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Welcome and Orientation

The Symposium was organized as a participatory, “open space” symposium where the ambition was to approach, discuss and process issues related to decolonizing and developing non-colonial ways of curating contemporary music and sound art.

The overall theme in this symposium was:

What does freedom sound like?

The Symposium began with a welcome by Julia and Thorbjørn. In addition to welcoming everybody to the Symposium, part of the story up to now - the context for being here - was shared. This includes the first face-to-face Symposium in Berlin in September 2019, the Online Keynote Symposium in October 2020, as well as the preparation for the Symposium 2021 with a planning group and an advisory board.

Introduction

The first part of the Symposium was facilitated using Whole Person Process Facilitation. After the welcome, participants were invited to begin the Symposium with some time of transferring in. This process began by asking participants to choose a sound and use that sound as inspiration for what it was conveying to them about how one imagines using this sound to engage with the current world? After spending time in small groups sharing their reflections, participants were invited to share highlights with the collective group. These highlights are recorded below.

- Nice to hear sounds - a way to introduce each other
- So many sounds - noise of our time - at home with COVID it's a noisy place
- Does this have implications for our work?
- Benefit of lockdown: More nature sounds, less traffic more quiet
- Downsides of the lockdown: illegal parties - lots of sounds at night
- Crisis is extremely loud
- Different perceptions - depending on position to sound and speaker
- Silence - sounds in my head - soft - becoming aware of my relationship with sound
- The more I listen the more nuances I hear
- Attention to sound - Let sound be sound and let people be people
- Sounds trigger spaces inside us
- Sounds have their own agency
- Sounds are beings - born and live in several locations
- They love to form groups

Wishes and Fears

Participants were invited to have conversations in small groups about their wishes and fears for the Symposium. The top wishes and fears from each group were shared with the collective to provide everyone an opportunity to hear the key insights from the other conversations.

Wishes

- Hope for fruitful conversations and meeting people alike
- Wish that this is an ongoing, broad movement that leads to in-depth structural changes
- Create something that has a real effect on this community
- Make new connections, networks with likeminded people
- Opportunity to experiment with this format
- To go out of our comfortable bubbles and see different perspectives as well
- Have a diverse contemporary music scene
- Wishing to meet also many different people, who might think differently than we, so we can learn from each others
- Wish: thinking (and acting) "publics" and "production" in the same breath
- Hold this connection that we have today
- Wish: that we are able to think about structures
- Concrete structures
- Freedom from our EarPods
- Changing perspectives
- Wish: that we stay open enough with each other to explain and overcome misunderstandings
- Wish to see faster changes and improvements
- Interrogate concept of diversity

Fears

- Fear that we speak a lot but these conversations lead (almost) nowhere or triggers very little change.
- Fear that these conversations remain just words. (our group was 100% white)
- all talk no action
- Fear: too easily settle on a question of equal representation without dealing with structures
- Nothing will change after the Symposium
- Freedom doesn't exist: is always within boundaries
- taking up too much space
- Fear of things getting lost in the digital format (loss of in-person interactions)
- Can't find the freedom
- Are we missing opportunities because of the mediation of technology?
- White people talking to white people about diversity
- Fear: Not to lose our regional differences to an overall European-American culture that spreads over the world
- Misreading body language, group temperature on screen
- To stay in our comfort zones
- Fear: that we just try to avoid mistakes. Mistakes are natural and human, but they are permissible if we learn from them
- Fear of time not being productive
- Must listen to silences and what has not been allowed to speak

Listening Sessions

The participants were invited to meet in groups and attend 45 min Listening Sessions, hosted by the following artists:

- Ariel Wiliam Orah - Ravenative Keroncong 2021
- Joseph Kamaru - artifices unknown
- Elsa M'bala
- Robert Machiri & Memory Biwa - PUNGWE
- Grant Jurius (Future Nostalgia)
- Hardi Kurda

Open Space

The second part of the Symposium was organized, using Open Space Technology. This participative meeting methodology invites participants to collectively create and organize the agenda and content of parallel working sessions around the central theme.

