



PERFORMANCE
PHILOSOPHY

EDITORIAL: THINKING THROUGH PERFORMANCE TECHNOLOGY IN MUSIC / SOUND

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WITH ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION ON [MARGINS] BY EDITOR DIANA DAMIAN MARTIN

This hybrid publication is based on a mutually catalytic approach that identifies and works through common practices, values, and worldviews within the journals *Performance Philosophy* and *ECHO*. The broad intention is to challenge the constituency of the two journals, to facilitate a dialogue between readers, to gently probe different modes of research content, to investigate the impact of juxtaposing related materials across the virtual distance between the journals, and to encourage a general change of approach to the technologically informed humanities—to invigorate scholarly engagement.

Why this hybrid issue? *Performance Philosophy* interrogates and tests the relationships between its titular terms in all possible configurations. *ECHO* brings together thought and practice at the confluence and interferences of music, thought, and technology. Given the ongoing expansion and proliferation of practical, environmental, and conceptual thought spaces, and the technological innovations and re-visions of the research field in general, not to mention the fabulously speculative plenitude of creative work, it has become necessary to address wider definitions of 'technology' and 'performance' with regards to sound making and music making. These two ground-breaking journals offer an opportunity to explore and share perspectives from various cultural horizons that delve into a wealth of inherited knowledge and current critical thinking. Concerns such as identity, reality, virtuality, artist, archive, and receiver can be re-examined from the perspective of redefined—and continually evolving—musical phenomena, the very notions of redefinition and evolution being heavily influenced by developments in theories and practices of virtuality.

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An essential value in the artistic positions of *Performance Philosophy* and *ECHO* alike is an emphasis on embodied practices of doing, rather than theorizing away from the relevant interfaces, an emphasis on practical action with and through research materials over and above reflective research into otherwise separate actions: in this, both journals emphasise that research into art making and into performance must always itself be an intervention into the world, not just a commentary.

In this light, this hybrid issue of *Performance Philosophy* and *ECHO* contains contributions that both reflect an engagement with the above concerns and consider the inter-disciplinary and non-specialist nature of the journals' diverse readerships. Many of these contributions are literally interactive and should be explored through direct access to the materials themselves and by explicit consideration of the way in which these materials have been presented on the platform. They have been designed and curated with this in mind, with the purpose of problematising the relationship between "abstract" and "text" amongst other binaries. Research, as these contributions show, is literally performed for its producers and consumers together, for what counts as meaningful in research is the unholy alliance of input and output, researcher and audience, material and engagement: in short, the embodied engagement of all invested parties. This hybrid issue aims to explore some of the various functions played by the materials (artistic materials, research materials, plus various fusions) and their presentations (textual, visual, and sonic media swirling around each other). The consumer's physical and virtual interrogation of these materials should be configured as a matter of creative co-curation: Research as Performance.

It is worth unpacking briefly the mutual challenges faced by *Performance Philosophy* and *ECHO* in this collaboration. How might *Performance Philosophy* learn from *ECHO*? How might *ECHO* learn from *Performance Philosophy*? How can the space between journals be shared?

Our editorial curiosity about the function of the online platform in respect of its contributions leads us to ask what precisely is the role of the platform. In this respect, there has been a fascinating learning process for both journals during the development of this hybrid issue. *ECHO*'s choices of mediatic diversity within a presentation aligns with its message, an opening up of form in relation to content, and a proliferation of content through its multiple technological mediations. The different technological affordances of the two journals' platforms have posed challenges to each other, as research dissemination continues to move, in fits and starts, sometimes fast, sometimes slowly, beyond the essay. This is explored by practitioners at the intersection of creative technologies and disciplines who have re-aligned their approaches and found optimal expressive means in which to formulate these. *ECHO*'s aim is to move outside of a limited and limiting understanding of the term 'technology'. It brings together thought and practice at the confluence of music, thought, and technology; technologies of imagining, creation, and production. It sees the confluence of music, thought, and technology as a matter of both intervention and interference: things will be different afterwards! Musical works, *ECHO* suggests, have much in common with virtual or digital objects. They exist in a unique state of materiality / immateriality, and while they are intensely tied to direct experience, to technologies, and to techniques and materials, their physicality can exist in multiple instantiations, they can be manipulated, engaged with, and acted

upon as cultural abstractions in a variety of ways. Digital humanities research and computer-based creation use the same repertory of tools. The medium of *Performance Philosophy* works with a similar multiplicity of materials and forms, and is equally driven by a passion that content must not be compromised, but it is perhaps slower than *ECHO* to surf the oncoming tsunami of digital and virtual modes of presentation, to embrace the newer technologically driven modes of affordance. More emphasis is needed on the practicality of doing in respect of technology's role in the research process, as exemplified by *ECHO*: technology is not merely a tool.

