscape that arose during the January 2011 Revolution contrasts with the normal soundings of politically constrained life before it, themes of spatiality also already begin to emerge. Galeev argues that the political chants in the square make people aware of how they relate to each other spatially in ways that are unique to the specifics of this political moment.

Music from the Middle East and North Africa comes up again in Stephen Wilford's article, with his focus on a diaspora community in the UK and how the notion of 'Algerian-London' is made meaningful through music. He argues that while the Algerian population in this city is geographically dispersed rather than concentrated in any particular area, and thus there is a 'lack of public space for the community', the pathways taken

by musicians across the city and by genres in virtual transnational space are central to the construction of this place-based identity. Jonathon Grasse sees similar phenomena at play in Minas Gerais in Brazil, and puts forward the idea of 'deep regionalism' to unify manifestations of localness found in physical, social, and emotional spaces. Employing three case studies – about the *Congado* processional, the *viola caipira* Brazilian guitar, and lyrics from songs by the Corner Club popular music collective – Grasse's study encapsulates a concern running through the opening of the issue for locating the heterogeneity of individual experience within the broader picture.

In the middle of the issue are two articles most directly illustrating relations and overlaps between the notions of place and space. Sunmin Yoon's study of recent developments in the Mongolian long-song folk genre show connections between singing techniques and singers' relationship with the immediate spatial characteristics of the environments in which they live and practise. The 'harmonizing' between members of the group Shurankhai relies upon particular ways singers conceive of and utilize the inner and outer spaces of the body and the environment respectively, with the voice understood as projecting vertically to link the earth and sky. This engagement with space feeds into various scales at which ideas of the place of 'home' is constructed, ranging from the specific spot on a mountain ridge to the level of the province or the nation. Then, David Leahy's article on free improvisation performances in the UK offers a detailed focus on the 'shifting topography of the performance space'. This takes account not only of the

fluctuating relations between people, but also their mutual engagements with the sonic qualities of various environments. Like Yoon, Leahy explores connections between relations in space and wider cultural visions of reality, this time linking the performances to 'egalitarian, interconnected, and collaborative values'. Like Galeev earlier, he explores the dissolution of barriers between sound producers and audiences, with insights into the politics of participatory and presentational performance here seeming to comment closely on the situation in Egypt too.

The next paper, from James Armstrong, not only begins a series of essays whose main focus has merged into primarily spatial rather than place-based concerns, but it also cements the movement into a sequence of intimate accounts of European classical and popular music contexts. Armstrong's key argument is that certain performance spaces carry significances to solo instrumentalists for more simply than their acoustic qualities, and he proposes a deeper engagement with their 'experiential' qualities. He takes up points raised earlier by Grasse about the neuro-cognitive bases of experiencing localness, this time harnessing approaches from environmental psychology to elaborate on the roles played by cultural conditions and individual histories. Benjamin Davis follows this up with an article of a larger scope, this enabling him to give a more holistic analysis of the performance context under consideration in his case study, the production of an opera. He sees the whole multifaceted endeavour of producing a performance as revealing a 'cartography of culture', especially through his observations on the relationships between different kinds of 'real' and 'imagined' spaces. The mapping of imagined spaces is an approach that

surfaces again in Alex Jeffery's case study. He explores various ontological questions that arise in Gorillaz's *Plastic Beach*, an album with an array of multimedia dimensions. The fictional island conjured in this work carries a host of implications for understanding the links between materiality and imagination.

The issue concludes with Alican Koc's article on the punk scene in Oklahoma City. His experiences and discoveries in the field unfold in a fittingly lyrical way to round off the issue, recapitulating the focus on place in light of the preceding papers. Koc's investigation of the affective dimensions of life in the city, and of playing in and researching its underground scene, captures a particularly intimate engagement with participants achieved through ethnography that is informed by his own participations in the scene. Similar sustained ethnographic contact comes through strongly in the papers of Wilford and Yoon. Indeed, articles throughout the issue embody a number of ways of ensuring that concern for global and economic phenomena does not come at the expense of 'field research built on "real people" and the truths of their mutual lives' (Magowan and Wrazen, 2013: 5). A theme of practice-based research, for instance, also runs through the issue, particularly evident in the carefully considered interventions made by Leahy and Davis on the musical practices in which they are involved. Armstrong adds a method that complements elements of laboratory-style experimental research with work in real-life environments and insights from in-depth interviews, while there is also analysis of various forms of texts, from song lyrics (Grasse, Goli), to social media posts (Goli, Galeev), and fan-made media (Jeffery). As I began this introduction by outlining the cross-disciplinary

motivations behind the original Durham conference, to end, it is worth reiterating the intention for these papers to be read not only as a body commenting on place and space, but also as examples of rich and varied musical contexts and research methodologies meant to continue this dialogue across disciplines.

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Dancing to the 'Hotline Bling' in Old Bazaars of Tehran: Persian Hip-hop, Glocalization, and Postmodern Theory

Shabnam Goli

1. Introduction

Since its emergence in the 'hoods of the Bronx in the late 1970s, hip-hop has been closely linked to the concept of place. Local abbreviations for 'hoods and telephone area codes have been major localizing devices used by hip-hop artists to unite marginalized members of society around the notion of locality and indigenous issues (Sarkar and Allen, 2007: 125). Socio-political maladies including poverty, inequality, and crime have given birth to and shaped a defiant youth subculture that offers a voice to African-Americans and minorities in US urban centers and provides them with new spaces for expressions of identity (Forman, 2000: 65). Hip-hop's potential to empower the marginalized and its mobility via mediated technology (Nooshin,

2011: 2) have transformed the initially distant genre of hip-hop into a globally spread, hybrid domain of cross-cultural creativity and communication. Today, hip-hop music can be traced in countries as geographically, culturally, and socio-politically removed as Palestine (Maira, 2008), Turkey (Solomon, 2005), Egypt (Williams, 2010), Germany (Bennett, 1999), Japan (Condry, 2001), and Iran (Breyley, 2014; Johnston, 2008; Nooshin, 2011, 2017), all sharing musical and cultural features of the global hip-hop scene while simultaneously reflecting their own localities.

Outside the US, as Tony Mitchell stresses (2001: 3), hip-hop scenes rapidly moved away from adopting US musical idioms and forms, instead towards *adapting* them to meet local needs. Borrowing Roland Robertson's concept of globalization (1995) to describe the complexity of the intersection between the local and the global, Mitchell discusses processes of localization and indigenization of the global form of hip-hop in diverse locations. The 're-emplacement' of the global form, to use Thomas Solomon's term (2005: 51), is achieved through embedding music in specific places and commenting on local realities in locally meaningful ways. With the constantly shifting meaning of locality in today's increasingly interconnected world, where bounded notions of culture and place are contested by rapid advances in telecommunication technologies, hip-hop connects the youth across the globe through common music taste and collective expressions of identities. Rather than dealing with locality as a politically, socio-economically, and culturally confined phenomenon, the postmodern world has created a fluid concept of translocality, of being here and there. In such a context, investigating the complexities of hip-hop culture – with

its postmodern rejection of metanarratives – spreading all around the world via new media and technologies, not only provides us with a more nuanced view of the concept of translocality, but also defies dichotomous understandings of global and local, civilized and primitive, modern and traditional.

In this article, I investigate contemporary Iran's rapidly flourishing hip-hop scene in light of Roland Robertson's concept of glocalization (1995) and informed by the enlightening research of scholars such as Nooshin (2005, 2011, 2017), Bronwen Robertson (2012), Nahid Siamdoust (2017), and G. J. Breyley (2014) to examine the complexity of the interaction between local and global forces in the musical domain of Iranian hip-hop. Focusing on the Persian cover of Drake's 'Hotline Bling' by a controversial, young hip-hop artist named Hamid Sefat, I argue that the postmodern nature of hip-hop, its rejection of metanarratives, tendency to cross boundaries, and celebration of pluralism (Pasler, 2001), along with its global appeal, mobility via mediated technology, and accessibility of production equipment (Nooshin, 2011), has shaped it as a translocal site for socio-cultural contact between young Iranians and the transnational hip-hop 'nation'. Contesting the confined notion of locality in terms of cultural and geo-political boundaries, challenging the Iranian state's control over culture and its attempts to isolate the young generation from the Western world as a way of fighting cultural imperialism and protecting state ideology (Siamdoust, 2017: 5-6), Iranian hip-hoppers have not only claimed membership of the transnational hip-hop culture but have created new forms and meanings influenced by the global sound and informed by local needs.

Functioning as what Mary Louise Pratt (1987) termed a 'contact zone', the translocal hip-hop scene in Iran has shifted from imitating the Western form in its early years in diaspora (Nooshin, 2011: 9) to an indigenous medium of expression with strong musical and extra-musical ties to its local setting. Instead of simply imitating and absorbing Western forms and norms, as Iranian authorities claim and warn against, using Jalal Al-e Ahmad's concept of Westoxification or West-struckness (Siamdoust, 2017: 10), Iranian hip-hop artists use their music as a tool to give voice to local concerns and to empower young Iranians who share the experience of suppression with their African-American counterparts, though in different forms. Through direct or indirect socio-political commentaries or exaggerated narratives of rich kids' hedonistic lifestyles, young Iranians utilize the global template to send out localized messages and to transcend geographical, political, and cultural barriers. Examination of Persian hip-hop as a contact zone between local and global musical forces, and in light of Robertson's notion of glocalization, emancipates us from bounded conceptions of locality and illuminates the intricacy of cross-cultural interactions in today's world.

Exploring Iran's hip-hop scene beyond the dialectics of the local and the global, employing theories of Westoxification (the destructive plague of being struck by the West, proposed by Jalal Al-e Ahmad (1982) in his study of Iran in the face of modernization), and considering cultural imperialism and cultural resistance, enlightens us about the ways through which Iranian youths challenge state control of space and culture, forge new translocal, transnational identities, and most impactfully on

a global level, expose the modern Iran to the outside world, defying media-imposed stereotypes of not only Iranians but also Muslims. Consequently, raising awareness becomes a major step towards a more peaceful future.

Moreover, as Laudan Nooshin shrewdly observes (2017), the representation of Iranian popular music in the romanticized discourses of resistance and freedom found in global academic and journalistic writings is reductionist and serves wider regimes of orientalist representation. It is thus vital to study Iranian hip-hop beyond the dichotomy of the local's active resistance against or passive absorption of the global. Briefly discussing the situation of hip-hop music in today's Iran, and the theoretical paradigms informing this study, I explore how Persian hip-hop functions as a bridge, a contact zone, and a translocal sphere encouraging pluralism and rejecting metanarratives of Westoxification and cultural indigenization against imperialism.

The accelerating growth in the global presence of hip-hop culture and music has inspired multi-disciplinary scholarly inquiry since the 1980s. Groundbreaking studies by Tricia Rose (1994, 2008) as well as ethnomusicological research on hip-hop have explored issues of race (Perry, 2016), gender (Rabaka, 2011), musical borrowing and copyright (Olufunmilayo, 2006), youth identity (Alim, 2011; Pardue, 2008; Perullo, 2005), and locality (Flores, 2000; Mitchell, 2001). Hip-hop in the Middle East has also been investigated as a window onto some locales that are geographically and culturally distant from hip-hop's birthplace. Much attention, however, has been paid to either introducing the music scene and its particularities or interpreting music as a

medium for oppositional youth self-expression and social commentary, thus to demonstrating the struggles between local and global forces in the hip-hop scene (Johnston, 2008; Nooshin, 2011).

While both trends of research have offered some critical insights into local scenes, the emphasis on the confrontation between local and global (Nooshin 2017), whether the former is painted as submissive or defiant, has led to some crucial blind spots, depriving us of acquiring a profound understanding of on-the-ground realities whose examination reveals that the interaction between local and global cultures is more complex than an either/or question. Rather than reinforcing such bipolar and reductive readings of socio-economic and cultural movements, Robertson suggests examining the ways in which both tendencies have become features of life in the late modern world.

2. Globalization, Glocalization, and Translocality

Globalization, the *Zietgeist* of the 1990s (Rosenberg, 2005), raised the prospect that the interconnectedness of the late modern world would eventually transform human society towards complete erosion of the local in the face of the global, and towards the replacement of the sovereign state with a multilateral, multinational, global system of governance. A decade later, however, globalization faced criticism as an all-encompassing and ambitious theory that distinguishes local and global as opposing poles. Highlighting that locality cannot be understood outside the global notions of identity, particularism, and universalism, Handler (1994) maintains that even the most extreme assertions of nationality and ethnicity are in fact

informed by global terms of identity and particularity. Locality, thus, is shaped, defined, and promoted from the outside.

Considering the local not as a counterpoint to the global but as an inseparable aspect of globalization, Robertson argues that accepting globalization as a process that overrides locality is problematic due to this stance's neglect of the complex notion of translocality (1995: 26-30). As Marjorie Ferguson (1992) also stresses, the overuse of the term 'globalization' in both academia and the public sphere has led to the *myth* of globalization as a powerful homogenizing force, obliterating not only locality but even history around the world. The future world, in Ferguson's view, is increasingly pluralistic (1992: 81). Maintaining that globalization – the compression of the world in the general sense – involves not only the incorporation but also the invention of locality, Robertson proposes replacing the term globalization with 'glocalization' (1995: 40). Glocalization clarifies that the two seemingly opposing trends of homogenization and heterogenization are in fact interpenetrative and complementary. The challenge, as Robertson observes, is to pinpoint how these forces interact with and influence each other. Hybridized cultural artefacts, including hip-hop music, embody such complex processes of glocalization. The transnational and postmodern character of hip-hop music (Manuel, 1995) creates a translocal contact zone in which global and local forces communicate in a dialogic manner.

Globally spread but localized hip-hop music rejects the common myth of the local disappearing into the global and illuminates the dialogic relationship between the two tendencies. The

examination of hip-hop reveals the multifaceted processes of blending the universal and the particular, and shows that understanding globalization as a tension between a 'McWorld' and a 'Jihad World' (Barber, 1995) is reductive. Discourses of cultural imperialism and Westoxification also fail to address the complexity of the encounter. 'Cultural messages' sent out by imperial powers – Western, mainly American culture – are not received and interpreted monolithically around the world (Tomlinson, 1991). Even the most universalistic artefacts and messages, whether it be Shakespeare (Billington, 1992), a McDonald's sandwich, or a hip-hop song, are received and interpreted differently in distinct localities. Moreover, incorporating local messages in the global template casts light on local participants' agency in the construction of new meanings.

Persian hip-hop is a prime example to explore the multifaceted encounter of local and global, as it challenges simplistic readings of the local resisting global forces or struggling to stay alive in the face of complete eradication and obliteration. By going beyond decoding localized messages and paying closer attention to the liberating impact of the new locality created via Persian hip-hop, we inquire about the ways Iranian post-revolutionary youth construct a new locality that transcends barriers, is outside the control of the state, and hidden to outsiders. Hip-hop in Iran functions as a site for cultural participation with far-reaching effects, involving the resisting of stereotypes and the portrayal of a new face of Iran.

3. Hip-hop in Iran

Since its emergence in the Bronx in the late 1970s, hip-hop has swept across the globe, securing a central position in global youth culture. As a 'vehicle for global youth affiliations and a tool for reworking local identity all over the world' (Mitchell, 2001: 1-2), hip-hop has developed a local meaningfulness enclosed in the global form. In Palestine, hip-hop has functioned as a site for youth political expression, education, and solidarity; an aesthetic form used by Palestinian youth, it has played a key role in raising awareness about the Palestinian condition (Maira, 2008). Likewise in Japan, it is said to have been re-interpreted to fit the Japanese context and way of life in various ways (Condry, 2001). Having initially emerged in the Iranian diaspora in California in the 1990s (Nooshin, 2011: 9), Iranian hip-hop soon reached a prominent position among the youth and in Iran's alternative music scene as well. By the mid-2000s, under the influence of President Khatami's liberalizing policies, the relaxation of regulations on popular music production, and technological advances including the internet, a flourishing local hip-hop scene was established inside Iran (ibid.).

Iran's vibrant hip-hop scene has attracted much scholarly and journalistic attention since its emergence in the mid-2000s (Nooshin, 2011; Robertson, 2012; Siamdoust, 2017). While Johnston (2008) introduces the scene and conditions of music production, consumption, and distribution, Nooshin focuses on the ways hip-hop has become localized and how it is used as a means of youth empowerment and expression of local messages (2011: 30). Siamdoust's study of music in Iran adds a comprehensive account of the roots and history of Persian rap.

Introducing a typology of Persian rap (street rap, gangsta rap, party/love rap), Siamdoust discusses the style and repertoire of some of the major Iranian hip-hop artists such as Yas, Hichkas, Shahin Najafi, and Justina, each of whose music is investigated through the lens of youth empowerment and of the expression of resistance to socio-cultural metanarratives (2017: 240-250).

To understand better the situation of hip-hop in today's Iran, it is important to consider Iran's larger music scene, including as it is expanded throughout the world via the Iranian diaspora, and also as it is constantly impacted upon by the political atmosphere inside the country itself. Nooshin (2011: 9-11) and Siamdoust (2017: 235-263) provide all-encompassing accounts of the emergence of hip-hop in Iran, contextualizing the scene within the wider socio-political circumstances of the country, discussing significant artists and songs, and explaining the audience's social class and age. As both studies highlight, soon after the Islamic revolution, Iranian authorities focused on strengthening an Iranian-Islamic national identity and creating solidarity on the basis of shared citizenship and state ideology (Siamdoust, 2017: 9). Having labelled popular music a 'youth decaying' Western influence (ibid.: 6) and highlighting its ties to the Pahlavi regime's socio-cultural attempts to modernize and Westernize the country (Johnston, 2008: 103), authorities banned popular music for nearly two decades, only accepting certain forms of revolutionary and religious song (Siamdoust, 2017: 2). Consequently, pre-revolutionary musicians were compelled to abandon their careers or migrate to the West.

The first instances of Persian hip-hop emerged in the US Iranian diaspora in the late 1980s and early 1990s in songs such as ‘Shagered-e Avval’ (Top Student) by pop star Shahram Shabpareh and with a rap section by female vocalist Nahid. The genre later developed in the works of the band Sandy written by the lead singer Shahram Azar (Nooshin, 2011; Siamdoust, 2017: 235). With the arrival of the internet and satellite TV broadcasting, soon exile-based Persian hip-hop, along with Tupac, Dr. Dre, and Eminem, entered Iran. The accessibility of satellite TV and the internet in urban areas not only introduced Western hip-hop to Iranian society, but also re-connected those in exile to the homeland.¹

It was almost two decades later, under reformist policies of Ayatollah Mohammad Khatami, that hip-hop appeared in the ‘undergrounds’ of Iran. Although Khatami-supported relaxation of regulations on permits encouraged musical activities, it did not lead to the emergence of a democratic music scene.² The fact that music production and performance required an officially issued permit pushed many young artists to the peripheries. Women faced prohibition from singing solo, and the content of lyrics and musical outputs were closely examined. Under such circumstances, ‘underground music’ or *musiqi-ye zirzamini* appeared as a youth sensation sweeping cross major urban centers in the late 1990s.

¹ For more information about Iranian exile television channels see Naficy (1993).

² All kinds of artistic and journalistic productions in Iran require official permits issued by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. Several scholars, including Hemmasi (2010), Johnston (2008), Nooshin (2005, 2011), and Youssefzadeh (2000), have covered the process of applying for and acquiring permits, or *mojavvez* in Farsi.

The authorities rejected hip-hop, even linking it to Satanism (Siamdoust, 2017: 235) due to its associations with American culture. Its direct language and candid content, and the 'un-Islamic' appearance of musicians and fans, however, made the genre a major component of Iran's underground music scene. By the end of the 2000s, hip-hop had become a significant element of Iranian youth culture, progressively emerging in the undergrounds of Tehran and other major urban centers such as Mashhad and Isfahan. Soon, the Iranian youth's *consumption* of Western products was replaced by an active *participation* in the production of global hip-hop culture via internet forums, chat rooms, and numerous weblogs (Johnston, 2008: 104).

In the first place, hip-hop linked the Iranian diaspora, and its Americanized popular music, to the homeland, creating a larger, more interconnected music scene that transcended geographical and state-imposed boundaries. Moreover, hip-hop became a window through which American culture and values – in terms of fashion and lifestyle, gender roles and codes, rebellious expressions of youth identity, partying and alcohol-drinking – gained a presence in remote parts of Iran. Although a language barrier hindered full understanding, the flow of values and meanings transformed the young sector of society. In this context, Persian hip-hop defies the norms of both Iranian society and the larger, conflictual and politically influenced music scene. Taking the beats and rhythms of Western hip-hop and blending them with local ingredients including language, dialect, and Iranian musical instruments and melodies, Iranian hip-hop covers a range of topics and issues, particularly those neglected by mainstream culture and media.

Unlike other Western styles of Persian popular music such as rock, the youth-dominated hip-hop scene in Iran, Nooshin argues (2011: 10), is dominated by the middle and lower classes of society. The accessibility of its means of production and consumption has made hip-hop a music of the streets. The scene, however, is not as monolithic as Nooshin depicts. While prominent rappers such as Hichkas (Sourush Lashkari) and Yas have devoted their careers to addressing and elevating young people from lower socio-economic sectors, bands such as Zedbazi and Tik Tak have focused their music on rich kids' hedonistic lifestyles and partying. Thus, it is vital to understand that Iran's hip-hop scene is vastly diverse, that it encompasses musicians and audiences from different walks of life, and has a variety of styles, contents, and audiences. The most prominent commonalities in the scene include the age spectrum of producers and consumer (teenagers to those in their thirties), Farsi language, and the inclusion of Iranian instruments and melodies.

Across the range of studies of Iran's underground music (Breyley, 2014; Nooshin, 2005; Rastovac, 2009; Robertson, 2012; Zahir, 2008), much attention has been paid to its defiant character. This frames it as a Western-influenced reaction to the state's censorship and a major youth medium for socio-political commentary. What has been left relatively unattended is the complexity of musicians' agency in not merely rejecting the state's undemocratic policies and regulations on musical activities and other aspects of life, but also in bridging the gap between Iran and the outside world, particularly the US. While underground musicians have used a variety of styles and genres,

from rock and heavy metal to jazz, blues, and hip-hop, to give voice to their generation's concerns, they have also taken influential steps in connecting the Iranian youth to global youth culture, not only receiving but also sending messages. As Nooshin highlights (2017), it is time to step away from monolithic and reductionist readings of Iran's popular music and attempt to cast light on the on-the-ground realities.

4. The Persian 'Hotline Bling'

A few days after Canadian hip-hop artist, Drake, released his award-winning hit 'Hotline Bling', social media was bombarded by numerous parodies.³ One parody video widely disseminated among Iranians replaced the song with a famous Persian 6/8 dance tune by the female singer Fattaneh. Perfectly matching Drake's dance moves, the parody created a comical juxtaposition of a Western artist dancing to a low-brow Persian dance tune. The wide circulation of the clip drove the song's popularity inside Iran. By the time Hamid Sefat released a Persian cover, 'Hotline Bling' had become a major hit, and Sefat utilized the song's established popularity to reach a larger audience.

The controversial rapper, Hamid Sefat, has gained tremendous fame in Iran's hip-hop scene since his emergence in the past few years. Born in 1993, Sefat quickly established himself as a rebellious rapper with a unique persona. His distinctive appearance – he has a dense, black beard, and frequently appears in military-style apparel as well as in Western hip-hop fashions – has played a key role in establishing his fame. His reverence for

³ The song brought Drake the American Music Award 2016, and two Grammy Awards for Best Rap Song and Best Rap/Sung Performance 2017.

the Iranian martyr, military commander, and first Defence Minister of post-revolutionary Iran, Dr. Mostafa Chamran, shaped his persona as a partisan rapper, and inspired him to devote the song 'Che' to Chamran and other Iranian martyrs.⁴ Sefat has repeatedly introduced himself as a *yaghi* (rebel), aligning himself with Chamran, a guerrilla character with religious and nationalistic values. Another significant aspect of his persona is his short motto '*Gholam-e Nanam*' ('I'm my mum's slave'). Appearing as a zealous young man, Sefat elicited respect and protection-verging-on-control from female family members.

Sefat's rap persona is similar to two significant Iranian rappers, Hichkas and Amir Tataloo. On the one hand, his streetwise, rebellious personality is reminiscent of the down-to-earth character of the founder of Persian rap, Soroush Lashkari. Lashkari's rap name, Hichkas (Nobody), points to the significant historical figure in Iranian culture of the *luti*. Siamdoust (2017: 247) explains *lutis* as chivalrous men of certain neighbourhoods, who fought for justice and valued selflessness, modesty, and honour. The power of a *luti* is manifest in his gang and its members' obedience towards him. Hichkas's *luti* character is revealed in his claiming of the streets, pursuit of justice, projection of nationalism and manliness, and *namous* and *vatan*

⁴ Ebrahim Hatamikia's 2014 movie, *Che*, is also devoted to the life of Mostafa Chamran. Sefat's song recalls the movie and is built around its message. Intertextuality is a major aspect of the postmodern nature of rap, as it reaches out to various texts to create meaning.

(ibid.: 248).⁵ Sefat exhibits the *luti* personality through using street slang, showing pride in the country, exerting protective control over his mother, and mimicking the old *luti* appearance with his gang of men in black suits and hats.

Contrary to Hichkas, who is greatly respected and loved by Iranian hip-hop fans, Tataloo is ridiculed and widely criticized for his political sidings. He supported the right-wing, conservative cleric, Ebrahim Raisi in the presidential election in 2017, and hypocritically promoted Islamic and state policies and values including the compulsory wearing of the hijab, the development of nuclear power, and the control of women, all under the labels *gheyra*t ('zeal and honour-based jealousy') and *namous* (Siamdoust, 2017: 248). Sefat shares Tataloo's support for the state's ideology and Islamic values, establishing both as 'good boy' characters of Persian hip-hop. Despite working within the framework of the Iranian state by staying away from addressing political issues on the one hand, and venerating the state's ideological values including its respect for martyrs (ibid.: 10) on the other, Sefat has not been given an official permit. As an underground, *zirzamini* artist, he has stated that acquiring a permit would be to accept censorship and control, and that it would go against the defiant essence of rap. Having been active in the rap scene since his teenage years, Sefat has various solo and group songs addressing young people's emotional

⁵ Protecting one's *namous* (honour) has historically been a significant aspect of manhood in Iranian culture. Two major components of *namous* include how a man relates to female members of the family (mother, sister, daughter, and wife) and to the homeland (*vatan*). Street rappers celebrate protection of *vatan* and *namous*, and encourage their fans to do so as well. In the song 'A bunch of soldiers', Hichkas sings 'We sacrifice ourselves for four things, *namous*, *vatan*, *khunevadeh* (family), and *rafigh* (friends)'.

challenges, loneliness, love and family relations, the importance of God, the protection of the homeland, and *namous*.

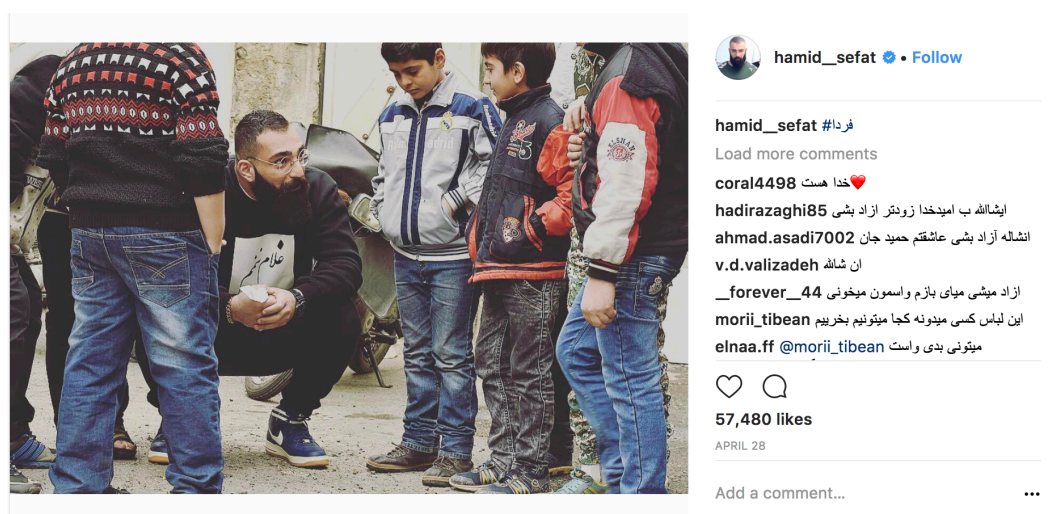
Figure 1. A posting from Hamid Sefat's Instagram page. The caption reads: 'At a time when music in Iran is dominated by repetitive and commercial pop music, we must be united, we must create quality music, we must transcend the boundaries, Iran's music is drowning in a swamp, new thoughts must be valued. Otherwise what you see as pop music in Iran is not presentable anywhere in the world'. Credit: Sefat's Instagram page.



In August 2017, Sefat was arrested on suspicion of murdering his stepfather and, at the time of writing, is in jail awaiting trial (Shahrabi, 2017). The incident further brought out the *luti* aspect of his character and mobilized a great number of hip-hop fans and musicians in an effort to protect him against the law. It also ignited debates on his persona as a hip-hop musician with a 'good boy' or *luti* character. During this period, Sefat's Instagram page has featured a series of prayers, apparently showing an effort to change his public image from that of a rebel rapper to that of a devoted Muslim who respects Sharia law and marks occasions in the religious calendar (Figure 1). He has received an ambivalent response from Iranian hip-hop enthusiasts, many of

whom support his traditional, religious stance (Figure 2), while others ridicule him for the paradoxical amalgamation of Western values and Islamic ideology, as also shown by Amir Tataloo.

Figure 2. Sefat behind the scene in filming the 'Hotline Bling' video. Comments 2-5 all express hope for his release and comeback to the music scene. Note the motto on his shirt, '*Gholam-e Nanam*' ('I'm my mum's slave'). Credit: Sefat's Instagram page.



With over five million views on Radio Javan (The Radio [for] the Youth), the principle platform for Persian music broadcasting, the Persian cover of Drake's 'Hotline Bling' awakened heated debates on Westoxification and the absurd replication of Western artefacts, as well as on issues of originality and authenticity in

the public sphere.⁶ Some music fans vehemently rejected the ‘meaningless’ cover of the song and its apparent deficiencies in creativity and ‘authenticity’, although many hip-hop enthusiasts appreciated the Farsi version and enjoyed the possibility of singing Farsi words to the beat. Despite the fact that cross-cultural musical borrowings, non-Iranian influences, and the covering of foreign songs have all been intrinsic to Persian pop since its inception in Tehran in the 1960s (Hemmasi, 2010; Nettle, 1972), debates on cultural imperialism and Americanization of the world have inspired a more attentive examination of the song in light of glocalization and the realities of the postmodern world. The trifold delivery of the song’s meaning in lyrics, images, and music illuminates the complexity of cultural ‘re-emplacement’ (Solomon, 2005).

The lyrics provide a translation of the original song’s text, which bemoans leaving a beloved. The assertive male point of view is highlighted in the word choice, which articulates dissatisfaction rather than agony and melancholy. He addresses the desired beloved:

⁶ Radio Javan (RJ) is the most well-known and widely used platform for the production, dissemination, and consumption of Persian music inside and outside Iran. Based in the United States, RJ has housed and supported both young and established musicians. Initially a music broadcasting website, RJ soon created a music blog, hired numerous DJs, began hosting cultural festivities and parties, recorded its own radio and television programmes, and eventually became the most significant broadcaster of Persian music. While RJ has its own politics, its relative openness has freed marginalized musicians from the need of securing a government permit to release music inside Iran. Playing permitted, underground (*zirzamini*), and exiled musicians, RJ has created a relatively democratic virtual Persian music scene. It is, however, vital to note that Iranian authorities require permitted musicians to remove their music from RJ. <https://www.radiojavan.com/>

*To midoonesti man bi to tanhām, midoonesti tanhām man, khandidi o gofti, boro dast as saram bar dār, ya’ni delet bā mā ni, hamash boodim sar-e kār, ya’ni delet bā mā ni, to mārō mikhāy pas chikar? (x2). Delam ba inke jā moondesh pish-e to, dige nemitoonam bemoonam bāt, khaste shodam man az harfāt, khandehāt az chesham hattā oftād. Delam bā inke jā moonde bood pish-e to, khoob bood amā yek dafe bad shod, bad shod o bāzio balad shod, hālā begoo ki beinemoon sad shod?*⁷

You knew I would be lonely without you, you smiled and said ‘go and leave me alone’, this means your heart is not with ‘us’, ‘we’ have been played with, this means your heart is not with us, why would you need ‘us’ anyways? Although my heart is still with you, I can no longer be with you, I am sick of your words, your smile is no longer precious to me. Although my heart is still with you, it [your heart] was good, but it suddenly became bad, became bad and learned the game. Now tell me, who separated us?

In the second verse, he adds:

Delam bā inke jā moonde bood pish-e to, amā kheli vaghte ke mordi barām, nemikhām bargardam be ghablanām... heif delam az to roo dast khord... dar o nadaram ro bāz havas bord...

Although my heart is still with you, but it’s been long since you’re dead to me, I don’t want to go back to my previous me, what a pity, you played with my heart. I lost my all to longing for [you]...

At a certain point in the bridge, the song becomes aggressive, threatening the beloved to either come back or stay away forever.

He sings:

⁷ The letter ‘ā’ is used to represent the long vowel ‘a’, as in the word ‘car’, to distinguish it from the ‘a’ in apple.

... *cheghadr oon sâde bâkht, In zendegi châre dasht, koo?*
zendegimoon koo? Bargard ammâ khoob Bedoon âshegham
tâ jonoon, yâ bemoon ghâne sham, yâ ke boro khâheshan

... she lost it so easily [here 'you' changes to 'she'], this
life could be saved, where is it? Where is our life?
Come back but be aware that I love you to death,
either stay and convince me or go and leave me alone

The lyrics are localized in the point of view they present and in the choice of words. As Samy Alim highlights, 'hip-hop artists vary their speech consciously to construct a street-conscious identity, allowing them to stay connected to the streets' (2002: 288). Sefat uses 'we' instead of 'I' to refer to the first person, an indication of the empowered male stance as is common in Iranian culture. By referring to himself as 'we', Sefat draws on the dialect of the lower sector of Tehran, especially in the vernacular language of *lutis* and *lâts* (tough guys). In his analysis of music videos in exile, Naficy explains that the tough guy characters in black suits and fedora hats represent the robust men of old Tehran, who devoted their lives to protecting the vulnerable, the poor, and most importantly, women (1998: 61-62; see also Breyley and Fatemi, 2016: 16). As discussed by Siamdoust, the *luti's* image is associated with a strong, jealous, and protective man who exerts power and control over females; this is an ideology that takes women as precious 'objects' to be owned and protected. In the language of *lutis* and *lâts*, 'I' is replaced with 'we' as a form of expressing power; it is as if one person has the power of a collective, perhaps relying on the presence of their gang. Furthermore, the short word *ni* (there is not, it is not) used by Tehranis (people from Tehran) instead of the word *nist*, the negative form of the verb to be, highlights the

linguistic tie to the locality. By utilizing the local dialect and associated cultural capital (Bourdieu 2011 [1986]), Sefat embeds Tehran in the song. The complex localization of the song in the linguistic domain, through using the dialects of Tehranis and *lutis*, can be particularly difficult to pinpoint by outsiders, as Robertson has highlighted.

The video clip further localizes the song through different techniques of videography, editing, and effects. The song begins by showing Sefat sitting on an old chair getting a haircut by the street. A very rare image in today's metropole of Tehran, with its highly modernized hair salons, the scene is a marker of temporal intertextuality. Black and white images make the haircut situation look more vintage and remote in time. As soon as the beat enters, the video switches to colour, and Sefat appears with his gang, strolling through old alleys in Tehran Grand Bazaar. Surrounded by bazaar workers, the gang lip syncs the song, imitating Western rappers' body movements.

The video reflects the juxtaposition of the East and West, tradition and modernity, on multiple levels. The depiction of young bazaar workers circling Sefat and his gang contrasts the urban poor with the wealthy, hover-board-using youth with Western outfits and hairstyles. The 'gangsta' rap feel of the music video intensifies the paradoxical co-presence of two worlds. Moreover, the location of the video, Tehran Grand Bazaar, emphasizes the concurrence of the local and the global. A historical landmark of Iran's capital, with numerous shops, banks, restaurants, and mosques, the bazaar recalls Tehran's history, lower social sectors, downtown life and *luti* culture. In

the alleys of Tehran's bazaars, urban workers and rural immigrants meet the Western-looking rich kids singing Farsi and dancing to a Western beat. The confrontation of the two is reminiscent of the juxtaposition of East and West.

Hover boards are particularly important as they exhibit consumerist aspects of global youth culture. Uniform patterns of youth consumption around the world – clothing styles, music tastes, and media habits – manifest a transnational, market-based ideology at the center of which exists a dialectic between structures of difference and their adaptation in local contexts (Askegaard and Kjeldgaard, 2006: 232). Global youth culture is best understood in terms of glocalization, as it exhibits creolization and appropriation of globally spread characteristics. Such creolized and appropriated glocal youth culture depicted in the song video – in fashion, hairstyles, hover boards, and body movements – casts further light on the glocalizing processes at work.

As a cover version, musical aspects do not change much. Nonetheless, localization of the song occurs in the use of two instruments, the violin and the Iranian frame drum, the *daf*. The violin, absent in Drake's version, is used in the choruses and becomes noticeable towards the end of the song when its player enters the music video too. The violin is an important melodic instrument in Persian popular and traditional music (Breyley and Fatemi, 2016: 35; Nettl, 1972: 222), particularly due to its timbre being close to the Persian instrument the *kamancheh* and the freedom it provides Iranian musicians in playing Persian microtones. The *daf* is also used in the choruses and plays a

prominent role in the rhythm section responsible for the beat, by giving it a Persian flavour through its distinct tone colour. As Johnston (2008: 108) stresses, the incorporation of Iranian instruments, as well as references to Persian poetry, have been effective tools in creating the distinct sound of Persian hip-hop (*rap-e Farsi*) and reflect the musical adaptation of the global template.

As the close examination of the song shows, the postmodern character of hip-hop music – intertextuality, bricolage through sampling, musical borrowing, pastiche, parody, and double consciousness – create a democratic contact zone that brings distant locales and cultures together. In the transnational context of hip-hop, everyone has access to membership and a voice, and this is a possibility dependent on the key aspect of the postmodern condition and the rejection of metanarratives (Lyotard, 1996). There are many arts to this contact zone. In Iran, hip-hop music has linked the young generation to global youth culture. Besides, through Persian hip-hop songs, modern Iran is exposed and connected to the globally dispersed Iranian diaspora and more broadly, the whole world. According to Swedenburg (2001), Muslim hip-hop artists play a pivotal role in challenging Islamophobia and racism in France and England. Khabeer's study of American Islamic hip-hop (2007) also reveals that this genre serves two major objectives; 1) preserving the Islamic identity of Muslim young people, and 2) educating non-Muslims about Islam and Muslims. As Pratt noted, these two studies are examples of the benefits of the contact zone. It is through the localization of the globally meaningful template that Muslim hip-hoppers aim to destroy stereotypes and cultivate

new discourses on Muslims' culture and identity. A very similar process is detectible in the Persian hip-hop scene.