All participants were invited to propose specific subjects for discussion under this umbrella. These subjects could be, for example, theoretical, practical or artistic in nature. The topics were then processed in 4 1-hour session times. 14 topics were posted for discussion:

- A creolised and usable past for new music (G. Lewis)
- The curatorial allows for interdisciplinary thinking. Is it helpful for formulating strategies of diversity?
- Should we cancel all postponed premiers?
- How does the composed contemporary music relate to the topic of freedom?
- Future Festivals (Postpandemic) music festivals will be like?
- How does freedom feel, which are helpful conditions? I am interested in stories, experiences...
- Understanding the Right to the City through sounds. Collective sound, social sounds, equality
- Is diversity a genre or an approach?
- How do we as musickers engage with the planetary timescales of earth?
- The forgotten creole? New Music in Latinamerica
- Artists in the Third-space: cultural mobility, is it a curse or a blessing
- Sonic freedom FROM something or sonic freedom FOR something? who expects identity from whom?
- European Solutions for European Problems
- Building a collective listening archive

In addition to the topics the following links were shared:

Glissando magazine - recent call for papers for the issue #41 (in both Polish and English) <http://glissando.pl/call-for-papers/glissando-41-call-for-papers/>

https://www.berghahnjournals.com/view/journals/turba/turba-overview.xml?tab_body=About

8 reports were written about sessions and they are included below.

1: A Creolised Usable Part for Music

Name of Leader: Kobe Van Cauwenberghe

Participants: Sandeep Bhagwati, Lee Walters, Sue Schlotte, Katja Heldt, Manos Tsangaris, Thorbjørn Tønder Hansen, Nico

Highlights of discussion

- Is there a point to discussion when we all have similar views
- All musicians all over the world have borrowed from the sounds they have heard, so isn't all music creolised even if this is not always recognised
- The history of our new music scene is defined by labelling which is clearly a result of where we grew up and what we look like
- Our music histories and teaching are totally centred on a particular timeline, genealogy and style. Maybe that is where the discourse about creolisation comes in.
- We need an offer of different histories
- An archive is a socially constructed history
- How do we read archives, how do we perceive history, how do we open up access to space, to scene, to who is talking, to who are quoted in texts
- How do particular composers become recognised in systems? Knowing that once they are, they become part of that system. So how do we create platforms that operate not from the idea but from the reality of equality? We must recognise the dangers of containment and not stay within the hierarchy to the extent that it isn't possible to think about freedom.
- The strength of a creolised past (that is outside capitalism) is that there is no ownership. This is an important issue: the origin and ownership in capitalism and how creolised artists are perceived within this tension
- We must step away from representation and look at practices instead of looking at people. Looking at people is a red herring
- Representation is a ruse dangled in front of us and is commodified and artists become the commodity. And markets spring up for that commodity. And as soon as this market is started, it begins to contain us.
- Why are these identifications created at all? what is the majority thought behind that creation?
- How can we be more aware of this in our practices?
- Where do we start? is this symposium the right way to change things?
- Maybe we should not aim for immediate change: but we should see it as a change to occur over a generation

Recommended Action

2: Should we cancel all postponed premiers?

Name of Leader: Brandon

Participants: Bert, Julia, Anne, Hardi, Monika, Lisa, Brandon, Johan Tallgren
Anna Jakobsson

Highlights of discussion

Bert no

Julia no

Anne no

Hardi no

Monika no

Lisa no

Brandon yes

Johan Tallgren abstain

Anna Jakobsson yes

radical move vs respecting our commitments

Is this a cultural crisis (like the housing crisis)

Cultural sector is precarious and not organized labour

using the money of the orchestras

Iraqi system of state employment of artists, i.e. alternative models

asking who is important for making culture

Recommended Action

Cancel all postponed premiers

3: How does contemporary music relate to the topic of freedom?

Name of Leader: Bert Palincx (November Music)

Participants: Memory Biwa, Cdrk, Kalvert Nelson, Candice Hopkins, Katya H, Anne Appathurai, Lee Walters (in and out)

Highlights of discussion

- Need to think about different models for curation. Doing things in a DIY approach, outside institutions/state, to avoid virtue signalling and "state-sanctioned" work
- How to reinvest in what people are doing, particularly if it's questioning the dominant narrative
- A shared repository of knowledge for helping artists tour
- institutions are important and the DIY scene is important but unfortunately they don't often talk to each other

Recommended Action

4: Experiences with freedom - conditions for it?

Name of Leader: Sue Scholte

Participants: Hardi Kurda

Highlights of discussion

Recommended Action

5: Understanding the Rights to the City through sounds

Name of Leader: Jorge Esda

Participants: Lisa Benyes, Thorborn Tonder Hansen, Jorge Esda

Story until now ...

