

What if We All Spread Our Ears Around the World? The Idea of a Community of Free Listeners in Becoming

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Abstract

In this article, we turn this question into an essay about otherness in music, about how we can bend the boundaries of already known sound and project it now towards the infinite, towards endless sound, towards that which is yet to be known.

It is about exposing a restless experience of thinking that inhabits and is present in a teacher-musician and an art education teacher – researchers and listeners, who hear voices confirming their incompleteness when confronted with the infinite and the materiality of sounds.

Here, then, are some fragments of this meditative discourse; here are the most recent declarations-eruptions of this volcanic activity in our thought. What becomes most clear is, above all, the emergence of what is said, not so much for its truth, or even its falsehood, but much more for its desire for contact and wandering among concepts that project them onto the sonorous face of the Other ¹.

It is important to clearly state that the Other is not a threat; it is a challenge, and this must be affirmed.

Keywords. Sonorous otherness, Nomadic listening, Post-music

[0] Before starting

We became silent for a long period, during which an extensive essay was woven, in theory, about the possibilities of silence moving us to other latitudes of imagination and reflection. We identified it, momentarily, as the call to memory that we all have of the noise of the world. We said, then, that it was not absence; it was much more a presence of something that gives us the opportunity to think of ourselves as that unique space-time that is only inhabited by us.

And so, we realised that missing those who think and make music is synonymous with silence, a kind of comforting and savoury shadow that, amidst the sonic heatwave, helped us listen to the world, even when it (dis)sounds, or proposes it to us.

At that time, we dived labyrinthically into Rui Chafes, Marcel Duchamp, Maria Gabriela Llansol, João Barrento, Maria Filomena Molder, Silvina Rodrigues Lopes, Eugénia Vilela, Paul Celan, Bashō, Laozi, Heraclitus, Spinoza, Nietzsche, Walter Benjamin, Adorno, Agamben, Foucault, Deleuze, Derrida, Aimé Césaire, Franz Fanon, Hildegard von Bingen, Anton Webern, Messiaen, John Cage, Morton Feldman, Luigi Nono, Albert Ayler, Murray Schafer, Eliane Radigue, John Blacking, John Berger, Hermeto Pascoal, and many, many more. They were all a kind of ideal class to which we do not even know how to return, because we will never have left it. With them, behold our constellation, we became diacritical and capable of suspending the robotisation of speech that inhabited us in cultural apnoea, a subject to which we paid particular attention, for it was not rare that it made us less open and available to the events coming from the sounds that continuously crossed us and persist in piercing us.

From there we set out for our open exhibition to the sonosphere, on the common ground of academia, to approach the plural richness of the sonorous-musical existence, and to seek to make sense of the singularity of our discourses and the authenticity of our lives.

Although we have not yet left there, as we said, it is time to let go of some of the thought adventures that we have recorded. Here they take the form of an essay, thus designated by the questioning in the epigraph, and which has in sonorous otherness an inexhaustible source of inspiration and exaltation, exposed and expanded now, as we listen to the reinforcement of voices from E. Levinas, J. Derrida, Rosi Braidotti, Karen Barad, Franz Boas, Isabelle Kalinowski, G. Deleuze, G. Agamben, Mark Fisher, Kofi Agawu, Pascal Quignard, Mieke Bal, Peter Pál Pelbart and a few more.

In this essay, we realise that between the thinker-musician-creator-art education teacher who starts something and the reader-receiver who interprets it, an indefinite number of relationships tend to increase. If so, between the stage and the audience, between the thought sound and the felt body, between the classroom and the academic gathering, countless thoughts-events also grow, which sometimes bring us closer and sometimes distance us from the relationships between musicians, creators, and listeners.

In any case, it is necessary not to unravel the web composed between all of us. It is, so to speak, forbidden to undo or misalign it, as this is what remains for us to survive the triviality of geometric and linear thought, precisely the one that crushes us every passing hour and brutally vulgarises and labels sonorous otherness as a rude and dispensable threat.

Music, when it truly is, does not merely lean on our bodies. It enters them immeasurably, carving its path within us like a lightning bolt that, through the constituent intensity of its otherness, takes us by storm. And this only happens when the strange coexists with the familiar.