5. Conclusion

Complex processes of musical indigenization, adaptation, and local re-emplacement inherent in the global presence of hip-hop have been widely studied in recent years (Baker, 2006; Kahf, 2007; Mitchell, 2001; Nooshin, 2011). Created at the intersection of the local and the global, and serving both as a canvas and template (Baker, 2006: 236), hip-hop is an epitome of glocalization. As Bennett maintains, the cultural value of hip-hop cannot be assessed without considering the local setting in which it is used as a 'mode of collective expression' (1999: 78). In Iran, hip-hop has developed as a globally conscious, yet locally meaningful medium for the expression of socio-political commentary and for young people's active participation in civil society (Nooshin, 2011). Moreover, it has linked the young generation to global youth culture through the reworking of beats, song forms, and content, particularly through cover versions. As Iran's 'fastest growing popular music genre' (ibid.: 5), hip-hop has been utilized by local agents (both producers and consumers) to create a space for marginalized voices and to forge globally influenced local identities.

In this article, I have claimed that the multifaceted processes of glocalization and the postmodern nature of hip-hop have given it the capacity to play more complex roles in the current context of Iran. Taking advantage of malleability inherent in hip-hop music, Iranian hip-hoppers have 1) challenged the state's tight control of space, 2) introduced the face of modern Iran to the outside

world, an underground Iran hidden to outsiders and thus defying not only the representation of Iran as a promoter of war and terrorism and its people as oppressed, but also the anti-Iranian, anti-Muslim rhetoric in Western and global media,⁸ and 3) rejected simplistic readings of hip-hop music as a manifestation of Westoxification and cultural imperialism, by depicting multifaceted processes of cultural interaction at work. As the case study of Persian 'Hotline Bling' shows, Persian hip-hop, even when its borrowing of Western culture is most evident, is much more than meaningless imitation.

On one hand, the song incorporates the vernacular Farsi of Tehran, locates the video in a historical landmark of Iran's capital, the Grand Bazaar, incorporates the *daf*, and gives prominence to the violin. On the other, it shows off hover boards, phones, and fashion styles representing global or American consumption patterns, and adds them to Drake's beat and dance moves. Persian 'Hotline Bling' re-replaces the song in Tehran, and reveals how hip-hop rejects the metanarratives of cultural purity against cultural imperialism. As such, simplistic interpretations of hip-hop – and consequently policies and practical approaches towards production and consumption – in locally and culturally remote sites like Tehran, Istanbul, or Beirut result in misreadings of the on-the-ground realities, depriving us of achieving a nuanced understating of socio-cultural interactions.

⁸ While the representation of Iran in the global media is not monolithic, the hostage crisis in the 1980s, the country's support for other Shi'a states in the region, and political adversity with Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the US have led to a visible anti-Iranian rhetoric in the world. Illustrative journalistic stories include Browne (2016), Ahronheim (2017), and Daoud (2015).

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Construction of Protest Space through Chanting in the Egyptian Revolution (2011): Musical Dimensions of a Political Subject

Oscar Galeev

1. Introduction: Politics of Protest Chanting

The waves of protests and, in some cases, mass uprisings in the early 2010s resonated from Zuccotti Park in the US to Change Square in Sana'a, and from Syntagma in Athens to Maidan in Ukraine. Despite their varying outcomes, the Arab Spring, the Occupy movements and, in general, the revolutions of 2011 shared similar decentralized forms of organization and positioning towards an urban space as their focal point (Mitchell, 2012: 8). Notably, the common protest dynamics and the very vocabulary of these movements were centred on specific sites such as parks, streets, boulevards, and squares. In this context, Tahrir Square deserves special attention not only as the most iconic site of the Arab Spring, but also as a vivid example of

popular politics emerging from a range of new uses and practices of space in the 2010s (Gregory, 2013: 235; Sassen, 2011: 573). Occupation and encampment in this small square – small compared to the scope of its impact – exposed the fragility of the Egyptian political order and shaped everyday practices of the Arab Spring protests (Bayat, 2012: 119). In order to understand how new street politics could become a successful tool in formulating a demand for political change we must look into some key protesters' experiences of encampment, of the distinctive sensuous space constructed in Tahrir Square in 2011.

Slogans and chants such as 'People want the fall of the regime'¹ became the most transferrable and universal cultural elements of the Arab Spring all across the Middle East and North Africa. Accessible to all protesters, catchy chants and tunes arose as the most democratic form of expressing a demand for social and political change. Unlike any written information distributed on paper or on the internet, chants were equally comprehensible for all classes including the urban poor, often illiterate and deprived of basic social and economic rights as a result of vast rural to urban migration in the region in the last decades. And it was chanting and the sounds of protesting crowds that often attracted more and more people to the streets and squares (Sanders and Visonà, 2012: 216). However, so far there has been very little research on how singing and chanting might be constitutive of spatial practices of the protests. My study started with personal observations and conversations with some participants of the 2011 and 2013 protests on Tahrir, many of them emphasizing the role of musical uses of the human voice in their collective

¹ الشعب يريد إسقاط النظام

experience of the Egyptian Revolution. Trying to understand why soundscape and the human voice had such a power in shaping the aesthetics of the protests, I continued researching individual experiences of Tahrir protesters through their reports, interviews, videos, personal published stories, and tweets sent from Tahrir during the January 2011 Revolution. Most of the data was collected in an online field study, designed as an anthropological questionnaire and comprised of 15 open questions in English and Arabic. Extensive responses from 13 respondents, whose ages range from 17 to 40, describe both protesters' memories of Tahrir encampment events and their accompanying subjective feelings and observations. It might appear surprising that I use the data from tweets alongside later recollections of the events such as memoirs and stories. Nevertheless, the imposed limit of 140 characters, together with the immediacy and urgency of a message sent from the protesting crowd creates an almost unmediated report, and this can be helpful in understanding the here-and-now experience of a protest (Gregory, 2013: 240). Personal accounts demonstrate how the sounds of the human voice are perceived by protesters and how they interplay with other noises accompanying the protest. However, it should be noted that this methodology, and the usage of a broad variety of sources, bears a risk of selectively picking the data relating to the protester's sonic experiences and excluding other complex facets of a comprehensive collective experience of the protest.

Overall, I will argue that the musicality of Tahrir lies at the core of its political aesthetics and of the sense of 'vivid present' in the days of the revolution. The soundscape of protest chants is

instrumental in the formation of what Bakhtin (1984: 223) considers a 'terrain of sensuous embodied existence' (Gardiner, 2002: 66). This is what makes the soundscape of the street and the square into a politicized space in the Egyptian Revolution. Here, I am using a broader interpretation of the term 'soundscape' than simply meaning a sonic environment and the interactions of people, in this case, of city residents with this environment (Bijsterveld et al., 2013: 35). In Schafer's (1994) original conceptualization, a soundscape is a relationship between individual experiences and the physical and cultural totality of space. But in a soundscape of a political protest, two additional levels of complexity arise. First, almost all people present in such a sounding space are the primary soundmakers; a site-specific soundscape, therefore, cannot be regarded as an ambient sound environment. It is rather a part of a coordinated and shared experience where sounds from all sources become a narrative medium (Kalinak, 2015: 99). Secondly, as protesters consciously construct a certain atmospheric effect in a sounding space, they all take part in a collective sound design (ibid.: 2). Using this expanded definition, I view a soundscape here as a designed acoustic backdrop without a clear demarcation between sound producers and an audience. This allows us to focus instead on a new collective political subject emerging in the revolution, a subject reflected in their embodied music cognition in Tahrir. As a result, a soundscape governed by the human voice and the chants of the protesters creates a form of musical communication that allows the message of the protest to be spread far beyond the physical limits of Tahrir Square.

2. Musical Rhythms of Protesting in Tahrir Square

Designed in the nineteenth century under Khedive Ismail, Tahrir remains a unique place in Cairo for its well-determined architectural planning (El-Menawy, 2012: 223). Nine government ministries, the Presidential Palace, the administrative Mogamma building, which notably was shut down during both the 2011 and the 2013 protests, and the headquarters of the National Democratic Party and of the Arab League surround the busy traffic circle that became the heart of the 2011 encampment. In such a conglomeration of symbols of state power around the square, the regime² opposed by the revolutionary crowd was not only the authoritarian Egyptian state in a narrow sense, but all that 'constituted the politically and socially familiar' in Egypt of that time (Sabea, 2014: 72). A distinctive immersive auditory experience of Tahrir, or its soundscape under Mubarak's regime, also constituted a part of the familiar and of the normalized in the everyday life of Cairo. And from the very beginning of the protest, the collective resistance aimed at subverting all language of power in Tahrir, including its soundscape (Kraidy, 2016: 155).

Schafer (1994: 78) coins the term 'soundmarks' to describe sounds specific to a geographical area and easily recognizable by a community. How the soundmarks of a revolutionary Tahrir were identified by the dwellers of Cairo can be seen in the account of a participant of the 18 days of the Egyptian Revolution who describes his experience of protesting as a repetitive movement through the city. For this Egyptian young man, the entire revolution consisted of his daily walks from his

² النظام

grandmother's house to Tahrir Square and back; as he approached downtown Cairo and the streets leading to the square, he would hear the intensifying sounds of the crowd, of people '... chanting, discussing, planning, hoping...' (Al-Zubaidi and Cassel, 2013: 64). The most popular chants such as 'People want the fall of the regime' or 'Revolution until victory', for this protester, became familiar and constantly reproduced soundmarks with their own unchanging musical rhythm:

Rhythm:	Ash-shàb yurìd isqàt àn-nizàm ³
Translation:	People want the fall of the regime!
Original:	الشعب يريد إسقاط النظام
Rhythm:	Thàwra thàwra hàti nàsr Thàwra fì kul shuàri màsr
Translation:	Revolution, revolution until victory! Revolution in all streets of Egypt!
Original:	ثورة ثورة حتي النصر... ثورة في كل شوارع مصر

This illustrates the first obvious function of a protest soundscape: it allows the protesters to manifest their presence in the square and to attract more people into it. But hearing noises of the protest in this context is not merely a passive act; the senses mediate between the built environment and the self and, thus, become geographical as they create our awareness of spatial relationships (Rodaway, 1994: 37). As a result, the soundscape of Tahrir is not static but rather evolving together with people's interpretation of the protests. Looking into the tweets sent during the January 2011 Revolution, we see that inhabitants of houses and hotels around the square regularly write about the slogans and chants that they could hear from their rooms (Idle and

³ The rhythmic transcriptions in this article are not the standard Arabic transliteration, they only serve to represent accents in each chant.

Nunns, 2011: 52, 70, 85, 90). On many occasions, the crowd would gather under residential apartment blocks and chant ‘Come down to Tahrir!’ with an accelerating tempo, waiting for people to come out of their apartments and into the streets.

Rhythm:	Înzîl Tàhrîr
Translation:	Come down to Tahrir!
Original:	انزل تحرير

As for the protesters directly immersed in the soundscape of Tahrir, the sounds inside and around the square reflect both the fear and excitement of the political protest; in such a way, the participants tweet about the sounds of police helicopters, army fighter jets, and bullets, contrasting these to the joy of hearing loud chants, songs, and poems in the streets (ibid.: 73, 86, 88, 127). A grave risk stemming both from a lack of authority and from participating openly in the demonstrations seem to amplify the emotional response to all forms of sensory stimuli. Consequently, feelings of vulnerability on the one hand and invincibility on the other, as well as the utopian visions of the revolution become directly linked to the soundscape of the square. For instance, user @alla tweets on 31 January: ‘... massive crowds singing dancing we cannot be defeated’ (ibid.: 146). Another protester answering the questionnaire for this study compares the feeling of unity and overwhelming collective excitement created by ‘chanting together’ to traditional chanting during football games. The soundscape of revolutionary Tahrir, therefore, exists in a constant interaction with the city as a whole; even years after the January Revolution, people of Cairo report how the atmospheric and sensuous aspects of the encampment

produced a memorable and unmistakable experience of the protesting square.

Of course, sensuous geographies of Tahrir were formed by visual as well as auditory perception. However, as Rodaway (1994: 114) argues, visual perception inevitably locates and abstracts each object in the surrounding space by focusing on it; the ear, on the other hand, 'favours sound from any direction' and constitutes a much more comprehensive social experience. Consequently, a soundscape is much harder to manipulate, but strategic control of soundscapes can be employed by those in power to achieve a desired atmospheric effect and social order; sound may act as an audio control tool, intensifying and demarcating space, and fostering or hindering certain social interactions (Yang and Guaralda, 2013: 2). Such a difference between the normal and the revolutionary modes of the Tahrir soundscape is eloquently described by a protester who had heard the call to go to the street on the morning of 25 January. She says that she '... checked out the streets and the reaction of the people, and everything was quiet and there was no evidence of anything abnormal...' (Al-Saleh, 2015: 94). Later on, however, she notices a group of policemen heading to the city centre and finds her way to the protest by following the street chants: '... the voice of the people was our guide, and I melted in its melody' (ibid.).

Such a 'voice of the people' bears the connotations of both sounds uttered and of a capacity to express oneself freely; this duality can be traced throughout Tahrir protests as Egyptians grew more and more aware that the spaces of public protest enabled them to be heard, both metaphorically and literally (Al-

Saleh, 2015: 12). For instance, an Egyptian immigrant in the US witnessing the January 2011 Revolution writes about an ‘... intangible sense of oppression and the insignificance of my own voice that I felt in my country...’ (ibid.: 100). Hence, revolutionary Tahrir as a distinct soundscape involves active *sounding* to the same extent as *hearing*; but both are related to everyday experiences of auditory freedom and control. One of the protesters participating in the questionnaire describes the sounds of Tahrir during January 2011 as ‘a storm, volcano, thunderstorms...’ This imagery of eruptive and repetitive sounds establishes a rhythm for the protest that is defined by public musical practices different from those before the revolution. Thus, while a normal soundscape manifests acceptance of political control, with its disorganized shouts, chattering, and the passing of cars, or its quietness and the absence of sound, a loud and organized chanting in the contested space embodies the distinct aesthetics of revolt. For instance, a typical performance of a chant such as ‘Change, freedom, and social justice’ often includes an accelerating tempo, and a repetition of over seven times. After a number of repetitions and consecutive cheering and whistling, the crowd catches breath and in a few moments another protester initiates a new chant with a different rhythm:

Rhythm:	Taghîr, hurîya, eadîl ijtimâ-îya
Translation:	Change, freedom, and social justice!
Original:	تغيير حرية عادلة إجتماعية

Schutz (1976: 239) explores voice as the means to musical, or acoustic rather than linguistic communication, and focuses on interpretation by re-creation; whether music is performed or merely listened to does not change the common scheme of

interpretation, the mechanism by which each participant creates musical meaning. Moreover, the repetition element creates a 'virtual unity' both within the musical piece itself and in a sense of unity between the performers and the audience. He claims that the musical province of meaning possesses its own cognitive style and leads to the emergence of new forms of spontaneity, self-experience, and sociality (ibid.: 232). Schutz concludes that the emerging musical community unifies the individual experiences into the vivid present; this emphasis on the uniqueness of musical experiences has larger implications for collective performance and potential functionalities of singing (Skarda, 1979: 88). For instance, Shklovsky (2004 [1925]: 20) focuses on the rhythms of work songs and claims that collective activities become automatic through the musical rhythm. Therefore, virtual unity is based on unconscious automatization, for example marching accompanied with music, a chant, or an animated conversation. Such a musical rhythmicity is often mentioned among the primary features of Tahrir's soundscape. One of the participants of the early days of the protests describes a pattern of the crowd repeatedly chanting a slogan and finishing in roaring applause (Al-Zubaidi and Cassel, 2013: 62). As the protest gained more and more supporters, the musical rhythms of Tahrir only multiplied; user @ashrafkhalil tweeted on 5 February: '1:30 am and the crowds in Tahrir are still large and LOUD...' (Idle and Nunns, 2011: 148). The loudness of many voices arguing as well as aligning in this soundscape is usually mentioned by the participants in comparison to traditional Egyptian street festivals such as Mawlid. Interestingly, user @beleidy employs this metaphor in a tweet, writing that 'Tahrir Square is a large festival' (ibid.: 90). Instead of saying that Tahrir

is a place hosting a festival, this protester seems to suggest that Tahrir Square itself is celebrated.

A single slogan, a collective chant, a poem, and a song can serve various functions in a protest; they can all be used as a tool for both inciting an action against the authority and for restraining violence (Butler, 2011: 5). This is made possible by the combination of sounds and musical rhythms into a 'vivid present', using Schutz's term. This vivid present has an agitating and galvanizing effect by combining the soundscape of the square with individual experiences of the revolutionaries. The loudness and pace of the chants only take effect at the moment of collective performance, but they are still built upon pre-revolutionary musical practices. Therefore, chanting allows for a creative re-thinking of the soundscape that transforms protesters as well as the space in which the protest unfolds. Gregory (2013: 241) argues that Tahrir Square prior to the revolution was reduced to a space of circulation (of people, vehicles, ideas) but not of communication. It should not be surprising, therefore, that chants during the protest were employed as a form of disruptive musical communication, aligning voices of the protesters in opposition to the controlled soundscape of everyday Egyptian political life.

3. Soundscape of the 'Carnavalesque'

The spontaneity of the musical creates a new relationship between the sensing body of a chanting protester and the immense number of sounds, voices, and noises ruling Tahrir Square in the days of the revolution. Tahrir had '... no one sound', says one respondent to the questionnaire, a 29-year-old

public health specialist: ‘... it was like a festival with different stages and groups organizing activities everywhere’. Hardt and Negri (2004: 198) speak of a protest being carnivalesque not only in its atmosphere but also in its organization. The carnivalesque, a term they borrow from Bakhtin, is rooted in the freedom of singularities that ‘converge in the production of the common’ (ibid.). Such a socio-political reality, expressed in the soundscape of Tahrir, is very different from the familiar political sphere in Egypt. Characterized by the absence of a centralized leadership, the protest of January and February 2011 in Tahrir is constantly referred to as a joyous celebration, what Bakhtin (1984: 223) considers ‘a feast for the whole world’. On Sunday 6 February, after hundreds were killed that very week through Egypt, a user by the name of @tarekshalaby tweets ‘Tahrir sq. Has been very festive/entertaining with songs n poetry [sic]’, and twelve minutes later adds ‘At Tahrir sq. you can find popcorn, couscous, sweet potatoes, sandwiches, tea & drinks! Egyptians know how to revolt!’ (Idle and Nunns, 2011: 157). The archetypical feast and celebratory spirit amidst the danger is made possible by breaking with the aesthetic limits of everyday formalism (Hardt and Negri, 2004: 209). As opposed to a monologic such as that of official state ideology, polyphony and heteroglossia – a multiplicity of voices and performances – creates a dialogue between diverse singular subjects, according to Bakhtin (1984: 159; Hardt and Negri, 2004: 211). Such a heteroglossia, of course, is projected into the soundscape of the protest, submerging the protesters into the polyphony of human voices that fills the streets of Cairo.

As a result of a constant dialogue involving multiple subjects, the carnivalesque celebration breaks with all conventional social divisions and turns Tahrir into a collection of *mawlid*s, or festivals (Keraitim and Mehrez, 2012: 44). What Bakhtin (1984: 180) calls ‘the carnivalistic misalliances’ allows for the bringing together of the profane and the sacred, the young and the old. Keraitim and Mehrez (2012: 44) note that, in such a manner, the *mawlid*s of Tahrir ‘... undo established social, gender, and class boundaries’; poor and rich, villagers and urban dwellers, younger and older generations, men and women share the public sphere here, and this enables them ‘to speak, to sing and to interact’ (ibid.). One of the respondents to the questionnaire, a middle-aged public health specialist, notes how unusual it was to see ‘different types of people’ in terms of social class, religion, and political affiliation in one place and performing the same acts together in the streets. Notably, the festival-like episodes do not necessarily invent new modes of celebration but rather incorporate the traditional culture of festivities into the protest. In such a manner, many of the ceremonies and rites familiar to the people of Cairo and to all Egyptians are creatively used in the revolution. Mixing everyday experiences with the music of religious rituals such as Sufi *dhikr* circles or weddings became the defining practice of Tahrir (ibid.: 45). Two users, @sandmonkey and @tarekshlaby, tweet from Tahrir respectively: ‘Today, a Christian mass was held in Tahrir, two people got married, and a couple is spending their honeymoon there. Awesome’, and ‘There’s a couple that’s about to have their katb el ketab [wedding ceremony] at Tahrir sq. in front of the revolutionary crowd!’ (Idle and Nunns, 2011: 161, 163). What emerges in the square in such moments is not an undifferentiated unity of the

people demanding a political change, but quite the opposite, 'the plural singularities of the multitude', finding new commonalities despite habitual social distinctions (Hardt and Negri, 2004: 99). The chants, songs, poetry, and religious recitations accessible to almost everyone in everyday community festivals, prayers, weddings, and other celebratory occasions become absorbed into the protest as a result of its carnivalesque organization. Tahrir itself is celebrated and, as a result, music of all that is celebratory in everyday life gravitates to the square.

In addition to a capacity for creativity that is forged by the paradoxical organization of the carnivalesque, a protest is characterized by the domination of affect and polarized emotionality (Hardt and Negri, 2004: 220). In an example of Bakhtin's loud carnivals, human imagination and desire are interlinked through 'the power of human passions' (ibid.: 210). Reading through the stories of Tahrir protesters, it is surprising how exalted and amplified their feelings of joy and terror are in public spaces, and how akin they are to Bakhtin's descriptions of mediaeval carnivals as contained moments of rebellion (Bahktin, 1984: 49; Werbner, Webb, and Spellman-Poots, 2014: 11). The protesters from Cairo who responded to the questionnaire tell about extreme excitement, jocundity, and pride about their 'constant desire to scream loudly' in the square. On the other side of the emotional spectrum, a fear of police brutality and harassment, as well as anger and sheer terror of being killed or hurt in the protest counterweighted the celebratory joy, and in the responses to questions about their personal experiences in Tahrir, the protesters speak in extreme terms of 'feeling alive' in one moment and fearing death in another. One protester

associates the sounds and chants coming from the streets with the unimaginable, with a 'dream that just became a reality',⁴ while another teenage girl tells how she would cry from joy and feel an urge to 'join the revolutionaries'⁵ when hearing the crowd from her home. I specifically mention the emotional power of sounds heard from the streets not only to emphasize the enlargement of the soundscape of Tahrir into the private spaces, but also to picture Tahrir as an audible and loud carnival projecting its emotional power back into the city.

The multitude of people engaged in a carnival undermined the ideological production of meaning in the square, and musical self-expression is instrumental to this process (Gardiner, 2002: 66). Ideology that rules the architecture and soundscape of the modern city, for Hardt and Negri (2004: 202), erodes any space for the common. But musical communication of the carnival allows for the bringing to light of a culture 'of the loud word spoken in the open in the street' (ibid.: 182). If we approach the political subject of Tahrir as a carnivalesque one, it becomes clear how chanting serves to resist the 'monolithic seriousness' of officialdom, leading to a new relationship between the protesters and the public space around them (Sanders, 2012: 144). The distinctive soundscape of a protest encampment in Tahrir featured a variety of musical genres, sounds of laughter, cries, and loud screams; as the protesters employed sounds and music to feel invincible in some moments and united in others the

⁴ وكانت المشاعر شديدة البهجة في هذه الحالة حيث تشعر أن الجميع تحرك بالفعل وأصبح الحلم حقيقة

⁵ كنت أبكي حينها من الفرح ولمنع أهلي لي من النزول ، كنت أود لو أن أجري إلى الباب لأفتحه وألاحق بالثوار

musical dimension of the protest not only reflected the carnivalesque of its political organization, but also shaped and guided the protest subjects.

4. Conclusion

This article has argued that an encompassing sensory experience of the participants of the Egyptian Revolution was crucial in the making of its political subject, a multitude of equal voices fighting the regime power with the 'carnavalesque overtone in everyday life' (Bakhtin, 1984: 154). For Werbner, Webb, and Spellman-Poots (2014: 12), the lived moments of mass demonstrations unveil the centrality of bodily, earthy experience to the constitution of political subjects. This short study has looked further into the role that the musical qualities of loud speech might play in such a political act. If chanting helps the protesters in subverting the controlled space by embodied musical practices, the soundscape of a revolutionary street is continuously politicized and contested in the protest. As a result, the soundscape of a public protest and formation of a protest subject enable one another.

For this reason, silencing the soundscape, or annihilating the voices of people in the square, was an essential part in reinstalling the regime's ideological power, of bringing the revolution to an end. Literally silencing the protest allowed it to put an end to the distinctive emotional experience that drew the protesters into the streets and extended the protest further into the public spaces of Egyptian cities.

While this research has briefly outlined a connection between musical experiences of the protest and construction of the protest space and its political subject, there are potential directions to note for future research into this topic, both in the case of the Egyptian Revolution 2011 and more broadly concerning the nature of street protests in the 2010s. Firstly, does the human voice hold a privileged position in collective revolutionary aesthetics compared to other forms of sound production? How does it relate to the historical culture of loud speaking and music production in city squares and streets? Secondly, the radical carnivalesque in Tahrir managed to disrupt the political performance of the Egyptian state by creating a space that, in Bakhtin's words (1984: 185), 'could be touched, that is filled with aroma and sound'. Then how can the same sensuous experiences be used in everyday life as a political tool to counter state oppression? For instance, what are the soundmarks of political resistance and discontent in quotidian human interactions in public spaces? Hopefully, future research can pay attention to these questions to further explore the connection between musical cognition and contemporary politics.

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Music, Identity, and the Construction of Contemporary Algerian-London

Stephen Wilford

1. Introduction

London's Algerian diaspora community has grown significantly over the past two decades as individuals and families have moved from North Africa and France to the UK to study and work. As the city's Algerian population has expanded, so has a local music scene that embraces everything from ensembles of *andalusi* and *chaabi* performers to rappers and *rai* singers.

In this article, I suggest that the musical practices of Algerians in London are closely entwined with the city in which they live, and that through musicking, Algerian performers and audiences

construct a shared notion of 'Algerian-London' (Small, 1998).¹ Music, I argue, plays a vital role in bringing together people from the across the city and creating a sense of social cohesion, while simultaneously demarcating a shared cultural identity for Algerians within the public sphere. While this identity is unique to London, it is shaped by an ongoing cultural dialogue with other Algerian populations, in North Africa and France. It is through this interaction and negotiation of the local and transnational, I claim, that music produces a distinct, if fluid, sense of belonging and identity for Algerians in contemporary London. While this shared identity is complex and multi-layered, ensuring that the local Algerian community remains in constant negotiation, music nevertheless produces social interaction and a feeling of kinship unique to the local diaspora.

I draw upon the works of two scholars to provide a framework for this article. Firstly, I am influenced by Ruth Finnegan's notion of urban 'pathways', which she explicates in her classic ethnographic study of music-making in Milton Keynes. While the pathways that Algerian musicians and audiences in London tread might not be as established as those featured in Finnegan's work, they are certainly 'not all-encompassing or always clearly known to outsiders, but settings in which relationships [can] be forged, interests shared, and a continuity of meaning achieved in the context of urban living' (1989: 306). Finnegan claims that such

¹ I employ Small's term 'musicking' throughout the article to articulate the collective processes of musical production, listening, and circulation that take place among Algerians in the city and beyond. As Small notes, this is 'not so much about music as it is about people, about people as they play and sing, as they listen and compose, and even as they dance' (1998: 8).

pathways embody a 'symbolic depth', and while they are not necessarily bounded and fixed,

They form broad routes set out, as it were, across the city. They tend to be invisible to others, but for those who follow them they constitute a clearly laid thoroughfare both for their activities and relationships and for the meaningful structuring of their actions in time and space.

(1989: 306, 323)

It is by traversing such pathways across the city, I suggest, that Algerian music and musicians move around London and construct a sense of shared cultural identity. I also extend Finnegan's pathways to include the transnational flows of music that circulate between the UK, France, and North Africa, and which play an important role in demarcating Algerian-London.

Secondly, my thinking is shaped by Ayona Datta's notion of a 'geographical turn' within diaspora and transnationalism studies, from which she claims that 'the movement of goods, ideas, people, and capital across (and beyond) nation-states, allows us to explore more situated politics of power that shape migrants' relations to other spaces and scales' (2013: 89). I am drawn to Datta's call to move our thinking about diaspora and urban space beyond notions of forced migration, asylum, and a desire to 'return', instead thinking of cities as spaces in which new and vibrant diasporic cultural identities are constructed. I suggest that this is the case for the Algerian community in contemporary London, for whom music plays such a vital role in producing a unique shared identity and negotiating an understanding of the city, and this paper aims to address Datta's call for 'framing cities as laboratories in the making of identities,

difference, otherness, and the production of home and belonging during the movement/immobility of people' (ibid.: 89).

The article is based upon four years of extensive fieldwork with Algerians in London between 2011 and 2015. The quotations included throughout the article are drawn from personal interviews with interlocutors, and have been anonymized where appropriate to protect the identity of individuals.

2. London's Algerian Community

The Algerian community in London is far smaller than those in many large French cities, but still forms one of the largest Algerian populations outside of North Africa. Official statistics regarding the number of Algerians living in the city remain unclear, but numbers have undoubtedly grown significantly since a 2004 Communities and Local Government report estimated a population of 20,000-25,000.² Many individuals moved to London in search of work, to study at one of the city's universities, or to escape the violence of the political situation in Algeria in the 1990s.³ By the early 2000s, a significant Algerian community had emerged on and around Blackstock Road in Finsbury Park, in the north east of the city, but negative media

² Making accurate statistical comparisons between the Algerian diaspora communities in the UK and France is difficult, but the French 2011 census recorded over 465,000 Algerian-born individuals residing in France. This figure does not include those born in France who consider themselves Algerian.

³ Between late 1991 and early 2002, a violent conflict was fought between the government and an armed Islamist opposition. Estimates of deaths caused by the conflict vary significantly, from 50,000 to 200,000. With much of the country engulfed by violence in the early 1990s, many elected to leave Algeria. Major cities across northern Algeria were affected by the conflict, but the majority of those arriving in London had migrated from the capital city of Algiers. For a detailed discussion of this conflict, see Evans and Phillips (2007).

reports at the time suggesting links to terrorism meant that many people subsequently elected to move away from the area.⁴ The effects of this negative stereotyping have never entirely disappeared, with one Algerian musician stating that ‘some people think [of Algerians as] “they are trouble-makers, they are terrorists”’. Others are concerned with the lack of interest in Algerian culture among the general public in London, and a local radio station owner argues that,

Until now it has been as if Algeria is just an alien country to everyone. They don’t know anything about it. Either the media has decided not to talk about it, or it has focused on politics rather than culture. We have got to a stage where we have to be proud of who we are, and we have to reconnect with who we are.

He adds that,

A lot of people [in London] don’t actually know about the Algerian culture. Maybe they know that when it comes to music, it’s *rai*, and when it comes to food, it’s couscous. So there is a tremendous area that needs to be explored, and to be shown and exposed. But unfortunately it’s really understated, and people don’t know anything about it.

This apparent lack of knowledge of Algerian culture in London is a concern for many in the community, and musical performances offer one way of increasing public awareness.⁵ The strong sense of nationalistic identity felt by many in the community can be explained, in part, by the efforts of the Algerian government to promote nationalism and Arabization after independence from

⁴ An example of a headline in the British media at this time is from a piece in the *Daily Telegraph* which employed the line ‘100 known Algerian terrorists came to this country as asylum seekers’ (Laville, 2003).

⁵ Other opportunities for social interaction among the community include book clubs, political groups, public lectures on topics relating to Algeria, and small cultural organizations. But these are rare in comparison to the number of musical activities that exist within the local community.

French colonial rule in 1962.⁶ Many of those now living in London grew up in postcolonial Algeria and were exposed to this nationalism at an early age, and this explicates the heightened sense of collective belonging among Algerians in the city.⁷

While strong connections to North Africa endure, there are also many other transnational links, particularly with Algerian communities in France. Despite a fractious shared history resulting from the legacy of colonialism, France remains home to a significant Algerian diaspora, and those that have moved from France to the UK differentiate themselves from other members of the local community. A female music promoter that I interviewed, who was born in eastern France, believes that differences are apparent in the musical tastes of those born in Algeria and France, and she claims that ‘many French-Algerians might listen to *raï*, but they’re not very likely to listen to *ma’luf* or *gnawa*. Some would... but we are more Westernized in the way that we listen to music. We listen to pop music, we listen to reggae, we listen to R&B’.⁸ There is an ongoing tension, therefore, between a desire for cultural unity and a shared sense of

⁶ The promotion of Arab culture and language has been problematic for many in Algeria. In 1980, the ‘Berber Spring’ protests were a result of political unrest and a questioning of the predominance of a monocultural Arab identity for Algeria. By disputing Arabization, Martin Evans writes that the Berber Spring ‘challenged one of the cornerstones of Algerian nationalism’ (2012: 357).

⁷ A 2007 report claimed that almost 50 percent of Algerians living in London were aged 30-39 and noted that ‘most Algerians have therefore arrived in the last 12 years. These figures must be increased further because Algerians really started applying for asylum in significant numbers from 1995’ (IOM, 2007: 13).

⁸ *Raï* is a form of popular music that emerged in the western Algerian city of Oran in the early twentieth century and found international success in the 1990s, particularly among the diaspora in France. *Ma’luf* is a form of Andalusí high art music from the east of the country, while *gnawa* is a form of spiritual music performed in the west of Algeria. It is important to note that *raï* is considered socially disreputable while *maluf* and *gnawa* are more respected.

community, and internal differences and diversity within the local Algerian population. Music plays an important role in negotiating and overcoming some of these anxieties, bringing the local community together, forming transnational connections, and producing a shared Algerian-London identity.

3. Algerian Music in London

Algerian music in London is performed within a variety of public and private contexts. These range from places restricted to Algerian audiences, such as the cafes scattered across the city that regularly host performances of *chaabi* and *rai*, to more public contexts, such as concerts, festivals, and weekly broadcasts by the city's only Algerian radio station. While there is a desire to expose Algerian culture to the city's wider public, audiences in each of these contexts remain predominantly Algerian.

The social aspect of musical performances is fundamental to overcoming the physical dispersal of Algerians across London and the lack of public space for the community. One musician, who arrived in London in the late 1990s, complains that 'it's not like with the Turkish, if you go to Dalston. You find Pakistanis in Whitechapel. But we haven't got that special area... our own area'. Music therefore provides something around which the community can coalesce, and a local radio station owner claims that,

It doesn't matter what you earn. If you are Algerian, that's fine. Most of the people I know, we don't have that differentiation between job titles, or you have papers or you don't have papers. For us, if you are Algerian, you are Algerian. We get on fine, there are no worries. We have that solidarity.

While some challenge these assertions, highlighting the diversity of the local community, there are many contexts within which music undoubtedly fulfils a unifying function. Perhaps the most salient are the handful of Algerian cafes found across the city, often on high streets in predominantly residential areas. These cafes are spaces almost exclusively reserved for men, and host performances of styles such as *rai* and *chaabi*.

Chaabi emerged in the working-class cafes of urban Algiers in the early twentieth century and continues to provide the soundscape for neighbourhoods in the Algerian capital, such as the iconic Casbah. Mustapha Harzoune (2013) claims that 'Algiers would not be Algiers without *chaabi*', while James McDougall, describing the history of the Algerian cafe, writes that,

In both urban and rural areas, cafes were vital and multifunctional spaces of Algerian male sociability, both preserving social ties and exclusions, and... incubating a new 'civil society' where work, music, news, football and politics were all organized and expressed.

(2017: 108)

Chaabi continues to play an important role in the lives of musicians in London, many of whom will travel significant distances in the evening or at weekends to meet in cafes and perform together. Reflecting its roots in the urban working-class neighbourhoods of Algiers, *chaabi* in London remains the preserve of groups of male performers who meet in small cafes scattered across the city. Rostomia, a small venue run by two Algerian brothers on Goldhawk Road in west London, is typical of such venues and acts as a meeting point for a number of the city's Algerian musicians. Ali, a *darbuka* player who lives in south London, regularly travels on his own musical pathway across the

city on his motorbike to perform there, and explains that ‘I’m from Algiers. So most of my interest was in it, because every time there’s a wedding party you’ll see bands playing music and it will be *chaabi* music. You go out and get in the car with my dad and it’s *chaabi* music. So that’s what I was really interested in’. These musicians are mostly men in their late 30s or older, who perform the more traditional *chaabi-melhûn* repertoire made popular by the likes of Mohamed El Anka.⁹ Performances can last for a number of hours, and while they help to sonically demarcate the cafe as Algerian, they often garner relatively little interest from the cafe’s regular clientele.¹⁰ It is not uncommon to see a group of musicians sat at the back of Rostomia playing *chaabi* together having little interaction with the other people present, and thus while the music serves to bring the performers together, its influence upon the wider community is somewhat limited. Such musical performances are certainly not without criticism, and one highly active Algerian musician claims that ‘the *chaabi* people’ do not understand the lives of young Algerians in London, arguing that ‘if you do a *raï* festival and a *chaabi* festival, you will find more people at the *raï* than the *chaabi*. This is the truth. Because those *chaabi* people are still stuck in the tradition, in the old clothes’.

⁹ *Chaabi-melhûn* is closely identified with the working-class neighbourhoods of Algiers and developed from the local poetic *malhûn* traditions (Morgan and Nickson, 2006: 7). Elsner writes that a traditional *chaabi* lyric ‘used the vernacular (*malhûn*) and was formally related to the *qaṣīda* in its strophic structure and equal rhymes over several lines and half-lines of verse’ (2002: 475).

¹⁰ Tony Langlois writes that traditional *chaabi* songs ‘consist of lengthy narrative songs sung by a single performer interspersed with vociferous choral sections involving the ensemble’ (Langlois, 2014).

Chaabi's influence is limited by the age and gender demographic of many of its performers, and the cafes in which it is primarily performed are not spaces in which women are generally welcome. A female musician highlights the restrictive nature of this situation, noting that 'I think in these areas people still meet in cafes and the cafes that are Algerian are only male. It's not a rule, but that's what tends to happen. And so for women, it's not as easy I think to meet with the community'.

Given the limited number of performers and restricted audiences for traditional musics like *chaabi*, larger public events and festivals provide an important public space in which Algerian music-making can take place. Whereas smaller venues, such as cafes, are often dispersed across the city and in areas with relatively low rental costs, these larger events commonly take place in the centre of London, allowing easy access to them via public transport.¹¹ Musicians and audience members trace pathways across the city to coalesce and share musical experiences. Events and festivals provide opportunities for local Algerian musicians and offer a public space for community interaction.

The Algerian Cultural Festival was held in October 2012 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Algerian independence from French colonial rule, and took place at Rich Mix, a charitable community venue in Shoreditch, east London. Organized by a

¹¹ Areas that are home to well-established Algerian cafes include Finsbury Park (north east London), Hounslow (south west London) and Shepherd's Bush (west London).

group of young professional Algerians living in the city, the Festival programme explained that,

The Algerian Cultural Festival (ACF) was born out of a desire to both commemorate a momentous anniversary in Algerian history, an important date little talked about in Britain, and to promote the country's rich cultural heritage, under-stated, under-covered and often misunderstood abroad... Fragmented and lacking cultural references, the Algerian community in the UK is largely absent in Britain's showcase of international folklore... Algerian cultural manifestations are seldom seen across the UK, and initiatives to connect and enable expression and exchange are few and far between.