Starting with the concept Right to the City by Henri Lefebvre

Highlights of discussion

- City - sound connection in our cities: Berlin, Tbilisi, Oslo...
- The Right to the city and the invisibilization of certain collectives: understanding the Right to the City from a queer, gender and post-colonial perspective.
- The dominance of finance capital over the city. Using music/sounds to fight against capitalist powers and gentrification.
- In this sense, is covid opening new opportunities to use urban spaces in a different way?
- How can we promote decentralization from the capital? Urban centers have as their axis the processes of segregation, displacement and spatial gentrification.
- Creating a long-lasting cooperation with the society. Giving power to the community to create. How can an institution promote grassroots initiatives?

Recommended Action

6: Post pandemic festivals

Name of Leader: Monika Zyla

Participants:

Highlights of discussion

Feeling that everyone is waiting to get back to exactly how things were before
Learning to live in a damaged landscape, in a Donna Haraway sense, instead of cultivating nostalgia

Pandemic and emergency as the mother of invention

Digital possibilities can also mean less festivals and ones that work differently.

How is curating developing?

How is the identity of festivals being reshaped after the pandemic?

The post-pandemic identities of festivals.

Evaluating and critiquing curatorial practices by focusing more on the outcomes, as a more productive way of approaching curating

Online productions as digital retro moments

The anonymity of digital audiences

Deterritorialization of festivals, transnational festivals - what's at stake here?

Recommended Action

Evening Reflection

At the end of Day 1 all participants gathered - after participating in the Open Space session of their choice during the afternoon - and were invited to share their reflections about the first day of the Symposium.

Below are some highlights:

- Something different
- Thumbs up - out of my comfort zone - new ideas for interactive symposiums
- Thanks for opening the platform with a ground up approach. These awkward pauses and silences were the most interesting moments
- Listening Sessions: Broaden the view, reflect on our views
- The listening sessions are fantastic - thanks so much for including them in the programme
- looking forward to more conversations
- Lots of questions and fewer solutions
- expressing negativity - addressing deeper structural questions
- relationship to institutions and larger opera organisations
- They have lists of resources, but no motivation to change things
- Concern about large organisations like operas. It's time to change institutions and audience
 - diversify these institutions
 - they have to be made safe
 - change the repertoires
 - hope they will use this period to establish a new way of thinking
- most of us are not connected to these institutions
- I am positive about how we are doing in this lockdown.
 - it will be a very rich time.
 - it's been socially difficult - artistically very creative time
 - New ways of reflecting and ways of working after pandemic
 - Focus on positive things and develop them in order to reach a new normality after the pandemic.
- There are also a lot of good things about this symposium - THIS Symposium!
 - New formats
 - digital formats
 - new formats of productions and presentation of sounding art
- Please add perspective of musicians to the picture

Links & Resources shared:

- www.space21.nu
- https://space21.nu/?page_id=145
- https://www.berghahnjournals.com/view/journals/turba/turba-overview.xml?tab_body=About
- William Grant Still: "Highway 1" non victim stories
- Terence Blanchet - bloody my bones - new metropolitan opera
- Amazing story: Maria Tallchief and Ralph Ellison!

At the end of Day 1 participants were invited to a Listening Session by Raven Chacon And to the live stream of the world premier of the Memories in Music concert at the Akademie der Künste

https://www.adk.de/de/projekte/2021/gedaechtnis/einzelprojekte/memories_in_music.htm?we_objectID=62313

Day 2

Morning Circle

Day 2 of the Symposium started with a 30 minutes Morning Circle – a time for new and returning participants to look at the agenda of the day, add new topics and organize the order of the sessions. It was also time to share the reflections people had about their learnings so far.

Find below the report written on Day 2.

7: The Forgotten Creole, New Music in Latin-American

Name of Leader: Nico Daleman

Participants: Julia Gerlach, Jorge Esda, Osvaldo Budon, Anne Marqvardsen

Story until now ...

Highlights of discussion

- How is the discourse of decolonization reflected in musical language?
- Change perspective
- Search for new pasts
- Rewriting history
- How does Latinamerica sound like in New Music?
- How do we teach music in Latin America? Modeled after European / USA Model.
- How do we bring together academic and musical discourse together? What is the role of academia?
- What is the contemporary? What is the language of contemporary music?
- Interest in Sound as material and dissonance.
- What are the practices and processes of contemporary music?
- Ethnological studies separated from contemporary music studies
- Notation and oral traditions
- Global dynamics
- How to discuss different cultures on the same level eye level

References:

- Enrique Dussel
- Meridian Brothers
- Guilherme Vaz

Ethnological studies separated from contemporary music studies

Notation and oral traditions

Global dynamics

How to discuss different cultures on the same level eye level

Recommended Action

8: Artists in the Third-space: cultural mobility, is it a curse or a blessing?