0.1 Shadow, Arts Education, and Cryptic Pedagogy

What we demand, therefore, is an education in which the artistic imposes its shadow. Such a premise calls upon us a conception of the “artistic”, whose sphere compels us to act directly on the sense of our place in the social, political, artistic, and educational arena. Indeed, whatever the idea of art and education, we want to believe that both constitute a gesture of philosophical-political reaction against the mechanisms of domination and naturalisation of our thought.

The cultural right to create and collectively engage in processes of critical profanation of that fundamental gesture which is “to create” – especially in a contemporary world that fetishises the discourse of creativity in the name of a future that is given to us to consume – requires us to question the ontological and phenomenological sense, primordial, we might say, of that impulse of knowledge which is the desire for the artistic. But such a desire cannot be pursued ignoring the shadow, as Mario Perniola (2006) would say, which inseparably accompanies the production of works, the artistic operations, and their discourses.

“The more violent the light that one intends to cast on the work and the artistic operation,” writes Perniola, “the sharper the shadow projected” (Perniola, 2006, p. 8). This means that “the more daylight-like and banalising the approach made to the artistic experience, and in this case, to the experience of music, the more its essence retreats and protects itself in the shadow” (ibid.). This obliges us to see the naivety present in the discourses of arts education, in the practice of teaching, and in arts and music research. But naivety lies not only in ignoring the shadow but also in using the defence of aesthetics as a weapon against the normalisation of art. In truth, according to Perniola, we face a double naivety – that which identifies art as an object (objectuality) and that which, reinforced by a climate of consensus, consists of understanding art “diluted in life”, as an instrument of communication. So, how to operate in the context of such reductions?

By entering the shadow of art, what we begin to do is react against the orders of goodness and harmony with which science and art have taught us to think. This means that by inhabiting a place of shadow, by incorporating that place in us, in our body, in our subjective action – because the shadow lives beneath us, it is the crypt – there is something that starts to implicate us, stirs our living force, disturbs us, destabilises us.

We believe that this confrontation is the essential confrontation with a pedagogy of the precarious and the fragile, a place from which we can relate to the rest, to waste, to all that is of the order of the disposable and the particular. Hence, the following observation is imposed: What will we be able to know through this cryptic pedagogy? Because “the ‘shadow’”, Perniola continues, “does not place itself in an adversarial position, but as the holder of a knowledge and a feeling that only it can achieve and that disappears as soon as the intense light seeks to replace it” (Perniola, 2006, p. 11).

Let us then ask again: What are the possibilities, today, for a cryptic experience of the artistic? What are the possibilities, today, of inhabiting a musical art education whose logic is less challenged by the clarity of things, and more by what remains of the light? Can art – and our relationship with culture and education – mean such an experience?

[1] Nomadic Listening

(...) I listen more and more with my imagination. I want my music to cast sounds and calls beyond what is heard or can be heard. I want my ears to learn to listen with the utmost clarity.

Maria Gabriela Llansol in *Ensaio de música*, LisboaLeipzig, Ed. Assírio & Alvim, 2014, p. 248

Music, all of it, is the living and pulsating permanence of the *arché* in us. There is in it a distant, unnameable, and formless secret that subterraneously exposes what still subsists in us, arising from the vanished sounds that inhabit us.

If it were to be prescribed a science, it should be designated as “*hauntology*”, a concept that Derrida² and Mark Fisher³ would approve. Here, this is understood as the deconstruction of the concept of sonic ontology, allowing us to be more attentive to the spectral trace of sound in its vibrational materiality, and less to its own metaphysical presence exposed by the phonocentrism⁴ of the positivist logos that dominates almost everything we do when we wish to speak about sound.

All music, hence, the auditory crick in our neck when we are affected by it, is uterine and predisposes us and prepares us for the return to the pre-linguistic, the amniotic site and place of babbling, a time and space proper to enunciating the world without object.

Music, sound, and listening could then be thought of as our fictional attempt to return to the affect, to the sensitivity of the *infans* we once were, in our desiring projection, dedicated to our past futurity, paradoxical as this may seem.

It is from this future anterior that music is made and, therefore, we should be available to negotiate with Orpheus who will pay the bill for such a demand, and attentive and unavailable to any action arising from a cultural machine that only extracts, for its own delight and interest, illusory effects of ourselves.

The reason is to test the strength to give to the metaphysics of absence⁵, in its dialogue with sonorous otherness⁶, as if the relationship with it were that fundamental epistemic leap to be taken by those who observe the world in its ethical and aesthetic condition, in a responsible and simultaneously bold way.