(ACC, 2012)

The festival brought together a wide range of musicians and ensembles from across London and was considered a momentous event among many within the local community. Houria, a musician and artist who moved to London from Algeria in the late 1970s, reflected that,

I think that this cultural event is really vital and important in terms of bringing Algerians together. This kind of cultural festival in London has never happened, for years. I have been here since 1977 and we were a tiny Algerian community in London... These kinds of event, like the Algerian Cultural Festival, it is really something very valuable and it should be done every month!

Karim, one of the event's organizers, believes it was important for the festival to provide a platform for local Algerian musicians, and he claims that,

It was the local community and that is exactly what I wanted. I said 'look, if you want to celebrate something, let's give an opportunity to local bands'. Because every time there is a gig, we have flown in someone [from France or Algeria] to be the star for the community. Let us say 'within the community we can have fun with what we have!'

This focus upon local performers was extremely important, and meant that the festival was not simply a representation of

Algerian culture, but specifically of the music of the Algerian-London community. It offered a space within which a shared community identity was constructed and negotiated, and featured performances of a range of musical styles, from the more traditional *andalusi*, *chaabi*, and *ma'luf*, to hip-hop, *raï*, and *gnawa*-influenced blues-rock. The demographic of the musicians and audience at the festival was similarly heterogeneous, and the event therefore simultaneously highlighted the diversity of the local Algerian population and produced a sense of community cohesion and unity through shared acts of musicking.

While the focus of the festival was primarily local, it drew an audience from across the UK who were eager for an opportunity to reengage with Algerian culture. Karim spoke to individuals at the festival who had travelled to London on buses from Manchester and Glasgow to attend, and recalls one particular conversation with an audience member:

He said 'the Festival is for Algeria, and independence', and they wanted to be part of it... People were there for the fiftieth anniversary of independence. I don't think they came only for the music. They came for music, and a night out, and to be Algerian, and to be proud for one evening.

The Algerian Cultural Festival therefore provided an important space within which a sense of community and cultural reengagement was produced through shared musicking. Although a festival of this scale is yet to be repeated, it marked an important moment in which community cohesion appeared possible to many within the local diaspora. While such events focus upon local music-making practices in London and the development of a defined Algerian-London culture, the

collective identity of the local community is also shaped by factors beyond the city.

4. Algerian Music and the Internet

The physical distances that separate members of the local Algerian community within the city, and the lack of established venues for musical performances mean that the internet has taken on a particular significance for Algerian musicking in London.¹² Online interactions, especially via social media, enable musicians and audiences to organize musical performances locally, while engagement with Algerian populations elsewhere in the world serves to shape and delineate Algerian-London culture as unique.

At the most fundamental level, internet communication enables individuals to discuss music and coordinate performances. Samir, a percussionist who is very active on the local scene, articulates this through his own frustrations at the lack of performance opportunities for Algerian musicians in the city. He is a highly active user of social media (particularly Facebook) and states: ‘thank God that there are social things, on the internet, so you can communicate, leave a message, even share an event’.

While Samir uses social media to interact with friends, the Al-Andalus Caravan employ the internet to facilitate their ensemble’s musical activities. The group is the city’s leading

¹² For example, members of the Al-Andalus Caravan (discussed below), travel from north east and south London, as well as other towns and cities in the south east of England (Reading and Woking) to attend weekly rehearsals in central London. The ensemble’s director may spend two and half hours or more driving to and from these rehearsals each week.

proponents of *s'ana*, a school of traditional North African *andalusi* music that is associated with the city of Algiers, and they meet each Sunday afternoon to rehearse in a church hall in Pimlico, central London.¹³ Their director Tewfik, a trained and highly respected musician, explains that,

It is possible in fact to use the technology for what we do. So Facebook is a very important point of contact. To look at pictures, and listen to records, spread messages, inform people of what's going on and what's happening... At the end of the day, technology was intended to help people.

The Caravan position themselves as an association, a term that connotes a collective desire to protect the traditions of *andalusi* music through performance and teaching. Jonathan Glasser writes that Algerian 'amateur associations are the preeminent spaces of initiation for novices, of musical advancement for initiates, and of intensive sociability for all' (2016: 175). The Caravan fulfil this function for Algerians from across the city, and association member Yasmine suggests that,

I think it's a very nice thing to have for the [Algerian] community [in London]. It's not that this is important for the association, but that this is important for the community. People who have started from scratch and have someone like Tewfik to teach them from scratch, to teach them about Andalusian music.

Tewfik runs two rehearsals each Sunday, for novice and more experienced members respectively, but his time with the musicians is limited. The ability to interact and share information online is therefore vitally important, and he uses the association's Facebook page to share audio and video files that serve to teach

¹³ *S'ana* is one of the three schools of *andalusi* music performed in Algeria, along with *gharnati* in the west of the country, and *ma'luf* in the east. Given its connections with the capital city of Algiers, it is perhaps the most prestigious of the three, and is most popular among the educated wealthy classes of Algerian society. *Andalusi* music is based upon the concepts of *tab'* (comparable to Western ideas of mode) and *nubat* (a song cycle).

repertoire and technique to the musicians. His primary concern, however, is exposing the Caravan's members to the sound-world of *andalusi* music, and he notes that 'what I want them to do is to listen to this music because by listening to music, you will record it and you will have that flavour. I focus so much on the flavour. There's no point in playing music without giving the flavour of it'. This engagement with music, he claims, has clear benefits for the wellbeing of the musicians, and he describes their musical activities as 'a good way for relaxation... it's made a lot of changes, not only for myself, but for the other guys as well... This type of music just reminds you how life can be beautiful... And you will say "yes, work is important, but we work to live, not live to work"'.

At the same time, social media allows the Caravan to interact with associations in other parts of the world. The term association does not simply denote a discrete and locally sited ensemble, but describes groups within a transnational network of music-making that share a focus upon performance, education, and nostalgia (Shannon, 2015). Through online interaction, the Caravan connect with other ensembles in this network, and Yasmine notes that,

There are a lot of [videos on the Caravan's Facebook page] that are of associations in Algeria, which is good because it kind of creates a community across borders, on one page... What's good about it is that with the people who are in the associations in Algeria or France, we could exchange ideas or videos of what they think is good, and we can go and talk about it.

The internet therefore plays a dual role for the Caravan, facilitating rehearsals, performances, and teaching locally, while constructing connections with associations globally.

The Caravan's membership remains relatively small, but the internet also plays a role in processes of musical engagement among the wider local community. One way in which this occurs is through the broadcasts of Rihet Bladi, the UK's only Algerian radio station, which is run by restaurant owner and music enthusiast Djamel from a small room in Brixton, south London. He created Rihet Bladi to imitate similar diaspora radio stations in the UK and states that 'I wanted to liaise with the Algerians here in the UK. Plus to promote the Algerian culture, through the music and the shows we do, and to actually engage some Algerians'. The station's weekly Sunday evening broadcasts include features and interviews (with Algerians in the UK, France, and North Africa), but dedicate much of their time to Algerian music, whether playing pieces from Djamel's extensive record collection or notifying the community of forthcoming performances. Djamel's rules for the station are never to discuss politics and only to play music that he deems appropriate for a family listenership. This excludes much repertoire from certain genres, such as *rai*, but Djamel claims that,

I have a lot of families listening to me on a Sunday. They have their dinner when the radio starts, they put it on in the background and listen. They are here in London, here in England. And they say to me that it just reminds them of home.

The station's broadcasts embrace a similar diversity of music to that performed at the Algerian Cultural Festival, and Djamel is keen to point out that 'you can't just play *chaabi*, you can't just play *hawzi*. I think every audience has to have its share'. He also believes that his radio shows are bound up in personal memories and nostalgia, and serve to ameliorate the daily stresses of life in London for his listeners, adding that,

I need to give him [the Algerian listener] something to take his mind off everything and bring him back to memories of his family when he was little. We put on something that makes him go 'oh this song reminds me of this, this reminds me of that'. The listener starts to go back. And it becomes, the radio, part of his childhood and his memories, and he will cherish it. So that is exactly my idea, to give them something to bring them back to where they used to be. Things that with being here in London, they forgot all about.

While some members of the community are critical of Djamel and his station, suggesting that it is self-serving, many describe the importance of individual and collective memories, and music seems particularly central to such processes of remembering. While the Caravan draw upon, and engage with, the shared nostalgia of *andalusi* music through online interactions, Djamel's radio broadcasts evoke personal memories for his individual listeners. In both cases, we might understand music as taking on the role of what Pierre Nora calls *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory), physical and metaphysical spaces 'where memory crystallises and secretes itself' (1989: 7). Nora's *lieux* are sites that can evoke and reproduce collective memories and serve to challenge the 'breaking apart' of the contemporary and historical. Similarly, music in this context draws together the past and present for London's Algerian community, and creates specific meanings around musical performances and recordings.

Musicians in London can also employ the internet to distribute their music to Algerian audiences in other parts of the world. The Papers are a group based in London that were formed by brothers Yazid and Massyl. Their sound combines a number of musical influences but is not identifiably 'Algerian', yet they have been embraced by the local community and appeared at the Algerian Cultural Festival. Yazid explains that,

I wanted the Algerians to be proud of us... Even if it's not necessarily your music. As long as you think it's good, it's cool and you like it, and you see that we are Algerian. If I saw something and I was on the fence a bit with it, but then I saw that there was an Algerian flag, I'd feel like out of solidarity I should like it.

While the group has been welcomed into the local music scene, he believes that their music remains more popular with Algerian listeners outside of London, suggesting that,

The local Algerian community [in London] that we know, I've found is either students or have their own tastes. A lot of them are into politics, and musically it's not really connecting just yet. Maybe certain tracks that are more political might work with them. But because it's not specifically an Algerian style, it's difficult.

The group share their music online, through Facebook, YouTube and other platforms, but he adds that they have struggled 'finding Algerian groups, and trying to push it on that side, they weren't that receptive'. In contrast, they have gained more positive responses from Algerian audiences outside of the UK, and Yazid believes that this is because of their Algerian-London identity. He explains that,

We actually tried to push it more in Algeria, back home, because we figured that they have their Algerian rap out there, *chaabi* or whatever, and ours is a bit of a different flip on things. It's European, it's Western music, but we're Algerian, there's Algerian in there.

For The Papers, having a unique identity provides a degree of cultural capital and by differentiating themselves from traditional forms of music, and Algerian musicians elsewhere, they have been able to garner interest in their music via online distribution.

Through online interaction with music and musicians across the city, and throughout the transnational diaspora, a unique Algerian-London cultural identity is constructed that draws upon a shared past and individual experiences in present-day London. Social media and file-sharing platforms facilitate performances, rehearsals, and active listening, while musicians and sounds flow along sonic pathways that traverse the city and connect the UK with France and North Africa.

5. Conclusions

Ayona Datta identifies a tension within urban diaspora and transnationalism scholarship that she calls the 'structure-agency divide' (2013: 91). This term, she explains, describes the tendency for research to fall into two broad categories: 'transnationalism from above' and 'transnationalism from below', or those studies focusing on macro structures of control and those engaging with the individual experiences of members of diaspora communities. This article attempts to understand the experiences of Algerians in London, and their involvement in musicking practices, from a place between these two binary positions. On the one hand, Algerian culture in London is structured by the city and is shaped by the sense of dispersal and marginalization than many members of the local community encounter. Algerians often find themselves living and working across London, with few opportunities to engage with one another, and little knowledge or interest in Algerian culture within the wider public sphere. It is here that music plays an important role in simultaneously facilitating social interaction and providing a sonic and visual identity for Algerian culture in the city.

On the other hand, Algerian musicians and audiences are actively involved in the development and mediation of a vibrant Algerian-London culture. Music is performed and experienced in a variety of contexts, from small cafes to festivals, and from rehearsal rooms to online radio shows. It is shaped by a shared history and frequent nostalgia for North Africa, and by connections with Algeria and France, but is also unique to the local community in London. Given the relatively small size of the local diaspora, musicians and audience members often know each other personally, and perform alongside one another. Musics that might remain discrete in Algeria or France, such as *andalusi* and *raï*, appear together on festival programmes and radio broadcasts, producing a vibrant and diverse local music scene.

The local Algerian music scene in London is not static however, and both musical sounds and musicians travel along pathways that are real and imagined, local and transnational. These pathways are sometimes obligatory, in the sense that musicians and audience members are required to traverse the city in order to experience and perform music together. But they are also voluntary, in the ways that individuals elect to join ensembles, share audio-visual materials, and listen to local radio broadcasts. Expanding upon Finnegan's original concept, I suggest that sounds, and their associated meanings, also travel along 'pathways' that flow between the UK, France, and Algeria, connecting people, places, and memories. It is through these local and transnational musical flows, and the encounters that they produce, that musicking enables Algerians in the city to

construct, negotiate, and reify a unique and vibrant shared Algerian-London culture.

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Musical Spaces and Deep Regionalism in Minas Gerais, Brazil

Jonathon Grasse

1. Introduction

In researching music and regional identity in Minas Gerais, Brazil, I engage three interrelated notions of musical space: the geography of cultural territory's physical places; the spaces of social development within and between historical communities; and the spaces of consciousness hosting identities of place as emotional, cognitive experiences enabling what some have theorized as neuro-phenomenological 'enactment' (Schiavio, 2014). This paper focuses on applying theories of musical spaces while briefly engaging other important aspects of three case studies illustrating the defining role these spaces play in considering what I term deep regionalism. These musical spaces, equated with the places of self and social identities, frame the music depicted here with notions of empowerment: individual,

social, historical, and political. The three select case studies in Minas Gerais include: the *Congado* popular Catholic processional of contemporary African-descendant communities in the city of Ouro Preto; the ten-string Brazilian guitar (*viola*, or *viola caipira*), an instrument/object of regional iconicity; and lyrics extolling pathos of regional place and history in songs from the region's Corner Club popular music collective (Clube da Esquina). Each case study engages the array of musical spaces in unique ways.¹

Encountered at various places and times throughout the year, the often-termed Black Catholicism of the *Reinado* festival, or *Congado*, is also manifest in Ouro Preto during Epiphany week, when the ensemble Ouro Preto Moçambique Group of Our Lady of the Rosary and Saint Iphigenia parades with invited groups visiting from other towns and cities. They follow a route from the Saint Iphigenia church in the Alto da Cruz neighbourhood, 'in the direction of the Chico Rei mine'. Groups typically include extended families with children and elder participants, reflecting their basis in community and neighbourhood. In 2016, the Epiphany week festival titled 'The Faith that Sings and Dances' attracted *Congado* groups invited from many regions of Minas Gerais (also simply Minas). A person or thing from Minas is still called 'miner' (*mineiro/a*), and the heritage of Baroque-era mining wealth was enabled through the enslavement of black Africans and their descendants. Though the procession's destination is the site of Chico's old gold mine, the gates to the Church of Our

¹ Fieldwork on the Ouro Preto *Congado* festivals occurred in January of 2015, 2016, and 2018, and includes interviews with organizers and participants, and videographic documentation. Fieldwork examining the *viola* includes interviews with luthiers, *viola* players (*viroleiros*), and scene events in Belo Horizonte, Nova Lima, and Sabará in 2012, 2015, and 2016. Research into the Corner Club includes interviews with collective members beginning in 2006.

Lady of the Conception serve as both a practical and picturesque compromise on the part of organizers; the masses of musicians, dancers, and spectators would overwhelm the narrow street running past the mine's entrance, a stone's throw away.

A regional foundation myth posits Chico Rei (Francisco the King) as having been the very first King of Congo (*rei do congo*), a title still bestowed to others as part of an election rite during or in conjunction with many *Reinado* festivals. For this very festival, the *Moçambique* community's king is joined by royal representatives of visiting groups as they bestow blessings on procession participants at the gate of the Church of Our Lady of the Conception. In a legend shared by countless *Congado* practitioners, Chico Rei purchased his freedom, and that of his son and other members of his African ethnic group, by saving what gold he could from his mining work. He later purchased the mine, earning the title in recognition of his leadership and having overcome slavery in such grand fashion. Before the dawn of the eighteenth century, the first of hundreds of thousands of slaves were brought to this highland interior of Brazil to work the gold, diamond, and gem mines for their owners and the Crown of Portugal, and later as forced labour in the coffee fields of southern Minas. 'The Faith that Sings and Dances' is a popular Catholic festival of a compound nature, dedicated to the Virgin Mary and the group's patron Saint Iphigenia of Ethiopia, two figures joined by Chico Rei in the nearly equally passionate devotion they inspire. Several festival events are held at the Chico Rei House of Culture, a community centre dedicated in part to the organization of social activism. Saint Iphigenia church, the heart of the hosting group's community, and

dramatically perched atop one of Ouro Preto's many hills, was constructed by slaves between 1733 and 1785, partially funded by Chico Rei.

The colourful procession, characterized by pounding percussion, graceful call-and-response praise songs, bright costumes and banners, and enthusiastic spectators, winds through steep streets and past landmarks. The pageantry links iconic physical locations symbolizing Minas's primary historical modes of regional identity: gold mining and the spectacular colonial-era architecture now protected by UNESCO. The Alto da Cruz neighbourhood in Ouro Preto's eastern edge, from which both the community and parade emerge, dates to the village known as Antônio Dias founded at the dawn of the eighteenth century, and bordering Ouro Preto when it was known as Vila Rica, Portugal's wealthy, colonial gem in the New World. It was near Antônio Dias that gold was discovered in 1697, and that slaves and the working poor were forced to live. Today, the parade route almost traverses what were these two worlds: one, of the poverty-stricken marginalized black workers; the other, of a picture postcard of a cultivated colonial city reflecting the European elegance of political and social power. Brazilians typically embrace the symbolic picturesque beauty of Ouro Preto's renowned landmarks as a national treasure, leaving behind as a seemingly forgotten legacy the marginalized districts still called home by descendants of forced labour. Here, the Chico Rei legend and the legacy of urban marginalization engage musical spaces of both physical territory and the development of historical communities; celebration of the historical figure's meaningfulness, mingling with the religiosity of public devotion,

re-inscribes cultural places still marked in 2018 by difference and confrontation.

The *Moçambique* ensemble's call for unity among visiting groups, and the festival's role in cultural resistance, positions the religious event, in part, as a confrontation to the general marginalization of Afro-Mineiro communities, while reawakening attention to historical legacies and to their spaces of racially segregated social development. The festival, a spectacular display of public devotion to Catholic icons, also contests Brazil's prevailing racial injustices in a theatrical 'desegregation' of the old city's streets and landmarks, and thus a marking of cultural territory. This aspect of black pride inherent in *Congado*, a facet not lost on the general Brazilian public, was emphatically shared by that year's *rei de congo* in an interview during the festival (Benifácio, 2015). At play here too are the notional social spaces of freedom – Chico Rei's freedom, and the promise of freedom forming the figurative grounds for contemporary commemoration. These 'spaces of freedom', augmenting Ouro Preto's physical cultural territory, emanate from social arenas of confrontation etched into history, and into notions of collective difference as a set of social places inhabited by communities. Music's formative spatialities created by the *Reinado* tradition in Minas confront, on their own terms, specific histories and legacies of hope and suffering while expressing and celebrating both Catholic religiosity and Chico Rei's heroic role in contemporary *mineiro* black consciousness. Geographic, historical, and cognitive layers of formative spatiality further link these Afro-Mineiro communities to their place in a particular frontier of the African diaspora.

2. Musical Space in Consciousness

Ouro Preto's culturally symbolic physical locations, and the historical arenas of the *Reinado's* figurative spatialities of confrontation, are near-empty ideas without the participatory consciousness in which individuals enact identity of place as a cognitive musical experience in real time, mapping in some way to these meanings. 'Musical sense-making is not a passive representation of elements of the musical environment. Rather, it is a process of bringing forth, or enacting, a subject's own domain of meaning' (Schiavio, 2014: 142). Intentionality and purposefulness on the part of *Congado* participants (performers, audience, community members), as a musical space, forms a key element to deep regionalism, an identity of place made real by neuro-phenomenological enactment. Similar neuro-phenomenological processes hold true, as key to meaningfulness, in the following descriptions of the *viola* as an icon of Minas's rural past, and of regionalist themes in the music of the Clube da Esquina popular music collective. If we are to say that these examples offer potential for deep regionalism, then we are saying that participants cognitively enact such sentiments, positioning themselves towards identities of place through music. Aesthetic and formal realms attract and encourage such participation through style, sound, and structures.

Music is neither expressive nor symbolic without participants consciously enacting experiential meaningfulness of those expressions and symbols. Enactment leads to processual, musical spaces of consciousness hosting identities of place. Here we theoretically concretize cognitive experience as being elemental to deep regionalism: through performer and audience enactment

of meaningfulness, music enables mindful engagement of both the objective physicality of cultural territory and the discursive arenas of historical social implications. Sense-making brought about in musical encounters is, furthermore, socially conditioned and linked to expectations inherent in broader experiences with the world. Theories of ‘embodiment’ suggest how affective encounters made beautiful, powerful, and sensual by music augment and facilitate the formation of identities of place enhanced by physical places and historical space. Notions of embodiment locate regionalism within a participant’s sense-making of experiential meaningfulness with music. In twenty-first-century ethnomusicological literature, embodiment acquires interrelated meanings (Ciucci, 2012; Gibson and Dunbar-Hall, 2000; Guy, 2009; Magowan and Wrazen, 2013; Schultz, 2002). I draw from across these sources to form a three-fold neuro-phenomenological concept of embodiment, emplacement and emplotment: in lifting ourselves up into music (enacting), we place ourselves into relationships with geographies of cultural territories, and into narratives of music’s ‘formative spatialities’ (after Leyshon, Matless, and Revill, 1995: 424-425) of social development. *Congadeiros*, it is suggested, *perform* territoriality and historical space as part of experiencing identity of place.

3. The *Viola* as Icon of the Rural Past

The metallic timbres of the guitar-like *viola*’s five double-course strings have become increasingly iconic of Minas Gerais’s rural past, as they also have in other Brazilian regions. Colonists, the clergy, Indians, and slaves in proximity to larger colonial-era settlements were eventually exposed to the instrument, known variously as the ten-string *viola* (*viola de dez cordas*), and the

‘country hick’ *viola* (*viola caipira*). Portuguese immigrants pouring into Minas Gerais during the eighteenth-century gold rush strengthened its presence there. Telling is the etymology of *caipira*: it is a word in the Tupi language for ‘those who cut and clear the trails’ (*caa* = forest, *pir* = cut). The original *caipiras* were the hardened labourers controlled by ‘flag-bearing’ colonizing settlers known as flag bearers (*bandeirantes*), the first Europeans to settle the south east interior, doing so with the help of enslaved coastal Tupi Indians. Folklorist Luis da Camará Cascudo defined the *caipira* as, ‘a man or woman of little education not living in a city. A rural worker, of the river banks, of the seashore, or of the sertão’ (Travassos, 2006: 128). Reconstructions of pre-modern, rural life remain elemental themes of the ‘country music’ (*música caipira*) associated with them and their social spaces. This musical space greatly informs *mineiro* regional identity, as it resonates with the regional, physical places of cultural territory and with participatory enactment.

Caipira is also the land itself, strongly related in the Brazilian psyche to the *sertão*, a truncation of *desertão*, a vast uninhabited place. Another aura of the *sertão* stems from the earliest, most Eurocentric days of the Portuguese empire. It is portrayed as Godless and lawless in its lack of Church and Crown, a region home to cannibalistic pagans without faith or promise. These were seen as inhospitable zones far from Western-style settlements, distanced from civilized ideas, and a place in which the devil did his work. In cities, towns, and *fazendas* (farms), the *pardo* (today *mulatto*) offspring of blacks and whites began forming a majority before the end of the eighteenth century, and

parcel farming and sharecropping (*parceira* and *meiação*) allowed the rural poor to live on privately owned farms. These positions are still handed down today through generations of labourers via land owners. This rural life, racially mixed and sprinkled with African-descendant communities, also became associated with the *caboclo* culture of the *caipira*, the mixed-race majorities of the backlands. A strong-arm oligarchy grew as economic opportunities for commoners vanished in a post-mining-boom economic decay. However, the *mineiro sertão* is celebrated too as a vast poetic space by nativist writers such as Guimarães Rosa, whose novel *Grande Sertão: Veredas* remains a landmark of twentieth-century Brazilian literature. In this *mineiro* heartland, so-called ‘illiterate maestros’ (*maestros analfabetos*) (Faria and Calil, 2003) created the repertoire of *caipira* music.

Today a roots instrument cultivated by luthiers and collectors as well as performing musicians, the *viola* comes wrapped in notions of this cultural territory’s physical places. The *caipira* experience, within an unforgiving social structure, and as depicted in the tragic themes of sentimental song traditions, is fictively buoyed in musical space by respect for nature, family, love stories, a satisfying taste for independence, and unique strains of folk Catholic religiosity. The *viola* is found in the widely practised folk Catholicism of the *folia de reis* procession and in many *Congado* groups. The secular *viola* famously channels romantic notions of the natural world and the self (Freire, 2008), its cultural emblems drawing from poetics of wilderness, isolation, and, throughout the twentieth century, shifts between poetics of big-city modernity and rural traditions. It is in the struggles and victories of survival that *mineiro*

individuality and independence proudly arise as dimensions of *sertão* existence. These themes of *mineiro* identity remain relatively unconnected to the rich, powerful, colonial-era fabric of the European-derived 'Minas Baroque' (*barroco mineiro*), with its legacies of gold wealth, diamonds, and lavish urban architecture as seen in sumptuous, eighteenth-century churches in towns such as Ouro Preto.

As industrialized, urban Brazil developed at the dawn of the twentieth century, images of *caipira* culture and the *viola* both emerged even more strongly as belittling stereotypes of the backwoods/backwards poor, the uneducated rural masses (*povo*) of the interior. Many grew to see the *viola* as an Iberian artefact repackaged as 'backwoods' through the prism of urbanized modernity (Travassos, 2006). The *viola* engages these notions representing this cultural territory, navigating the spaces of historical social confrontation, and symbolizing contestations that define aspects of Brazilian society. Wedded to a fictive countryside curated by twentieth-century social change, the *viola* emerged in new contrasts to burgeoning urban, popular music styles such as the guitar-dominated *choro* and *samba*. The 'viola song' (*moda de viola*) arose as a generic term for repertoire performed by a vocal duet (*dupla*) singing in thirds while accompanied by *viola*, with an optional guitar. The cities of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and, at the start of the twentieth century, Belo Horizonte, swelled with rural immigrants subscribing to these associations. In Minas, as elsewhere in Brazil, the unofficial 'songbook of the *caipira*' (*cancioneiro caipira*) presents memories and myths of lyrical battles for countryside soul and rural authenticity. This ethos was clearly showcased in an event

attended by this author, Belo Horizonte's first Minas Festival of Viola in 2013, which was organized by the Brazilian Viola Caipira Institute (IBVC) and featured original songs by finalists drawn from all corners of the state. The IBVC overlaps with smaller organizations throughout Minas Gerais such as FENACRUPE (National Viola Festival of Cruzeiro dos Peixotos) of Uberlândia, a city in the state's western section known as the Triangle in which agriculture and cattle industries dominate. FENACRUPE's festival routinely draws audiences of over 10,000.

Yet to 'consider the place of music is not to reduce music to its location, to ground it down into some geographical baseline, but to allow a purchase on the rich aesthetic, cultural, economic and political geographies of musical languages' (Leyshon, Matless, and Revill, 1995: 424-425). A human landscape of independence, suffering, hope, survival, and storytelling opens windows into the heterogeneous spaces of contested social development within and between hinterland communities: the *viola* becomes the voice, a 'musical language' of these spaces, articulating those pasts, and resonating in the reception of the *viola* by today's Brazilian audiences. Antique, nineteenth-century *violas* hand made by the fabled luthiers of Queluz, MG (a city since renamed Conselheiro Lafaiete) have been rescued, refurbished, and heralded as cultural emblems by sophisticated collectors, just as master *mineiro* luthiers such as Virgílio Lima and Max Rosa design and construct improved *violas* for the demands of instrumental masters and the burgeoning high-end *viola* market (Lima, 2015; Rosa, 2015). Today, the *viola* taps into the unidentifiable beauty of *música caipira's* composite disposition of empowerment enjoyed by the mythologized personae of the

lonely and isolated *caipira* that is both safe (nostalgia for a rural home and small community) and dangerous (the vulnerability of the isolated individual in the wide-open natural world and lacking political power or social standing). The instrument, laden with symbols of the places of subjugation and forgottenness, engages the peculiar pathos of those sometimes-sweet stories etched into song depicting the individual within a rustic simplicity set against a massive backdrop of natural wonder and devastating social change where feelings of loss are not just for former lovers, but also for traditional ways of life transformed by market economies, industrial agribusiness, and a political world that has betrayed the *caipira*.

4. The Corner Club: A Popular Music Collective and Its Odes to Regional Identity

The *viola* narrative fluidly relates to music spaces, its timbral identity and stylistic associations facilitating transformational processes of memory and belonging, and also of transcending boundaries, of crossing over to other places, of forgetting, leaving, and departing. This empowerment by spaces physical, historical, and emotional also characterizes popular urban music based upon expressions of *mineiro* regional identity. Emerging from Belo Horizonte (also BH) during Brazil's eclectic popular music scenes of the mid-1960s, singer, songwriter, and guitarist Milton Nascimento spearheaded a collective of musicians and poets known as the Corner Club (Clube da Esquina). The 1972 EMI-Odeon double LP titled *Clube da Esquina* is regarded as one of Brazil's most important post-*bossa-nova* albums. The release came at the culmination of the decade that saw Milton's rise from obscurity to winning nationally televised music festivals, a

period during which the collective became further linked to its *mineiro* roots, and which mapped on to turbulent years of a brutal military dictatorship (1964-1985). The LP launched and furthered careers of many musicians and poets, among them Milton's primary album collaborator, Lô Borges. Their two names appearing on its back cover, the LP's wordless front cover features only a full-bleed photo of two hauntingly anonymous boys sitting beside an iconically rustic dirt road, a fictively rural mirroring of the urban Milton-Lô collaboration: the elder is black, the younger is not. Both LP title and the collective's moniker are carried over from a song of the same name, the earliest Nascimento-L. Borges collaboration. The 'corner' is a celebration of the physical location, in BH's Santa Teresa district, of the intersection of Rua Divinópolis and Rua Paraísopolis, street names taken from small, interior towns in diverse regions of Minas Gerais. Today, the corner is also the epicenter of a series of inscribed silver plaques, placed by the Corner Club Museum in partnership with the City of Belo Horizonte, and mounted on buildings and sites that played important roles in the collective's development.

Deep regionalism's multiplicity of musical space (physical, historical, emotional/cognitive) is here illustrated textually by poetic reference to *mineiro* cultural territory, the physical layout of the city of Belo Horizonte, and the regional lineages found among the collective's members and their families. Musicians Wagner Tiso, Beto Guedes, Toninho Horta, Tavinho Moura, and Nivaldo Ornellas, among others, each with fascinating family legacies traversing Minas geographically, culturally, and historically, brought their diverse aesthetic input to group-

orientated recording sessions, musically augmenting the poetic textual identities found in many of the song lyrics: urban, rural, historical, modern, regional, national, Latin American, and global. Many lyrics of the Clube da Esquina's most successful songs were penned by one of three young poets, Márcio Borges (Lô's older brother), Fernando Brant, and Ronaldo Bastos. This article focuses on textual analysis, forgoing discussion of the great extent to which the collective's music supports and extends those meanings.

By the mid-1970s, the collective released a string of well-received recordings interlaced with jazz, folk-rock music, classical music, art rock arrangements, and social protest sensibilities. Some songs showcase Minas Gerais as a unique cultural territory. In addition to themes of modernity and contemporaneity, some songs invoke regionalist themes covered in the *viola* section of this article: rustic simplicity, reverence of nature and tradition, and both a questioning and a valorization of isolation, travel, and escape. Lyrics speak yearningly to national and universal issues from within this guise of mythical *mineiro* landscapes, of introspective, regional heritage, and from within both expansive and intimately composed sound worlds. During the dictatorship, with citizenship itself threatened, Clube da Esquina songs elevated contexts of *mineiro* identity to the equivalency of a Brazil writ large. Notable production values of sonic musical space often portray the contradictory *mineiro* tapestry of Baroque, golden age brilliance, the self-conscious doubt of the post-mining-boom decay (*decadência*), and the cleaved identity of BH's gleaming modernity cast against a vast, isolated hinterland and the often dark yet celebratory religiosity of popular Catholicism.

Our three notions of musical space emerge once more: geographical place, historical space, and cognitive processes of identity of place in individual consciousness. In these songs, space is empowerment: personal, creative, social, and political.

Lô and Márcio Borges are joined by lyricist Fernando Brant on the telling rock song 'Para Lennon and McCartney' (For Lennon and McCartney), featured on the 1970 EMI-Odeon LP *Milton*, and an anthem masterfully navigating late '60s rock aesthetics in a conjoining of *mineiro* identity and the collective's desire to be heard beyond the region's borders, beyond Brazil. This shout out to the world openly addresses the Beatles, fans, critics, and all listeners, with the message that Minas Gerais is 'on to' what is happening in the rest of the world:

I am from South America, I know you will not know
that
But I am now a 'cowboy', I am made of gold, I am you
I am of the world, I am Minas Gerais

A clear message emerges, equating the cultural array of South America, Minas Gerais, and the hip cowboy who is in on this regionalist manifesto delivered on the international stage. A vigorous rock soundtrack powerfully conveys the sentiments. Embedded in the song's sheen, its strong delivery, is BH's own modernity, and this developing world's tropical modernism, in which the collective's appreciation for their regional heritage ('I am made of gold' is also a nod to the Baroque past) is a spatial-cultural condition most outsiders 'will not know'. And only when placing itself on the world stage, in contexts of other continents and hemispheres, does the Luso-Brazilian voice, in

Portuguese, associate so strongly with Hispanic, Spanish speaking neighbours ('I am from South America').

The song 'Os povos' (The People) is ostensibly about the *mineiro* past, lost in a moody remembrance of struggle, and of light and dark. Mountainous Minas is portrayed in Márcio Borges's lyrics as existing at the edge of the world, isolated, with a hidden historical pain. The lines eerily map onto the oppressive decay of citizenship during the military regime. Musical devices are contoured to these meanings, the accompaniment's plodding determination reflecting at once both a vision of a troubled Minas landscape in its post-mining-boom decay, and for the stifling oppression of the regime; the 1972 album came at the time of the dictatorship's darkest years, nicknamed the 'Leaden Years' (*Anos de chumbo*).

At the edge of the world / an iron gate / a dead
village / multitudes / my people
No longer want to know what is new / It is my city /
dead village / gold ring / my love
At the edge of life / we return to meet in solitude (we
turn to find ourselves alone)
. . . Ah, one day, whatever hot day / is always one
more day to remember
The mountain range of dreams that the night erases

The programmatic accompaniment could be that of a burro mindlessly treading the paths of Old Minas, or of an ox cart wheel turning undeterred by change, unfazed by Milton's lonely voice coaxing the listener back through time in melodically simple, matter-of-fact declamations bathed in reverberation. Breathy human voices whisper softly percussive 'chuh-chuh' and 'wah' vocal sounds, accenting an arpeggio's rhythmic scheme. But listeners also recognized within this a hypnotic churning of

boredom, the deadly acquiescence to dictatorship. Finally, a cry – ‘Ah, one day...’ – sharply contrasting the matter-of-fact, purposefully drab vocal delivery of the opening; Milton is calling out to gain attention on solitude’s behalf. But it is an echo chamber. No one listens. It is of no use contesting this near-tragic loneliness of the *mineiro* interior from which a voice of the past calls out; or is it emanating from within a 1972 police dungeon’s interrogation cell? The simplicity of the musical gestures is no longer simple: spaces of identity are being drawn from Minas’s history of decay, and tragic current events. This is Minas, ‘my people,’ and a Brazil lost to both time and brutality.

Lô and Márcio Borges contributed the curiously sardonic ‘Ruas da Cidade’ (City Streets) to Nascimento’s 1978 sequel LP *Clube da Esquina 2*. With a deliberately unsettling chord progression reminiscent of material from Lô’s first solo album, the so-called Tennis Shoe album of cult fame (*Lô Borges*, 1972, EMI-Odeon), the song’s ostensible attempt at celebration quickly, intentionally, fades. Names of indigenous ethnicities, appropriated in the original 1890s city plan for streets crisscrossing downtown Belo Horizonte, fail in their homage, and instead confront three hundred years of settlers paving over these ethnicities, now anonymously collapsed beneath modern BH. Rather, the streets become well-trodden, metaphoric cemeteries. The pseudo-solemn, ceremonial naming has utterly failed to honour the rich cultural histories of the indigenous peoples who once called the region home. That is what the song is about: they are all in the ground:

Guiacurus, Caetés, Goitacazes, Tupinambás, Aimorés
[names of indigenous ethnicities]
All in the ground / The wall of streets
Do not give back / The abyss from which they turned
away
Lost horizon in the middle of the jungle / The village
grew

Such was the case for the Guiacurus, forced westward from Minas during colonial times, into what are now the states of Goiás and Mato Grosso do Sul, adopting horses along the way to augment their warrior-like resistance to Portuguese expansion. The violent decline of Native American populations, a forgotten history in Brazil even as it brutally continues today, came in the form of slavery, disease, displacement, and massacres. But such details are not the teleological goal of Lô and Borges's literary gesture and would have weighed down the song. 'Ruas' is neither a documentary, nor a commemorative ballad. Rather, a morbid, ironic deadpan turns the non-celebration of these peoples, thoroughly unconvincing in the flaccid boosterism of nineteenth-century city planners (and resonating with the *Indianismo* literary movement of nineteenth-century nationalist Brazilian intellectuals), into a questioning of those very intentions: the song jabs at the notion of street names doing justice to genocide. Meanwhile, the queasy yet pedestrian-sounding song takes us on a journey through those streets of Belo Horizonte (beautiful horizon), now *Horizonte perdido* (lost horizon):

Street car passes, cattle pass / Tractor passes, an
aeroplane
Streets and kings / Guajajaras, Tamoios / All in the
ground
The city planted in the heart / Many names of those
who died
Lost horizon in the middle of the jungle / The village
grew

The two most convincing follow-ups to the 1972 LP are the Nascimento albums *Minas* (1975) and *Geraes* (1976). Thanks to a friend's observation, Milton was inspired by the first title, if not for obvious reasons, then partly due to its matching the first letters from his name: MI-lton NAS-cimento, with its paired concept album companion *Geraes*, assuming an archaic spelling while completing the ode to regional identity in blatant fashion. *Minas* sold hundreds of thousands of copies in Brazil, still ranking as Nascimento's bestselling LP. The song 'Fazenda' (Nelson Angelo) appears on *Geraes*, a nostalgic meditation on the gentle, family-based weekend country house. Visited with the extended family, and far enough from the city to constitute 'country', yet close enough to visit frequently, the family *fazenda* typically boasts a small orchard, pond, or some livestock. 'Fazenda' celebrates via first person narrative the natural beauty and local delicacies laced with familial, generational experiences. There are no apologies given for the warmth of family space as a *mineiro* treasure. Life is good.