Name of Leader:

Participants: Esther, Hardi, Anne, Tze Yeung, Mary Ellen, Serge

Story until now ...

What implications are there when we ask artists to answer "where are you from?" This can be seen in bureaucratic application processes, program notes, discussions, etc. How can we engage with topics of diversity with sensitivity?

Highlights of discussion

> third culture 'kids' <--- the focus on children in this topic, how young people self-identify vs. adults? Exposure to the questions of identity when one is young, to break down bias.

> "starting something without knowing where Rome is"

> "we are all from planet earth!"

> "where are you from?" <--- is this question necessary?

> creating new relationships and questions about communicating who we are and what we do, instead of geographical/political/etc. rhetorics

> "where are you from" is occupying space in lessons, discussions, etc...

> "the power of suggestion" changes how people engage with one another

> "It doesn't matter how you got the opportunity, it's what do you." <--- how do we cope with this when confronted?

>>freedom is knowing your boundaries, knowing in which spaces you can move" - Esther

> bubbles miss, merge, but it requires a lot of talking

> modesty/humbleness is important from every side of the conversation

> working with young people will change the future of sounds if adults don't restrict their freedom, allowing them to create a new vocabulary for sounds; the role of the teacher is very important in this process

> "exchanging ideas between locations but doing things where we are" may eliminate issues related to geography (thereby eliminating the 'where are you from?' question)

> in the context of an archive in this current moment: artists have different backgrounds but we share the same space in archives. how do we look back at this in the future?

Recommended Action

> we should experiment with different questions in our bureaucracy (e.g. applications) and share our experiences with our network

> more regular open spaces like this conference to talk more about experimental practices in offering opportunities

> let's make this conversation a regular thing.



Open Call: What Does Freedom Sound Like?

Throughout the Symposium participants could also listen to the [Open Call contributions for this Symposium](#).

Action Planning

Towards the end of the Symposium everyone had the time to read all reports from the Open Space Sessions. Then participants were invited to reflect individually what this all means for their work, their practice and their lives before they met in pairs to share with one another. This reflection was intended to converge the broad exploration of the theme and land on specific actions everyone wanted to do - individually or collectively. The following actions were introduced. We have xx Next Step documents for you below. Feel free to contact the people if you'd like to join their activities.

Givens for the Action Planning

Givens are the foundational “non-negotiables” that form the container for creativity and innovation. Below are the givens for the Symposium. They are not listed in any order of priority. Within these givens, you are invited to consider the actions and projects that are most important to you to discuss during this workshop.

- The actions you take up at this moment are for you to move forward
- The Symposium does not have resources allocated to action planning
- We are happy to support you if we can
- Feel free to move forward without us, too
- The documentation of the Symposium will be shared with all participants
- We will organize a follow-up meeting to this symposium where you can speak to your progress on your actions on 6 October 2021 at 5 to 8 pm CET

8 actions were posted, see notes below:

A: Youth-Educational and major cultural organizational inclusion

Contact Person: Jalalu-Kalvert Nelson

Participants:

Our immediate next steps:

- Creating a contest-workshop for young and new "opera-music-theatre creators" from the ages 15 to 21 perhaps :Open to any musical style, with a musical, theatrical and visual aspect. Can involve singing, dancing, texts, visual etc. Will be led by "so-called facilitators-mentors, who are open to their ideas. They would first be introduced to what "Opera" is. And that basically it involves music-dance-visuals-texts-singing all at the same time (simple). And they can go from there.
- SECOND: Working with institutions of higher-musical instruction on inclusion. In terms of music learned-,more diverse creators- methods taught, improvisation, for example.
- THIRD: working with major culture organizations on inclusion in all facets. Realizing that this will be a most difficult task.

B: Seeking collaborators co-thinkers and co-presenters for new hybrid multi-creative projects with Ensemble Extrakte Berlin

Contact Person:

Participants:

Our immediate next steps:

hEAR DROPS is your monthly dose of playful ideas focusing on sound and music. An online offer of animated visual stories for an international audience of children, parents and teachers. Each film invites subtle, sensory interaction interaction.

A timeless duo, boy and girl, share their resonating adventures with the viewers. All exercises have been frequently tested in Musica's practice.

Watch an episode together. Discover the rules of the game. Watch it again. Discuss the context and materials. Organise the necessary and perform.

With an 'art link' in each episode: a reference to the broader world of the arts, for even more new perspectives.

You can find hEAR DROPS on [YouTube](#).