We are thus faced with an approach in the form of becoming that critically views the logocentrism and phonocentrism we are accustomed to. This is a very comfortable position given the hierarchical and hegemonic tendency that prevails in this part of the world in which we live.

The Western edifice has lived like this for too long, and it is time to question it, to provoke a stutter in its discourse and, perhaps, to force it to rethink itself, by demanding unconditional hospitality⁷ from it. It is urgent to clear away the categorisations it exposes daily, provoking a setback, by adopting a position of action and different and nomadic⁸ listening in its handling of the world. Spreading our ears around this world is precisely based on this assumption. Yet, even knowing that listening is itself a victim of successive captures, managed by the politics of sonic training, it is necessary to spread different and nomadic ears as a practice of micro-utopian obstruction.

1.1 Can We Envision a Nomadic, Transhumant Arts Education?

In the “Lecture on Nothing”, Cage writes: “I remember loving sound before I had ever taken a music lesson. Then we pattern our lives by what we love” (Cage, 2023, p. 18). The relationship between poetry, music, word, and sound is not only the sole basis for understanding but also the most profound, in the context of the mythologies that ground us, the “violence of music itself”, as Nietzsche considers in the context of tragedy. Such an intricate web does not presuppose any idea of a path – “Now our poetry is the understanding that we possess nothing. Everything then will be a pleasure (since we do not possess it) and we should not fear its loss” (p. 8), returning to Cage.

On the contrary, if we are willing to engage in a nomadic arts education – and in that task which is to think about art and education from the crisis of their relations – we will be led to rethink the meaning of our own discourses and, above all, their failures of truth. Such an exercise evokes in us a role, a form of intervention, as Ortega y Gasset (2018) would say now, that is, a gesture of commitment capable of resisting a critique that subjects arts education to a humanising and humanistic operation.

In arts education, such an imperative imposes on us the need for dissonances between the unspeakable and the speakable, between the power of the inscrutable and the cruelty of the visible. Our *dissonant* desire does not correspond, however, to a mere will to know, that is, to subjectivise everything we know to be of the order of the objective, and which is part of the world of art. It seems that no one desires to be saved by art any more, even though the narratives and discourses we produce in arts education continue to emerge from that kind of orthodoxy that makes us all “idyllic shepherds”, as in one of the figures alluded to by Nietzsche.

It is by knowing of the existence of many of these focal points of resistance that we are here, in academia, to test a protagonism alongside them. Or rather, our task is to compose an insistent agonism – this is the case of arts education – in the production of a collective reading of the discontinuities to be operated in our pedagogical practices, and by fostering dissensions, even in the midst of the existing artistic archive.

[2] Sonorous Otherness in the World

The sociocultural reality of the present time is very complex and demands a discernment and intellectual involvement from all of us which is capable of bringing it to the forefront, putting it into perspective. Arrangements need to be proposed that fuel our work with energetic commitment, adept enough to combine our conceptual concerns with direct, concrete, and committed actions towards the world that surrounds us.

In this circumstance, we can ask where the things we do are. Where are our fabrications? When the possible has been surpassed by the spectacle of sameness, what remains of that noise within us, and what prevents us from expanding the universe of symbolic sound? In the harshness of these conditions, it is fitting to declare that our life will never be obscene if we sonically and musically reject impostures, injustices, and shamelessness.

In our case, when we work on music and its repertoire, we have been arduously and persistently escaping the semantic prison that confines sounds to an idealisation, let us say Platonic, which does not allow them to create significant spaces and times between the sensible and the artistic that touch everyone.

In a kind of cautious and prolonged *ars longa*⁹, we establish a relationship with sounds that can be framed within the Nietzschean concept of *amor fati*¹⁰, a place of aesthetic experience with sounds, where their destiny is not a fatality. On the contrary, it is more of a challenge where music becomes a poetic manifestation, constructed at the same time by calculation and by the wings that sounds contain within themselves.

By spreading ears around the world, we are asking everyone, without exception, to do the same. Why? Let us respond with another question: Were sounds born to dissolve into multiple listenings? Is that their ontology? If not, what purpose would repetition and difference between sounds serve? Here we find a fragility in the logos that attempts to parameterise it, infecting it in its pursuit of sounds: it only follows them to lend diversity.

This is how the logos allows us – here is the good news – to advance beyond the known, by experiencing the sounds that excite the ears scattered around the world, welcoming them in the space-time of the unlimited which it itself constitutes. At this moment, we do not know where to find the logos of listening, but we suspect that it will never be in the ear. The ear, more like the foetal image of a human body, tends to be more of a nomadic oracle of the senses than anything else.