Performance Philosophy extends *ECHO*'s philosophical basis in a cosmology derived from science's approach to technology by re-opening ontology towards thinking: an emphasis on 'be-ness' / being alongside that of creation and development. It offers a distinctly performative approach to technology, a rethinking of its forms as real / virtual 'object-beings', insisting on their presence as manifesting in ways that are other than merely functional—indeed, in ways that resist, challenge, and sometimes simply ignore the documentary / archival desire of research (not all results of *Performance Philosophy* remain after the event of their curation and emergence, and this is not an unhappy ontology). *Performance Philosophy* challenges the intersecting areas of music, thinking, and technology in *ECHO* by arguing for a non-quantifiable approach towards the materials involved: the chosen medium is the message, action, and thinking are non-divisible. Thought emerges from an interaction between music / sound / technology / other media, without there needing to be advance knowledge of a result. What emerges cannot be based on purely operational procedures, and it eludes terms of pre-definition.

Reflected in the issues raised here is the importance of thinking around the performance of music and sound in an interdisciplinary way, together with a mutual curiosity about the platform of each journal that manifests itself as a learning process. In fact, a link between *Performance Philosophy* and *ECHO* already exists, based on their mission statements as quoted from at the beginning of the introduction. In essence, this collaborative attempt addresses the challenge of bringing the sciences and humanities philosophies together, strands that have parted ways in history. Music and sound have their basis in cosmology, in technology as quantifying the possible, but also in ontology, as in the nature of being and making the seemingly impossible possible. Sound and music are essentially a mode of thought.

Two sets of criteria were used in the collaborative selection of submissions. The first was the appropriateness of the material in its relevance to technology and performance practice, artificial reality / virtual reality / artificial intelligence / musicking / sound / mediation. The second was the presence of a critical response to the chosen media. Curation has sought to emphasise varied structures that exist away from the essay format: those based on practice as research, process-oriented thoughts, artist statements, digitally native storytelling, and the non-narrative, the contexts of which should include subjects specific to BIPOC and the Global South. Group submissions were encouraged according to the prevailing themes and modes of presentation offered by both journals.

Emerging from the selection process are four broadly thematic groups: Telematic Dance and Live Coding, Instrument De / Reconstruction, Embodiment and Design, and Technological Accelerationism.

The first group concerns technologically mediated and embodied interaction in dance-driven music performance, where the latter are combined with live coding. All three contributions from [Iannis Zannos / Stella Dimitrakopoulou](#), [Stella Dimitrakopoulou / Vasilis Agiomyrgianakis](#), and [Zander Porter](#), are concerned with the subject of dance, music, and cyber-physical performance, whether in the context of an educational research project, an experimental audio-visual experience, or as a 'play' between text and image. Technology is embedded into a process of interaction between bodies and digital narrative.

Where are our objects and foci in music / sonic performance? What do we mean by 'instruments' in this context? These fundamental questions are both challenged and answered by two contributions that widen our conceptions of musical sound and technology both in relation to the environment and to historical tradition. Contrasting perspectives on Instrumental De / Re-construction are explored here by [Maureen Wolloshin / Khabat Abas](#) and [Sam McAuliffe / Louise Devenish](#). Whereas the former re-align their practice within a feminist approach towards free improvisation, thereby inducing a paradigm shift in the musical material itself, McAuliffe / Devenish expand definitions of instrumentality through an intermedial connection with our environmental world. Both contributions offer an innovative approach towards a wider context of cultural traditions for performance.

The design and making of a technological medium follow on from the previous theme, emphasizing in turn an integral element of embodied experimentation with a chosen format. Embedded within the compositional process is an ongoing refinement of materials that manifests itself in a sound art performance given by the artists themselves. Two artist statements by [Jaehoon Choi](#) and [Alexandre Bento](#) deal with this interaction in different ways, involving in both cases the contact between gesture and object by means of electromagnets or sensors. Whereas Choi is concerned with a constant feedback-loop between his finely articulated control of brushing movements across an electro-sensitized surface, Bento brings a strong awareness of energy fields generated by electromagnetism that play with his own physical, motoric memory. Musical performance, whose design is inherent to the compositional process of each artist, is generated in real time. Former distinctions between creative roles and materials are blurred, generating an entirely different performative aesthetic.