Drinking water, backyard spring, everything with a
thirst to live
To forget troubles was so normal that time stopped
We had the *sabiá* [a bird], the orange grove, we had the
manga-rosa [mango]
And during our farewell, uncles on the veranda
A Jeep driving away, and our hearts left behind
... And the children breathed the wind until night fell
The old folks spoke things about this life
I was a child then, today it is you, and tomorrow us

The romantic arrangement, with surging emotions delivered by Milton's unmistakable, trademark voice, speaks directly to a nostalgia balanced with confidence in a future that holds these dreams intact for subsequent generations. Beto Guedes's high vocal line of the backing chorus is heard as an echo of sorts, a memory in falsetto calling as witness to rustic traditions. The varied, subtle intricacies of Angelo's arrangement artfully mask a rock ballad, complete with driving rhythms and soaring strings. The gently unsettling harmonic modulations leave a question mark as to the relationships we might have with these sweet memories. Above all, this is an ode to a *mineiro* sense of place where home is beautiful in every way, as it is spatially synonymous with privacy, family, and belonging.

5. Conclusion

The three case studies discussed here are regional traditions, each offering narratives of deep regionalism engaging the geography of cultural places, the heterogeneous spaces of social development within and between communities, and the processual spaces of consciousness hosting identities of place as cognitive experiences enabling what some have termed enactment. As with the *Congado's* territoriality and Afro-Mineiro

historical narratives, and the *viola*'s iconicity of the rural past, downtown BH's streets represent historical confrontation and conflict. In speaking to power, 'Ruas da Cidade' accomplishes this in its questioning of hollow, local boosterism. Likewise, the equating of the normalization of a military dictatorship to a curmudgeonly historical population in a dead village at the end of the world, as in 'Os Povos', relies upon music's formative spatialities. Here, 'the mountain range of dreams that the night erases' casts Minas as hopeful space lost in time. 'Para Lennon and McCartney' thrusts this almost secretive, golden place onto the international stage. As claimed here, regional identity for many *mineiros* is linked to *Congado*, *viola*, and the Clube da Esquina. For many other *mineiros*, foreign imports are a passionate stand-in for how music articulates their regional identity: rap, hip-hop, death metal, and virtually all global trends have found their way here as localized currency. They are simply less traditional, yet carry their respective symbolic, formative spatialities.

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Echoes of Mongolia's Sensory Landscape in Shurankhai's 'Harmonized' *Urtyn Duu*

Sunmin Yoon

1. Introduction: The Formation of the group Shurankhai, and Ethnographic Observations of Ulaanbaatar's Contemporary *Urtyn Duu* Scene since 2009

In December of 2009, during my field research, young people whom I encountered in Mongolia's capital Ulaanbaatar (hereafter UB) constantly asked me about Shurankhai, when they learnt that I studied and researched the traditional folk genre called *urtyn duu*. The three female members of the *urtyn duu* vocal group called Shurankhai had come together formally in 2008, after their first concert together, and now their first album had been released. With rising curiosity, and knowing that recordings in Mongolia are released in limited numbers, through private funding, I thought that I should quickly buy the band's new album, also called *Shurankhai* (2009). I purchased their CD

and listened, sitting in my old Soviet-style apartment in the winter cold, and found that Shurankhai's was an experimental way of performing *urtyn duu*. After interviewing mostly countryside herder and older professional singers, I realized that there was something special in the way these young *urtyn duu* singers were 'harmonizing' and reviving the folk songs, that it was quite different from other 'folk-pop' bands I had heard from other countries.

Urtyn duu, often translated as 'long-song' or 'long-tune' (hereafter I will use both terms, *urtyn duu* and long-song, interchangeably), is understood as one of the representative traditional folk genres most dear to Mongolians. As a solo genre, it is famous for the ornamented and elongated vowels in the lyrics, and for the skillful manipulation/modification of consonants. Traditionally the genre was performed with up to 32 verses (*badag*), but now it is often sung with only two verses (Sampildendev and Hyatskovskaya, 1984: 8), following changes to the stage culture in UB made under the influence of Soviet Western classical music during the 1950s and 1960s. Currently the *urtyn duu* genre is still actively practised both in the countryside and the city. Singers in the countryside are mainly herders who learnt the singing from their parents at home, or sometimes from a local teacher in their town. Singers in the city are either established professional singers who perform mainly in UB's theatre, or younger professionals who have been trained in singing schools in UB such as SUIIS (Soyol Urlagiin Ikh Surguul, University of Culture and Art), and Khögjiim Bүjgiin Surguul (Music and Dance College). While the older generation of professional singers in UB, who are mainly the faculty of these

schools, have had the experience of being raised as herders, and of learning the songs in the countryside, the majority of these younger professional singers, though they have the experience of growing up in the countryside, have neither much learnt nor practised *urtyn duu* singing in the rural herding context.

The three members of Shurankhai – B. Nomin-Erdene, D. Üüriintuya, and G. Erdenchimeg – are among those younger professional singers, and studied together at SUIIS. They grew up in the countryside, but are from different provinces (*aimag*): Nomin-Erdene is from Bayankhongor province, Üüriintuya is from Dundgovi province, while Erdenchimeg is from Arkhangai province (Figure 1). Bayankhongor and Arkhangai provinces are not far from UB, and *urtyn duu* is common to these regions, since feasts, at which *urtyn duu* was customarily sung, are held frequently there. The style of singing in this area, which is often defined as the Central Khalkh style, is characterized by long-sustained notes and by the gentle flow and refined sound of the melodic contour. Dundgov' province (Figure 2), where Üüriintuya is from, is famous as a region that has produced many long-song singers. It presents a much more elaborated and ornamented form, called Borjigon style, sung in a nasal vocal tone. Central Khalkh style is often described as following the topography of the *khangai*, a landscape of open steppe, grassy and undulating (Figure 3), while the Borjigon region is well known as having a lower-lying and concave topography. Compared to the neighbouring *khangai* regions, the Borjigon region also has a more rocky and rugged mountainous landscape. When driving in this area, I was aware of how many rocks there were on the road leading into the nearby 'desert' area

(the Mongolian word *gov*, sometimes transliterated *gobi*, means 'desert'). I could feel that this region has more jagged tracks, and this is often reflected in the Borjigon singing style.

Coming from different rural regions, these three singers have acknowledged in interviews (28 November 2009, 20 June 2017, and 4 February 2010) that they all began to study *urtyn duu* in UB, not in their hometowns. They all learnt the pieces and techniques in UB that are typically practised among professional singers. As Nomin-Erdene mentioned, 'we are very close, because we all came from the countryside, together we missed our mothers and their food, and we were learning *urtyn duu* in the same school'. She also mentioned that, like their contemporaries, the members of Shurankhai also enjoyed listening to and singing pop and rock music from 'the West'¹ while developing respect and love for *urtyn duu* (interview, 28 November 2009).

¹ It was interesting that Nomin-Erdene described Western art/pop music as 'Russian Style', while Üüriintuya referred to it as 'German Style'. I have found that the concept of 'the West' can be understood quite differently among diverse people in a non-Western country, depending on their particular experiences.

Figure 1. Mongolian Central Khangai and Gov' Regions. Source: [http:// www.mongoliatourism.info/1/menu/118/7](http://www.mongoliatourism.info/1/menu/118/7)

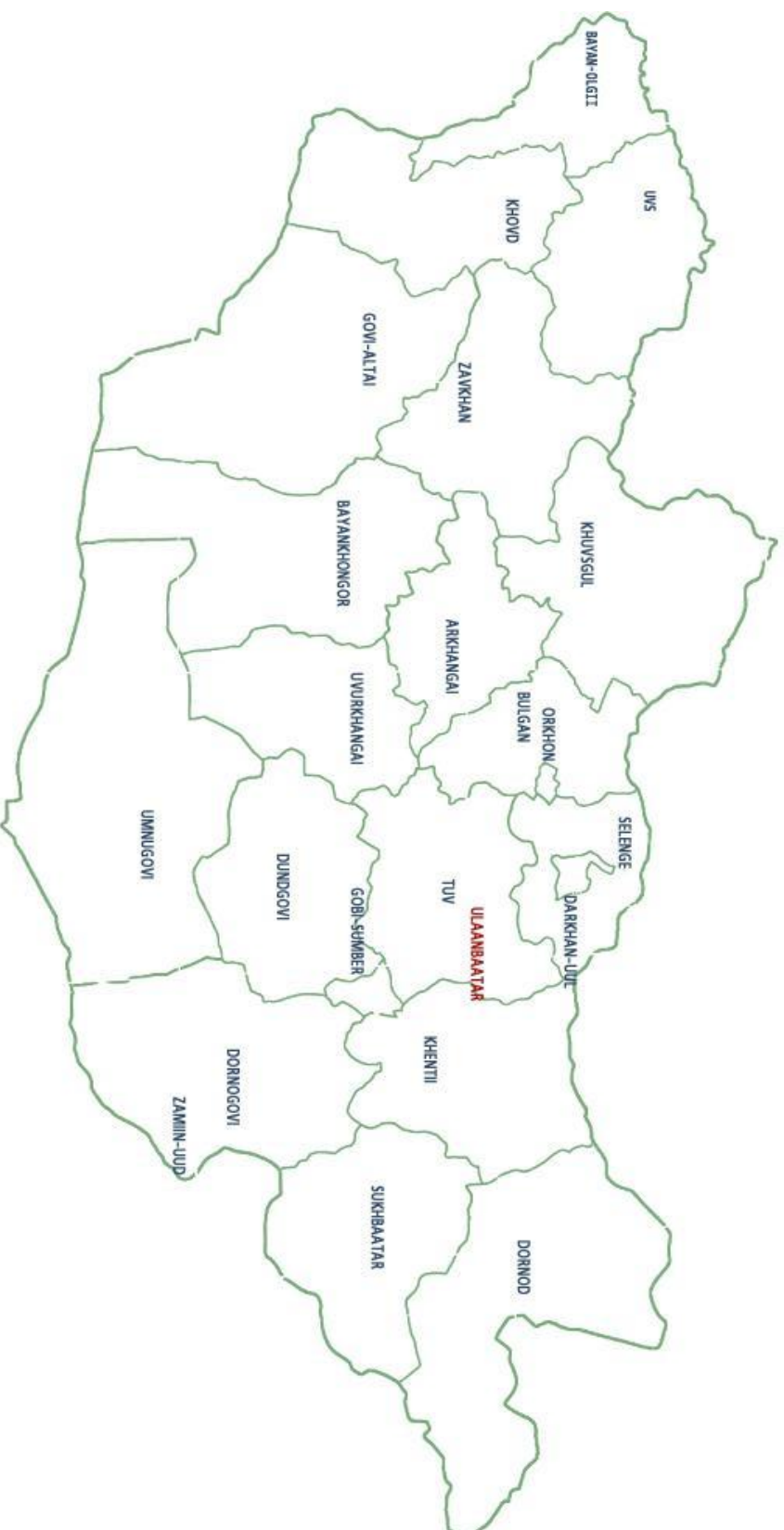


Figure 2. 'Gobi' region, Dundgov' province. Photo: Sunmin Yoon.



Figure 3. Khangai region, Arkhangai province. Photo: Sunmin Yoon.



Since the end of the socialist regime in Mongolia in 1990, the musical taste of the public, which had been heavily influenced by the Soviet Union during the 70 years of the Soviet era, has been divided into two different camps. As part of their nationalistic reinforcement of post-Soviet identity, Mongols thought the time had come for a strong revival of the traditional musical genres that had thrived during the pre-revolutionary era, including *urtyn duu*, as well as *khöömii* (throat-singing), by registering these with UNESCO as their intangible cultural heritage. In contrast, there was also a great interest in embracing the new sound, in the form of a wide variety of current popular music, and bringing the globalized world to the new Mongolia. The spatial dichotomy of urban and rural in Mongolia also often presents the popular musical scene as the urban, and traditional/folk/vernacular music as the symbol of the rural. Over the past ten years, however, my observations have indicated that Mongolia's music scenes are a more hybridized process, rather than a separate and isolated form, between the two dissimilar sounds of traditional folk genres and synthesized and electronic popular music, mixing the two into a new style of pop or crossover music. Consequently, this spatial dichotomy has also generated a new musical sound that has emerged from both urban and rural Mongolia. As much as the *urtyn duu* has been practised traditionally by herder singers and deeply embedded in the rural landscape and nomadic lifestyle, and as much as that remains the case, this traditional sound is also prevalent in the contemporary cityscape. Particular vocal techniques, such as the simple pressed voice (*kharkhira*, *khargira*) of throat-singing, or *urtyn duu*'s glottal ornamentation

and exclamatory vocal timbres, were adapted to genres popular with Mongolians, including EDM, hip-hop, and rap, and played as background music in UB restaurants, and in other public spaces. Musical groups such as Zagasan Shireet Tamga, Ethnic Zorigo, and Shurankhai, are typical examples of this. In this way, the countryside is vivid and constant in the sound found throughout the cityscape.

2. Interviews: ‘Tsombon Tuuraitai Khüren’ (Brown Horse with Plate-shaped Hooves)

The song that launched Shurankhai as stars in Mongolia was ‘Tsombon Tuuraitai Khüren’ (Brown Horse with Plate-shaped Hooves), a rearranged *urtyn duu* in which the group’s three members sing together ‘in harmony’. ‘Tsombon Tuuraitai Khüren’ follows a rather simple style of long-song (*besreg urtyn duu*) that is sung by many singers, both in the countryside and in UB, as a solo tradition. This song is about the protagonist’s lover, Egiimaa (or Igiimaa) who has moved away from him. Although I have found it throughout the Mongolian countryside, I learnt that the origin of this song is in the eastern regions of Mongolia, including Inner Mongolia, where the Üzemchin ethnic group is located, and where a more grassy steppe-plain topology is prevalent. The lyrics of the song, given below, are followed by the original version of ‘Tsombon Tuuraitai Khüren’, and by Shurankhai’s version of the song.

Tsombon tuuraitai khüren maan'
Tsokhilson khar alkhaatai
Tsovoolog yanzin Egiimaa n'
Tsotsood serkhed sanagdana

Oonyn khoyor everiig
Orooj zangidaj bolokhgüi
Orchlon khorvoogiin jamig
Ogoogch martaj bolokhgüi

My plate-hooved brown horse
beats out rough paces
and my lovely Egiimaa appears
when I suddenly awake

A gazelle's two horns
cannot be twisted together
We must not forget
the way of this world

Musical Example 1. Ts. Delger 'Tsombon Tuuraitai Khüren' –
traditional style:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAur1PW-T7I>

Musical Example 2. Shurankhai's 'Tsombon Tuuraitai Khüren':

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=micqFajC3Eo>

As shown by these two examples, Shurankhai's version is of a very different character from the traditional one. Following a long piano introduction, the three vocalists simultaneously 'harmonize' the original tune, yet in a way clearly different from the traditional harmony typically understood in Western music.¹

¹ Mongolian composers of Western art music use several terms for harmony. For example, Batchuluun (2008) uses two terms, *nairaldakh* ('to bring together') and *zövshööröltsökh* ('to come to agreement'), while Jantsannorov (2009) generally uses the term *zokhirol* ('musical chord', 'concord') (Bawden, 1997). Additionally, *khamraa zokhiokh* ('to harmonize'), and *aya khamrakh* ('put together a melody') appear in the Oxford English-Mongolian dictionary (Luvsandorj, 2004). *Öngö niilüülekh* can also be used, according to Nomindari Shagdarsüren, the former UNESCO Mongolia branch officer (email communication, 25 May 2017). Overall, I found that the general ways in which Mongolians use the term suggests the concept of 'putting together' or 'joining' the tones in a pleasant way.

I used this English word ‘harmony’ in my interviews,² and the word became at least a channel for communication with the singers, to suggest this concept of ‘singing together’. This simultaneous ‘harmonic’ singing was mixed with the echoing projection of each singer’s exclamatory and timbrally distinctive voices in ‘Tsombon Tuuraitai Khüren’, but the quality of an echoing sound was also clearly presented in other songs on the album, even in the pieces where the three singers did not sing together. The more I heard their singing through the recording, the more the relationship between the music-making process and Mongolia’s endless rural landscape (*gazar*), through which I was constantly travelling, became clearer to me. I then had a chance to meet with two members of Shurankhai – Üüriintuya (20 June 2017, in UB) and Nomin-Erdene (28 November 2009, in UB) – to talk in detail about the music-making (harmony-making) process, directly after the release of the first album (with Nomin-Erdene) and after a further two albums (with Üüriintuya).

Both singers mentioned that D. Tüvshinsaikhan, a composer and conductor of the National Morin Khuur [horse-head fiddle] Ensemble, had arranged the song from the original folk song. Üüriintuya in particular mentioned that they had needed a more ‘professional’ way of making ‘harmony’, and that Tüvshinsaikhan had arranged their parts to make a better ‘harmonization’. The three singers’ distinctive singing voices, it seemed, had come together with the help of Tüvshinsaikhan, who had arranged the relative movement and articulation of the three separate vocalists’ lines in a more effective way. Üüriintuya

² When I mentioned ‘harmony’ in English, they often confirmed using the Russian word *garmonia*.

mentioned that they had often had vibrant discussions with each other, as well as with Tüvshinsaikhan, and that Tüvshinsaikhan also frequently experimented with possible melodic progressions on the horse-head fiddle (*morin khuur*) while they discussed. Regarding the definition of their vocal range, I asked Nomin-Erdene which one of them had a high vocal tone and which a lower tone, using the Mongolian musical term *öngö* to mean the ‘tone range’ of a vocalist, which I had learned in discussions with other singers and musicians in Mongolia.³ Nomin-Erdene provided an interesting answer: ‘We three have very different *öngö*. I have a rather strong [*khüichtai*] voice, and Chimgee [Erdenechimeg] has skillful articulation, while Üüriintuya has beautiful glottal ornaments [*tsokhilgo*, *tsokhilt*]. We tried to keep everyone’s vocal characteristic in our process of putting everything together’. Clearly, for them, I realized, the idea of ‘harmonizing’ was not the making of similar timbral expression nor of uniting articulations, and for this reason, it provoked the question of how Mongolian singers understand the process of ‘putting together’ folk musical language.

Üüriintuya and Nomin-Erdene both mentioned that when they first tried singing together, and making ‘harmony’, most long-song singers were not especially welcoming of the ideas and effort, since *urtyn duu* had originally been a solo tradition. Nomin-Erdene mentioned that arranging the traditional *urtyn duu* as an ensemble piece was not an easy process, as can be seen from the fact that some groups that came after them did not have

³ *Öngö* can be translated as ‘colour, timbre (quality), tone’ (Bawden, 1997). However, I also heard that Mongolian musicians use this term for the Western musical term ‘pitch’.

such success. Nomin-Erdene felt that one reason for their success was that they were always thinking about how to put their voices together, and that they experimented whenever they were travelling together:

We think about this all the time, and sing together when we travel to the countryside, on the open steppe, inside the *ger*, and anywhere we go. We listen to each other, not just each other's voice, but also our breathing and so forth...

(Interview with B. Nomin-Erdene, 28 November 2009)

Just as their minds were always tuned to one another, my interview with Üüriintuya revealed a similar experience, when she talked about recording sessions in the studio:

We stood together in the studio, facing each other so that we could see and feel our bodies together... so that we could listen to each other at the same time, and breathe at the same time...

(Interview with D. Üüriintuya, 20 June 2017)

Thinking about the Western concept of harmony, in which the aim is to create a similar timbral texture integrating melodic progress and different ranges within the defined chord progression, Shurankhai's 'harmonizing process' seems to emphasize finding a way by which each singer could communicate with the others' musical voices, while keeping their distinctive individual timbral and ornamental qualities. In turn, they are strongly focused on feeling each other's breathing to create a 'harmonized' sensibility – in this case, the physical place in which they are present – and their sense of that space is a vital part of their 'harmonization'.

The processes involving instrumentation also reflected the Mongolian idea of music-making. I learnt that after they

completed the ‘harmonization’ process of the melodic parts, they added piano to their singing, and later inserted the synthesized beatbox starting from the second verse. Üüriintuya emphasized that Mongolian *urtyn duu* is traditionally based on improvisation with individual ornamentations, and that the singing should not be restricted by the instrumentation, that singing was supposed to be primary, and that only at the end should the piano and dance beat controlled by the computer program come in.

This seems similar to the process by which the group originally came together. Nomin-Erdene and Üüriintuya both clearly mentioned that they had not intended to create this ensemble group (*khamtlag*), since the long-song is traditionally a solo form that emphasizes an individual singer’s improvisational skills. They simply organized a concert together because, as students, they did not have enough sponsorship, and they thought it would cost less money to join together for a concert and CD release. For this reason, both the concert and the CD included a couple of songs that they sang as ‘harmonized’ pieces, while the remainder consisted of solos with some ‘modern’ and ‘pop’ touches. However, they became an ensemble because that was what people started to call them when their ‘harmonized’ songs, such as ‘Tsombon Tuuraitai Khüren’, became so popular. Nevertheless, what I found interesting from their album was that, while the songs had not at first been deliberately arranged and sung together, that feeling of having been ‘harmonically’ put together was present throughout their three albums, and it was precisely that same sensibility of sound projection I often heard when sitting with countryside singers on the open steppe, now performed in an urban studio.

It was not until, at one point in my field research I started feeling the countryside's significance in terms of place that I understood how important what these two singers had mentioned to me had been, that they needed to feel or sense one another in order to make their 'harmony' and sing *together*. Regardless of the subtle differences of regional topography and ecology – particularly with the mountains and forests of western Mongolia – the Mongolian countryside is generally a continuation of open land, a massive landscape that connects with the sky on the horizon. As I learnt from what the herder singers in the countryside mentioned to me, the open steppe where they herd their livestock is their practice room and the concert hall for their singing. They memorize the lyrics first, and then continually practise some of the difficult long-song techniques and phrases by singing out loud in the open space, while listening to the sound of their livestock, and to the projection of their singing and the songs in the air.

3. Reflection: Spatial Echos of Singing

The word *shurankhai*, used as the group's name, refers to one of the most important *urtyn duu* techniques, one that even lay people would know and recognize. In the seven or eight words of one *urtyn duu* verse (*badag*), this technique generally appears only once. Also, depending on different kinds of *urtyn duu*, this technique may either be included or not. The only kinds of *urtyn duu* that can utilize this technique are found in the most important category called *aizam duu*, which Pegg translates as 'extended long-song' (Pegg 2001: 44). I have learnt throughout my fieldwork that this extended long-song is considered musically difficult because it has a range wider than that which

singers are generally able to cover, and also because it uses longer sustained notes to make more ornamentations. Most importantly, however, the lyrics in *aizam duu* were traditionally more rooted in philosophical themes than those in other categories of long-song, which describe mundane nomadic lives. For this reason, the extended long-songs were given more respect in Mongolia's traditional feasts and among singers. Certain *aizam urtyn duu* were songs that were performed in a specific order during a wedding feast, in a ceremony for erecting/moving into a new *ger*, in family customs, and so on. Thus, *shurankhai* is a technique that *urtyn duu* singers wanted to master in their singing; mastering *shurankhai* symbolized a singer's advanced ability, and such a singer was placed in the most important seat among the participants at the feast.

The technique of *shurankhai* is similar to falsetto in the Western vocal tradition, which can be an unforced and subtle singing technique. Most of the *urtyn duu* singing techniques use strongly pressed vocal cords, and resonance in the face, particularly close to the cheeks and nose. Due to these methods of vocalization, *urtyn duu* is produced through the considerable power of a singer's vocal sound, and this often surprises listeners. In the structure of the melodic contour, the *shurankhai* appears at the highest note of the verse, signalling the climax of the song. The melodic line rises towards the *shurankhai* like the mountain ridges lead upwards, as shown in Shin Nakagawa's (1980) analysis of the structure of the *urtyn duu*. Just as the *shurankhai* connotes the high point of the mountain ridge in the rural landscape, so the techniques of long-song singing have

developed from a singer's traditional relationship with the place in which they reside.

The observations gained about Shurankhai's music-making from my interviews, notwithstanding the fact that these took place in Ulaanbaatar, shows a deep physical, emotional, and socio-political connection with the rural nomadic Mongolian landscape. As Tuan says at the opening of *Space and Place*, 'Place is security, space is freedom' (Tuan, 1977: 3), and the Mongolian countryside is both security and freedom to the people of contemporary Mongolia. The countryside (*khödöö*) is the secure home, the place where Mongolia's nomads have traditionally dwelt and created their nomadic culture, while for urban dwellers, the countryside is a space where they can explore their identity, emotion, and nostalgia, particularly in this post-Soviet era. The boundary of home for Mongolians, as Lewicka points out (2011: 211-213), can represent a variety of 'place scale', from the province (*aimag*) to the town (*sum*) to a specific spot located among the ridges and mountains. Szyrkiewicz (1982) analyzes three levels of 'local communities' that form the conceptual boundary of the homeland (*nutag*). He sees the *nutag* as starting where Mongolians' nomadic movements are repeated, and limited to a close distance. But the *nutag* can be extended as herders' nomadic movements grow broader to satisfy their livestock's and their own needs, and it can encompass a longer distance. However, as is common for those who have moved to the city, it was clear that most long-song singers, including Shurankhai's members, understand the *nutag* within the broad boundary of the 'countryside'. This encompasses wherever the traditional herding practice is alive, and where Mongolians

spend their nomadic lives and practise the *urtyn duu* tradition in relation to the natural environment. Thus, the concept of place/space in their homeland is much more fluid. As the physical boundary becomes fluid, so the idea of place becomes more linked to individual, regional, or national communities.

The concept of 'place attachment' and 'sense of place' has been discussed by human geographers, and also by environmental psychologists, who have suggested that place produces socio-political and emotional relations that connect the place and those who live within it (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977), as well as those who travel to and from it (Giuliani, 2003; Lewicka, 2011). In the case of the Mongols, there is often a strong 'place attachment' to rural landscape and to their *nutag* within constructions of identity. There are also nostalgic emotions for the urban mobile populations who still have memories and family members still in the countryside, and they provide a sense of security, however fragile that might be. In contrast, once they are in the countryside, the countryside becomes a space free from these conceptual affects, a place in which the more realistic aspects of surviving in the environment are present. This concept of 'place attachment' certainly appeared in similar ways in my interviews with Shurankhai, not as a discourse about being Mongol, but about being an *urtyn duu* singer, in that they emphasized the importance of the connection to the rural landscape.

The close relationship between the melodic lines of *urtyn duu* and rural topographies has previously been discussed by others (Desjacques, 1990: 97; Pegg, 2001: 45-47, 105-107), and I also learnt that this was a common discourse through my interviews

with other *urtyn duu* singers, both in UB and the countryside. However, as Levin also argued, the vocality of *urtyn duu* is not only melodic but timbral (2011: 57), and the relation between the singing and the melodic line is not only linear, but multidimensional. One of the *urtyn duu* singers' main vocal techniques, *tsokhilgo* (*tsokhilt*, glottal trilling), has been understood as simply 'trilling' due to the quick movement between two different pitches (Nakagawa, 1980). However, it is clear that this is an alternation of two different glottal timbres, and *urtyn duu* certainly utilizes the timbral aspects. Additionally, this way of using timbral manipulation in their ornamented improvisation can further be explained by my observations on the relationship between *urtyn duu* and the landscape. This relationship is expressed not only in the melodic contour in the horizontal and linear sense, and in imitation of topography, but also in Mongolian musicians' sense of the spatiality of their sound, in particular that it projects vertically.

Curtet (2013) provides extensive discussion regarding the timbral aspects and vocal techniques surrounding the concept of verticality in the case of *khöömii* (throat-singing), and its relations to the ecological environment. He illustrates two vocal spaces, inner and outer. The inner space is the singer's body and the outer space is the singer's environment, where the singer's body is when singing. This can also be applicable to *urtyn duu* singers. In the case of *khöömii*, the inner space rests in the three important points of vocal verticality – the belly, throat, and mouth (the tongue and lips) (ibid.: 79). I see it operating slightly differently in long-song, with the belly equivalent to the breathing, the throat as glottal ornaments, and the chest, face, and mouth as the

resonating cavity to project into the space of their singing. While *khöömii* emphasizes the inner body, taking natural sounds such as those of water and wind as imitations and manifestations of the universe within the body, the long-song's technique creates a sounding from the inner body, but one projected towards outer space to connect the singer with their environment and the sky (that is, Tenger, the sky-god that symbolizes their spirituality). As I often encountered in discussions during fieldwork, Mongols see themselves as entities between the land and sky. Humans are one of the elements of nature existing in that space, and they pursue spiritual harmony as Tibetans also do, mediated by Buddhist tradition (Studley, 2012). Illustrating this through mountains, *ovoo* (a cairn of stones), and the nomad's tent (*ger*), Humphrey (1995) explains the notion of verticality in the Mongolian landscape:

If we understand the landscape, as the Mongols do, as everything around us, then the landscape includes the sky and its phenomena, such as blueness, clouds, rain, lightning, stars, and rays of light... With this in mind, the idea of 'the centre' is not so much a point in a horizontal disc on the earth, as a notion of verticality, for which position on the earth does not matter. The aim is reaching upwards, the making of a link between earth and sky, as with the column of smoke from a fire. 'The centre' is established anew when people make a halt. It is, in other words, not a place but an action.

(Humphrey, 1995: 142)

Therefore, the *shurankhai* technique is also a part of the manifestation of the highest vertical point existing in a singer's surroundings. The wide vocal range and echoing of *urtyn duu* singers is an action to respond to the space, they are participating directly in the creation of the Mongolian landscape. The musical 'harmonization' of the folk song, discussed earlier through the example of 'Tsombon Tuuraitai Khüren', is, after all, the

reinforcement and strengthening of how Mongols have always related to and practised with their land, ecologically harmonizing themselves between the celestial roof and the earth. In dwelling nomadically, Mongol herders move not only daily, but also seasonally from winter home to summer home, and so their movement becomes circular, repetitive, and habitual. In winter they need to be sheltered from the strong wind, while in summer they should be close to water, and so they come back to the place where they were the previous year (Humphrey, 1995; Szynekiewicz, 1982).

... This begins with the basic fact that nomads do not nomadize freely, but live in mobile settlements. Hence their relation to space is regulated and follows some precise lines of social, economic and ritual obligations, not to mention ecological conditioning.

(Szynekiewicz, 1982: 39)

Through their repetitive movement, however, Mongol nomads have established not only the map of the place – where to move and where to come back – but also the sense of the place. This is a spatial awareness along with their local environment and knowledge of it, so that the experience of countryside to them becomes not mastering geography, but mastering environmental interaction – ‘something with energies far greater than the human’ (Humphrey, 1995: 135). These ‘spatial skills’ are ‘what we can accomplish with our body’ (Tuan, 1977: 74-75). Thus, as *urtyn duu* singers have developed the awareness of the relationship in their music-making between their body as a medium on the land, and their echoes projected into the atmosphere, so the ‘harmony’ I heard from Shurankhai was a more extended version of these sonic relationships with the

singers' specific surroundings.

4. Conclusions

The American philosopher Edward S. Casey states, 'body is what links this self to lived place in its sensible and perceptible features; and landscape is the presented layout of a set of places, their sensuous self-presentation as it were' (Casey, 2001: 405). Mongols have made the relationships with their environment in a way that 'do[es] not take over any terrain in the vicinity and transform it into something that is their own. Instead, they move within a space and environment where some kind of pastoral life is possible and "in-habit" it' (Humphrey, 1995: 135). Mongolian *urtyn duu* singers, then, take their body as a condensed universe to connect with their outer space of the rural landscape, where they interact with each other and with the natural world and make relationships in their lives. Thus, singing, and the making of music, is not simply a skillful articulation of the human body but, as a part of the natural world, the resonances and echoes of the sounding body become the channel to their survival in the Mongolian landscape.

The act of standing together to make a 'harmonized sounding' by listening, not only to one another's voice but to one another's breathing, and also by feeling each other as well as sensing each other's presence within the surroundings, is the habitual way of living for nomadic Mongols, and something *urtyn duu* singers habitually practise as part of their daily lives. The soundscape and the echoes that provide the sense of Mongolia's rural space are becoming more and more the spirit of music-making in today's Ulaanbaatar, and that has certainly been seen in the hip-

hop, rap, folk-pop, and other popular music scenes in the city (see Zagasan Shireet Tamga (2015) and Ethnic Zorigoo (2015)). Because the rural *place* is where they came from, it is their secured past, but it is to a more phenomenological experience of Mongolia's rural *space* through new musical experiments that they would like, in their unforeseen future, to go.

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Musicians in Place and Space: The Impact of a Spatialized Model of Improvised Music Performance

David Leahy

1. Introduction

Free improvisation is often explained as a non-hierarchical musical process that emerges out of the precise acoustic, emotional, environmental, psychological, and social conditions in existence at the time of the music's creation. But given that free improvisers continue to perform in conditions that involve the static positioning and formal separation of the performer and the audience, the extent to which these claims can be realized is questioned by this chapter.

This article reports on a practice-based research project, 'Musicians in Space' (MiS), which aims to offer insights into how the free improviser, through the introduction of a spatialized approach to the music, can develop an all-encompassing and

non-hierarchical musicking practice. An outline of the research process and the findings from the first stage of the research are offered, before the discussion is extended to look at the connection between spatialized free improvisation and deep ecology.

2. Free Improvised Music

Free improvised music emerged in Europe during the mid-1960s, with musicians eager to strip away the performative expectations and restrictions that they were used to (Morris, 2012: 100). Inspired by developments in free jazz and contemporary Western classical music, the music is constructed through a dialogical process where 'everybody's actions and ideas impact everybody else's' (Vargas, 2013: 25). The roles of soloist and accompanist are shared fluidly amongst the improvising participants, with the musicians utilizing any musical, technological, or structural means at their disposal to maintain the flow of the music. This is achieved with little or no reference to any identifiable melody, rhythm, or harmonic structure. Instead, improvisers engage in a process of music-making that pushes at the boundaries of the known and recognizable, and this regularly involves subverting what is expected, led by the 'desire to make something important happen' (Wachsmann, 2012: 20).

In 1975, free improvising saxophonist, Evan Parker suggested that his 'music of the future' would be played by groups of musicians 'who improvise freely in relation to the precise emotional, acoustic, psychological and other less tangible atmospheric conditions in effect at the time the music is played'

(Parker, 1975: 12-13). This potential for free improvisation to respond to any aspect of the performative experience has become a prominent and widely acknowledged characteristic of the music. The all-inclusive nature of the musical process is regularly associated with the idea that free improvisation involves a largely egalitarian approach to music-making. As Hargreaves, MacDonald, and Miell (2012: 6) point out, a range of theories to situate the practice of musical improvisation has blossomed in recent years. Many have noted that the implications of the practice go well beyond the boundaries of musical performance and practice, but encroach on wider cultural, educational, and political contexts also. This idea was championed, amongst others, by Spontaneous Music Ensemble's founder, John Stevens, who referred to free improvisation as 'free group music'. Stevens advocated a music constructed by individuals focused on creating an immersive group sound.

I question the extent to which all-inclusiveness and egalitarianism are realistically possible within free improvised music, given the largely unquestioned and continued adherence to the static and stratified positioning of the musicians and the audience. I argue that while the improvising musicians continue to perform fixed in one position, the extent to which they can experience all the possible aspects of the performative environment is left in doubt. Additionally, the stratified positioning of the participants, I suggest, does little to support the heterarchical aspirations of the musical form; the implied fourth wall makes the listener a mere bystander to the process that, through their continued presence, nevertheless involves them. Stevens himself grew to feel that the collective principles of

the music were later side-lined by an increased emphasis on 'individualism, personal instrumental virtuosity, and musical elitism, which he believed detracted from the more profound musical, spiritual and political implications of free group music' (Scott, 2014: 104).

3. Musicians in Space

'Musicians in Space' (MiS) is a practice-based research project investigating the ways in which free improvising musicians relate to both the listener and the space around them. It introduces a spatialized approach to the performance of free improvisation that allows all the participants the opportunity to move during the improvisation. Worded as an invitation, the participants are given the option to shape and regulate their individual involvement in the performative process without being prescribed a set behaviour or mode of action. Considering the intersubjective and unfixed nature of improvisation, the task of structuring the research was approached with a clear desire to protect the integrity of the improvisational process in all its complexity. To that end, an emphasis was placed on identifying a research design and method that could accommodate and faithfully celebrate the inherent polysemic nature of the practice of free improvisation without restricting the improvisational process.

These considerations led to a design utilizing the phenomenology-based heuristic research method, combined with a pragmatic approach to practice-based research. Developed by Clarke Moustakas (1990), the heuristic research

method places the researcher at the centre of the research process and emphasizes the importance of the ‘tacit dimension’ that Michael Polanyi (2009 [1966]) believes underlies all knowledge. The pragmatic approach to the research reflects the inherent nature of free improvisation, and supports an open structuring that allows for the selection of methods based on what is considered most appropriate and ‘fit-for-purpose’ (Kupers, 2011).

Figure 1. London Improvisers Orchestra (LIO) performance, 21 May 2017. Photo: Séverine Bailleux.



To contextualize the research, a theoretical framework that emphasizes the social and interconnected nature of musical activity was used. This comprised of Jacques Attali’s notion of ‘composing’ (1985), Christopher Small’s ‘musicking’ (1998), and a broad range of ideas and themes related to the link between musical performance and ecology.¹ All three referents converge

¹ For example Borgo (2002, 2006, 2007), Clarke (2005), Cobussen (2014), Davis (2008), Di Scipio (2003, 2015), Nelson (2011), and Waters (2007).

to support the idea that free improvisation can exemplify an individually centred, but collectively based means of self-expression and co-creation, which balances individuality and selfishness, and collectivism and totalitarianism (Fischlin, Heble, and Lipsitz, 2013).

The research was structured in two stages, with the first stage involving a series of public performances that occurred during May and June 2017 (see Figure 1). The second stage builds on these performances with a series of participant interviews. The five performances, in Canterbury, Liverpool, Oxford, and two in London, all involved improvisers experienced in large group improvisation, with most of them affiliated to improvising orchestras such as the London Improvisers Orchestra, the Merseyside Improvisers Orchestra, and the Oxford Improvisers. This ensured that levels of experience and skill from across the improvising community were broadly represented.

During three of the performances, the improvisers were initially split into playing in smaller improvising ensembles before the large group improvisation began. This gave the improvisers the opportunity to experience the spatialized improvisations as both performers and audience members. The instructions offered to the 49 improvisers simply involved an invitation to move – but only if they felt motivated to do so – to enhance their listening and playing practice. The public audiences were also invited to modify their spatial relationships to the musicians just as they would within a sound art installation that incorporates an array of loud speakers. The intention was to allow the participants the freedom to interpret the invitation as they saw fit, and it was

emphasized that it was in no way obligatory that they moved at all.

All the improvisations, and the post-show discussions that followed each performance, were filmed and recorded binaurally from various positions in each venue, to provide a range of listening and viewing perspectives for future reflection. The post-show discussions, which involved both musicians and audience members, were all transcribed, and, along with the footage, served as the source of data for the reflections reported on in this article. A subsequent set of interviews, with a small number of improvisers, have since taken place. These will develop the themes that emerged through the initial process and will constitute the second stage of the research. Footage of all the performances is available for viewing via www.dafmusic.com and on an associated YouTube channel.