To the voracious machinery of culture, we counterpose a concept of music – perhaps even post-music – in an ontological instability, testing the power of its restlessness, dedicated to the overflight of ideas, objects, sounds, and impulses.

Spreading ears, a mutant and precarious strategy, resembles not a philosophy, but a thinking poetics that asks music to reveal itself in its essence. With this spreading of ears, we speak of a sonorous and profane epiphany, whose nature, if we may call it that, allows us to access the fragments of the sounds of the world equitably, rescuing them from the margins where they live.

2.1 Spreading ears

Spreading ears constitutes here a poetics, a poetics that is a poem woven by a “carpet of water”, as Thomas Bernhard puts it. Arts education thus begins to inhabit a place of nowhere, a constant return to that place of contentment, which is nothing, made of intervals and “solitary communities”, which, by seeking nothing, become something. As Cage says, “we are always arriving at nowhere”, but “carrying our home within us” (p. 10).

This home corresponds to a place of conflict with which we begin to cohabit, but which implicates us in the production of a “paradoxa”, reintroducing here the term of Deleuze (2000), whose reality can no longer be measured by the “goodwill” of reason and its natural method of thinking. But if we find ourselves in a place that is critical of criticism itself, “how, in the end, do we escape the game of mirrors?” (id., p. 264), we ask with Deleuze.

Deleuze uses Artaud’s writing to position himself before a thought whose potency is recognised in its own “difficulty”; it is the “collapse” and the “fissure” – the “natural impotence” (id., p. 251) of the being that is thought there. Such recognition seems relevant in the exercise of thinking about an arts education capable of resisting the colonising narratives of art and education, whose *apparatus* fixes criticism in an act that attributes to thought a single set of “civil states” considered from the viewpoint of a law and a

nature of fact. Thinking well, and in a world that is always better, is, in this respect, a symptom of such an operation, which involves using the instruments of aesthetics, science, and behaviour (for example, psychology) as forms of legitimising the act of thinking itself.

The exercise of criticism, in art and arts education, is subordinated to a logic of divergence, which is almost always seen as contrary to convergence. But the problem “is not to direct, nor methodically apply, a preexisting thought by nature and by right” (id., p. 252). On the contrary, Deleuze continues, “it is to make what does not yet exist be born (...). Thinking is creating, there is no other creation, but creating is, above all, engendering, ‘thinking’ in thought” (id., *ibid.*).

The musical present that inhabits us today lives in us because it is pregnant with futures, but much affected by the past. It is in this present that we place our hope of becoming more available for the discernment that comes to us, granted by musical and sonorous otherness.

With this gesture, we move towards a joyful, but not innocent, availability capable of escaping the chronological and hierarchical line of time, letting ourselves be enchanted by *achrony*¹¹, or even by *panchrony*¹², which happens when the instant begins to listen to the infinite.

Spreading ears across the world takes the infinite as its motto by asserting that the past no longer survives what it was, what happened. In a new context, this hegemonic past assumes itself as something posthumous, as a fleeting and passing apparition. Thus, this questioning becomes a kind of method without a system capable of proposing inquiries into the unexpected that exists in the relationship between sound, art, and nature, arguments composed in direct contact, face to face, with the face of the Other, of otherness.

[3] The post-music¹³

Thus, we find ourselves with a voracious appetite in the search for the unfixed, the unstable, speculating on a common ground about the concepts that promote errant yet incisive inquiry into the sensitivity of which we are made. Is this a direct representation of post-humanity, including post-music within its embrace?

We do not yet know, but we are already marked by the inquiry into the sensitive ways of thinking on and making music openly, considering this very gesture in the haptic way of listening to the world. Because of this, at the end of the day, we will realise that music will be no more than a hypothesis of experiencing another kind of knowledge, in a utopian action designed between us and reality.

Let us imagine post-music as a shelter, or temporary respite, to distance ourselves from the vicissitudes of contemporaneity and postmodernism. It ceases to be merely the resonance of this time to become, opportunely, untimely and futuristic in the present we have. Let us imagine ourselves again as someone who becomes immune, perhaps because they are in academia, to the indifference with which all of us are infused by this contemporary way of living.