- http://matralab.hexagram.ca/research/ensembles/extrakte/?page_id=19890
- Oslofoni.com

C: Hashtag Guerilla

Contact Person: Patricia Hofmann

Participants: Brandon Farnsworth, Mary Ellen Kitchens, Julia Gerlach

Our immediate next steps:

We would like to create a process of finding a hashtag for bringing attention to different things, that are flashbacking on different levels in different subjects - programming, structures, words, textes...

Short, clear, with kind of "stitch", not negative or only critic

#100%Beethoven

#100%new

#backtothefuture

Whatever.....

We would like to start
brainstorming
researching

in an email feed...starting with an e-mail

D: Organising a sharable database for touring (organisers contacts), tricks and tips regarding visas, opportunities, funding, travels, travel costs, etc.

Contact Person: Cedrik

Participants: Monika Zyla, Milana Zaric, Thorbjørn Tønder Hansen

Our immediate next steps:

have a meeting in June to begin

aim to present next step at follow up meeting in October

E: Networking Art Project

Contact Person: Hardi Kurda

Participants: Lee Walter, Saori Kanemaki, Julia Gerlach

Our immediate next steps:

- Sharing and collaboration between small festival programmes and events, organisers and artists.
- Creating possibilities for small events represents in other countries and festivals.
- Exchanging audience for our events
- Bring divers programmes
- Artists who know venues can share programmes of other festivals in their own country. works as a co-organiser.
- Create possibility for artists through the network
- making projects together from idea to practice.

F: Look for cooperation for Bridge concerts for intersonanzen Festival

Contact Person: Thomas Gerwin

Participants:

Our immediate next steps

Looking for ensembles and soloists from all over the world to play at our "intersonanzen" festival in Potsdam and to play the same concert as "bridge concert" at home again. Please contact me to discuss this.

G: #CancelallPostponedPremieres or 100% new music quota

Contact Person: Brandon

Participants:

Our immediate next steps

Closing Remarks

The Symposium ended with a 30 Minutes Closing Circle. General comments centred around appreciation for the opportunity to meet one another and think and share ideas together in this participative format. Participants were looking forward to continuing this exploration in the future and the Symposium was a good start.

Some remarks made by participants in the circle summarized below:

- I was only able to participate one day - many of my interests were present in the various discussions
- I got the chance to exchange - situations, problems and things I want to do in the future
- Re-considering our perspective on musical history - need to rethink
- It was very stimulating
- I feel grateful that people gave so generously
- I would like to stay in contact
- I think this is the 3rd Symposium around the academy and I have participated in all of them, I feel connected - friendship
- It relates to a growing kinship - very wonderful
- Most of us share common values
- Grateful for the new participatory format - it's like improvising
- We should go to a more „aggressive“ way - let's go forward together
- Lots of ideas - that's interesting - small hints of different perspective
- I wish there was more diversity - I want to learn more
- I got new ideas
- Rollercoaster - from inspiration to annoying and everything in between
- I had a negative impression of the Symposium from the title - but during the symposium I have a positive impression - I really enjoyed it
- Space to develop ideas
- Grateful I could join - no expenses and resources
- Surprised Zoom helped!
- We are ripples of hope - in humbleness we as artists are here to serve for the greater good
- We were too comfortable - next time the panel should look different - younger people - support and nurture them and make their places save.
- We are in a particular moment - avoid going back to normal - we need to feel empowered to change the outcome of what happens
- The Symposium creates hope in a time of isolation
- It was a wonderful occasion for me to learn about everyone's situation and contributions

In the evening participants were invited to attend the concert Avant Joik <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IscS3Ag9dVY> at the Akademie der Künste

Facilitators Note

It has been a privilege to facilitate the Symposium for the second time - where you focus on these important and overdue questions – as pioneers within our societies.

This time I was partnering with my colleague Doris Gottlieb from Amsterdam. We enjoyed how open you were to the online environment and the learning curve you accepted to come together as a group in an online environment.

Our work is rooted in the Genuine Contact way of working. This approach supports organizations and individuals in finding a state of health and balance. It was developed 20+ years ago by Birgitt and Ward Williams and is used worldwide in many different cultural contexts. Genuine Contact uses simple tools and processes taking care that all learning styles are served throughout a process facilitation.

One of the fundamental beliefs is that all people are precious - this facilitation approach gives room to the diversity of all participants and, as a result participants develop personal and collective resilience, deepen mutual cooperation and tap into the wisdom of the whole system.

All the best,

Anna Caroline Türk + Doris Gottlieb

TruthCircles.com DorisGottlieb.com