4. Observations and Experiences

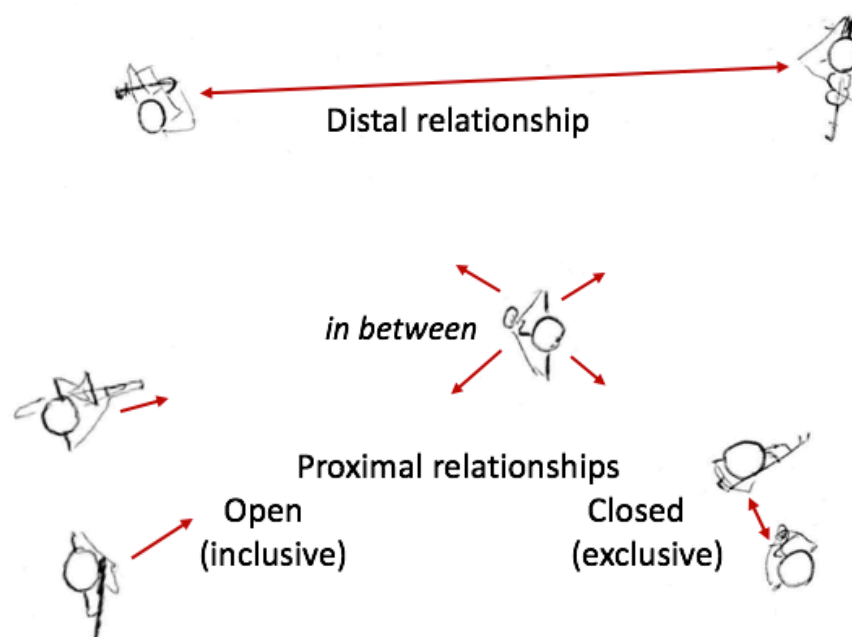
The various approaches to the spatialized performance process employed by the musicians can be seen to fall under two headings. Firstly, there were ‘added affordances’, which resulted in a greater level of diversity of interactions, activity, and ways of listening, all contributing to more visible relationships and connections within the improvisational process. Secondly, there was an increased level of ‘inclusivity’ amongst the improvisers, the audience, and the physical and sonic elements present within the performance environment. Encouragingly, a definitive set of actions and responses from the musicians were not observed during the MiS performances. Had this occurred, it may have indicated that the improvisers felt inhibited by the process.

Instead, the actions of the musicians were seen to exist on a continuum of possible responses to the complexity of the process. This demonstrated that they were taking the opportunity to move as just another improvisational parameter to utilize, subvert, or ignore. It meant that while some musicians chose to remain in the same place, or moved just once during an improvisation, others embraced the idea of engaging with the ensemble from different locations, making the shifting topography of the performance space a central focus for their improvisation.

4.1. Added Affordances

Despite an established tradition of improvising in a close spatial arrangement, no specific distance between improvisers was observed as being preferred over any other. Musical connections were made both distally – from opposite sides of the room – and proximally – with musicians right next to each other (Figure 2). The movement of the musicians was generally guided by their personal interests, coupled with an intention to maintain a clear perspective on the whole ensemble. This meant that musicians moved towards or away from what they wanted to engage with, while facing into the room and with an open stance in relation to the group.

Figure 2. Possible playing positions observed during the performances.



Only rarely was it observed that musicians chose to block out the other participants by playing proximally close together and facing inwards. The other musicians chose to respond to this exclusivity either by stopping and waiting, or by encroaching musically and/or physically on the closed dialogue.

Musicians readily took the advantage of small pauses in the music to move and reconfigure their spatial relationships. This had the effect of making some of the improvisations feel episodic in structure. Musicians were regularly observed coming together to form subsets of the larger ensemble.

Video Example 1. Oxford Improvisers, 20 June 2017:
<https://youtu.be/0bHfbO4aW70?t=4m15s>

These subsets continually formed and reformed as improvisers moved towards or away from one another, with musicians taking the moments when they were not playing to listen or

move. Thus, a cascade of musical activity was sometimes observed, with one group leading the ensemble while others took time to listen or regroup in preparation for establishing something new. This grouping strategy was also noticed at times of adversity when, for instance, the volume of the music increased and the quieter instrumentalists would come together for solidarity (Figure 3).

Video Example 2. London Improvisers Orchestra, 21 May 2017:
<https://youtu.be/QvtyJ57Tilo?t=6m55s>

Figure 3. String solidarity - London Improvisers Orchestra (LIO) performance, 21 May 2017. Photo: Séverine Bailleux.



But just as much as the improvisers chose to group together, at other times they were also seen to remain separate from each other. This afforded a greater ability to hear the entire ensemble and to see the various disparate subsets of musicians that made up the whole. In fact, the option to play in a spatially isolated way and ‘in between’ different subsets of the ensemble, listening

and responding to multiple groups simultaneously, was an option frequently taken by musicians.

Video Example 3. London Improvisers Orchestra, 21 May 2017:
https://youtu.be/_AQ5Uhb08Ew?t=4m31s

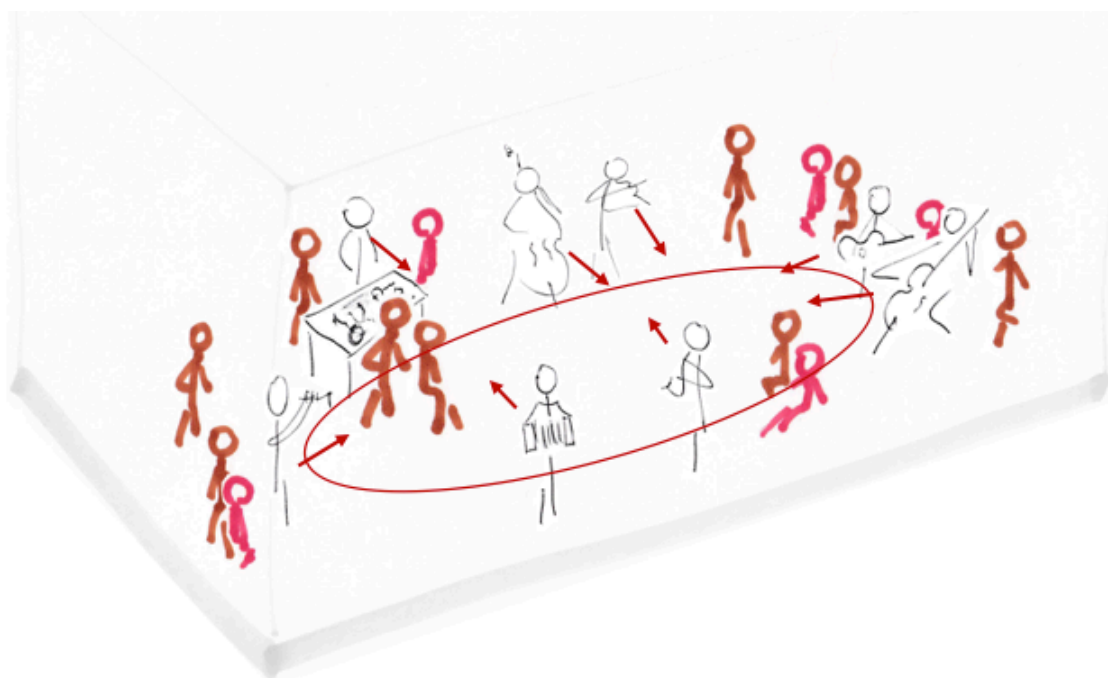
To maximize their ability to hear and see everyone in the ensemble, the musicians naturally formed a circular arrangement (Figure 4).

Video Example 4. 11 June 2017:
<https://youtu.be/BCjFMv3ZQfw?t=4m55s>

This corresponds to research by Healey, Leach, and Bryan-Kinns, which found that the musicians, without any instruction, orientated themselves in a circle to support a cooperative ethos where all the participants have more or less equal ‘speaking rights’ (Healey, Leach, and Bryan-Kinns, 2005: 2). This positioning was then maintained throughout the improvisations with other musicians moving into the free areas when gaps appeared. However, when a musician or musicians decided to enter the circle or cross through the central space, this action regularly resulted in the subsequent actions of that musician gaining added gravitas and poignancy.

Video Example 5. <https://youtu.be/p3eGT9UoxGs?t=14m25s>

Figure 4. The musicians naturally chose to perform in the round, optimizing their ability to hear and see everyone.



Musicians frequently reflected on having to change the way that they approached the improvisation process. In particular, they could not close their eyes whilst playing, as they would normally. This was not always seen as a negative aspect to the process, but rather as an unexpected point of departure for exploring the ensemble in a new way:

I found it very illuminating in this environment to be encouraged to use my sight. And that also led me to different kinds of relationships with the other musicians. And the ability to move around also. But... the aspect of sight and being able to move, I thought, was really exciting because I felt that I could explore the geography of the acoustics of the space.

(Improviser 1, Canterbury performance)

Others commented on needing to adapt playing techniques to account for standing up and walking, while others chose to leave parts of their musical equipment in different parts of the room.

Video Example 6. 11 June 2017:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qqpt1lhdOY8&feature=youtu.be&t=4m49s>

In two instances, both voiced by trombone players, the need to remain more proprioceptively aware of the other people in the space was seen to have a detrimental effect on their playing. However, most musicians appreciated that they could always return to a static position, with eyes closed, to reduce the complexity of what could at times become a cluttered performance environment.

Where the performance involved established groups, such as the London Improvisers Orchestra, the spatialized practice led to a confounding of expectations for the more static musicians. They found that the sounds of various instruments were not coming from where they were expecting them to.

What was surprising to me was that the sounds kept... not coming from where I expected. Although I didn't know that I was expecting anything until they stopped doing that...

(Improviser 2, LIO performance)

It was regularly remarked that this approach to performance impacted on the overall nature and sound of the improvisations. The improvisations were felt to be less cluttered, possibly for two reasons. Firstly, as the musicians instinctively faced what they were listening to, the other improvisers could gain more understanding of the relational dynamics at play. Secondly, the spatially dispersed arrangement of the musicians afforded, as noted by Henry Brant (Harley, 1997: 70), more clarity and ease in locating the various sonic contributions of the participants.

Video Example 7. Oxford Improvisers, 20 June 2017:
<https://youtu.be/zqzc6nRCqA0?t=9m25s>

These factors meant that the improvisers could enter and exit the music with more understanding of the unfolding relational dynamics, with many choosing to also not play and just listen more frequently.

4.2. Inclusivity

The MiS performances allowed many improvisers the opportunity to focus on the variability of the acoustic topography of the space. This led to an engagement with the physical and spatial qualities of the performance environment rarely seen within free improvised music. Frequently, musicians chose to play into the corners of the room, into the floor, towards different surfaces, or they moved outside the room entirely. Sonic qualities of the rooms were also taken advantage of, with resonant or creaking floors boards and walls being played, and extraneous objects that were lying around being incorporated into, or used on, instruments.

Video Example 8. Oxford Improvisers, 20 June 2017:
<https://youtu.be/zqzc6nRCqA0?t=20m49s>

This added playfulness and an inquisitive approach to the performance environment, and the musician's interest in the varied characteristics of the aural architecture, profoundly affected the quality and nature of the listening process. The focus of the participants was no longer limited to the musical activity on the stage. Instead, the listening experience became spatially specific to the individual and could go from encompassing the entire space to being narrowed onto a specific location. The term

‘telescoping awareness’ (Koteen, Smith, and Paxton, 2008), which comes from the work of dancer Nancy Stark Smith and her framework for contact improvisation, the Underscore, possibly describes this diverse range of possible listening experiences that can exist. Stark Smith uses it to refer to the ability of the dancer to focus on anything from the macro to the micro, in terms of ‘personal awareness to sensation, activity and any other information or aspect of your improvising practice’ (Leahy, 2014: 43). Similarly, the nature of this adaptive listening process can be compared to ‘Deep Listening’ (Oliveros, 2005), which emphasizes a more expansive and inclusive approach to listening to the world around us. This wider listening awareness, it is suggested, resulted in the music regularly becoming increasingly quiet, as mentioned here:

I was really... taken by the sensitivity of everyone’s listening. And the fact that we could... really hone to each other and play very, very quietly and still keep a kind of intensity to what was happening, with such space. Personally, I found that very engaging.

(Improviser 3, Canterbury performance)

This greater sensitivity also developed an increased awareness of the multi-sensorial nature of the musicking process, emphasizing the link between perception and action (Clark, 2015; Clarke, 2005; Ingold, 2011; Thompson, 2007) and the physical body, as exemplified here:

Immediately, by the sounds that were being emitted and the energy that was being constructed from almost everybody, I was immediately, [click of fingers] kind of, triggered to start dancing, and to start moving. Maybe not necessarily like... [gesture] but like start to actually allowing my body to express itself. Which is something that I hadn't really felt in a lot of spaces, so that was great.

(Audience member 2, LIO performance)

Regularly, both musicians and listeners remarked on the pleasure of moving very close to players to hear from the musician's perspective:

It was also nice for musicians with louder instruments that you can go right up to someone who has got a quieter instrument and, sort of, hear it from their point of view, and tune into that. Even against the sound of your own instrument or... the whole sound.

(Improviser 4, London group performance)

While the positive aspects of these performances were widely discussed, the possible negative implications of spatialized improvising on the listening process were also raised. It was suggested that the movement and the spatially divided positioning could detract the listener and performer from the focused and 'reduced' (Chion, 2012: 50) listening experience more common to free improvisation. But this, I would argue, is offset by the added possibilities that this approach to performance provides.

While free improvisers have focused, for the last fifty years, on questioning and subverting the musical forms, techniques, and meaning of musical performance, they have expected their audience to remain as polite and silent bystanders to the process. As stated initially, I argue that the objective of the improviser to arrive at a unique musical experience that incorporates all the

possible aspects of the performative environment may remain more elusive, while the presentation of the music continues to support a stratified and hierarchical relationship between the musicking partners. The MiS performances effectively demonstrated that it is possible to afford a level of freedom to the audience without adversely affecting the musical process. This results in an interesting bridge between the realms of participatory and presentational music-making, as outlined by Thomas Turino (2008). As the performances progressed, the audience gained more confidence in exploring the varying acoustics and the spatial relationships present within the performances. Like the musicians, some listeners enthusiastically explored the 'psycho-sonic' (Improviser 13, LIO performance) nature of the performance: lying on the floor, turning their heads, or circling on the spot to highlight the immersive listening experience. One audience member remarked that:

... it was really nice to see how there was this organic, kind of, conversation happening that was generating a topography of sound around the space... And it made the music, and the playfulness of the music, really... characterize the space that it was occupying.

(Audience member 10, LIO performance)

The audience appreciated the freedom to self-regulate their relationship to the musical process, modifying their position in the room depending on what interested them. As expressed here:

The option to detach a little by going to the outer edge of the space made it quite relaxing. Equally, there was a choice to enter into the space a little more and in doing so, it felt like I was having a more active influence on the performers.

(Audience member 9, LIO performance)

It was initially imagined that audience members, inspired by their new-found freedom to move, would decide to join in musically. This only happened once, however, as it seemed clear that the shared understanding of what constituted a free improvised performance provided enough of a guideline for all the participants to follow. Therefore, the MiS performances did not involve the disappearance of the roles of audience member and improviser, but rather facilitated the boundaries becoming blurred, played with, and mutually subverted. Collectively, everyone seemed to benefit from the more heterarchical dynamic that provided new possibilities for sonic and social engagement. The audience appreciated the more active listening experience, while the improvisers gained an increased appreciation for the contribution made by the listener to the performances. This shared sense of responsibility for the creation and maintenance of the performance process has subsequently emerged as an important area for further investigation. In the limited space left, I will address some of the wider implications of this spatialized approach to free improvisation, by relating it to deep ecology.

5. Deep Ecology

Deep ecology emerged in the 1970s, through the work of Arne Naess, as a way of combating the ecological destruction resulting from excessive human action and intervention. It emphasizes the intrinsic value of all life forms and environments, separate to any material or monetary value that may be placed on them by interested human parties. Built on a deeply felt understanding of the interconnectedness of everything and the right for all life to flourish, deep ecology promotes a 'process of ever-deeper questioning of ourselves, the assumptions of the dominant

worldview in our culture, and the meaning and truth of our reality' (Devall and Sessions, 1985: 8). The dominant worldview referred to emphasizes an anthropocentric, hierarchical, reductionist, and rational mode of thinking and being, which leads to modes of behaviour and action based on the belief that the world is inherently cruel, competitive, and something that can be reduced to ever smaller parts engineered and manipulated by humans.

Deep ecology promotes an alternative, more holistic worldview that does not see humans as above or separate from other life. It emphasizes qualities of equality and cooperation, while attempting to balance rational reasoning with intuitive and tacit forms of knowledge and understanding. Only by targeting the underlying assumptions and values, the deep ecologist argues, is it possible to facilitate a sustainable change to the way that humans live and interact with all life on earth. Fritjof Capra encapsulates this stance:

... the connection between an ecological perception of the world and corresponding behaviour is not a logical but a *psychological* connection... if we have deep ecological awareness, or experience, of being part of the web of life, then we *will* (as opposed to *should*) be inclined to care for all of living nature.

(Capra, 1996: 12)

Interest, inside and outside academia, in the connection between ecology and music has greatly increased since the 1970s and the time of the World Soundscape Project (Schafer, 1969, 1977), with an ecological perspective on music seen as particularly useful in highlighting its social and interactive nature. Ecological approaches to music have emerged from a variety of musical and

musicological fields. These include Steven Feld's 'acoustemology' (2015), 'acoustic ecology' (Schafer, 1994) and a 'performance ecosystem' (Di Scipio, 2015; Waters, 2007) to name a few. Each approach has appealed to different areas of musical endeavour and has been used to frame a host of composition, improvisation, sound art installation, listening, and virtual AI-instrument experiments and practices. While free improvisation can also be contextualized within an ecological perspective, as pointed out by Marcel Cobussen (2014), the expansion of the improviser's practice off the stage and into the performance space, as seen in this study, has facilitated a subtle but profound shift in the dynamics within the performative space. This shift is both intuitively felt and socio-political, and is something that, I am willing to admit, I am only beginning to understand. It is for this reason, however, that I have been drawn to deep ecology specifically, as it focuses on the deep-rooted beliefs of the individual that stem from one's life experiences, cultural surroundings and education, the same sources as for an individual's personal connection to music.

As 'the way we see things is affected by what we know or believe' (Berger, 2008 [1972]: 8), the way we engage with music also corresponds to the set of values and assumptions that makes up our ontological perspective and worldview. This connection is outlined by Small (1998), who suggests that the specific music an individual engages in corresponds to a particular view of the world. Moreover, playing and listening to music with others provides us with an opportunity to congregate with like-minded individuals, to affirm, explore, and celebrate our desired version of reality (Small, 1998: 183). I would argue that the version of

reality the musicking partners in the MiS performances bring into existence reflects the egalitarian, interconnected, and collaborative values of deep ecology. This, therefore, could signal to the deep ecologist that an appropriate means of addressing an individual's deep-rooted belief structure could be found in music. This does not mean that the ecologist should pick up a guitar and write songs, although the social upheaval of the 1960s that saw the emergence of free improvisation also provided us with many musical eco-warriors and troubadours. Instead, I am suggesting that the ecologist should look to musical practices that share their egalitarian and ethical beliefs. From a shared commitment to questioning the basic assumptions and behaviours of our dominant worldview, deep ecology and spatialized free improvisation also entertain similar orientations towards diversity and adaptability, complexity rather than complication, and a sense of inclusivity and equality that comes from seeing the inseparability of all things. They both aim to construct something sustainable and meaningful through a dialogical and dynamic process that includes, not excludes, dissenters. They see idiosyncrasy and difference as positive points for creative departure, rather than as adversities to overcome. The free improviser also joins the deep ecologist in seeing a healthy level of diversity and variety as positive signs of a rich and resilient system or community.

The MiS performances revealed a middle ground between participatory and presentational modes of performance that respects the separate roles of improviser and listener but within a less hierarchical environment. It provides a forum for divergent and creative excellence, while also cultivating an environment

that empowers all the participants by promoting an active and self-directed engagement in the musicking process. By drawing parallels between deep ecology and the MiS performances, I have attempted to show that the subversive, resourceful, and adaptive nature of the spatialized free improviser has implications beyond just the musical. The wider implications of the MiS free improviser's skill set is something that, I would argue, begins to resemble the original vision for free improvisation of John Stevens, who said 'spontaneity between human beings is a way of serving the community' (Scott, 1987). This also relates to the political dimension of music, as emphasized by Fischlin, Heble, and Lipsitz, who see improvisation as being 'more than an artistic conceit, more than a spontaneous creation of notes by musicians' (Fischlin, Heble, and Lipsitz, 2013: xii). They go on to say that 'improvisation is the creation and development of new, unexpected, and productive cocreative relations among people' (ibid.).

Like any complex self-organizing system, free improvisation exists as a constantly emerging process, where ideas are shared, tested, developed, and discarded. It is then the responsibility of all the participants to make sense of the experience for themselves, given what is known from previous experience, what is unknown now but just under the surface, and what is unknowable. Improvisation keeps music pliable and able to adapt; it does the same to the individual. By inviting the audience to engage more fully in the musicking process, the complexity, diversity, and vibrancy of the improvising experience was increased. Therefore, the free improviser's primary objective in creating a musical expression that balances

new with old material while avoiding habituated responses was also made easier with the invitation to move in space.

6. Conclusion

The Musicians in Space performances made visible the inseparable link between the improviser, the performance space, and the audience. By building on the existing practices of the free improviser and inviting them to explore the performance space, a range of added affordances became available that provided further clarity to the musicking process. At the same time, in allowing the audience the opportunity to shape their own spatial relationship to the listening experience, they enjoyed an increased degree of freedom to actively engage in the musicking process. For these reasons, it is argued that this spatialized approach to performance comes closer to realizing the claims that free improvisation is an all-inclusive and heterarchical musical process. Additionally, it is suggested that the deeply rooted connection that is universally felt towards music can provide a key, for the deep ecologist, to tap into and challenge a set of values and assumptions that can otherwise remain difficult to reach. It is hoped that given favourable conditions, such as room to move, spatialized musicking processes like Musicians in Space can be used to establish more inclusive modes of performance; approaches that not only blur the boundaries between the separate roles of the musicking participants, but also exemplify a sustainable and ethically sound approach to relating to ourselves, to those we collaborate with, and to the world around us.

Acknowledgements

I respectfully acknowledge the contribution made to this research project by all the participants of the performances.

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Person-environment Relationships: Influences beyond Acoustics in Musical Performance

James Edward Armstrong

1. Introduction

The environment in which a musical performance takes place is highly influential over a musician's playing and performance, and over their experience while doing so. Existing research within music performance studies tends to focus on the effects of the acoustic characteristics within an environment on a musician's playing. From such studies, it is established that tempo, dynamic range, articulation, and musical expressiveness are shaped, and sometimes dictated, by the acoustical characteristics within a space (Kawai et al., 2013:1; Schärer Kalkandjiev, 2015). When focusing entirely on acoustical characteristics, the experiential influence of an environment often goes unnoticed.

A small number of studies have indicated that a musician's perception of their surroundings on a psychological and emotional level is important when investigating the environment within a music performance context. The purpose and everyday uses of an environment, or its place in culture, do in fact impact upon a musician's playing and performance experience. It is unlikely, however, that these affective environmental qualities are of a musical nature, and they are thus referred to as 'non-musical'. The surrounding environment's attributes contribute greatly towards the manifestation of a 'person-environment relationship'; this term is used to describe the interactions between a person and their surroundings, in relation to both their immediate physical setting, and the wider socio-cultural setting. The aim of this paper is to reveal how the person-environment relationship between a musician and their surroundings can be influential in the context of a musical performance, focusing on themes of behaviour-settings, socio-cultural significance, and personal meaning.

2. Existing Studies

A majority of existing studies on the subject of environment and space in musical performance tend to focus only on the influence of acoustical characteristics over a musician's playing. In the interest of providing a controlled environment for the purpose of scientific accuracy and minimizing potential variables (Woszczyk and Martens, 2008: 1043), the experiments conducted by the likes of Sato, Kamekawa, and Marui (2011), Ueno, Kato, and Kawai (2010), and Ueno, Tachibana, and Kanamori (2004) take place within an anechoic chamber. Due to the absence of an acoustical response within anechoic chambers, acoustical characteristics are

instead simulated via convolution processing. This provides the participating musician with artificial reverberation that responds in real-time to their playing, in a similar way to a real-world space. This allows for a researcher to observe changes in a musician's playing in response to a range of simulated acoustic environments, encompassing attributes such as reverberation, early reflections, resonance, and echoes. One advantage this approach offers is the ability to test a large number of acoustic environments without having to physically relocate the experiment (Galiana, Llinares, and Page, 2016: 110). It also provides the researchers, and all of those involved, with the convenience of conducting their experiments in a fixed setting.

Although studies of this nature are conducted to a high level of accuracy, they examine a very limited set of variables; rarely, if at all, are real-world environments outside of the laboratory setting considered for investigation (Schärer Kalkandjiev, 2015: 117). A church, a cathedral, a concert hall, a rock venue, a rehearsal room; all are defined by much more than their acoustical properties and are likely to impart more than their acoustical identities into a musician's playing and performance. The personal meaning and individual associations a musician may have in connection to each environment transcends the limitations of what an artificial reverberation effect can be expected to create. Indeed, this is acknowledged in fields concerned with simulated audio environments and auditory virtual reality. It might be suggested that anechoic chambers are unrealistic performance environments, and that this fact is a likely cause of discomfort for musicians participating in the experiments (Noson et al., 2002: 474). A small number of existing

studies have also implied that there are emotional and psychological influences attached to real-world environments that cannot be replicated in a simulation (Lenox and Myatt, 2007: 209), and these studies acknowledge the need for such research to be conducted (Sato, Kamekawa, and Marui, 2011: 4).

A final point to note is that existing studies typically analyze the performances of classically trained musicians, unless investigating performers from a specific genre. None of the authors of the studies mentioned above offer reasoning for favouring this musical background. There is, however, criticism of recent music performance research retaining a focus on classical music (Gabrielsson, 2003: 222). Perhaps the preference is based on a generally accepted idea of there being a higher level of instrumental proficiency and professionalism amongst classically trained musicians, and it is suggested that future studies include musicians of alternative genres as well. Similarly, many of the studies regarding the influence of environment over a musician's playing and performance suffer from a lack of repetition. These publications regularly conclude by calling for further investigation.

3. Introducing Environmental Psychology into Music Performance Research

This research is conducted using an interdisciplinary approach combining music performance studies and environmental psychology. Environmental psychology is a discipline concerned with the study of the interactions between humans and their surroundings; how behaviour-settings, social instruction, and place attachment affect the ways we perceive and experience our

built environment. The aim of an environmental psychologist is to understand how and why we interact with our surroundings in the ways that we do, with the overall goal to improve the environment and our attitudes towards it. In the context of a musical performance, the knowledge and methodologies afforded by the field of environmental psychology offer an understanding of a musician's relationship with their environment that is under-researched, and that remains unavailable in current music performance research. A relatable study from within psychology by Aarts and Dijksterhuis investigated the situational norms and behaviours attached to a library setting, suggesting that the built environment has the potential to prime the behaviour of those within it, even if there are no direct social stimuli providing encouragement (2003: 20). Similarly, Cassidy indicates that the behavioural demands of a church environment are also likely to remain in effect outside of the typical context (1997: 40). Unlike the behavioural influences of social stimuli, a built environment remains fixed, creating boundaries of influence to a specific location that extend to include wider social factors. Furthermore, environmental psychology is yet to be applied in a music performance context in any great detail.

'Behaviour-settings' is a term frequently mentioned in this paper, particularly with reference to Barker's behaviour-settings theory. This approach is often found in environmental and ecological research fields, and therefore it requires an explanation before application in a music performance study. Behaviour-settings theory, first suggested by ecological psychologist Roger Barker (1968), approaches the relationship between a person and their

surrounding environment as a series of behavioural interactions: 'in many cases the behavior outcomes of individuals can be predicted more accurately on the basis of the situation in which they are located' (Popov and Chompalov, 2012: 19). To contextualize, using the example of a church: from a young age, we are taught not to run and shout in this kind of building; that disruptive actions are disrespectful; and that there is a clearly defined etiquette to follow here. This is an example of socio-normative expectation, and instructs the learned behaviour associated with a specific environment; a behaviour-setting is established.

4. Methodology

The methodological approach developed for this research builds upon those used in existing music performance studies. Participating musicians in this study are tasked with playing a selection of musical excerpts of their own choosing in a real-world performance environment, a simulated acoustic environment, and an acoustically dry setting. For example, a participating musician performs in a church, followed by an acoustic simulation of the same church, and finally in an acoustically deadened studio. This process is repeated with eight musicians performing on variations of the acoustic guitar; they each come from different musical backgrounds and have different skill and experience levels (see Table 1 below). Specifically focusing on the performance experiences for players of the same instrument, the guitar, is a decision made for the purpose of consistency within the study, and also to support the International Guitar Research Centre (IGRC) at the University of Surrey.

Table 1. Participants within the study

Participant	Age	Gender	Instrument Type (acoustic guitar)	Playing Style
Guitarist A	30	Male	Classical (nylon-string)	Classical
Guitarist B	37	Male	Classical (nylon-string)	Classical
Guitarist C	44	Male	Steel-string	Folk
Guitarist D	38	Male	Classical (nylon-string)	Latin/Flamenco
Guitarist E	32	Female	Steel-string Resonator	Folk and Blues
Guitarist F	27	Male	Steel-string	Pop
Guitarist G	29	Male	Steel-string	Pop
Guitarist H	30	Male	Steel-string	Pop

The study uses the ‘three-stage method’, the name referring to the three different environmental settings (real-world, simulated, unmediated) encountered by participating musicians (see Figure 1 below). This method provides similar results to existing studies as to how a musician’s playing is altered in response to the acoustic feedback of their surroundings. The addition of the real-world setting provides another level of comparison to explore changes in a musician’s performance, with the potential to highlight that differences in performances do not necessarily

result from changes in acoustical conditions. As in previous studies, no audience attends any of the performances in these experiments. It must be acknowledged that the absence of an audience while performing in environments where one would usually be found may lead to some unusual experiences for the musicians involved (Kartomi, 2014: 190).

Figure 1. Real-world, simulated, and unmediated performance environments within the three-stage method.



In terms of music performance studies, this method allows for comparative analysis of a musician's playing in a real-world environment, a simulated acoustic environment, and an acoustically deadened space, highlighting differences in playing that occur between the various settings.

Following on from the practical experiments, participants are interviewed about their experiences while performing during the study. They are initially questioned on their level of awareness of acoustical characteristics within different environments, and how these can influence their instrumental playing. The main focus of the post-experiment interviews, however, is on how participants experience their performances as a result of environmental qualities, including behaviour-settings, socio-cultural significance, and personal meaning. It is at this point that

qualitative data can be obtained about the emotional, psychological, and experiential qualities of responding to a music performance's surrounding environment; these data are unavailable through analyzing differences in playing exclusively (Holmes and Holmes, 2013: 72-73).

The responses of each participant are analyzed separately, and common themes are extracted manually to be presented in the research findings. The experiment has been conducted nine times, including the pilot study for testing the methodology. Locations have included Eton College campus, Guildford Cathedral, St. Mary's Church in Horden, and the Sage Gateshead. This method has so far proved to be successful in providing an understanding of how musicians experience and interact with their surrounding environment beyond its acoustical characteristics.

5. Research Findings

This research has indicated that a number of environmental qualities have the potential to significantly influence a musician's performance and their experience in performing. Excerpts of the post-experiment interviews conducted with the participating musicians are included in this section in support of the identified outcomes. The following example describes the outcomes from performances conducted in a church setting.¹ The church setting as a music performance environment has been chosen due to the

¹ Three different church environments were used during the practical performance and recording experiments in this study. Guitarists A and B performed in Guildford Cathedral's Lady Chapel and the Church of St. Martha-on-the-Hill respectively, both in Guildford, Surrey. Guitarists C to H performed in St. Mary's Church in Horden, County Durham.

widely accepted understanding of how to act and behave within this place of worship, established through social expectations and learned during previous experiences (Cassidy, 1997: 35). The behavioural expectations attached to a church setting are also applicable outside of music research fields. The following section of the paper discusses themes of behaviour-settings, social and cultural significance, and personal meaning.

5.1. Behaviour-Settings

Participating musicians adhere to the behavioural demands of their surroundings, and this becomes a factor in their performances within a church setting. All instances of the experiment showed that the associated expectation for a person's behaviour in a church environment remains intact in a performance situation. For example, the musicians remained quiet and noticeably reserved once they had entered the church building. Upon reflection, some of the participants recalled a sudden awareness of a change in environment that was, in part, signalled by the abrupt contrast in acoustics; suddenly, the smallest movements and sounds were exaggerated by the highly reverberant space, and this caused a hyperawareness of one's own actions and the subconscious imposition upon oneself of the requisite restraint. Some of the participants were able to elaborate further, having acknowledged their awareness of the behavioural demands attached to their surroundings, during their reflection on their involvement in the study. However, the acoustical conditions are unlikely to be the sole factor in directing a behavioural change; it just so happens that the church setting has highly reverberant spaces that are readily identifiable as a quality.

All but one of the participating musicians behaved as might be expected in a place of worship; they were calm and peaceful, acting with respect to the beliefs presented in the surroundings, speaking quietly, and minimizing any playing between recording takes. The one anomaly, Guitarist B, appeared to be highly excitable, was energetic in performing, and acted in ways that might be deemed disruptive. An explanation for Guitarist B's actions is found in personal meaning associated with the specific church environment he was performing in at the time, and is discussed in the Personal Meaning section, below.

5.2. Social and Cultural Significance

During the post-experiment interviews, a number of interesting details about the participants' individual experiences are revealed. For example, all of the guitarists involved in this research indicated that they felt performing in a church setting produced conflicts with the belief systems associated with the environment. Guitarist A (2016) remarked, 'You wouldn't play Flamenco in a church', and Guitarist D (2016) stated, 'It feels slightly wrong to be playing Flamenco in a church'. The two guitarists are from different countries, play different styles of music, are at different skill levels, and have different religious beliefs, yet shared the same concerns over what is appropriate within a church. Guitarist D further commented on his concerns about the cultural expectations and restrictions perceived to be in play in the church setting:

I think having been in a church a lot, I know what churches are. I have an idea of how you're meant to behave in a church. I spent many hours of my life in a church. I just thought it was appropriate that I make music in church environment that was right for the environment, and that's more of a spiritual type of thing. One of the songs is quite percussive and it didn't even feel quite right playing it there. It's about an attractive Latin lady, I was very conscious of what the environment wants of you.

(Guitarist D, 2016)

Despite the churches used in this experiment having impressive acoustical qualities with expansive reverberation and musical resonances, the musicians involved approached their performances with a sense of caution due to their concerns around behaving disruptively. In the case of Guitarist D, this came from a feeling that his chosen musical excerpts contrasted with the belief systems attached to the building. The same sense of unease was not experienced in the recording studio when the simulated acoustic environment of the church was introduced; the recording studio setting clearly did not carry the same social expectations. This further indicates that an environment is much more than its acoustical characteristics within the context of a musical performance.

5.3. Personal Meaning

A sense of personal meaning in relation to the surrounding environment is most likely unique to the individual. For example, the one participant whose behaviour proved an anomaly was not purposefully trying to act disruptively or show disrespect to his environment. During the interview, he revealed a particular interest in horror films. The 1976 movie *The Omen* was filmed in Guildford Cathedral, and this explained the musician's excitement; his behaviour was an attribute of personal

meaning and its significance could not have been identified through performance analysis alone. A sense of personal meaning is more likely to affect a person's emotional state, as opposed to their behavioural actions. For example, Guitarist G spoke of the church setting with a great sense of sadness since his previous experiences in churches often revolved around funeral services:

In the church I probably... to be honest, think of times of mourning. That was probably the first that sprung to mind, and that kind of, like, affects you, because it's a place where you're meant to be quite sad, and therefore that's definitely the way I felt in that environment.

(Guitarist G, 2017)

This association altered Guitarist G's emotional state during his time in the church, including throughout his performances, and this contributes to his overall performance experience.

6. Additional Findings

In addition to insights into the relationships between individual musicians and their surroundings during a performance, two further areas of interest emerged from the post-experiment interviews. The first is a distinct difference in how a musical performance is approached and experienced when comparing musicians with classical training to those with other backgrounds. In this study, two self-identified classical guitarists (Guitarists A and B) provided responses regarding their experiences that were significantly different from those given by Guitarists C to H, who are not classical trained and do not play in a classical style. The second additional area of interest is the difference in the individual participants' experiences during a

performance depending on whether they were local to a specific performance environment or were visiting. This comparison reveals interesting generalizations of actions and behaviour as a result of association and expectations. The following section provides an overview of these two areas of additional findings, and discusses how these outcomes contribute to a more holistic understanding of the person-environment relationship in music performance contexts.

6.1. Classical vs. Pop

This research indicates a significant divide between participants with formal training and a classical music background when compared to participants from pop, folk, and experimental genres. For those with classical training, there was an emphasis on delivering a precise performance and ‘playing to the score’ throughout their participation in the study. Guitarists A and B both revealed a sharp awareness of their acoustic environment, noting a focus on playing to accommodate the space whilst also trying to remain faithful to the notated music. In highly reverberant spaces, one of these classical guitarists expressed frustration at not being able to tune his instrument or play at the tempo that the score indicated. Although they indicated recognizing an obligation to adhere to the expectations of a church setting, their main anxiety was with feeling unable to perform as desired. For the non-classical musicians, the acoustical characteristics of a space seemed to offer grounds for experimentation, and the necessity to alter their playing was not considered a negative. One possible explanation for the divide is that the musicians without classical training are more likely to experiment, compose, and improvise in their music-making

more generally, and are therefore more likely to take advantage of the opportunity to be creative with varying environmental conditions (Sovansky et al., 2016: 34). Although this study did not aim to demonstrate any differences between the participating musicians based specifically on their musical backgrounds, the divide here suggests that previous studies of this nature using solely classically trained musicians may have resulted in an unforeseen bias.

6.2. Local vs. Visiting Musicians

The results of these experiments also reveal a divide between visiting and local musicians in how they respond to the performance environment. A local musician is likely to be familiar with the cultural significance of an environment, whereas a visiting musician may approach it with an outsider's perspective. Where a church environment provides a behaviour-setting that is typically universal across all places of worship (Cassidy, 1997: 35), the personal significance of performing in a church in the North East of England, such as St. Mary's in Horden, is much less likely to affect musicians that are not local to the region. In this experiment, Guitarists C and D, both from the North East of England, expressed a sense of sadness when performing in St. Mary's Church. Guitarist C stated:

I felt quite upset there, in that town, Horden, and the beach, because this is how my father has lived, and forefathers lived, and I felt, you know? How much hardship and suffering... It still goes on today. The conditions were appalling when there was work, and now it's appalling because there is no work. It wasn't just a church in a village, but it was in a town that was... A town in distress, you know? It's ailing, suffering.

(Guitarist C, 2016)

The building is situated in an ex-mining village, apparently neglected since the closure of the mining activity on which the vast majority of its residents once relied for their livelihoods. When a participant who lives in a similar ex-mining village, Guitarist E, was asked about the influence of local history and heritage, she replied, 'Well, that's just the North East' (Guitarist E, 2017). This points to an indifference that may have emerged as a result of a gradual normalization of this apparently depressed situation.