In testing this immunity, we realise that the music, the post-music we are now preparing, comes from an intimate need to invoke concept-words that name the figures that threaten us and, because of this, dare to draw a horizon of freedom.

We are faced with another music, a music that anticipates resistances to comfortable and established sound, and gives us access to the best of ourselves, by not reducing us to mere survival.

There is an imaginary vitality in each of us that can bring out the multiple tonalities we are made of. Each of us is a multitude, and this confusion – Godard called it our music – is that orchestration that allows us to distinguish, record, and announce the existing soundtrack in the world.

Given a sociocultural reality as complex as ours, we are required to engage even more deeply to measure these complexities. It is here that we think of post-music as a cartographic rather than merely ethnographic action. We say this because we consider that there are significant critical conditions involving the human, which clearly affect their affects and percepts. Here is where post-music advances, associating with the post-humanist movement stemming from Rosi Braidotti¹⁴ and Karen Barad¹⁵. It distances itself from the universalist humanism that took the human for granted, as a centre of gravity, celebrating a concept about which there is no rigour and promoting hegemonies and hierarchies that narrow both human beings and their artistic manifestations.

Post-music, in this sense, becomes an experimental field where sound is detached from its traditional functions and reimaged as a force capable of destabilising existing narratives. It embraces the instability and multiplicity of contemporary existence, offering a critique of the fixed, linear conceptions of music that dominate our cultural and educational systems.

In conclusion, post-music represents a radical shift in how we understand and engage with music and sound. It challenges us to rethink our relationships with the sonic world, encouraging a more fluid, dynamic, and inclusive approach to artistic creation and education. Through this lens, we can explore new possibilities for human expression and understanding, ultimately contributing to a more diverse and equitable cultural landscape.

3.1 Post-music: an exploration of sensibility and arts education

Post-music, to use Cage's term again, is "micro-macrocosmic" (p. 12). It intertwines with matter, form, or tonality, but its vitality is sentimental, lacking any truth, goodness, or greatness in society. This "nothingness" is of interest in the exercise of an arts education that, like music, sounds, and noises – entities that predate knowledge and are perpetually in transit – needs the *transhumance of practices and discourses to survive*. To what extent can we think of this arts education within the expanded sphere of art? Does it make any sense? What is the nature of the not-knowing in arts education?

An expanded conception of art, using the terms of Italian philosopher Mario Perniola (2016), has been establishing itself on both a global and local scale, bringing art closer to techno-science and reconfiguring its conceptual and constitutive logic according to what we might call imposed superficiality.

In a time of compulsive fusions and fascination with new multimedia aesthetics, this conception is not immune to the influence of contemporary neoliberal forces aligned with this exponential hyperactivity, whose policies affect the meaning of artistic knowledge, especially concerning its contexts of production and observation. There has been a massive proliferation of art biennials, markets, fairs, and artistic and musical festivals (*luna parks*), with the emergence of cultural industries focusing on the creative and its various applications in an art economy, along with the consolidation of managerial and regulatory logics of the "art world". These phenomena, despite having distinct impacts, have been transforming the artistic

into a negotiable field of relation with the real, understood either from an essential point of view (art as work), an instrumental one (art as playful manifestation), or even a communicational one (art as a public object).

The naivety evident in these three positions lies in a common search for totality, whose language allows us to speak of art in the “singular”. It ignores the metamorphoses, experimentalism, and new regimes of artistic formation that currently challenge pre-established disciplinary boundaries and the atmospheres in which art transits in a profoundly intriguing way. With the emergence of new visual, plastic, and techno-performative configurations, traditional notions of art are altered, while at the same time political positions within artistic practices diminish in the face of the impulse of fashion and its subsequent inorganic anaesthesia. Given such a scenario, where can we find a sense for the sensitive today? What operations are now involved in constructing artistic authorship?

An aesthetic of contemplation is therefore imposed on an aesthetic of estrangement and alterity. Both serve an experience of difference, less immediate, radically opposed to the pragmatism of art’s affectivity and emotionality, and consequently inscribed in a gesture of suspension (*epoché*). Through this, we neither deny nor affirm anything—only the enigma, the mystery, and the shadow come to sustain our gaze and the artistic judgment that emerges from it.

