

Foreword

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As both Benjamin and Adorno noticed, back in the early thirties, and as highlighted by several studies over the last decades, the technical development of music recording and playback devices has not only contributed to strengthen the diffusion of music, but it has also radically altered its nuances, revolutionizing our ways to experience it.

Along with the multiplication of technical means and physical supports (ranging from the vinyl record up to Compact Disc and DVD), the new millennium also brought a less expensive and faster fruition pathway, namely the listening and visual streaming (both on demand and live) of an ever growing, web accessible music database (providing contents in various formats such as Real Audio, Real Video, Windows Media Audio, Windows Media Video, Quicktime, Adobe Flash Video etc.).

What impact does the increasingly frequent and widespread use of these interfaces have on the aesthetic, metaphysical and social field? How did the diffusion of streaming change our ways to experience contemporary and past works of art, as well as music traditions and practices based on improvisation?

The present issue of Aisthesis, co-organized and sustained by the research group "Mind and Naturalism: from the aesthetic Mind to the symbolic Mind" of the "Lettere e Filosofia" Department at the University of Florence and by the Labex GREAM ("Groupe de Recherches Experimentales sur l'Acte Musical") at the University of Strasbourg, addresses these questions by referring to some aspects of peculiar interest, such as in particular:

1. the new possibilities of instantaneous production and distribution of music on a worldwide scale;
2. the functional shifts and meaning deflections of several musical phenomena as related with today's modalities of reception and understanding;

3. the emergence and overlapping of new aesthetic criteria, often associated with lifeforms based on specific informatic-bonded social webs, rather than related with geographical contexts;

4. the tendency to reintegrate a visual dimension into the main forms of musical phenomena's reception, often (but not exclusively) associated with the performative moment;

5. the re-thinking of "live" musical experiences and the genesis of new creative practices;

6. the legal and ontological issues related to the property of artistic works available for streaming fruition.