7. Conclusion

This research project reveals a number of environmental attributes that influence a musician's playing and performance experience, beyond acoustical characteristics. The adaptation of methods typically found in the field of environmental psychology has allowed for a wider range of aspects of environment and space to be introduced to existing research in music performance studies. Rather than disregarding research currently available, this project provides an extension by including real-world environments and investigating participants' individual experiences throughout the various stages of performance. Behaviour-settings and social expectations change a musician's approach to a performance in ways not replicated within a simulated environment.

Although the acoustical characteristics of church settings are often impressive and conducive to (certain) music, the musician is likely to be influenced in ways beyond simply adjusting their playing to acoustical responses. The differences between musicians with classical and other kinds of musical training or

background suggest that some musicians may be more susceptible to the effects of the person-environment relationship on an experiential and emotional level than others. Due to the qualitative nature of this research project, there is not enough data to confidently make conclusions on how a musician's training impacts upon their interaction with a performance environment beyond acoustics. This does, however, highlight a possible area for further research, and one that would require dedicated case work. While previous studies suggest that musicians play in certain ways in response to their acoustic environment, this research reveals that there are more environmental attributes to take into consideration.

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Staging *Ariodante*: Cultural Cartographies and Dialogical Performance

Benjamin Davis

... it is entirely oriented towards an experiment with the real... open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation. It can be drawn on a wall, conceived as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation... The map has to do with performance...

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1976: 12)

1. Introduction

Staging Handel's eighteenth-century opera *Ariodante* involves the making and navigation of various maps that are expedient to both process and performance. In this article, I shall employ the idea of the map to interrogate my own creative practice, as the associate director of Richard Jones's 2014 Aix-en-Provence Festival production for co-producers Dutch National Opera and Canadian Opera Company in 2016. I shall consider Christophe Den Tandt's (2016) recent theoretical 'blueprint' for the

production of cultural forms, zooming in on an analysis of the opera's production staging, and broadening out to how contemporary 'operatic hermeneutics' construct spaces.

The map, as Deleuze and Guattari (1976) suggest, takes many forms and has long been associated with many different notions of realism.¹ Maps are performative in both their form and purpose, asserting a particular 'experiment with the real' in why they are conceived and how they are then navigated and employed. I wish to qualify different maps as informing different phases in the process of staging opera. These perform distinct functions, such as focusing on detail relevant to certain roles within complementary disciplines and discourses, or '*socially constructed ways of knowing some aspect of reality which can be drawn upon when that aspect of reality has to be represented, or, to put it another way, context-specific frameworks for making sense of things*' (Van Leeuwen, 2009: 144, emphasis in the original). Many kinds of interdisciplinary maps of meaning fall under this definition of discourse² and require particular knowledge and skill to decipher and interpret, for example: orchestral parts of an operatic score, a piano reduction vocal score, the *libretto* (or sung text), rehearsal schedule, design model box, technical drawings,

¹ My preferred definition of realism as a mode (rather than a genre or historical movement) was conceived of literature but is relevant to other cultural forms: 'An imaginative extension of experience along lines laid down by knowledge: referring to, reporting on, doing justice to, celebrating, analyzing and being constrained by reality, not [merely] replicating, mirroring, reproducing or copying it' (Tallis, 1988: 195).

² 'Discourse' as a field of study is more broadly related to 'culture' and has been defined as: 'distinctive ways of speaking/listening and often, too, writing/reading *coupled* with distinctive ways of acting, interacting, valuing, feeling, dressing, thinking, believing, with other people and with various objects, tools, and technologies, so as to enact specific socially recognizable identities engaged in specifically recognised activities' (Gee, 2005: 155).

rehearsal mark-out, costume and lighting plots, production book, video recording, and even a review of a performance – all of which privilege certain information from a particular perspective and for a particular purpose, and can in turn be interpreted in a number of ways.

Auslander argues that music and its performance are inextricably imbricated with one another, intending his MAP to stand for music *as* performance, not an alloy of constituent disciplines (musicology and performance studies), but rather an ‘elemental, irreducible fusion of expressive means’ (Auslander, 2013: 354-5). I agree with this assertion, particularly when it comes to the heightened, multimodal reality of opera as a form, which sets out to communicate in performance through its own array of ‘expressive means’.³ Tonal analysis, historical contextualization and reception studies have indeed been slow to embrace the multimodal nature of opera as a visual and spatial as well as musical form of theatre.

The process of staging opera involves the collaborative and reflexive mapping of various discourses: from deciphering and interpreting the score to the realization of a design world and negotiations with company members and casts who embody and navigate these musical, physical, and conceptual spaces. I propose that in relation to the making of opera productions it is

³ Opera is described on the Opera Europa website in the following way: ‘Opera is a total art form which joins music, singing, drama, poetry, plastic arts and sometimes dance. In each work, all the components of opera combine their expressiveness and their beauty. This complex alchemy makes an opera performance an extraordinary show, monopolizing the sight, hearing, imagination and sensibility of the audience, where all human passions are at work’ (Opera Europa, n.d.).

useful to consider how dialogue and dialogical theories, developed from the writings of Mikhail Bakhtin (1981), might be understood as ‘thinking together’ (Isaacs, 1999) about performance from different perspectives, in order to broaden and deepen understanding of the subject material (in this case opera) and reach some consensus (in this case a psychologically congruent, and hopefully coherent, production narrative). Christophe Den Tandt’s performative repositioning of realism ‘on virtual grounds’ has proffered a blueprint for the production of cultural works in a contemporary, or dialogical realist mode.⁴ Whilst developed as a literary and cultural theory, I apply Den Tandt’s theoretical blueprint to my discussion of the form of opera in this case study, ‘staging *Ariodante*’. In so doing, I postulate that opera productions are increasingly dialogical cartographies of culture, and can themselves be read as idiomatic maps. From the perspective of creative practice, I wish to advocate a dialogical model for the making and performing of

⁴ According to Christophe Den Tandt’s developing theoretical framework for cultural forms, ‘dialogical realism’ as a mode of discourse is firstly heuristic (fact-finding): investigative, researching and inter-medial in relation to our perceptual experience of the world. Secondly, it is reflexive (meta-discursive): for example, through self-embedment (which in the context of opera, I understand to refer to the paradox of the simultaneous presence of the performer and their persona, as well as to a musical work and its interpretation). Other examples of reflexivity include impersonation, pastiche, and hybrid codes. Thirdly, dialogical realism is contractual: implicit transactions make up the ‘referential contract’; performative negotiations make up the ‘reality contract’. Both must function simultaneously to support a psychologically congruent, or plausible life-world. This is messy and inherently problematic to dialogical approaches; however, it is often because of these discrepancies that realism claims to open up ‘an authentic search for truth’. Fourthly, dialogical realism is a mode in praxis (action-oriented): testing the limits of physical feasibility and the practical contingencies of situated-ness. Following the logic of the ‘reality bet’ (the optimistic belief that consensus can be reached), dialogical realism is a performative practice of looking more closely at what we know, reminding us of it and transforming that knowledge into experience (Den Tandt, 2016).

opera, as well as asserting the richness of similarly dialogical and interdisciplinary approaches to scholarship and praxis.

Thus, with reference to the way the set design for *Ariodante* combines actual and imaginary elements, I examine how visual and choreographic disciplines function in a dialogical realist mode. With reference to a technical video recording, I explore how audio and visual discourses in opera can be mutually shaping within a production in order to intensify its affective experience, as well as jarring, or going against one another to disrupt our perceptual flow of time and the production's metanarrative. This can be intentionally deployed for narrative effect, as breaking the imagined 'reality contract' in a Brechtian device of epic theatre,⁵ or, more frequently betrays an unravelling of the immense artistic task of knitting all of opera's component discourses and expressive means seamlessly together. None of this mapping, however, should be seen to diminish the considerable investment individuals make in navigating the live performance of a production's metanarrative, which must be uniquely embodied and can be seen as an act of orienteering. The staging of operatic events, meanwhile, can be said to extend beyond their performances in venues to engage individuals, communities, and heterotopias, or 'other spaces'. This leads me to a consideration of opera's meta-stages, 'paratexts',⁶ avatars, reception, and where any 'truth' in opera might exist.

⁵ A familiar conventional example of this is the breaking of the 'fourth wall', where a performer steps out of a scene, or out of character, in order to address the audience directly.

⁶ 'Paratexts' surround and extend the 'text', in this case an opera production, 'precisely in order to present it, in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense: to make present, to ensure the text's presence in the world, its "reception"' (Genette, 1997: 1).

2. The 'Performing' Space

Figure 1. Screen shot from the beginning of Act 2, DNO technical wide-shot video.



The set design, by ULTZ, for the 2014 Aix-en-Provence production of *Ariodante* is an interior cross-section of a building, inspired by photographs of seventeenth-century buildings on Scottish Islands.⁷ The entire set is framed within a white border, delineating the 'fourth wall'. White lines on the floor continue along the back wall and ceiling and delineate the absent interior walls of the kitchen and bedroom. The kitchen door, which opens onto the main room, is signified by an off-white door handle mounted on a hinged bar fixed to the floor, which effectively simulates the action of opening and closing a door

⁷ Photographs of some of the sources of inspiration for the design were included in the original accompanying production programme in Aix. When the production was revived in Amsterdam and Toronto, the programme images varied and the set then elicited additional associated references in press reviews. The design process involves what Den Tandt calls 'heuristic', inter-medial investigation.

without the physical presence of an actual door, or door frame. This device is repeated on the other side of the main room in place of a door to the bedroom. In the screen shot from DNO's technical fixed-camera recording, taken at the beginning of Act 2 (Figure 1), the imagined kitchen door is open and the one to the bedroom is closed.

The delineation of interior solid features, as an integrated design element, is intended to function dialogically with actual physical walls and doors and enables better sightlines across the set. The lines themselves perform as a haunting presence of objects removed from the actual building and also set up a readable convention for the imaginative space, providing the contractual terms of its integrity are observed by those inhabiting it (i.e. by not breaching imaginary walls or putting arms through imaginary doors and by 'playing the space' as if defined by walls and doors that are not actually present).

The design of imaginary architectural features enables the production to construct a level of simultaneous action across several contained spaces, where choreographed movement could be synchronized visually as well as musically, and is a development from relying solely on musical cues in closed-box sets for opera. Therefore, the conventions and potential for the *mise en scène* to construct a kind of 'choreographed realism' are built into the design.⁸

⁸ This design feature became a point of interest for the marketing department at Canadian Opera Company (COC) in 2016, when I directed their revival of the production. A promotional 'insights' video for the production illustrates my rehearsal room interview with selected video clips from the staged production (COC, 2016).

The mechanism of the door without a door asks for both the cast's and an audience's complicity in the imagined reality of the world it is portraying, or in Strindberg's words from his Preface to *Miss Julie*: 'Because the whole room and all its contents are not shown, there is a chance to guess at things – that is our imagination is stirred into complementing the vision' (2008 [1888]: 66). This is, of course, not unique to opera, but one of many spatial design features in theatre tailored to invite an audience to participate in the imagining of the metanarrative, or world of the production: an example of how visual and conceptual interest are hopefully created, drawing curiosity into a space. I would also suggest that the multiple divisions in the spatial design of the set play to our twenty-first century literacy of the semiotics of the screen, and our capacity to read significance into simultaneity across multiple spaces. This resonates with the perception of simultaneous 'voices' and spaces possible in music through rhythm, melody, harmony, and dissonance, and in opera in particular, where distinct simultaneous voices and text are frequently discernible.

Transposing the setting for the opera to a 1970s island in the Hebrides allowed for a number of artistic licenses to be imagined, forming some of its contractual terms of reference and reality, not least the notion of the community outsider. The spoiler of that community is Polinesso, a Duke in the libretto, re-imagined as a travelling charlatan priest in the production. The supposed saviour is Ariodante, Ginevra's fiancé from a neighbouring island and as such nominated to succeed Il Re as king. This offered a given context in which to explore the nature of deception, judgement, sacrifice, and the resulting

psychological fallout, rather than the traditional paradigm of redemption left open by the opera's ending. Polinesso capitalizes on the good-natured suggestibility of the Calvinist island community and their adherence to a rigid ideology of morality and gender, which is exposed and harnessed for ill. In one respect, the setting of the narrative provides a map for the dynamics of competing discourses and ideologies as well as the subsequent psychological investigation of those characters that navigate them.

3. Towards 'Dialogical Realism' in Opera Staging

I shall consider the production staging of Act 2, scenes 9 and 10, with reference to my own vocal score annotated with production blocking (Figure 2)⁹ and a fixed-camera video recording of a performance of the production in Amsterdam, made as a technical record of the show.

⁹ Reproduced with the permission of the publisher from the Halle Handel Edition of *Ariodante* (BA4079-90) © 2007 Bärenreiter-Verlag Kassel and Aix-en-Provence Festival.

Figure 2. Act 2, scene 10, excerpt of vocal score and blocking.

The image displays a musical score excerpt on the left and handwritten stage blocking notes on the right. The musical score is for Act 2, scene 10, featuring characters GINEVRA, DALINDA, and DALINDA. The lyrics are in Italian. The handwritten notes on the right describe stage blocking, including furniture placement, character movements, and stage directions like 'G falls into table' and 'G flut on table'.

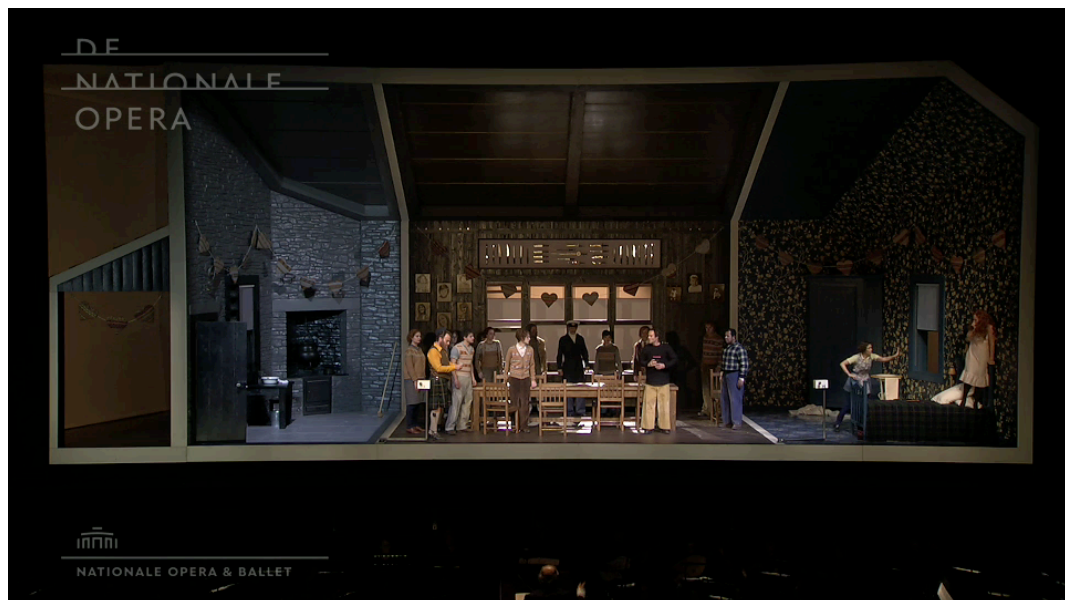
The video was not made for broadcast purposes, although it is of better quality than most technical records of productions.¹⁰ Here I regard it as a record and map of how actual, physical elements of the set and props in the production design become vessels of imagined and symbolic meaning, through a combination of heightening shifts in style and register in the libretto, scoring, lighting, and production choreography; all function dialogically to construct and propel the narrative towards psychological congruence, or dialogical realism.¹¹ In my reading of this staging, informed by my own creative practice in reviving the production, I shall show how design and choreographic features

¹⁰ Permission gratefully received for its reproduction with the courtesy of Dutch National Opera.

¹¹ A question persists about how much set is required in opera for there to be a believable environment in support of the metanarrative of the production, and perhaps distract enough from the technical mechanics of singing (increasingly exposed through camera close-ups), but this is beyond the scope of this article.

of visual discourses, such as in the use of puppetry, framing, stage pictures, and the punctuation of movement in stillness, inform how we hear and experience the music of a staged opera, particularly in the treatment of repeats and Baroque musical structures, such as the *da capo aria*.¹² Audio and visual discourses, therefore, are mutually shaping and inform emotional and psychological engagement with operatic situations.

Figure 3. Screen shot from Act 2, scene 9.



Video Example 1. Excerpt from Act 2, scene 9. Refer to online version of this article at:
<http://www.musicologyresearch.co.uk/publications/benjamin-davis-staging-ariodante>

¹² A *da capo aria* is an accompanied song for solo voice with a musical structure of ABA, where the repeated A section is often embellished, ornamented, and sometimes even improvised by the singer in a display of their virtuosity. The ornamentation of *da capo arias* together with any motivation and staging are, in my experience, a question of taste and negotiated in rehearsal between performers, conductor, and director.

The scene begins at the pivotal moment towards the end of Act 2 when Il Re (the King) wrongly accuses his daughter Ginevra of immorality, and thus responsibility for the death of her fiancé Ariodante, disgracing herself and the community: '*Non e mia figlia, una impudica*' ('Not my daughter, an immodest').¹³ Il Re traverses the imaginary threshold to Ginevra's bedroom (now established as real to the world on stage) (Figure 3). The main room is left populated with a community council still in shock from the news of Ariodante's sudden death in despair, as well as from his brother Lurcanio's call for justice in accusing Ginevra of being to blame. A secretly guilty Dalinda (Ginevra's confidante) and the misguidedly self-righteous Lurcanio are foregrounded in the main room. The audience crucially knows of Dalinda's guilt and Lurcanio's misdirected anger. The absent Polinesso has deceived Lurcanio, Dalinda, Il Re, and Ariodante, precipitating these events.

Ginevra stands on the bed. Disturbed out of unconsciousness by Lurcanio's denunciation of her, she has made it to her feet. Her innocence and moral purity are culturally signified through the vulnerability and whiteness of her costuming, skin tone, and red hair; she is the only person in the production seen in undergarments, and she exposes more skin than anyone else. From an initially elevated position on the bed she retreats to the wall when accused of being '*una impudica*' by her father, the attack endorsed by Lurcanio in the doorway. She challenges the accusation at arm's length to her father and king, who brandishes the damning evidence with an outstretched upstage arm that keeps the stage picture demonstrative, dynamic, and open to an

¹³ My own literal translations.

audience (on stage and in the auditorium), becoming a more intimate scene as Ginevra falls to her knees in an incredulous, vulnerable appeal at the foot end of the bed, interpreted by Lurcanio as 'proof' and testimony of witness to her 'immoral' conduct. The repetition and questioning of '*A me impudica?*' ('To me immodest?') turns to disbelief in the reality to which she has awoken in her text: '*Chi sei tu? Chi fu quegli? E chi son io?*' ('Who are you? Who was that? And who am I?'). The reality and promise of love, a morally pure and happy family life, indeed the whole atmosphere of joy and celebration at her engagement to Ariodante at the end of Act 1 has turned into a waking nightmare for Ginevra. Dynamically, this loaded scene between father and daughter is staged in the bedroom in profile to the fourth wall and, as such, references painterly treatments of mythical and religious subjects in its spatial composition and lighting, intensifying the dramatic moment of the King's misguided denunciation of his daughter as a turning point in the opera.

The staging foregrounds Dalinda's interjections of '*O ciel! Che intesi?*' ('Oh Heavens! What intended?', an aside), '*Misera figlia!*' ('Miserable daughter!'), and '*Oh Dei!*' ('Oh Gods!'), positioning her down stage centre in the adjacent room. Whilst Dalinda's gaze is directed out to the audience and pierces the fourth wall, she remains anchored to the scene with the rest of the community by physical contact with the table in the main room. As a consequence of this dynamic tension in the direction of focus on stage, Dalinda comments dialogically and simultaneously on Ginevra's misfortune, the implications for Il Re and the community, as well as her own shameful

predicament: having impersonated Ginevra at her lover's behest, she has precipitated Ginevra's denunciation and accounts of Ariodante's death. Dalinda's text '*Ohimè, delira!*' ('Oh delirious!') is ambiguously bracketed as an aside in the libretto. In the staging it is delivered to Il Re, in an impotent attempt to deflect his fury and is loaded with dramatic irony; Dalinda was herself complicit in Ginevra's drugging in a silent play at the beginning of Act 2.

Dalinda's text also sets up a transition that follows the brief image of innocent sacrifice, dismantled as Ginevra steps off the bed and passes into the main room, up onto the table for the heavily accented chords in the orchestra that signal a shift in the poetic and dramatic register of her text as she summons the Furies from Hades: '*Uscite dalla reggia di Dite! Furie, che più tardate?*' ('Get out of the palace of say! Rage, what more delay?'). The erupting orchestral fervour of the *accompagnato* (a form of *recitativo* with full orchestral accompaniment) is liberally embellished in the pit in support of the staging of the text that follows: '*Su, precipitate nell'Erebo profondo quanto d'amor voi ritrovate al mondo*' ('Up, hurl into Hell's depths all of love you can find in the world').

The register of the staging shifts with the move from *recitativo*,¹⁴ which has been mainly naturalistic in performance style, to *accompagnato* and a flurry of more expressionistic stage action. The chorus members, who throughout the production form a community that bears witness to and endorses the wielding of moral judgment, move the table with Ginevra on it downstage, remove chairs from the main room and furiously tear down the wedding decorations that were joyfully erected across the four spaces of the set in Act 1. The whole sequence completes in just moments (five bars of music), disrupting our sense of naturalistic time. The chorus assembles upstage in a line across the back of the main room. Ginevra runs out on to the porch pursued by Dalinda over her appeal '*Principessa!*' ('Princess!'), followed by Il Re who stops in the kitchen to watch the women, focusing the stage picture for a punctuating extended *fermata*¹⁵ in the orchestra (at the end of bar 15). There is stillness and silence across the stage and in the pit – a picture – a moment in which to take in what has just happened. Out of this comes a chord, embellished with some artistic license in performance by the lute and strings to serve the dramatic pacing of the scene and the change of mood. The chord signals Ginevra's private questioning of space

¹⁴ *Recitativo*, or 'recitative' in English, is a style of delivery in which a singer adopts the rhythms of ordinary speech and ranges from *secco*, or 'dry', at one end of a spectrum, where the singer is accompanied with minimal plucked or fretted instruments (standardized at the time of Handel as a harpsichord and viol or violoncello), through to *accompagnato*, *obligato*, or *stromentato* at the other, where the full orchestra is employed as an accompanying body and where sung ordinary speech bridges into something more song-like. This latter form is often used, as in this case, to underscore a particularly dramatic text.

¹⁵ A *fermata*, or pause, is a symbol of musical notation indicating that a note or rest should be prolonged beyond what the note value would normally indicate. Here it is not printed in the score. I added it in pencil (as would the conductor in their score) during the course of production rehearsals. As it occurs during *recitativo*, there is more artistic licence taken over pauses and the orchestra is held until the desired stage action is completed.

and meaning on the porch, in the wake of Ariodante's death and accusation that she is to blame for it: '*Dov'è? Ch'il sa me'l dica! ... Che importa a me, se il mio bel sole è morto?*' ('Where is he? Who knows how to tell me! What does it matter to me, if my beautiful sun is dead?'). The meaning of this text and Ginevra's position in the stage picture echo the staging of the ending of Ariodante's famous aria 'Scherza Infida', in which he bewails his beloved's (supposed) infidelity, and this is the last an audience has seen or heard from him.

The violence in the text and orchestral *accompagnato* finds metaphorical expression through a disruption to the temporal flow of the narrative, whilst remaining within the aesthetic and space of the production's own realist terms: the community scatters to tear down the heart-shaped decorations and reconfigure the furniture in the main room. This spatial reconfiguring shifts the aesthetic from the relative naturalism of the recitatives to a heightened expressionistic space in which to stage Ginevra's aria 'Il Mio Crudel Martoro Crescer non Può di Più' (This Cruel Anguish Could not be Greater). The video excerpt ends here.

Although the transition between sequences described above occurs quickly in performance, detailed maps of the flight paths of cast and props are developed in rehearsal to achieve these scenic modulations safely and at the desired temperature and speed for dramatic momentum. The community's gaze and the staging of the aria that follows focus on Ginevra, whose movements quietly resonate with visual references to the Crucifixion story in part A, reminiscent of the choreographic

language of Pina Bausch; in the B section, the staging echoes Ariodante's own position of despair on the floor against the front door in 'Scherza Infida', further emphasizing their spiritual connection, and in the *da capo* section of the aria,¹⁶ she is dragged by Il Re from the kitchen floor across the main room and onto the table, where she is metaphorically sacrificed.

This heightened idiomatic staging has been progressively signalled and operates dialogically with Ginevra's text, music, and the sub-textual world that has been constructed to support it. The culmination of the stylistic modulation is a meta-theatrical puppet show (titled 'Sin City' in rehearsal) in which the community morally pass judgment and denounce Ginevra at the end of the act, during the opera's orchestral 'dances' (Figure 4).¹⁷

¹⁶ *Da capo*, meaning 'from the head, or beginning' here refers to the repeated section of a *da capo aria*, with a musical structure of ABA.

¹⁷ Puppetry, as a metatheatrical narrative device, is also used during the dances at the end of Act 1, where the community presents a surprise puppet show finale to the celebrations that are staged to mark Ariodante and Ginevra's engagement. The community perform an endearing backstory of how Ariodante and Ginevra met, and project a wholesome, God-fearing future for the couple. This first celebratory puppet show is reprised, under the blundering attempts of Il Re at the end of Act 3 to smooth over what has happened and reunite Ariodante and Ginevra in marriage, becoming an expression of intransigence, oppression, and suffering caused by religious dogma, among other things. Ginevra abandons the charade, leaving both Ariodante and the island community in the production's significantly 'modern' solution to staging the opera's 'happy' ending.

Figure 4. 'Sin City' puppet sequence – screen shot from the 'zoom' technical video, DNO.



How the story of *Ariodante* is told in the production, how an audience is invited to be imaginatively complicit and emotionally involved in the telling, forms a significant part of the contractual basis of reference and reality, or imaginative truth of the world of the production. The level of an audience's suspension of disbelief can only be 'bet' upon (to use Den Tandt's terminology) by stakeholders in a production through committing to what *they* can believe in and by participating in dialogical processes in both visual and musical languages.

Deleuze and Guattari conceive of music as being rhizomatic¹⁸ in the way it 'has always sent out lines of flight' (1976: 11). Conflating the two analogies of rhizome and map, they conceive of connecting strata and dimensions of space that we experience

¹⁸ A rhizome is a continuously growing horizontal underground stem, which puts out lateral shoots and adventitious roots at intervals. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, it is explored as a metaphor for the way networks of connections and meaning may be conceived, in contrast to the structural and metaphorical hierarchy of the tree.

as real but that are not always actual; space includes that experienced in the mind, suggested, unfolded, or created by what we perceive, feel, and imagine: the augmented actual, the virtual, and the transcendent.¹⁹ Modulations in the musical and visual register culminate in the puppetry sequences as ‘virtual’ to the reality of the on-stage community in this production of *Ariodante*. They are staged as the imaginative expression of that community’s joys, hopes, and fears at various points in the opera’s story. Similarly, as for the on-stage world, visual and musical ‘lines of flight’ traverse our own personal narratives as makers and audiences. It is at these intersections that we experience something meaningful, something real to us in our encounter with the performance of music. Visual information and contexts have been shown to influence what we hear in music at both cognitive and perceptual levels (Schutz, 2008: 91). Indeed, our other senses influence our experience and interpretation of sound and vice versa.²⁰ Whilst music is shaped and spaced in time, it arguably shapes our sense of time and space, or temporality (Kramer, 1988), connecting our sense of the present place to sounds and ideas from elsewhere, the past and even to notions of the future.

A significant operatic feature is the possibility of a congruent ‘assemblage’ of multiple, simultaneous voices and spaces within which cultural values are more or less cogently expressed and nuanced. Within this production, the metadiscursive puppet

¹⁹ Two fascinating volumes inform my own understanding of Deleuze and Guattari’s analogy here: Buchanan and Lambert (2005), and Buchanan and Swiboda (2004).

²⁰ See the work of Charles Spence and the Crossmodal Research Laboratory in experimental psychology. For a more light-hearted article, see Barton (2012).

shows during the 'dances' at the end of each act are examples of Den Tandt's performative dialogical realism that imaginatively express and shape the reality of the community that create them. We can see this relationship reach beyond the world of the production to reference actual spaces in the cities where the production was performed. The Act 2 'Sin City' puppet sequence, for example, took on particular resonance when the production was performed in Amsterdam at DNO, not far from the city's famous red-light district.

Positioning opera productions within a discourse of staged 'events' that necessarily take in time, place, and the demographic of performers and audiences allows for a compelling expression of culture whose territory in the twenty-first century reaches well beyond the confines of actual space and is arguably becoming increasingly virtual. Such events, however, do not exist in a void.

4. Towards 'Dialogical Performance'

Singers, music staff, conductors, and directors ideally arrive at production rehearsals 'knowing' the score to the best of their ability; what everyone is voicing in the libretto, in whatever language they are singing, as well as having a personal understanding of what it means to them. Increasingly important are the skills necessary to explore the group's understanding and expression of character, phrasing, and subtext, together with others in their roles through rehearsals. For singers, this becomes about embodiment; assimilating, through a process of layering of information, the discursively mapped role into the voice, thought and emotional architecture, movement, and relationships in scenes. This is an extraordinary feat of orienteering when it

occurs successfully and we consider the climate and constraints of international opera productions.²¹

Crucially, mapping and navigation also exist on the level of programming repertoire, detailing and deploying the producing company's resources, such as the availability of cast and staff members, rehearsal spaces, orchestra and chorus sessions, costume fittings, stage time, and so forth, in the form of the technical and rehearsal schedule. It is beyond the scope and expedience of this paper to unpack just how important, unseen, and political the power struggles over this territory can be; however, in my experience, many of the most critical and diplomatic negotiations occupy these planning spaces and determine the relative dialogical success of opera productions.

On the level of the metanarrative (world of the production), the director hopefully mediates the various maps towards some consensus (generally in the interest of coherence, but sometimes intentionally not). This will include character motivations for flight paths through actual and imagined elements of the set, recorded as 'blocking'. Meanwhile, the conductor and director exert their influence over other stakeholders in the production, hopefully but by no means consistently, towards the same end. This can be messy, difficult, combative, and wonderful. Practitioners have a certain amount of agency within their defined professional and character roles, whereas personalities understandably manifest variously under pressure.

²¹ In accord with my own view, another form of recent sector mapping has endorsed the holistic training of opera singers in the UK (where acting, physical training, and command of languages are not merely add-ons to vocal performance) to meet the growing demands of the profession (see GDA, 2016).

Opera rehearsals, in my opinion, should be about human beings navigating the musical and associated territories, about negotiation and discovery. These are led at various phases in the schedule by different roles. Crucially, they involve an act of faith in the process to generate a set of choices for staging opera that are plausible to the group of people assembled, resulting in the creation of a cohesive metanarrative, mapped in turn in the form of the production book. I would therefore agree, in theory, with Den Tandt's insistence on an open mind and faith in dialogical processes to reach consensus, although must stress that, in practice, this manifests in participants in varying degrees under the pressures of time and within the constraints of available resources. Investigating the given material of the score and libretto from a number of different perspectives dialogically, when entered into in this way can, in my experience, lead to greater communion with the music, oneself, and others whilst encouraging a sense of purpose and commitment to a shared 'imaginative truth' for those involved. Therefore, counter to what one might instinctively believe about the heightened form of opera, staged productions can be made following the blueprint of a dialogical realist discourse, but crucially require an act of faith in the process, whether they hope to reference a naturalistic, expressionistic, and/or other aesthetic. From the perspective of those performing in and producing opera productions, live performances of opera can thus be seen as acts of both cultural orienteering and faith in production maps to hold value and interpretative meaning.

5. Beyond the Physical Stage

Performances of opera reverberate beyond the space of the physical stage to occupy other virtual territories through their paratexts and avatars in digital broadcasts, DVDs, marketing show reels, 'insight' promotional material, on social and other recorded media, such as YouTube, or the technical video made by DNO referred to in this article. The reception of these performances and their virtual reincarnations continues the process of interpretation and intersection of individual narratives (that we each bring to the event) with the metanarrative of the opera production, igniting further interplay between actual and virtual worlds, be it by an audience in a venue on the night, in the press, on television, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, or other virtual presence. The more intersections of personal narrative with the metanarrative there are, the greater the chance of connection between them, following the 'reality bet'. The physical touring and international co-productions of opera, often 'revived' with new company and cast members, create further cultural ripples in their spatio-temporal conjunctions with new audiences.

In the midst of the well-documented and debated circumstances of the opening night of *Ariodante* in Aix-en-Provence in 2014,²² where it was targeted for disturbance and sabotage amidst national demonstrations on behalf of the *intermittents de spectacle* in France, a large portion of the metanarrative, such as the use of puppetry and Polinesso's disguise of religious authority in the

²² Whilst there is much to say on this subject, it is unfortunately outside the scope of this article. Sarah Connolly, who sang the title role in both Aix and Amsterdam, has written her own vivid account of the evening of the first performance (Connolly, 2014).

production, was picked up and commented upon in the press. The publicity and marketing departments' involvement, wherever a production is presented, add another level of discourse that clearly steers, frames, and inflects the space of any production's reception.²³ Marketing strategies open up other debates and 'lines of flight' around engagement and impact.²⁴

Reviewers that were sympathetic towards Richard Jones's production of *Ariodante* in Toronto, when I directed it for Canadian Opera Company in 2016, focused on local resonances with the island setting and *how* the story was told, citing its use of puppetry, choreography, 'postmodern' treatment, and its ending (informed through direct relationships with the company's public and media relations department, interviews with the production team, the conductor, and members of the cast). For example, where the 'Sin City' puppet sequence at the end of Act 2 was particularly noted by company members and audience polls in the Netherlands as referencing Amsterdam's neighbouring red-light district, in Toronto, the same was described salaciously for sensationalism and to generate controversy, or an overall parallel was drawn between the production's metanarrative and the communities and culture of

²³ See The *Globe and Mail's* preview article by Robert Harris (2016a) subsequent to separate interviews with me and the conductor, Johannes Debus, as an example of an informed and sympathetic framing of the production in Toronto.

²⁴ For relevant recent marketing material on 'culture segments' and the mapping of audiences' receptiveness to and engagement with arts and heritage sectors see MHM (n.d.).

the Canadian Maritimes.²⁵ Just how much resonated with the thousands of audience members in each of the co-producing venues forms part of Ten Dandt's 'reality bet' and remains resistant to measurement and codification, beyond the scale of the applause, polling audience's immediate reactions, or studies that have attempted to measure the longer term impact of the arts in general.²⁶

Negative, reactionary reviews typically aimed at the production rather than the music, conductor, or singers (who were almost universally praised for the quality and suitability of their voices), largely betray the writers' own aesthetic tastes (which tend to be

²⁵ For example, Michael Vincent's review for the *Toronto Star*: 'A puppet on a stripper's pole. A wall of knives and invisible doors. A tattoo-covered priest in a "Canadian tuxedo" and combat boots with a kink for sniffing women's knickers... Opinions will surely be divided, but with a show as dramatically complex as this was, it is also exactly why it is so deliciously interesting' (Vincent, 2016). Contrast with *The Globe and Mail*'s considered endorsement, by Robert Harris in Toronto: 'The decisions Jones has made to update and deepen the resonances of the opera work beautifully both to preserve the integrity of the original and add to it touches and textures that only a modern audience can appreciate. Those resonances begin with the setting. Jones has taken the story of *Ariodante*, a simple Renaissance tale of jealousy, deception and eventual reconciliation, and placed it in the suffocating world of the 1970s Outer Hebrides of Scotland. Intentionally or not, a Canadian audience cannot fail to see in these homespun clothes, immediate passions and narrow, dogmatic, community life echoes of a Newfoundland outport or isolated Maritime village... Then there's the set for *Ariodante*, a clever tripartite arrangement, three rooms divided by the simplest of gates that allow action to proceed in all three places simultaneously, allowing for a wealth of psychological suggestions and counter-suggestions that immediately modernize the original. Those gates are immensely symbolic in Jones's productions, which is all about doors opening, and more often closing, in the community's life – closing on people, ideas, forgiveness, faith... If you needed one example to demonstrate why modern staging and perfectly realized music from the past need each other, this was it' (Harris, 2016b).

²⁶ There have been many studies into these areas of both quantitative and qualitative measurement, often deployed politically to endorse the cultural value of the arts beyond the economic value-for-money argument made in response to devastating cuts in state funding. It has also been acknowledged, however, there will always be an element of experiencing the arts that remains subjective and elusive to measurement (see Shishkova, 2015).

rather literal when it comes to assessing visual components of the performance), exhibiting self-aggrandizing prejudices, and a pejorative, if amusing writing style.²⁷ Rarely, in this case, are reviews balanced and neutral; however, a number provide caveats to temper their frustrations with the production in phrases such as ‘taken on its own terms’ and ‘within its dramatic suppositions’ (Sohre, 2016). These, at least, acknowledge the contractual parameters of an approach that licenses artistic prerogatives of the production, but to my mind fall back on preconceived or pre-drawn maps of the operatic work and a vaguely envisioned spectacle while citing some rather disembodied notion of ‘the music’.

As a group of practitioners and makers of productions, we aim to make the work in which *we* can believe as artists gathered from an international and interdisciplinary community. When it comes to realism in opera, as perhaps any form, the question gravitates towards *whose* realism is under scrutiny. The production inevitably communicates cultural values that are variously affirmed, ignored, or challenged on the level of the production’s reception and in the press. These discourses can, in

²⁷ One example was James Sohre’s review for *Opera Today*: ‘the updated “realm” consists of a massive, unattractive setting that is one large part community meeting hall and one small part private residence. Well, “residence” in the sense that Ginerva’s bedroom and a cramped, ill-used “foyer” were all that were seen other than the rather primitive common room. From the numbingly ugly bedroom wallpaper, to the floating doorknobs that open/close non-existent “doors,” to the confusing configuration of entrances, this was a depressing, intentionally dull atmosphere, meant to convey a mandated routine and an oppressive societal structure. Set designer ULTZ was also responsible for the drab, purposefully provincial costumes. The attire was at times confusing (chorus women were dressed as men but danced as women), at best functional (such as the wedding gown that gets passed around), and at worst, defeating (the titular prince looks like a hang-dog village simpleton)’ (Sohre, 2016).

their turn, be the subject of analysis in a continuation of the dialogical spaces generated by the production, particularly as it not only travels to but is also revived by different co-producing houses for their opera-going communities. Occasionally, changes to the production itself will be made as a result of its critical reception. It is, however, in the virtual spaces of social media and the blogosphere as much as academic circles that the critics themselves may be critiqued, although the impact of negative notices on the perceived success of opera productions, and careers of those involved, is rarely held to account.

Ultimately, operatic hermeneutics produce spaces from the interplay of actual and virtual elements that constellate around musical form. Opera, as a total art form, demands an open and complex engagement with the virtual as an imaginative exploration of the real, or of reality as experienced by human beings – a co-created hallucination, if you will; it tests the limits of the contractual parameters of reference and reality, becoming most powerfully affecting and ‘real’ when its metanarrative intersects with the personal narratives we each bring to the event. From the cartographic processes involved in creating and promoting a production, to the varied off-shoot forms, paratexts, and commentary that reinterpret it, the increasingly dialogical staging of opera repositions the performer, critic, and audience (in the broadest sense) as cultural orienteers and performers in their own reality matrix.