Consequently, a conception of the shadow – inherent to art, experience, and *aisthesis* – also accompanies the construction of an image of the contemporary, which we retrieve from Agamben (2009). In its significant ambiguity, art and shadow form a phenomenological experience, through which we no longer direct our gaze to the artistic objects “in themselves”; it is rather the consciousness, and its acts of knowledge, that produce the intersubjectivity necessary for the difference, the parody, and the eroticism that the particularity of art can exert in us in a way that goes beyond the aura and its reproducibility. Hence, the expanded field of art is giving rise to contemporary artistic and musical practices linked to both the power of not knowing and the potency of non-neutrality in social, cultural, and political terms, within which education and its various agents seek to activate processes of an anti-monumental, anti-classist, and anti-colonialist order.

The ecology of art and education, viewed through the lens of the expanded field, embodies a socially committed arts education. That is, the game of educational practices corresponds to a game of forming commitments, where the dialectic of contemporary artistic and musical experience is no longer a dialectic of winners and losers – it is, instead, a dialectic that challenges the banalisation of culture, incorporating the leftover, the precarious, the waste, the particular, the mourning. In this sense, many contemporary issues in arts education are based on ruptures, rifts, and conflicts – whether of a philosophical order (and its aesthetic resurgence), political (as a guarantee of freedom, equality, and social justice), or disciplinary, especially regarding the sense that artistic knowledge can reacquire in an intrinsic relationship with educational practices.

By exploring the concept of post-music, we embark on a journey that seeks to redefine the boundaries of arts education. This journey challenges traditional frameworks, embracing the instability and multiplicity of contemporary existence. It calls for an education that is nomadic, transhumant, and perpetually in motion, engaging with the world in a way that is both critical and imaginative. This approach not only fosters a deeper understanding of the artistic process but also cultivates a sensitivity to the diverse and dynamic nature of the human experience. Through this lens, we can create a more inclusive and responsive educational landscape, one that is attuned to the complexities and nuances of our ever-changing world. We are talking here about a convergence to take place between post-humanist thought

and the *poiesis* of post-music, the right place for us to embark on an ethically, aesthetically, and politically committed action with a radical epistemology of democratic, antifascist, anti-racist, and anti-hegemonic nature, in its clear purpose of asserting that the human is anything but a neutral concept.

So, what does post-music need to manifest itself?

It needs to activate convergences between post-humanist critical thought and the musical performativity stemming from communities of creators, performers, and free listeners, putting their sonic-musical thinking and action at the service of everyone in a nomadic and rhizomatic environment.

Post-music will always be that which is aware that the choices it makes are political hypotheses arising from a specific cultural formation. Furthermore, in our particular circumstance, it dares to question essentialism – the case of the binary question of erudite/popular in music – and the reduction of the complexity of sound phenomena, for example, the devastating case of world music.

Post-music only needs to make its presence felt in our bodies by affecting us with the sound materialities patented by its creations. It will suffice, then, for us to imagine a community of free and becoming listeners, something that will demand presence and action from it.

In this other community, we will then be ready to quench our thirst for experimenting with other ways of thinking and making music: this is the reason for the presence of the concept of musical otherness here, which advances, in our case, right in the core of the academic context.

For this to manifest, it is important to make singular discourses audible, as seen in the case, to give just two examples, of Isabelle Kalinoswoski who, in *La Melodie du Monde*, Ed. Philharmonie de Paris (2023), invites us to observe music in context from the perception of differences, and Kofi Agawu who, in *L'Imagination Africaine en Musique*, Ed. Philharmonie de Paris (2020), gives us an account of the richness and diversity constituting African sonority. Both of them, in distinct ways, populate our thinking with an atmosphere close to the ontology of difference, and this has given us food for thought.

These two examples would be enough for us to dare to imagine the gesture of spreading ears around the world, just like an antidote to stem the civilisational malaise caused by the forced verticality of hegemonic cultures.

[4] Right Now, and Almost Finishing...

In this text, we put our conditions of creation, interpretation, and reception in music under tension. We hide the underlying question of this essay – how can we understand what we do not know without resorting to the already known? – in a fabric woven between the concepts of sonic otherness, nomadic listening, and post-music, wondering whether our indefatigable curiosity must always be synonymous with usurpation.

From this reflection, we are left with the idea that it is worthwhile to combine what has already been heard with what has not yet been heard, in the hope of being able to remake – this is our micro-utopia – the profile of existing music.

For this, we need to embrace the sonic that has always been marginalised, by questioning the canons and endowing music – behold post-music – with the strength of multiplicity, porosity, and strangeness arising

from sonic otherness, which can be rehearsed from a device – a war machine we now call the aesthetic literacy of otherness.