Finally, the following questions are also taken up: How does our current and coming technological reality shed new light on performance and practices from other times and places, however near or distant? And how do such transformations affect the subjects of and approaches to performance? Do our identities shift, and with them entire cultural bodies of education and criticism? The acceleration of technology cannot ignore its socio-political consequences if we consider our multiple identities and realities within a perspective of wider cultural horizons. For [Jörgen Dahlqvist](#), in his discussion of an intermedial theatre production, the use of audio and video

technology is central to mediate a manifold of perspectives on societal challenges concerning migration and xenophobia. Choosing the medium of audio podcast plus script for her contribution, [Flavia Pinheiro](#) radically unpicks issues of interspecies entanglements, contamination, and ghosts as symbolic manifestations of colonialism, whilst exploring a wide interdisciplinary field in her quest for 'transversal research'.

The [Margins] section of *Performance Philosophy* brings together formal and technological inquiries that probe listening and viewing as creative critical modes of thinking and doing. There are resonances across the contributions to the musicality of language, the performativities of sound and echoes of philosophy as a speculative practice, as well as embodiment and technology. [Michael O'Connor](#) examines the performance philosophical edges of imagined lines as dialogical practices, looking to listening and interference. 'The problem with imagined lines,' he argues, 'is that without the ability to see them, they possibly resist coming to an agreement between people.' Taking his cue from ideas on listening, non-straight interference, and bodily processes, the article is a multi-faceted reflection on spatial and bodily proximities. From interference to assembly, [Stefan Paulus](#) brings together the sonic and the visual to explore non-standard aesthetics 'without objects'. Thinking with François Laruelle, Gilles Deleuze, and Felix Guattari, as well as through photographic, sonic and other material inquiries, Paulus speculates on methodologies for new epistemes through superimpositions and transitions, resulting in immanent relations. In *Listening is Action: a soundwalk with Hildergard Westerkamp*, Luis Velasco-Puffleau probes the edges of listening as critical practice. In his two-part work, a commentary and a sonic documentary, Velasco-Puffleau probes recording as inhabiting human and more-than-human, and articulates a mode of engaging with listening informed by the work of Pauline Oliveros and Hannah Arendt, foregrounding relationality and the political. The collaborative work of Mauricio Carrasco and Fernando Garnero, *Midnight Reflections*, begins from an open question on positioning in the context of the North when rooted in the Global South. Through an audio exploration that includes electronic interludes alongside unpublished scores, the piece thinks through voice, in-betweenness, dialogues with talks on YouTube by Thirusa Naidu, Rosi Braidotti, and Achille Mbembe; it convenes around Naidu's notion of Northern Ventriloquism as well as the musical notion of the feedback to explore identity, global politics, institutionality, and technologies of resistance.

Caroline Wilkins contributes to the ReView section of *Performance Philosophy*, writing in 'ReListening to Derrida and Benjamin' about a parallel sound-world spontaneously invoked during a reading of two plays *Derrida | Benjamin* by John Schad and Fred Dalmaso, and referring to key phrases / quotes in the texts that became pointers for triggering sonic responses.

A final note on how to engage with this hybrid issue. There is no one correct way to engage with it. Rather: let yourself find a space between the two platforms and dive in; take pleasure in the distribution of related content across the journals; read from one journal towards the other; juxtapose the materials and let the space between journals bloom in a riot of provocations; follow the authors' contributions but let yourself drift around; relax, wonder, ponder, and enjoy this hybrid issue.

Biographies

Independent composer/performer/researcher **Dr. Caroline Wilkins** completed a practice-based PhD in Sound Theatre at Brunel University, London in 2012. She comes from a background of new music performance, composition and theatre, and has worked extensively on solo and collaborative productions involving these. Her particular interest lies in exploring new forms within the field of inter-medial sound theatre.

She has presented extensively at (inter)national conferences and published articles / essays in both book and journal form, including O.U.P., Intellect Books and Journal of *Performance Philosophy*.

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Anthony Gritten studied the organ with Harry Gabb, Anne Page and David Sanger, and is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists. He has given over 300 recitals all over the UK, Paris and Canada, including several premieres of works by Daniel Roth.

Anthony's research spans a variety of issues in performance studies, the philosophy and aesthetics of music, and the music of Igor Stravinsky and John Cage. He is a core convener of the Performance Philosophy network.

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