In conclusion, I return to the quotation from *A Thousand Plateaus*, which is a definition of music, of the map, of the way art reimagines what we perceive to be real in order to glimpse at

some truth about our sense of space and place in the world. Staged opera can be both poetic and real to the extent to which it is given meaningful context, with reference to actual forms and human experience and perhaps grounded by them in our understanding. The 'truth' of music as performance and of any MAP, therefore, is to be sought in the live encounter and interplay of actual and virtual worlds. Opera may be uniquely positioned to explore this territory because its heightened idiom continues to test the boundaries of our suspension of disbelief, and because of the potential dialogical richness of its expressive means and staging in the twenty-first century.

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Journeys to *Plastic Beach*: Navigations across the Virtual Ocean to Gorillaz' Fictional Island

Alex Jeffery

1. Introduction

For at least two decades, a literature has formed that looks at popular music in geographical terms, connecting popular music studies with approaches from cultural geography in particular. These directions have been largely restricted to real locations, however, at the expense of considering how fictional geographies in popular music might be mapped and traced culturally. Analyses of the encoding of geography within popular music have thus far had a tendency to focus on how music is produced and performed, searching for connections 'between sites and sounds, for inspirations in nature and the built environment' (Connell and Gibson, 2003: 91). Much of this is focused on what happens at a local level (Bennett and Whiteley, 2004), as well as on flows from the local to the diasporic (Daynes, 2004) or towards the transnational. Cultural geographers like Lily Kong

(1995) have approached popular music from their own perspectives, contributing to discourses around how meaning is produced, and the cultural politics and power relationships bound up in these processes. Most of this attention is directed towards real places, yet the creation of fictional spaces and locations within popular music culture is a widespread, if largely unexplored phenomenon that can be observed among many songs and concept albums. In other examples, more overarching geographical conceits can span entire careers, such as that of the fictional/virtual group that is the focus of this article – Gorillaz.

It is not uncommon for popular songs themselves to carry references to local places in many ways; references to American towns, cities, and states, for example, have been exhaustively mapped, if only on a superficial level, by Hayes (2009). When a named place forms the subject of the song, this can help to further reify mythologies of locations that are already well known and well visited. London, New York, Paris, and Rio de Janeiro have all inspired musical odes to cities, and urban locations within them, in turn contributing to each city's mythology. Anyone who has never been to New York will nonetheless have a highly mediated preconception of the city as large-scale metropolis with a grungey street culture that is tough, but that can make dreams come true if conquered. These images both condition our understanding of the songs, and are conditioned *by* them, as anyone who has grown up listening to 'New York, New York' can confirm. This is further enshrined on the level of genre, where punk and disco stand in for the sketchy, dangerous street life and a shiny world of glamour and sexual permissiveness, respectively. In the case of João Gilberto's

'Garota de Ipanema' (Girl from Ipanema), it is not simply lyrical references to Rio's Ipanema beach and the beautiful, gently swaying female who frequents it that conjure the setting, but the indexical links to the city through *bossa nova* – the musical style that sprung up there. In Kid Creole and the Coconuts' 1981 album *Fresh Fruit in Foreign Places*, this indexical quality of genre provides a structuring device that helps the listener to navigate the loose narrative of the album. This forms an odyssey around the Caribbean in search of a lost lover, where the style of the music in each song (calypso, salsa, ska etc.) indicates on which island the song-story takes place (Palmer, 1981).

When pop songs are set on fictional remote islands – the setting with which this article is concerned – they generally retread well-worn clichés borrowed from other popular media. 'Bali H'ai' from *South Pacific* (1949), Blondie's 'Island of Lost Souls' (1982), Madonna's 'La Isla Bonita' (1987) and The Beach Boys' 'Kokomo' (1988) are all pop songs about fictional tropical islands that are painted in broad strokes as colourful places of escapism in which to find love or a break from the mundane. These clichés are present for a reason – without the connection to a real location, it is far more difficult to convey a sense of place to a listener. If they are to achieve any foothold in listener imaginations beyond the archetypal or clichéd, the fictional location in music must often be represented visually somehow as well as heard. It must be said here that location is merely one element in immersion in some kind of *world*, which may or may not be narrative, or perceived as such. Generally of greater interest to the audience within this *worldness* (Klastrup, 2003) are the star's performance persona(e), which may be variations upon their recognized

public persona (Björk in *Utopia*), characters more akin to the roles of an actor (David Bowie in *1.Outside*) or, in the case of Gorillaz, purely virtual constructions that have become untethered from the musicians themselves. However, in addition to providing a narrative setting, location may help provide a conceptual focus or merely ground the listener by suggesting that the music happens *somewhere*.

This article is concerned with one fictional setting – Gorillaz’ *Plastic Beach* – and the attempts made to aid immersion in a particular chapter of Gorillaz’ storyworld through this location. As the location exists largely in virtual space, I explore the consequences of virtuality for users of the *Plastic Beach* project and assert that due to its limitations, fans are encouraged to transcend this virtuality through their own creative fan practices. By remediating the fictional environments in their own ways, users manage to enact desires to insert themselves into the world, achieving unusual methods of metalepsis, or crossing ontological borders, in the process.

2. Gorillaz and *Plastic Beach*

The cartoon band Gorillaz first arrived in the public consciousness in early 2001 with the video for the international hit single ‘Clint Eastwood’. Founded by Blur musician Damon Albarn and comic book artist Jamie Hewlett, the motivations behind the Gorillaz were manifold. Conceptually, the project would allow their creators a means to provide a sharp, parodic critique of the vapidness of the music industry, while simultaneously being able to hide behind their fictional creations. Having been the subject of often intense media scrutiny as a

member of the rock group Blur, Gorillaz allowed Albarn in particular a musical output that could deflect attention away from himself as a performer. Gorillaz' embrace of ongoing new technological developments has also led to them developing a reputation as agents of audiovisual innovation. Their singles and hugely popular animated music videos helped launch them to global popularity and significant record sales for their albums *Gorillaz* (2001) and *Demon Days* (2005). With the creators of Gorillaz choosing to remain mostly hidden behind the characters they had created, the fictional construct therefore operated largely in virtual space, where the records were promoted, and a fanbase built. The believability of Gorillaz, and by extension *Plastic Beach*, involves successfully achieving the transportation of consumers across the boundary between the real and the virtual. A conceit used in early Gorillaz shows was a screen separating the audience from the real musicians, who were only visible in silhouette. Graphics and video depicting the virtual band were then projected on the audience's side of the screen, enacting a physical boundary or 'virtual curtain'. Although this device was soon abandoned when it became clear how it limited audience interaction in live shows, the idea of the permeation of this curtain remains as a compelling metaphor; not only is it the audience that must make the cognitive leap through the curtain, but the band themselves are frequently agents of transition and transgression. The mechanics of how Gorillaz perform live particularly fascinated writers in their earlier career (from 2001 to 2005). Holographic representations of the band stood in for flesh and blood performers in several award shows, although technological limitations (the tendencies of the holographic image to be disrupted by high amplitude sound) meant that

Gorillaz' tours were more conventional. Expanding on ideas by Ryan (2004), Roberta Hofer views this in terms of metalepsis, where ontological boundaries are crossed. Citing Ryan's insistence that real metalepsis never really affects the 'real world level', she notes that with Gorillaz, 'cartoon characters will never REALLY step out of their comics and into our real world' (2011: 239). However, rather than simply consume Gorillaz' media passively by listening to and watching their media, it is also possible for us to step into their world and engage with it through our own *active* consumption practices. As I will argue later, how we do this can also have significant consequences for how we interface with location.

Viewed by the media as Gorillaz' most ambitious project yet, their third album *Plastic Beach* (2010) was a loose concept album with the overarching theme of human waste and the man-made artificiality of what we produce.¹ Beyond just the songs on the album, these themes were extended in a large-scale transmedia narrative followed by its users beyond the album into a series of interconnected videos, games, and other media. These put a virtual location at the heart of the project – the titular island. Transmedia storytelling has been defined by media scholar Henry Jenkins as that which 'unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole' (2006: 95-96). It is rare that transmedia narratives are rooted within popular music culture, but when they are, as has occurred with Gorillaz, this implies, indeed

¹ This theme arose from observation during a seaside holiday of musical founder Damon Albarn that the small pieces of sea-smoothed plastic proliferating among the beach pebbles were as much part of 'nature' as the rest of the beach.

necessitates, the presence of visual texts. Other transmedia projects in popular music have a similar reliance on a sense of location in suturing the user to the storyworld. David Bowie's *1.Outside* sets much of its action in Oxford Town, a fictional city located somewhere in New Jersey. Thomas Dolby's transmedia project *The Floating City* (2011), meanwhile, maps its future earth setting with the continents of Urbanoia, Oceania, and Amerikana.

For *Plastic Beach*, to help furnish the narrative with a setting that encapsulated the album's ecological theme, an island was envisioned in the remote Pacific. The inspiration for this island was the real-life phenomenon of the Great Pacific garbage patch, an area of marine debris within the North Pacific gyre thought to cover millions of square kilometers of aggregated plastic marine waste, including plastics and chemical sludge. The fictional *Plastic Beach* island was consequently visualized as an aggregation of various human detritus, including obsolete appliances and, in keeping with the musical meta-narratives of the piece, outdated music technology. To enhance the reality of the location, a real-life eight-foot model was constructed from small plastic toys, glued together and sprayed pink with a studio complex built on top. This model was then filmed in a large water tank at Shepperton Film Studios, with footage debuting online via YouTube at the start of promotion in January 2010 as the 'Orchestral Trailer'. This highly cinematic piece allowed the island exterior to be viewed from multiple angles, which could subsequently be explored further via arcade-style games available through Gorillaz' website. The interior of the studio complex built on the island could also be explored in a separate point-and-click adventure game, with players gaining access to

new rooms by solving puzzles. The island could also be found remediated in further drawings used as sleeve art or magazine covers, several animated videos, and other digital art offered as screensavers.

Why did so much effort and expense go into visualizing the location, when, ultimately, the main commercial product of the *Plastic Beach* project was a collection of audio recordings? It is largely Gorillaz' virtuality that might provide the answer. The fact that Gorillaz' virtual cartoon characters are unable to appear in person to promote or tour their products, as would happen with a non-virtual band, has led to a number of ingenious promotional strategies that rely on technological novelty. Examples of such technology that Gorillaz have embraced over the years include puppetry, holographic live performance and, increasingly, the use of augmented reality. A constant feature of their first three albums was the creation of an inhabitable, gamified band website where a strong sense of location was key to maintaining engagement from users. From 2000 to 2007, this location was Kong Studios, an important part of Gorillaz' mythology that has featured in many of their videos. On the website, Kong Studios became an explorable three-dimensional space with rooms and corridors that housed Gorillaz' audiovisual media as well as offering various puzzles and games to promote repeat visits. The intensity of engagement by users, who would often visit the site every day, is well documented in web forums, and a recent YouTube thread demonstrates how former devotees of the website still express nostalgic loss and mourn its passing (TWG, 2017). The emotional attachment evident here has been noted as important not only for

contributing to a 'sense of place' but for experiencing full spatial immersion in a location (Ryan, Foote, and Azaryahu, 2016: 54). It was clearly hoped that the same attachment would occur for the new location, a 'beachsite' created for *Plastic Beach*, which arrived in 2011 to replace the old Kong Studios interface. In the new site, the island and the studio complex were able to be explored through gameplay, helping set the scene for a narrative that would unfold through the music videos, games, and other media. Like Kong Studios, this interface was later removed after Gorillaz became inactive in the long gap between albums, and has been replaced by a more conventional, non-navigable feed-based website. As well as deepening emotional engagement, the provision of a hub website based around the island's topography helped situate *Plastic Beach's* users (the term I will employ to describe Gorillaz' fans and consumers during this specific period) within a highly complex, and potentially confusing, constellation of media objects. Around these objects, it was evidently hoped story immersion would also lead to successful commercial outcomes for the project. In addition to sales of CDs and vinyl LPs, the 'innovative 18-month multimedia campaign' was hoped to attract paying subscribers to the website, which would provide them with access to online content, subscription-only live events, ticket priority, and a toy (Leonard, in Barrett, 2010). When the campaign was curtailed by the record company EMI roughly halfway through the projected period, and further animated music videos cancelled, it can be assumed that both streams of revenue (music sales and subscription fees) proved to be insufficient.

However, beyond providing a focus for these commercial aspirations, the choice of a remote Pacific island as the main location for *Plastic Beach* has deeper consequences that situates *Plastic Beach* within a particular tradition of storytelling. What is the particular mythical power that the island holds as a fictional location and why does it often result in outlandish fantasy worlds like *Plastic Beach*?

3. Islands in Popular Music

In *Narrating Space / Spatializing Narrative*, Ryan, Foote, and Azaryahu point out how it is islands in particular that are favoured when the imagination engages in world-creation. They list several reasons why this might be so, including how islands are able to represent the real world in geographical microcosm, as well as how their limited size makes them 'knowable and mappable' (2016: 57). The limited space of *Plastic Beach* gives it an intimacy that is appealing to those who want to engage with it as a location, a quality it shares with other fictional examples from film and literature including *Swiss Family Robinson*, *Treasure Island*, *Jurassic Park*, and *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. Its location in the middle of the world's largest Ocean – the Pacific – goes further in linking it intertextually with other fictional islands such as Skull Island from *King Kong* or Bali Ha'i from *South Pacific*. Two cult TV shows set on mysterious Pacific Islands are in fact clearly referenced in *Plastic Beach*'s visual media – *Fantasy Island* (1978-84) and particularly Gerry Anderson's 'Supermarionation' show *Thunderbirds* (1964-66), whose Tracy Island has an obvious (and confirmed) influence on the design of the *Plastic Beach* island complex (Lamacq, 2010). More recently, the mysterious island has also emerged as a popular trope within

gaming, such as the CD-ROM game *Myst* (1993), the beach levels of *Mario Kart* (1992 onwards), the *Tropico* series (2001 onwards), and *The Sims 2: Castaway* (2007). The geographical fantasy of these game-world islands bears a striking resemblance in places to *Plastic Beach*, and this encourages further intertextuality in fan videos, which have remediated *The Sims 2* locations into *Plastic Beach* machinima.²

As I have previously stated, when songs are set on tropical islands, the treatment of the setting can be rather clichéd. Occasionally, though, popular musicians have also conjured more deeply thought-out mythical islands in the service of ambitious and expansive *storyworlds*.³ Björk's recent album *Utopia* (2017) is inspired by a thread running through folk tales found across several continents, where women break out with their children from a society that is oppressing them, steal flutes, and escape to a new place (Sawyer, 2017). Unsurprisingly, these flutes join in the musical narrative in the album, where the location is loosely conceived as a wild, blissful, and matriarchal island, perhaps resulting from an eco-disaster. Although this location is not evinced for the listener particularly strongly through the lyrics, the digitally created landscapes of *Utopia's* music videos, particularly that for 'The Gate' and the title track, bring the world of Björk's imagination vividly to life. Motifs used in the videos include grass meadows, fluttering mythical winged

² In machinima, gameplay from software engines is screen-captured, and later edited into videos that may relate a narrative, or be set to music to create fan-made music videos. This will be explored later in examples.

³ World-building in *storyworlds* is differentiated from the construction of *narrative* by Jenkins (2006: 114), who highlights the expansive contents, and complex interrelations between characters and stories that *storyworlds* contain, as well as their inability to be bound within a single medium.

creatures, and outlandishly pink-hued beaches, themselves not dissimilar from those to be found on *Plastic Beach*.

Decades prior to this, British electronic band the KLF placed a fictional island at the heart of their philosophy and mythology from 1988 to 1994, and named it Mu. Name-checked in a number of songs, Mu was a partial retreading of the Atlantis myth. The island was particularly inspired by Bill Drummond's prior involvement in a stage adaptation of Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson's *Illuminatus* trilogy of novels, which itself took inspiration from a number of fanciful fictional treatments of the Atlantis myth (Fitzgerald and Hayward, 2016: 51-52). In 1991, in order to stage a press event on Mu, the KLF borrowed the Isle of Jura in the Inner Hebrides to stand in for it, with journalists and media industry figures invited to the island during the summer solstice. The invitees then participated in a series of ritualistic events modelled on those taking place in another fictional location, Summerisle (ibid.: 59), the mysterious western Scottish island upon which the British cult horror film *The Wicker Man* (Robin Hardy, 1973) was set. The KLF's use of the mythology surrounding the film, which subsequently developed a strong cult following, is further evidence that fictional islands are highly intertextual by nature; both their appearance and mythologies exert strong influence on other works and worlds.

The design behind all of these islands is clearly at least partly utopian. Mu's temporary layering over Jura provides an interesting twist on Foucault's reading of utopias as having 'a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society' (Foucault, 1986: 24). However, such locations are

perhaps really closer to the concept of the heterotopia, an 'effectively enacted utopia in which all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted' (ibid.). Heterotopias are often unbound from fixed locations, as in the 'heterotopia par excellence' of the ship or boat, conceived as 'a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea' (ibid.: 27).

Despite having a fixed rather than transient location, *Plastic Beach* might nonetheless qualify as heterotopian in a number of ways. Its own media contain an encyclopedic array of nautical references from a number of other media types, including the previously mentioned *Fantasy Island* and *Thunderbirds*, the 1998 film version of *Godzilla*, and literary classics such as *Moby Dick* and *The Old Man and the Sea*. In keeping with Gorillaz' transnational style, which borrows from Japanese culture in particular, a cover for Q Magazine also references the highly recognizable Japanese woodblock print 'The Great Wave off Kanagawa'. Among countless other intertextual references, one of the rooms of the beachsite features a sub-game that challenges users to name all the faces displayed on a 'captain's wall'. These include musicians (Captains Beefheart and Sensible) and literary characters (Captains Hook, Flint, Nemo, and Haddock). Decades, even centuries of cultural signs are therefore collapsed into an atemporal fictional space that recalls Alan Moore's *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* series.⁴ *Plastic Beach* has also been framed on several occasions as a musical/multicultural 'microcosm of

⁴ Moore in fact had already collaborated with Albarn and Hewlett on another project, which eventually became the *Dr. Dee* opera in 2011.

the globe', as the album featured collaborations from several continents, including a number of British and European artists, but also contributions from New York, Syria, and Lebanon. Many of these musical collaborators, such as Lou Reed and Snoop Dogg, were cartoonized and depicted journeying to the island in a flotilla of submarines in a segment of the video for 'On Melancholy Hill', positing *Plastic Beach* as an imagined space for borderless, cosmopolitan musical harmony. Within this space, international musical relationships that never actually took place during the recording of the album can be perceived, as parts from sessions conducted separately in different countries and cities were spliced together by Albarn at a later date.⁵ Heterotopia here carries some political weight. It is implied that the collapsing of borders (whether real or imagined) is viewed as positive and beneficial for music in general, reflecting statements Albarn has made both in interviews and at political rallies, such as the 2003 'Stop the War' march.

Plastic Beach relies on a high degree of intertextuality to situate its users culturally and geographically on the island and help them identify personally with the setting. This bears similarities to Mu, where to intensify identification for journalist participants, the KLF combined an existing physical location with a fictional/mythic one. By doing this, they managed to create 'a temporary space in which their mythos and logic systems briefly prevailed' (Fitzgerald and Hayward, 2016: 59). This performative resignification of place is recognized by Fitzgerald and Hayward

⁵ A subsequent tour did, however, finally unite many of these musicians within the same physical space.

as part of a wider folkloric tradition within a number of cultures (ibid.: 63). Fantastic islands are more often visited than they are inhabited, though, and this necessitates often lengthy journeys that, as we are dealing with the virtual rather than real, require some imaginative approaches to aid transportation to the destination. Returning to the subject of the island in *Narrating Space / Spatializing Narrative*, Ryan, Foote, and Azaryahu argue: ‘the ocean that separates islands from the continents provides an allegory of the ontological difference that separates fictional worlds from the real world’ (2016: 57). The vast and empty geographical space that must be traversed in order to reach fictional islands correlates to a change of state that the user must undergo. It therefore follows that in order to jump across the ontological gap and change state, some kind of *mental* journey must therefore be undertaken. Journeys to islands are an important part of the enjoyment of most fiction set on remote islands, and identification and the plight and wonder of characters arriving in strange new worlds are an important element in stories as diverse as *Treasure Island* and *Swiss Family Robinson*. Perhaps it is no surprise, then, to find that in *Plastic Beach*, journeys through geographical space to reach the destination are prominent within its media; various agents can be seen to undergo them, including the band members, within character ‘ident’ videos and three music videos, and the real musical guest collaborators on the album. From ocean liner and lifeboat to hang-glider and several submarines, the means of transport here are diverse and often eccentric.⁶ It was only nine

⁶ To untangle the order and meaning of these multiple journeys, which often seemed to contradict each other in terms of story and chronology, a long video was eventually created for YouTube entitled ‘Journey to Plastic Beach’. This

months into the campaign that this set of journeys finally ended with the planned music video for 'Rhinestone Eyes', and the 'action' could truly be said to begin *on* the island. Unfortunately, when funding for music videos dried up after poor sales for the album, fans were then left frustrated by the lack of satisfactory progression and conclusion of the story. The ontological transition is particularly important with *Plastic Beach* because the location is not just outlandish, but exists largely in cyberspace. In the various film versions of *King Kong*, there is a veil of mist that shrouds Skull Island through which the American protagonists of the story must pass. An analogy could well be made here to the 'virtual curtain' that separates Gorillaz' real world and virtual loci. To aid the mental transportation further, in several levels of *Plastic Beach's* computer games, Gorillaz themselves become playable avatars. Here, identification with the characters, as well as a haptic engagement with the journey by using physical controls, all contribute to a sense of reality for the player.

There is another method by which the ontological gap could be bridged; if the fictional world visited requires an act of mental transportation, then time spent in that destination might consequently be viewed as an act of virtual tourism, where the reader, audience member, listener, or player can vicariously experience a location that does not in fact exist.

spliced the idents and music videos together with other artwork and pieces of video, and a voiceover narratively sutured all this heterogeneous content.

4. Touristic Frames

‘Virtual tourism’ involves an application of Urry’s influential concept of the ‘tourist gaze’ (1990) to fictional virtual reality environments, where the user may be seduced by the landscapes (and townscapes) of the setting. Christian Krug uses the examples of mid-1990s CD-ROM games *Myst* and its sequel *Riven* to demonstrate how ‘the semiotics of visual consumption have already spilled over into products that are not normally associated with tourism’ (Krug, 2006: 269), such as games and films. In such games, the act of revelling in the beautiful scenery of the islands is viewed as ‘pure unadulterated tourist gaze’ (ibid.) and more of a draw to the world than gameplay itself. As mentioned earlier, *Plastic Beach* bears much similarity to the digitally rendered landscapes of games like *Myst*, albeit with an inverted aesthetic sense that seeks to make the ugly and artificial visually appealing, rather than the conventionally pretty or natural. *Plastic Beach* explicitly invites a tourist gaze since the location, and by extension the act of mental transportation, is framed *in terms of* tourism in a number of ways, in particular two elements of the media campaign. A set of four *Plastic Beach* ‘postcards’ was created and used as a promotional item, each with the caption ‘Greetings from Plastic Beach’ (as well as a digital image of a ‘passport’ with Plastic Beach stamps on it). The circulation of promotional ephemera like posters and postcards, sometimes given away as a bonus with record releases, has played a constant role in situating popular music within material culture; their ‘thingishness’ acts as a counterbalance to issues surrounding the intangible nature of music and music cultures in general (Leonard, 2007; Straw, 1999). The postcards can also be seen partly as arising from a satirical twenty-first-century culture

of celebrating mundane and toxic images of mid-twentieth century civilization, such as Martin Parr's *Boring Postcards* book for Phaidon (2004). This is well in keeping with Hewlett's style, which is both highly intertextual and revels in sarcasm and irony. Within popular music culture, there is also something of a tradition of using postcards as images for albums that somehow wish to evoke a real place: Bruce Springsteen's *Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J.* (1973) is one of a number of rock albums that simply use a vintage picture postcard of the city (in this case circa 1940) as their cover.⁷ This tradition is effectively pastiched by Gorillaz' postcards, highlighting the surreality and artificiality of the island, which appears toxic and unnatural, yet curiously attractive in its garish colours.

In an attempt to penetrate the media further with touristic frames, in the week of *Plastic Beach*'s launch, British newspaper *The Guardian* staged a 'Gorillaz Takeover Week' containing several travel-related media objects.⁸ As well as a pictorial 'virtual travel guide', two travelogues were commissioned from real authors. One written by literary journalist and travel writer Harry Ritchie (2010) was relayed as a straight travel piece; the other, far more psychedelic piece came from Howard Marks, the Welsh drug smuggler turned best-selling novelist (2010), whose purple prose was more in line with Gorillaz' house style. While drawings and videos of the island showed new users what it

⁷ More sardonically, Tim Buckley's *Greetings from L.A.* (1971) employed a deliberately ugly postcard image of a smog-covered tangle of freeways for its cover. This reflected the themes of sexual depravity, hopelessness, and masochism in its songs, which were set in seedy Los Angeles bars and bathhouses.

⁸ Still available online at <https://www.theguardian.com/music/series/gorillaz-takeover>

looked like, the significance of the *Guardian* articles is that they may have encouraged them to feel that the fictional location was *real*. This has much to do with the interface through which the articles were accessed: the website of a well-regarded broadsheet newspaper. Instead of posting a token article or interview, the newspaper dedicated a significant amount of space that reflected the regular sections of the newspaper's coverage (travel, food, news, reviews etc.). Despite the ironic distance still clearly present in the articles, the coverage integrated *Plastic Beach* completely into a mediascape that, through its indexical connection to real life, makes it all the more believable, helping further collapse ontological difference. The collusion of the media has always been crucial in maintaining Gorillaz' virtual address to the audience. Journalists and radio or television broadcasters have generally tended to present articles and interviews as if the band were real, without flagging up the knowledge that they are not. This media complicity, shared with the audience, was extended by The *Guardian*'s travel pieces well beyond the characters and their backstory to the virtual location of the island. Belief in the island as somehow real was also encouraged by real-world co-ordinates in the middle of the Pacific Ocean that were provided in Ritchie's fake travel article. The co-ordinates – 48° 52' 36" S, 123° 23' 36" W – mythologize the island as 'Point Nemo', the remotest spot on the planet, being the 'furthest point from any other bit of land' (Ritchie, 2010). In addition to these touristic frames, and the emphasis on journeys, another way in which the storyworld can become more real for users is by exchanging ideas socially about the island with other users within fan forums. This happened particularly within gorillaz-unofficial.com, the (currently defunct) main site where

fans congregated to share information about their fandom and activities.

However, the fact that all these virtual activities occur via online portals suggests a lack of user mobility, an issue discussed by Sarah Gibson (2006). However, while Gibson is concerned with the immobility of the cinematic experience, computing has a more complex relationship with mobility. As mobile technology develops, games like *Myst*, experienced on desktops in the home or office, are giving way to new types of environmental gaming. These exploit the capabilities of mobile devices to access and utilize real-world location data. When this data is transformed into a gamified experience for the player, they are encouraged outside to explore the streets and landmarks of the city. In addition to the well-known example of the augmented reality (AR) game *Pokemon Go*, a rash of immersive, location-based games like *Geoglyph* and *Ingress* have quickly sprung up to become the new popular frontier of gaming. Although mobility is not necessarily a pre-requisite of augmented reality (Bimber and Raskar, 2005: 5), this is nonetheless forcing a fairly rapid *volte-face* in the perception of gaming as essentially sedentary, closeted, and immobile. Gorillaz have adapted to this technological shift with customary canniness, adopting AR technologies in their music videos and interviews. One mobile app for their 2017 album *Humanz* superimposed elements from their music videos, including Kong Studios, over real life. A second, called 'The Lenz' would reveal 'exclusive Gorillaz content' when pointed at anything magenta (a sponsored tie-in with the T-Mobile brand, whose logo is the same colour). Although harnessing such technology helps Gorillaz to appear

current, this strategy can also be viewed as a way of keeping down promotion costs, which have traditionally been high for Gorillaz. A pivot can be felt here away from the creation of immaculately crafted virtual environments like *Plastic Beach*, with their high development costs, and towards the user's own environment, aided by the recycling of Gorillaz' previous media. Indeed, both music videos and interviews for *Humanz* have focused heavily on other AR techniques of overlaying real human actors with digital characters – a fast and cheap route to character animation for the band. Fans need not rely on Gorillaz to perpetuate, recreate, or extend their favourite environments, though, as they have frequently taken the ball into their own court by recreating them themselves.

5. Remediating *Plastic Beach*

Although we might speculate about what the virtual geographical space of *Plastic Beach* may mean to users and fans, and trawl forum discussions for evidence of reception, perhaps the most convincing evidence of this is not what they say in response but what they *make*. Surprisingly, the drawing and redrawing of maps is almost entirely absent within fan-made media. This activity would be an obvious signifier of deep engagement with a fictional topography, and with many storyworlds, map drawing can even be an aid to understanding narrative features like plot (Ryan, Foote, and Azaryahu, 2016: 62). However, the presence of *Plastic Beach* as a three-dimensional environment in cyberspace does not lend itself as well to graphical map drawing as it does to three-dimensional mapping with software. This occurs most readily in the form of game mods. Various digital remediations of the island posted on

YouTube have been created by fans using the sandbox game *Minecraft* and the previously mentioned *Sims 2*. Most impressive are two fully playable gamified versions of the island created within the god game⁹ *Spore* by YouTube user THEdragon. These allow the player to control a small dragon (the player's own creation, with no connection to the official canon of Gorillaz characters), who can fly or walk around the island, interacting with the band members and facing off against antagonists from *Plastic Beach* music videos.

It is useful at this point to again consider practices that are so embedded within digital cultures from the perspective of materiality, from which these practices seem to have become untethered. This is particularly key with *Plastic Beach* as, thematically speaking, it is very much *about* materiality, from the startling design of the island to lyrical references to plastic waste and artificial materials in songs like 'Some Kind of Nature', 'Rhinestone Eyes', and the title track. The aesthetic and exploration of waste and junk in *Plastic Beach* has strong resonances with what Will Straw has documented as 'museums of failure' – accumulations of unwanted CDs and vinyl in second hand stores as 'cultural waste' (1999). The title track of *Plastic Beach* not only references the obsolete technology of the Casiotone keyboard in its lyrics ('it's a Casio on a Plastic Beach'), but also in the musical arpeggio patterns that denote the cheap and cheesy early 1980s sounds of the Casiotone's preset rhythms. A dialectic emerges here between so-called digital and analogue

⁹ God games are artificial life games in which the player is cast in the position of controlling the game on a large scale, rather like an entity with divine and supernatural powers.

cultures, where material cultures (the crafting of the *Plastic Beach* model, the manufacture of CDs, vinyl, and other promotional artefacts) collide with digital cultures (the remediation of the island in Gorillaz' videos and computer games, as well as those created by their fans). I have argued more extensively elsewhere (Jeffery, 2017) that *Plastic Beach*, arriving within a dematerialized music culture, provides a teasing 'look but don't touch' to its audience, who are provided with visual material promise, but with little in terms of actual material or haptic objects to handle. This dialectic extends to the locations of *Plastic Beach*, and how fans of the project choose to explore and inhabit them within their own practices. Fannish responses to *Plastic Beach* that embrace materiality span the crafting of replicas, customized toys, and stop motion videos that remediate the island. However, the most compelling way fans insert themselves materially into these spaces is through the act of cosplay, which is simultaneously a craft and performance practice.

Returning to the idea of metalepsis, Astrid Ensslin coins the term 'participatory metalepsis' (2011: 12) to describe one form of interactional metalepsis, where fans of media narratives bring aspects of the fictional world into the extratextual world. As well as *vidding* (the making and posting online of fan videos, which is another core Gorillaz fan practice), she discusses cosplay in this context. Both of these forms of UGC (user generated content) are often brought to life by the affordances of digital media, and the sharing of such content online is a key motivator for its creation. Dressing up as Gorillaz' characters is a fairly widespread activity, and can be witnessed on media-sharing platforms such as YouTube, DeviantArt, or cosplay.com. A particularly popular

choice for this is the female Japanese guitar player Noodle, fetishized by largely female fans for her playful and mildly sexualized embodiment of the Japanese principle of *kawaii* (loosely translated as 'cuteness'). However, in many images of Noodle cosplay, it is not just the styling details of costume, make-up, and hair that aid the cosplayers in achieving their fantasy, but the locations chosen for the photoshoots. The role of location has surprisingly attracted little writing from the scholars of cosplay, who, when they do engage with location, are mostly interested in cosplay conventions, where cosplayers gather to engage in carnivalesque public parades of their inclinations and creativity.¹⁰ However, the creative possibilities of how cosplay shoots can transform the locations themselves prompts the question of whether it is the location that makes the *cosplay* come alive, or the cosplay that brings the *location* to life. Langsford notes that locations in this practice are 'hybrid spaces produced through the endless interpretations of globalized imagery' (2016: 20), which can often give rise to an uncanny quality. She gives as an example her own practice of photographing *Game of Thrones* cosplay on the steps of Parliament House, Adelaide, Australia. The 'strange assemblage of European symbolism and local materials' of the building (ibid.: 15) has to stand in for the 'remixed European history' of *Game of Thrones* (ibid.: 20), bringing to mind again the KLF's fictional/real composite island of Mu. Gorillaz' cosplay locations, however, are curiously placeless: re-creations of *Plastic Beach's* beach are most popular, although the beaches used could be anywhere. The beach, often viewed as a liminal, heterotopian space itself (Andriotis, 2010), is

¹⁰ The cosplay convention has itself been traced back to American science fiction conventions in the 1960s and 1970s (Lamerichs, 2013: 158).

given a digital makeover in these images, where either the sand or rocks on the beach (or both) are given bright pink filters in Photoshop that approximate the look of the island model. Other cosplayers have gone further in seeking out more unusual locations, where scenes from the videos or computer games can be played out. These include a public aquarium, where the circular viewing windows act as a stand-in for the portholes of Gorillaz' submarine, a location used across several music videos and computer games. It is, of course, less the specifics of the location that are active in transporting the agent to the location than the embodied acts of impersonation themselves. The true fantasy can only be fulfilled when the images are viewed at a later date, after they have been touched up with digital colour saturation in Photoshop. The process of image creation therefore charts a progress from the virtual (Gorillaz' images and videos of *Plastic Beach*) to the real (human agents cosplaying on a beach) and back into the virtual (digitalized remediations of these images posted online).

6. Conclusion

In complex transmedia based in popular music, it is not enough for location to be simply mentioned in the lyrics, if an ongoing engagement with a (narrative) setting is required. Elaboration in the visual realm, via drawings, animation, and detailed three-dimensional models, activates an inhabitable, memorable spatial environment in ways that music, despite its own spatial organization, cannot easily provide by itself. Within the set of texts that represent *Plastic Beach*, multiple devices are used to help situate users on the island, including an engaging, colourful location that is recognizable through intertextual links to other

fictional islands, and touristic frames such as postcards. Beyond the merely touristic, mediated and sometimes haptically assisted journeys to the location help to bridge the ontological gap between the real and the fictional/virtual. As entertainment media are increasingly erasing the borders between media types (cinema, animation, video games etc.), dichotomies are collapsed between the analogue and the digital, the real and the virtual, creators and fans. Within complex transmedia, how such borders are traversed, and the metaleptic journeys often involved in these processes, demand attention that must focus not only on frames provided by the original creators, but also the fan-made media that are created in response. These may give a more accurate picture of reception, particularly how users craft their individual journeys through the transmedia world.

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‘Trapped in Oklahoma’: Bible Belt Affect and DIY Punk

Alican Koc

1. American Hate

This story begins in the backroom of a Chicago skate shop in the summer of 2014. Hundreds of us are assembled in the damp heat of the room for the main gig of a local DIY (do-it-yourself) punk festival, chatting over cans of cheap beer and sweating profusely as we wait for bands to play. A new band whose name I have not yet learned has begun setting up on stage, and they look a little different from the others.

Even with the massive span of North American DIY punk and its abundance of small regional scenes, the proliferation of online blogs, popular zines such as *Maximum Rocknroll*, small independent music festivals, and the movement of bands and their respective sounds and styles has ensured some sort of aesthetic uniformity to the style and music of the greater scene.

This is to say that the increased access that participants in the DIY punk network have to the wider scene contributes to a quickly shifting dialectic of subcultural styles in which dominant aesthetic trends routinely shift. More importantly, this access to regional scenes throughout the continent allows participants to geographically map out dominant trends by region, distinguishing for example, between the street-smart artiness of New York City's late-2000s punk scene and the post-apocalyptic imagery of Pittsburgh raw punk bands like Eel and Ratface. In the geographic imagination of a style-savvy North American punk rocker, each city or region on the continent seems to have its own localized sound and style.

Despite my involvement in this community for years, this band's aesthetic feels unplaceable within a particular geographic locale, subgenre, or style. The band's guitarist, bassist, and drummer all have wild, long hair – an anomaly in this festival, particularly in the heat of the summer. Even more terrifying is the band's singer, a huge guy with a big frizz of bleach-blond hair covering part of his beet-red face. As he furiously paces back and forth in front of his band, waiting for them to finish tuning and setting up, his face gives the impression that he has reached a boiling point, and is about to erupt. As the band begins to play, the singer charges at the audience bellowing at the top of his lungs, grabbing the first person in front of him by the face, and throwing them to the ground – a daringly violent move during an otherwise peaceful fest. The band thrashes around wildly, swinging their long locks as they force out a pummelling and deranged strain of rock 'n' roll driven hardcore punk with a sense of primal rage that I have never seen or heard before. As

the set comes to a close, the guitarist begins violently slamming his guitar against his amplifier, filling the room with a screeching feedback that intensifies the sense of tension that has been building in the room since before the band even began playing. The set finally ends, and I am astounded by the performance. Attempting to conjure up words again, I ask someone standing behind me the name of the band. 'American Hate', he replies. 'Where are they from?' I ask. 'Oklahoma City'. Somehow everything begins to make sense.

Having known next to nothing about the state of Oklahoma, let alone its punk scene, something about American Hate's furious performance and sonic aesthetic captivated me. Upon discovering the existence of a thriving DIY music scene in a city I that barely knew about, I became consumed by an anthropological curiosity surrounding the lifeworld that spawned this strange music. After hours spent chatting with the band about booking shows in Oklahoma City and the state's Republican governor Mary Fallin, I realized that I had begun to form a romanticized idealization of a bizarre place in the center of America in which a suffocating climate of religious conservatism in the heat of the prairie gave way to an aesthetic form of pure American hatred – an artistic condensation of the country's legacy of violence planted right in its heartlands.

2. 'Something in the Water'

The expression 'something in the water' has become little less than a cliché in the DIY punk circuit, used to describe the rapid and unforeseen emergence of cultural and aesthetic activity within a specific region. My fascination with this overused

expression is twofold. Firstly, the expression implies some degree of formal aesthetic unity across the music emerging from these regions. Here, a particular feeling derived from the place from which the music emerges is understood to coincide with a specific style. Secondly, the joking tone of the expression seems to point to some other phenomena responsible for the spontaneous eruption of creative energy from a particular locale. The question that emerges here is: What is happening in these places to contribute to the rapid emergence of a specific aesthetic if it is not something in the water of these cities? Put another way: What is the relationship between the circulation of affect and the emergent cultural aesthetics of a particular place? This question will be the central concern of this paper; it will draw upon ethnographic research conducted in Oklahoma City's DIY punk scene to examine the relationship between the scene's sonic aesthetics and affect in the American Bible Belt.