Let us explain: music is non-historical, and this tells us a lot about its condition. To create is always to betray what exists around us, as each act of creation contains a future that does not yet fit within the present we have.

When we talk about post-music, we are talking about the anterior futurity it contains, for it forces us to feel it as a negation of the finite. Post-music is a sonic case of excess, as it is capable of being unfaithful to the culture and history that subtracts it.

When we now speak of the aesthetic literacy of otherness, we are at the epicentre of an epistemic hurricane because we know that no two listenings are the same. Because of this, we suspect that there are also no two places of speech that are the same. If so, why do we not propose plural ways of understanding the world around us and let ourselves be ensnared by the one-way street of hierarchical comfort of sameness?

By advocating for the device of the aesthetic literacy of otherness, we are calling on all of us to exercise disobedience to the canon and affirm that listening is no longer just obeying (to *listen* in Latin means to *obey*).

4.1 *Emerging ontologies against banality*

In this sense, knowledge, that desire to know, contains a potency whose relationship depends neither on teaching nor on learning. It is precisely from within a “tangle of landscapes”, recalling the Portuguese poet Herberto Helder, that we seek to listen to ourselves in a singular community because our thinking is in a permanent relationship with all the noises and references that live within us. Such noises are part of a thought whose singularity is, above all, an object of our own world-making, yet hostage to that operation of humanisation to which schooling incessantly seeks to give rise. Faced with such salvific forces, what, therefore, will be the commitment of art in its relationship with teaching? What agreement is it seeking? What are its justifications?

We believe that such questions instigate the field of arts education beyond its aura, and beyond accommodation to a rhetoric of genius, taste, admiration, or competence. Everything that is of the order of the symbolic is difficult, requires laborious articulation, returning to Perniola, and this is why such an order can be profoundly transformative for those who speak and those who listen. In the place of the shadow, our relationship with the rest is implicit, and such a relationship, which is different from the relationship with knowledge transmitted by teaching and the relationship with knowledge singularised by the artist, requires us to take a position that is not only political but also deeply fragmentary and discordant within itself. It is this idea of considering precariousness that interests us in the practices of arts education. It is, above all, what this idea elicits in us, and not so much the idea or ideas themselves. Such a gesture helps us to identify the reifying forces that the discourses of arts education are imbued with and the practices of normativity that invariably attack us.

We are motivated by a certain temporality, a melancholy towards a time in which we do not recognise ourselves: the time when our future is shown to us; the time when, in the field of art, images, and music, the mix of reality and abstraction is infinitely explored by informational products; the time when critical discourses are accused of being too cynical and therefore always relative; the time when the

meaning of our action in the world – as educators, teachers, artists, researchers – is produced based on positions that seem to exclude any need for justification (especially political); the time when listening and listening to ourselves – the condition of freedom and democracy – lives in a space that is the space of the *establishment* and mass communication; the time, finally, in which, in a very Manichean way, opinions reproduce the dominant relations of power, disguising experiences and processes of critical emancipation whose content, in effect, we continue to desire in artistic education and research practices. Therefore – what do we think? How do we think? And why do we think? Do we think autonomously or are we thought? How do we build the freedom of thought and our choices? Such questions lead us to think about the figures, roles, and names we give to things – it is the relationship with education, with learning, and with the teaching of art and music that here is revealed to be problematic because such relationships are not given by the nature of things in themselves; they will always be *oscillating potentials*.

If we understand literacy as the interpretation we make of what we hear, if we think of aesthetics as the attention we give to the impact exerted on us by the way sounds reach us, and if we understand otherness as that which comes from the Other, or even from the self-in-the-Other as different, unknown, we can then claim a regime of academic work dedicated to the sharing of the sensible.

This is a game dedicated to the not-yet-felt that projects itself well beyond the political, social, and educational fields, a place where the Other should already be coexisting with us. This is a matter of urgency, and we are already late, very late.

Without concluding, we move forward with the purpose of listening to the human landscape, not as a background sound, but more as a unifying feature with the sonic diversity of the world, making sound a hybrid, future-oriented concept.

For later discussion, there remains the hypothesis of seeing post-music as that which does not wish to practise human monoculture, perhaps because in post-humanity – we know well that music cannot stand alone in this desire – we want to reduce the prevailing autistic humanism to the smallest species and proclaim the *diaspora of sounds* by spreading ears across the world.

Now the petit bourgeois no longer wants to listen. With a flick of the ears, this idea is dismissed. What an annoying fly this idea is.

Aimé Césaire, "Discourse on Colonialism", Ed. Vs, p. 31, Vilarinho das Cambas, 2023

Notes

1. The "Other" is considered here from a porous, hybrid, and multiple perspective, as an element expelled from a logocentric sonic world that tends to excessively, and at times violently, favour sameness. This attitude has been the cause of a reductive conception of the world of music, reified through exclusionary and marginalising criteria, which is identified here as a criticisable arbitrary category. This becomes problematic when glorified within a power ideology that consistently promotes procedural linearities, enabling the exploitation of binary, dichotomous, and exclusionary notions of truth.

2. Derrida introduces the term "hauntology" in *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* (Routledge, 1994, p. 202), proposing it as follows: "To haunt does not mean to be present, and it is necessary to introduce haunting into the very construction of a concept".

3. Mark Fisher, in "Ghosts of My Life" (Ed. Vs, 2020, p. 47), addresses this Derridean concept, expressing the idea that it refers to "the way in which nothingness enjoys a purely positive existence".
4. By phonocentrism, we understand the emphasis placed on sound through the excessive weight of the logos, a focus that prevents the observation of music and sounds in their multifaceted existence.
5. Western tradition situates presence and cosmic reason as the locus of forms. The metaphysics of absence we introduce here asserts that this is insufficient to approach the real, a notion claimed by Derrida in *Writing and Difference* (Ed. Perspectiva, 2019, p. 9), where he states: "only pure absence (...) can inspire, (...)." This evokes a notion of implicative resonance, a breath, a pneuma, which we seek to align with the hauntological strategy in order to approach the (ir)real of sound.
6. Here, we adopt the concept of otherness, which we qualify as "sonic", drawing from Levinas in *Totality and Infinity* (Ed. 70, 2023, p. 7) in his approach to the Other as the face of the infinite, and from Derrida in *Writing and Difference* (Ed. Perspectiva, 2019, pp. 129–143), where alterity is conceived as presence and the manifestation of absence.
7. In Derrida, unconditional hospitality involves a dual action: responding to the call for hospitality while creating conditions for welcoming the Other, under circumstances yet to be determined. The Levinasian influence here is substantial.
8. The concept of the nomad is introduced here at the intersection of Deleuze's philosophical explorations in *A Thousand Plateaus* (Ed. Assírio & Alvim, 2007, pp. 447–494), Mieke Bal's concerns with intercultural analysis in *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities: A Rough Guide* (University of Toronto Press, 2002), and Isabel Kalinowski's ethnomusicological perspective on expanded listening in *La mélodie du monde* (Ed. Philharmonie de Paris, 2023, pp. 131–139). We venture here to engage human listening through this specific lens.
9. This is the desire to extend the rapture and impact of the arts in the world.
10. The wisdom of affirming life, even in the worst circumstances. *Amor fati*, a distinctly Nietzschean concept, seeks a profound aesthetic relationship with our existence by expressing the idea that destiny is not a mere inevitability but a challenge. This involves accepting the finitude and incompleteness that define us. It is not a resignation but rather a joyful adjustment to our lives, enabling us to continue affirmatively.
11. *Acronia* here denotes what is abstracted from time, that which becomes timeless or occurs outside of a specific temporal framework.
12. *Pancronia* points to the possibility of a multiplicity of possible times within a particular moment.
13. The neologism we use to focus on the conditions of musical creation, interpretation, and reception at the precise moment we speak. From these conditions, we reflect on the historical subject we are, as we dare to announce the metaphorical paradox inherent in creating, interpreting, and receiving a sound: we are, in fact, simultaneously both midwives and birthers of the sound. *Post-music* lives precisely in this space: in the prior future of sound and in the transhumance of music.
14. Rosi Braidotti (1954–), an Italian philosopher and lecturer at Utrecht University, emerges from the tradition of Continental philosophy. Her research explores how to think about difference and

what it means to move beyond dialectics. Her work reflects an ethical concern, which can be read in *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics* (2006, Cambridge Polity Press) and *The Posthuman* (2013, Cambridge Polity Press).

15. Karen Barad (1956–), an American theoretical physicist, advocates for “agential realism”, a framework for understanding a new formulation of causality related to new materialism. Her work resonates with the ideas of Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, Jacques Derrida, and Walter Benjamin.

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