3. 'Can You Feel It': Exploring the Intersections of Aesthetic and Affect Theory

What exactly is affect? Few words seem to have been used so much to connote so little over the past few years. The answer depends on who you ask. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's adoption of the term from Spinoza, Brian Massumi calls them 'virtual synaesthetic perspectives anchored in (functionally limited by) the actually existing, particular things that embody them' (1995: 96). In Massumi's work, 'affect' refers to a set of presubjective bodily sensations that are distinguished from emotion due to their ability to resonate prior to cognition and social qualification (ibid.: 88). Following the staunch anti-representationalism of Deleuze and Guattari, Massumi treats

affects as singularities largely abstracted from their point of emergence in the world (ibid.: 94). Art is one of these points of emergence, a 'bloc of affects' that has never been representational, according to Deleuze and Guattari (1994 [1991]: 164, 173). Rather than attempting to trace particular relationships between art and affects anchored in the actual, Deleuze and Guattari, as well as a number of their followers, regard this relationship as decidedly arbitrary, viewing art's affects as imminent to knowledge and meaning, and instead focusing on potentialities of being through artistic expression to set off new powers of thought (McMahon, 2002: 4; O'Sullivan, 2001: 126).

While demonstrating an overdue sensitivity towards the fluid relationships between art's affectivity, content, and form, Deleuze and Guattari's theory of expression has received criticism for ignoring the role that affect plays in mediating culture (Anderson, 2014, 2018; Dutta, 2015; Mazzearella, 2009). As William Mazzearella writes in 'Affect: What is it Good for?',

Rather than expending vast amounts of energy recuperating the constitutive instability and indeterminacy that attends all signification... would it not be more illuminating to explore how this indeterminacy actually operates in practice as a dynamic condition of our engagement with the categories of collective life?

(2009: 302)

Indeed, this project that Mazzearella describes has already begun. J. S. Dutta writes that 'as the quarrel around affect's non-representational alterity to language is becoming increasingly tired, attention is shifting to how language and affect are mutually implicated' (2015: 296). Seeking an affect theory that embraces the messiness of mediation and representation, I now

turn towards the work of Raymond Williams, whose 'structures of feeling' concept more or less encapsulates this correspondence (1977: 133). Williams describes something called 'structures of feeling' as 'a way of defining forms and conventions in art and literature as inalienable elements of a social material process' (1977: 131). For Williams, structures of feeling refer to the loose solidification of historically and temporally situated affects from human life stuck within the still tacky and fluid resin of artistic form. Subtly interweaving material processes, affects, and creative expression, Williams' concept thus functions as a theoretical tool for trying to identify the proverbial something in the water without drawing dogmatic linear relationships of cause and effect.

4. Arrivals

My arrival in Oklahoma City to do fieldwork in the summer of 2016 was admittedly not my first time in the 'Sooner State'. Developing a close friendship with American Hate, the band members booked a show for my band in the summer of 2015, and I returned the favour, booking their Toronto gig just two months after. Following my astonishment watching American Hate's enraged performance in Chicago, and hearing hours' worth of anecdotes about furious hardcore punk shows taking place in the garages and basements of residential homes in the capital of the stiff, conservative Christian state, I was incredibly excited to be playing in Oklahoma City. In my mind, I imagined the city's scene as an almost uniform entity, composed of American Hate and a number of similar-sounding bands, transforming the stifflingly conservative political and social climate of their home state into violent bursts of noise and

hardcore punk coupled with dreary images of life in Oklahoma. Moreover, the city's punk scene appeared to be on the cusp of a renaissance. Following the acclaim received by Oklahoma City bands American Hate and Glow God after their extensive touring around the country, American Hate's singer, Ross had booked a small DIY music festival and art show in Oklahoma City in the spring of 2015. Despite its humble size, the first Everything Is Not OK fest drew sizable crowds of spectators, bands, and visual artists from around the country and received national acclaim in zines such as *Maximum Rocknroll*, and amongst punks on the internet, creating a spotlight on the city's scene, and a fertile environment for younger members of the scene to start bands and begin circulating their art.

As we approached Oklahoma City for the first time during our tour in August of 2015, I looked over the city's small skyline, laid neatly below the massive and gleaming Devon Energy Center, and began wondering just what sort of a place this was. Passing through the city's massive quasi-suburban sprawl, signs all around me pointed out that I was indeed in a significant loop of the American Bible Belt, from billboards showing images of cute babies that read 'Cherish Life' and church signs that had slogans like 'Abortion is Murder', to the looming white cross erected beside the highway north of the city. That night, we played at The Shop, a former car repair shop in a remote industrial part of the city, owned by local punks Becky and Nora's parents, which had been converted into a DIY concert space. In the warm glow of Christmas lights hung from the walls and rafters, the beaten and dust-covered tractors lining one side of the room struck me as a tongue-in-cheek nod to Oklahoma's rural prairies, while the

eerie vintage dolls faces that hung from ropes tied to the rafters felt like an oppositional response to the pro-life billboards and signs I had seen throughout the city. Despite the relatively small turnout at our show, our performance was well received, and upon immediately being invited by Ross to play his upcoming Everything Is Not OK fest following our set, we happily agreed.

During the following months, my romanticized view of Oklahoma City's punk scene and its seeming aesthetic recreation of the bleak feelings of living in the American Bible Belt continued to grow. Just two months after Oklahoma City police officer Daniel Holtzclaw was convicted of a series of racially charged rapes of poor African-American women in the city, his crying face from a picture taken during his court date appeared on the cover of local powerviolence band Crutch's second demo tape, this time with a noose drawn around his neck. With their almost inhuman speed and crushing metallic hardcore riffs, Crutch struck me as a sonic embodiment of the rage experienced by punks in Oklahoma City. With lyrics like 'sick of your bigoted mentality / you lost your way in evolution / now I'm feeling violent / backward hillbilly fuck / your superiority is shit / bigot racist sexist pile of shit', or 'crossbearers, saints and saviours / sin-makers, death bringers / no resolution on their stained glass stage / two thousand years of empty promises / their mandates set to control and confine / turn the tables, burn their books, and see the end of faith / resist control', Crutch was directly addressing the bigotry and narrow-mindedness of Christian conservatives in their home state (Crutch, 2016a).

As I geared up for our return to Oklahoma City for the festival, I quickly began ransacking the internet for more punk bands from Oklahoma that sounded and felt like American Hate and Crutch, and also began reading reviews from *Terminal Escape*, a cassette blog whose author had previously lived in Oklahoma. There, I found a seemingly boundless plethora of descriptions of Oklahoma's punk scene over the decades, describing it as 'arguably the most socially conservative state in the country, with little to fall back on but a history of white oppression and unemployment' (The Wizard, 2012b). Amid descriptions of Oklahoma as a 'geographical handicap', and as 'culturally void', a number of reviews in *Terminal Escape* described bands pointing a 'stiff middle finger to the Oklahoma bible belt culture that weaned and corrupted them', and manic, frustrated hardcore punk vocals attributed to living in Oklahoma (The Wizard, 2010, 2012a, 2014). As I listened to the new bands coming out of Oklahoma City and read these reviews, I began to associate the heavy and anguished sounds of Oklahoma City punk with a particular affect of suffocation and rage towards the Christian Right in the Bible Belt. It seemed almost perfect. Perhaps a bit too perfect.

5. 'You Are Now Entering America's Corner'

I arrived in Oklahoma City to do my fieldwork in July of 2016, staying with Ross, Taylor, Tim, and Nora the respective singer, guitarist, and bassist of American Hate, and one of the front people of Cherry Death, with whom I had developed a close friendship with since meeting in 2014. Staying at 'American House' turned out to be the best opportunity to learn about punk in Oklahoma. As the oldest member of Oklahoma City's DIY

punk scene, Ross functioned as something like the scene's Big Man; running the local festival called Everything Is Not Okay, routinely booking shows for out-of-town bands, starting a small local cassette tape label, and singing in the city's best-known punk band. Moreover, over his years in the local scene, Ross had collected an encyclopaedic archive of local fanzines, demo tapes, and show flyers dating back decades. Within days of my arrival, I was presented with a stack of local tapes and zines to read over and transcribe, and was introduced to a huge number of local participants in the scene, with whom I spent my days hanging out and conducting short and casual interviews.

As something of an outsider to Oklahoma City's punk scene, my ability to meet and establish rapport with local punks, or even to find shows to attend could have been severely hindered due to the secretive nature of DIY punk. Not only was I an outsider to the scene, but I worried that my plan to collect research for a graduate school paper on the local scene might be met with suspicion. If punk is understood as an oppositional subculture devoted to the rejection of mainstream society's hegemonic interests, then going to university, let alone graduate school, may not be considered to be punk for many of its participants. Luckily, none of this was the case when I arrived in Oklahoma City. My incredible fortune in being able to meet and instantly establish rapport with a vast number of local scene members for my research was boosted by a number of factors. One of these factors was that I was already known as a punk musician who had visited Oklahoma City twice to perform with my band. Not only was I a member of a somewhat known band from out of town, but my several year-long friendships with the members of

American Hate ensured that I was in with the right crowd as well. Under the angelic wing of the scene's Big Man, Ross, I was immediately introduced to everybody who I was not already familiar with operating within the city's small but tightknit hardcore punk scene. In addition to this, Taylor and Tim, whose interests exceeded the confines of hardcore punk, introduced me to a number of talented musicians who used the scene's DIY punk network as a venue for more avant-garde sounds, ranging from noise rock, post-punk, psychedelic, and indie rock bands, to solo projects focused on ambient music and noise.

In its current state, the small grassroots network of North American DIY punk sometimes resembles a secret society of sorts. Following Los Angeles punk band, The Germs' insistence that 'what we do is secret' (1979), participants in the DIY punk scene generally stay within their tightknit communities, appearing as hostile, cold, or otherwise unwelcoming to outsiders. The multitude of reasons for this secrecy mostly surround the issue of authenticity. While cultural theorists such as Dick Hebdige have famously theorized punk's ability to signify chaos and opposition at every level of its style, the subculture's relatively short history is rife with stories of the cooption and commodification of its striking aesthetic sensibility, and youthful angst (1979: 113). Not only is such commodification considered a disgrace to punk's oppositional aesthetic, but it also has tangible effects on the lives of participants within the subculture. In his influential essay, "'Gentrification" and Desire', Canadian geographer Jon Caulfield notes how the emergence of marginal groups seeking to improve their lives in lower-income inner city neighbourhoods constitutes the first wave of

gentrification in urban space (1989: 623). According to Caulfield, these 'marginal gentrifiers' become the cultural vanguard for more mainstream and middle-class groups to arrive into these neighbourhoods, driving up housing prices while diluting the marginal group's avant-garde values and desire for a unique place to live (ibid.). Considering the centrality of punk culture to the practice of marginal gentrification described by Caulfield, and punk's aestheticized critique of mainstream bourgeois culture, it seems evident why punks have had an adverse attitude towards the 'discovery' of their scene by outsiders and 'normies' (a slang term used to describe people with mainstream values). In order to prevent their scenes from becoming overridden by mainstream groups, punks often avoid contact with people outside of their subculture, and have devised elaborate methods of ensuring that their events are only known by punks within their scene. Perhaps the most famous of these is 'Ask a Punk', a generic address posted on flyers and Facebook events for shows happening in house spaces, parks, abandoned buildings, or any other DIY spaces in which the presence of police or other outsider groups is unwanted.

After Ross drove me home on my first night, the two of us immediately began a long conversation on punk in Oklahoma. Sitting in the dim light of the house's front porch, Ross began recounting stories of growing up as a young punk from a Christian family in Oklahoma. In stark contrast to my conception of Oklahoma City as an oppressive Mecca of Christian Republicanism, Ross spoke of the city as something of a cultural oasis within Oklahoma. Ross had recently designated the place as 'Freak City, USA', and described it as somewhere that punks

and other marginal groups were less likely to be harassed by rednecks, jocks, and the police for looking different; a city in which DIY spaces and shows were never in jeopardy; and a refuge for dozens of young, disenfranchised freaks to escape the banality of their conservative small towns. When I subtly began trying to ask Ross about American Hate's relationship to the abrasive hardcore punk sound that I had attributed to the place, Ross matter-of-factly mentioned that there had never really been a specific Oklahoma punk sound. Within a matter of hours of my visit to Oklahoma, the sensationalistic vision of a pulverizing sound I associated with Oklahoma City and the affects of enraged freaks living in the heart of the Bible Belt continued to crumble. It began to seem like I had got it all wrong. Not only was Oklahoma City a far cry from the neoconservative dystopia I had imagined it to be, but the sound I had previously associated with the uncontrollable anger of Bible Belt punks was proving to be a fiction, or at least the tip of the iceberg of a scene whose eclectic range of sounds was as spread out as the sprawling city limits. I began to think to myself that perhaps my desire to find a perfect representation of a Bible Belt punk structure of feelings, and its embodiment in a regional music scene, was more akin to the sensationalistic fantasies of record collectors or music writers than the findings of an anthropologist. Still, I could not shake my strange compulsion to the tremendous affective resonance of the Oklahoma City scene.

6. Moving Towards the Church of Freak City

As I began paying closer attention to the diverse array of sounds in Oklahoma City and chatting with local musicians about their experiences in their home state, Ross' designation of the place,

and specifically its DIY punk scene, as Freak City began to come to life. Virtually everybody I spoke to described the scene as a kind of refuge that they had stumbled upon after leaving some sort of elsewhere. For many people, this elsewhere was a geographical one, generally one of the small towns bordering Oklahoma City. During my first conversation with Ross, he had mentioned leaving his hometown of Edmond – a small town just north of the city – due to the harassment he was experiencing from local police for dressing differently.

In addition to functioning as an escape for frustrated youth fleeing the conservatism of their small towns, Freak City also seemed to function as a sanctuary from a cultural elsewhere for many members of the scene. For almost everyone I spoke to, this cultural elsewhere was their home. While none of the local punks described an active hatred towards their parents and families, almost everyone mentioned conflicts arising from the rift between the conservative, Christian values of their parents, and the progressive ideals associated with their punk subculture. Perhaps the strongest example of this was a conversation I had with Jerry, a close friend I had made during my first visit to Oklahoma who was the most active transgender member of the city's scene. During our conversation, Jerry noted that despite loving her parents, she did not feel the need to agree with them or to continue living her life as a conservative Southern boy. For Jerry, and everybody else in the scene who I spoke to, punk functioned as an ideal chosen family that was otherwise inaccessible to Oklahomans raised under the rigid structure of family life in their home state.

While the Freak City DIY scene seemed to be a place in which its alienated members created a family-like sense of community, I soon came to realize that the scene was not necessarily the first place in which its participants had sought refuge. During many of my conversations, the DIY scene was treated as an oasis that had been stumbled across after many botched attempts to feed a subcultural thirst for community in a number of mirages. For many members of the punk scene, these mirages were other alternative music communities in Oklahoma City that offered more aesthetic coherence to their formal styles, yet seemed incapable of properly ridding themselves of the problematic ideologies and behaviours of their society. This came up extensively during my conversations with The Garters' vocalist Labangry, who described to me how herself and other women in the scene had fled to the local DIY world after witnessing the intense misogyny of the more mainstream hardcore scene in the city. Similarly, Jerry mentioned her feelings of alienation from the drug use and hookup culture within the city's queer scene.

For Jerry, Labangry, and almost everybody else who I spoke to, the title of Freak City seemed to have a dual meaning. As a geographical space, Freak City referred to Oklahoma City, a somewhat more progressive place in Oklahoma, in which disillusioned youth from nearby areas could escape the banality and conservatism of small town life in the Bible Belt. More importantly, Freak City seemed to function as a cultural space referring to the city's DIY punk scene, which functioned as a creative network as well as a community for people who felt alienated by their families and other social networks and sought

solace in one another. Upon asking Ross what Freak City was, he mentioned this dual meaning to me,

This. It's here. It's Oklahoma City. It's a place where you can be a fuckin' freak and it's chill and you know, Freak City is our community. I think the way that we're perceived here is not the way that we are but it's like when you go to shows at The Shop, that's Freak City, that's a bunch of people who have found three hours of this given week or month or day where they can exhale, they can feel safe being who they are and talk about life or not talk about it, however they want to be. And nobody is going to be like, 'Look, you're different'.

Alienation was perhaps the most prevalent theme that I noticed throughout my conversations with local scene members, and in the work of local bands. Looking through the stack of local demo tapes Ross had lent me, I came across an American Hate cassette whose insert simply read, 'Thanks to anyone who has ever felt alone'. The message running throughout the scene was clear: *you don't have to feel alone*, and all of the members of the community seemed to feel that the do-it-yourself ethos and progressive politics of punk created a space in which alienated freaks could come together and express their own subjectivity and experiences.

Considering the pervasive hatred towards Christian conservatism that I found almost ubiquitously amongst punks in the scene, I was interested to find that a number of members of the scene likened the social organization of their community to that of a church. As Colin said to me when I asked what they sought to achieve with their participation in the scene, 'It would be... a place where cultural hierarchy is negated, and it's just a pure horizontal space. I want it to be like a church, I guess'. Not only was Colin's idealization of a church interesting to me, but I was intrigued by the decidedly utopian sensibility of Colin's

description of their vision of the scene. As the church bells of Freak City rang throughout the sprawling landmass, permeating through the lazy midday heat, I began to wonder if their violent, feedback-ridden tune was merely a distorted take on an old utopian hymn.

7. Cruising Dystopia/Slamming Utopia

Considering its oppositional aesthetic centred upon chaotic imagery, jarring stylistic choices, and violent and abrasive soundscapes, punk's beer-soaked and sweat-stained mosh pits seem like an unlikely place to turn in the pursuit of cruising utopia. Yet, throughout my conversations with members of the Freak City punk scene, there seemed to be an undeniably utopian affect underlying their feelings towards the scene, a gentle whisper emanating from what José Muñoz refers to as a 'warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality' (2009: 1). In the words of a number of scene members, the DIY punk community was spoken of as a blessing, a utopian breath of fresh air and acceptance in the sweltering heat of a red state that seemed predisposed to breathing down the necks of its outcasts and freaks. Punk's counter-intuitive existence between utopian idealism and a dystopian aesthetic style has been noted by a number of scholars including Muñoz. Addressing punk specifically, Muñoz writes: 'I propose that we can see the negation that is negativity as something that can be strangely utopian while simultaneously dystopian. It can conterminously represent innovation and annihilation' (2013: 98). For Muñoz, punk serves as a space in which negativity towards one's surroundings may correspond to a utopian affect – a space in

which the destruction of the present world clears space for a potential utopia to be resurrected in its place.

Like Muñoz, I suggest here that the utopian feelings of expression and belonging that bled out of the damaged sounds in Oklahoma City's punk scene can represent the same interconnected relationship between innovation and annihilation. In the heart of the Bible Belt, participants in the Oklahoma City punk scene seemed to have no option but to adopt a sense of militant optimism. It was this bitter optimism that gave the scene its creative fuel, charging its participants to simultaneously destroy what they hated about the world around them, while building a better world in its place. At the end of shows at The Shop like the unhinged after parties that took place during Everything Is Not Okay, after the firecrackers had been lit and thrown around the room, inanimate objects smashed in the mosh pit; after the state-endorsed brand of cowboy Christianity had been lit aflame by the drinking and swearing, the screaming and slamming; after the room filled with ghostly echoes of erupted frustrations towards jocks, rednecks, parents, teachers, cops, and politicians, the venue would hollow out, and the residents of Freak City would silently get to work sweeping up cigarette butts, beer cans, and debris to prepare the space for another day.

If the correlation between the affective impulses circulating within Oklahoma and the aesthetics of the Freak City punk scene did not immediately make itself evident to me, it was perhaps largely due to the fact that my scope had been too narrow. As I eventually learned, it was not that the Freak City scene had not

produced pummelling hardcore punk that reflected the dystopian feelings of alienation and frustration experienced by punks in Oklahoma, but that these feelings and sounds only accounted for a minute fraction of the affective/aesthetic output of the scene. The reality of it seemed to be that Freak City was a space far more complex in its affective and aesthetic boundaries than I had imagined, closely resembling Oklahoma City in its vast, underpopulated, and decentred sprawl.

A new question buds forth here in this strange borderland between the actual and the virtual: if the designation of Freak City is to be understood as an imagined space of expression built out of the simultaneously utopian and dystopian affects circulating amongst punks in Oklahoma City, then what does this sound or look like? Thus far, we have been given a taste of the fury of American Hate's live performance in Chicago, the frenzy of destruction of late night shows at The Shop, and a space of love, acceptance, community, and expression that had blossomed out of this. Yet, I want to suggest here that the latter utopian feelings were not merely cozy caresses and comfortable pillow talk following the frantic release of pent-up emotions within the scene. Instead, I suggest that these utopian affects animated the aesthetic makeup of Freak City with the same intensity as the scene's destructive, dystopian feelings, creating a fluid relationship between the two. Put another way, the utopian feeling of Freak City was not only achieved through the sonic annihilation of Christian conservatism, and a liberating sense of expressing frustration, but was also reflected in the music itself in all of its incredible diversity.

One of the best examples of the utopian affect of Freak City was Cherry Death, the psychedelic quasi-supergroup lead by Tim, and featuring a rotating cast of musicians from in and around the city's scene. Knowing Tim only as the bassist of American Hate, I had been intrigued by how vastly different Cherry Death sounded from the belligerent hardcore produced by his other band. On 'Bite My Nails', the first track from the band's eponymous EP, the seemingly quotidian nervous tic referenced in the song's title erupts into a hopelessly beautiful pop ballad, carrying the listener off into a rosy and enchanting lifeworld of its own. Within seconds of the song's opening chords ringing out, the skies seem to open up, lifting the listener into the warm embrace of a golden horizon of flowers and heartbreak. On 'Puppet Dance', an instrumental track on the band's *Stone Shake Golden Mile EP*, a simple country style walking bassline keeps a steady pace through a heart-stopping little piece of folky Americana, its dazzling guitar licks guiding the listener through their fantastic illusions of the rolling green fields of America's heartland.

It was not just Cherry Death's music that had astounded me in its utopian feel, but the way in which Tim produced the band's songs as a pure labour of love. I could see it on his face as we sat on the porch, drinking beer and engaging in casual conversation, while Tim wrote new songs on his guitar. Early on in my stay in Oklahoma City, I had the pleasure of participating in a recording session with Cherry Death, as they were putting the finishing touches on what would soon become their newest LP, *Saccharine*. It was a sunny afternoon, and I was walking into a liquor store in the city's north west end to pick up some beers to quell the heat,

when Taylor pulled up in his car and told me that Cherry Death was recording that afternoon. When I arrived at the house, I was instantly invited by Tim to participate in the recording session and could not refuse. Tim handed me some shakers and told me to play percussion. Upon asking what to play along to the song, Tim gave me a warm smile and told me to just do my thing. As the sky dimmed on a quiet residential street, ten of us, most of whom had never before heard the song we were now recording, clustered around a wide bungalow, jamming out the slow and dreamy instrumental track I now know as 'Brilliant Love'. To me, Tim's faith in his friends to stumble in from the street and record on his upcoming album, and his ability to record new material live off the floor with an ensemble of musicians who had never before heard the song, and finish it all by the second take, was a perfect testament to the utopian feeling of Freak City.

The utopian and dystopian affects circulating through Freak City's virtual lifeworld did not merely exist as black and white, however. Throughout my stay in Oklahoma, I witnessed the complex and fluid interplay between the two, echoing Muñoz's mention of the conterminous relationship between annihilation and innovation. This originally came to life when I first met the members of American Hate after their performance at Not Normal Weekend in Chicago in the summer of 2014. Having been somewhat terrified by the band's violent and destructive performance, I could not help but notice the glowing smile on Ross' face as he stood in the back alley of the show space drenched in sweat, smoking a cigarette as members of the audience surrounded him to congratulate him on the band's incredible set. Back at The Shop, I would see fresh new faces

beaming as they slammed back and forth to the tough hardcore punk of bands like Life as One and Leashed. Everywhere there was frustration, anxiety, and an appetite for the destruction of the menacing world of the Bible Belt in Freak City; it seemed to be coupled with a desire to create better worlds of community, belonging, and diverse forms of self-expression. Inspired by the infectious energy surrounding me, I drove to a lake north of Oklahoma City with Tony and Crutch's front man Garrett on one of my last days in town. Sitting on the bank of the gleaming river in the hot midday sun, I remember rubbing Oklahoma's famous red dirt on my jeans, hoping that it would never wash off.

8. It Starts with a Feeling

Upon returning home from Oklahoma, I was glowing with the energy of the local scene I had spent my time with, yet was somewhat puzzled over how to theorize my observations on punk in Oklahoma. My initial premise of a hateful structure of feeling in the American Bible Belt, and its manifestation within a specifically violent local hardcore punk sound, had proven to be largely fictive. Not only had there never been a specifically Oklahoman sound and style to punk, but the violent affects I had associated with Bible Belt punk only seemed to account for half of the picture, leaving out the vibrant utopian affects that animated the scene's atmosphere and aesthetic output. Seeing as the observations that I had made seemed like a far cry from the juicy and sensationalistic story that I had been chasing of an emerging regionalized sound fueled by the anguished cries of alienated punk rockers in the heart of the American Bible Belt, the 'so what' question loomed heavily in my mind.

My answer to the aforementioned question is as follows: it starts with a feeling. Even before condensing or being categorized into aesthetically coherent forms, genres, and sounds, music begins as the expression of affects and emotions. Rather than communicating meaning through language, music functions through what Suzanne Langer terms 'implicit meaning', an 'articulate but non-discursive form having import without conventional reference' (1953: 29). Occasionally, a tangle of affects specific to a particular place and time start to solidify into something vaguely aesthetically coherent. This is the stuff of sensational fantasies for record collectors and music critics, and certainly makes for a good story, but this is an anomaly. The relationships between the feelings articulated through music, the cultural and material circumstances through which these feelings emerge, and the formal mode of articulation are incredibly complex. However, it would be short-sighted to use the indeterminacy of affect and aesthetics to altogether neglect processes of mediation and representation that are constantly taking place and shaping existing social institutions. Only time will tell whether the recent growth of the Oklahoma City DIY scene will be known as footprints in a dusty red dirt road towards a regionalized sound, but the difference it made in the lives of its participants is undeniable.

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Biographies

James Edward Armstrong

James Edward Armstrong is a PhD researcher at the University of Surrey; split between music performance studies and environmental psychology, James' interdisciplinary approach has been developed to investigate the relationships and interactions between a musician and their surrounding environment. By combining the two disciplines, a musician's surrounding environment in the context of a performance is viewed as more than its acoustical properties, and its social and cultural significance can be explored. James' academic and professional backgrounds are rooted in music production, working as a composer, producer, mixing and mastering engineer, as well as achieving a BA and MSc in Music Enterprises and Music Production respectively. Other research interests include ethnography, soundscape studies, music therapy, and creative recording practice. In addition, James has composed and exhibited a number of site-specific sound and multimedia installations

Benjamin Davis

Benjamin Davis is an opera director, awarded the first doctoral scholarship (in 2015) by the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Opera and Drama (CIRO) at Cardiff University. He was a staff director at Welsh National Opera from 2001 to 2011.

Directing credits: *Così fan tutte* (Welsh National Opera), *Il tritico* (Opera Zuid), *La Rondine*, *Sir John in Love* (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland), *Les Illuminations* (Cardiff International Dance Festival), *Il Tabarro*, *Star-Crossed Lovers* (WNO community tours), *Opera Scenes* (Royal Welsh College of Music Drama, National Opera Studio). Semi-staged: *Written On Skin* (Mahler Chamber Orchestra, European tour), *Jephtha*, *Carmen*, *La Traviata*, *Rigoletto* for WNO at Birmingham Symphony Hall.

As revival director: *Tosca*, *Wozzeck*, *The Magic Flute*, *The Queen of Spades*, *Hansel and Gretel* (WNO), *Hansel and Gretel* (Portland Opera), *Carmen* (Scottish Opera), *Written on Skin* (Bayerische Staatsoper, Opéra Comique, Le Capitôle de Toulouse, Wiener Festwochen), *Hänsel und Gretel* (Bayerische Staatsoper), *La Dama di Picche* (Teatro dell'Opera di Roma), *Ariodante* (Dutch National Opera, Canadian Opera Company) and *Gianni Schicchi* (Royal Opera House, Covent Garden). As associate and movement director: *Al gran sole carico d'amore* (Salzburg Festival and Berlin Staatsoper), the world premieres of *Orest* (Dutch National Opera) and *Written On Skin* (Festival d'Aix-en-Provence).

Oscar Galeev

Oscar Galeev was born in Russia and graduated from a musical school in Moscow. Upon obtaining an honours degree from Leiden University in The Netherlands, he worked as a research assistant at Leiden Institute for Area Studies. Currently, Oscar is a Yenching Scholar at Peking University continuing his academic

research. His interests lie at the intersection of sociomusicology and the study of quotidian political performances.

Shabnam Goli

Shabnam Goli received her Master of Music in ethnomusicology from the University of Florida (UF) with a thesis on Iran's underground rock music scene in 2014. Currently a doctoral candidate in ethnomusicology at UF, Shabnam studies alternative Persian popular music produced by the young generation of Iranian immigrants in the United States. She has presented at the annual meetings of the Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM) and SEM southern chapter (SEMSEC). In 2015, she was awarded the Dale Olsen Award for her paper on socio-political resistance in Iran's underground rock music. Shabnam has also received the Outstanding International Student Award at UF in 2013 and 2014. Her research interests include music and migration, politics, nationalism, and issues of gender and identity (re)construction among Iranians in the homeland and diaspora.

Jonathon Grasse

Ethnomusicologist, composer, and guitarist Jonathon Grasse lives in Los Angeles. His work on Brazil has been published by *Popular Music* and the *Yale Journal of Music and Religion*. His forthcoming *Milton Nascimento and Lo Borges's Clube da Esquina* will appear in Bloomsbury's 33 1/3 series on Brazil. Further publications on Brazilian music include those in the *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, *History: Reviews of New Books*, Guitar Foundation of America's journal *Soundboard*, the MLA journal *Notes*, and UCLA's *Selected Reports in Ethnomusicology* and *Pacific Review of Ethnomusicology*. His book project concerns music and regionalism in Minas Gerais, Brazil. He authored the chapter on Indonesian-style gamelan in the book *Lou Harrison: Composing a World* (Oxford University Press,

1998). Recordings of his compositions and improvisations are available on Centaur Records, Acoustic Levitation, CD Baby/Spotify, and Bandcamp. His sextet Native Plant Society performs in the Los Angeles area. He is a professor of music at California State University, Dominguez Hills where he founded the Festival of New and Improvised Music.

Samuel Horlor (Co-editor)

Samuel Horlor holds a PhD from Durham University, and he currently teaches there in ethnomusicology and popular music. His research examines street music performances in China, and has considered these events' relationships with the city environment through analyzing convergences of social, sonic, and other material characteristics. He was an Institute of Musical Research Early Career Fellow 2016-17.

Alex Jeffery

Alex Jeffery is an interdisciplinary scholar, currently based between London and Berlin. He completed a PhD on Gorillaz' *Plastic Beach* at City University, entitled *The Narrascope of Gorillaz' Plastic Beach: An Interdisciplinary Case Study in Musical Transmedia*. This focused on concepts of narrativity, materiality, and the ecological theme of the album. This research was deeply situated within digital cultures and also intersected with visual cultures, ludology, and fan studies, investigating the motives for a variety of fannish responses to Gorillaz' work.

Ongoing research interests look at narrativity within popular music culture more generally, such as music video, concept albums, and other case studies of popular music transmedia, including David Bowie's *Outside*. This research also forms the basis of a recently started creative music project, which looks to apply theories of world-building to popular music, and has a science-fiction narrative set in the future of the music industries.

Alex lectures on popular music in several institutions in London, including City, University of London and BIMM London. He is also an associate editor at the long-running music review site MusicOMH, and runs the YouTube channel DocPopterTV, which posts audiovisual essays on his research, as well as other audiovisual creative work.

Alican Koc

Alican Koc is a doctoral student in the Communication Studies department at McGill University, where his research focuses on affect and aesthetics, particularly within music subcultures. Alican received his BA and MA in Anthropology at the University of Toronto. His published works have focused on a diverse array of topics themed around race, affect theory, music, and popular culture. Outside of academia, Alican continues to pursue these interests as a musician, concert promoter, archivist, and writer within the North American DIY music circuit.

David Leahy

David Leahy is a Kent (UK) based musician and dancer specializing in free improvisation in music to contact improvisation in dance. He performs regularly, both in the UK and abroad, as a music and dance-based improviser and has been fortunate enough to perform alongside many of the leading names in both disciplines. In 2014, David completed a MA in creative practice at the dance faculty at Trinity Laban, where he continues to work as a dance accompanist.

David has regularly conducted the London Improvisers Orchestra, which he has been a member of for nearly 20 years. This has led to opportunities to conduct similar ensembles in the UK, Spain, and Germany. As a composer and collaborator, David

continues to work with a range of folk and Irish musicians, choreographers, and theatre companies such as Fevered Sleep.

In 2016, David was awarded a scholarship from the Centre for Research and Education in Arts and Media (CREAM), at the University of Westminster, to complete a practice-based PhD. David is using this opportunity to further his interest in music as an embodied performance practice, drawing on his experiences from across the arts, in particular his experience as a dancer.

Stephen Wilford

Stephen Wilford is an ethnomusicologist based at City, University of London. His work focuses upon North African musics, particularly those of Algeria, and spans a range of traditional and contemporary styles. He is particularly interested in the role of digital technologies in the production and circulation of music amongst North African composers, performers, and listeners.

He completed his AHRC-funded PhD at City, University of London under the supervision of Professor Stephen Cottrell, with a thesis focusing upon music-making amongst the Algerian diaspora community of London. He previously studied at Goldsmiths, University of London, Leeds College of Music, and the University of Aberdeen.

He is currently working alongside Dr Laudan Nooshin on the research project 'Music and Digital Culture in the Middle East and North Africa'. He is an Early Career Research Fellow of the Institute of Musical Research (2016-17), and a member of both the national committee of the British Forum for Ethnomusicology and the ethnomusicology committee of the Royal Anthropological Institute.

James Williams (Co-editor)

James is a Senior Lecturer in Music at the University of Derby, where he also Programme Leader for BA (Hons) Creative Expressive Therapies in Music, Dance, Art and Drama. Previously he was a lecturer in Music Composition at the University of Hertfordshire from 2012 to 2015. James's research interests focus on an anthropology of music, investigating the behavioural, social, creative and collaborative processes behind music. His research rests on ethnomusicological methodologies and socio-cultural modes of music analysis, exploring notational, improvisational, and electronic/electroacoustic technological practices in music. Recent post-doctoral research includes the study of music online and digital anthropology, music and politics, and music in therapeutic practice. James is the founding editor of *Musicology Research Journal*.

Sunmin Yoon

Sunmin is an ethnomusicologist specializing in Mongolian folk songs, specifically a genre called *urtyn duu* (long-song). Working closely with a broad range of singers whose careers have spanned both Socialist and post-Socialist Mongolia, her research explores singers and songs at the intersections of the politics, dialogues, and mobility which exist between rural and urban musical environments, and interrogates the nature and feasibility of preservation, and globalized cultural heritage.

Her work has appeared in the *International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) Newsletter*, *Mongolian Studies*, *World Literature Today*, and *Smithsonian Magazine*. She is a recipient of grants and awards such as an NEH Summer Institute Program Grant, a CMS Community Engagement Seed Grant, the Diversity Action Committee Program Award at SEM, CIAC Small Research Grants from Association of Asian Studies, and the Dean's Dissertation Fellowship (Anne Wylie Fellowship) at University

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of Maryland at College Park. Currently she is teaching at University of Delaware as an adjunct assistant professor.

Contributor's Review

Shabnam Goli

As a graduate student based in the United States, it is of great importance to me not to be confined by geographic academic boundaries and to get involved in the global musicological conversation. *Musicology Research* provided me with a valuable opportunity to publish my recent research and helped me reach out to a larger scholarly audience. During the submission and editing process over the past few months, working remotely with the journal, I was encouraged and kept informed and updated about the process. I should express my gratitude for the opportunity and for the journal staff/editors' exceptional level of professionalism and friendliness that motivates young researchers like me and supports them in the earliest stage of their academic establishment and progress. I look forward to future issues of the journal as a reader and contributor.

Contributor's Review

David Leahy

My experience of working with *Musicology Research*, on this my first journal publication, has been a very positive one. The communications from the editor were always clarifying, encouraging, and supportive which, I felt, very much set me up to succeed. I appreciated having this article to write, as I used it to remain focused on my research, in between two stages of my doctoral process. It also gave me an opportunity to reflect on what I had achieved, to that point, in my research. The review process proved to be incredibly valuable also, as the points raised by both the reviewers provoked me to consolidate my arguments, and the overall direction of my research. Therefore, I would like to thank everybody involved with the journal, for supporting my research, and I look forward to the next opportunity I have to write for *Musicology Research*.

Contributor's Review

Stephen Wilford

Musicology Research is a relatively new open access peer-reviewed journal that supports research students and early-career music scholars, providing them with an important opportunity for publication. Submitting proposals to established international journals can prove daunting for inexperienced researchers, and *Musicology Research* offers encouragement in preparing work for publication, while never compromising on academic rigour. Given the challenging job market for those embarking on a career in music research, having a chance to publish work in a peer-reviewed journal is crucial and *Musicology Research* is a welcome addition to the world of music academia.

As an ethnomusicologist, I was pleased to discover that *Musicology Research* embraces a range of disciplines and approaches, and seems very attuned to the increasingly fluid nature of music research. My own article contributes to a special issue that grew out of a conference at Durham University in early 2017. The call for papers was clear and provided direction for my work, while never feeling restrictive. I received extensive constructive feedback and advice from my reviewers that vastly improved my work, and felt extremely supported by the editors; my first child was born during the period that I was writing my article and they were both understanding and flexible. I am sure that *Musicology Research* will go from strength to strength and would highly recommend it to any research students or early career scholars who are looking to publish their work.

Contributor's Review

Sunmin Yoon

Deciding where to put one's writing can be a hard decision. With the trend being that most academic journals are moving into a digitized format, with vibrant communication and access to academic discussions available online, the online peer-reviewed format of *Musicology Research* made it the right place for my article, which includes sound examples and images so as to provide a more interactive understanding of my study. *Musicology Research* assigns a theme to each volume, but does not limit it in terms of subdisciplines of music; in covering diverse and wide range of topics, it offers a place to think of new approaches to musical studies which could stimulate dynamic dialogues addressing new interests in the field. For this reason, I feel that the *Musicology Research* contributes to what will be an ever more important platform within the broadest reaches of the community of academic music studies.

The editors were so understanding in their handling of the reviewing process and were always available to discuss my contribution, while at the same time, they were always attentive to the requirements of the publication schedule, and through the process of review to the quality of publication. I would highly recommend *Musicology Research* not only to early-career scholars and graduate students, but also to scholars who are looking for a way to present their research in an interactive format, and whose work is inclined to interdisciplinary music research.

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MUSICOLOGY RESEARCH JOURNAL

Issue 4

Spring 2018