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Book Review

Musical Encounters with Deleuze and Guattari

Edited by Pirkko Moisala, Taru Leppänen, Milla Tiainen and Hanna Väättäinen
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Musical Encounters with Deleuze and Guattari assembled by Finnish editors, Pirkko Moisala, Taru Leppänen, Milla Tiainen and Hanna Väättäinen, University of Helsinki, brings together a richly-laden volume of carefully selected individual essays that are based on the involved authors' fieldwork projects and textual matter. The edited volume is one of the major outputs of the Academy of Finland -funded project, "Deleuzian Music Research" (Academy of Finland 2012–2016), whose core team was comprised of the volume's four editors. The book combines a diverse field of thinkers, cultural theorists, musicologists and contributors in music and sound mediums and is divided into three thematic sections: *Elaborations, Events and Experiments* in Deleuzian music research. Challenging the conceptual underpinnings of historical music theory, the book also introduces Deleuzian-Guattarian key terms that recur throughout the chapters. The individual essays feature a wide diversity of thematic fields and areas of music and sound research: performance and sound theory, somatics, bio-science, ethics, neuroscience, contemporary healing practices, ethnomusicology, jazz and popular music, Western opera, disability studies, dance movement and cultural studies.

The contributing authors examine the methodological implications of the French philosophers, Deleuze and Guattari's conceptual ideas in a musician's arrangement, a live event or a collective or participatory entangle-

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ment, or in improvisational styles of musicking that are explored as a ‘musical encounter.’ All of these authors critically expand on Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts, sharing contemplative ruminations through their situated creative research practices. The entire anthology focuses on transposing musicality actively at play and emergent, converging working sonically and vibrationally in moments where a musical encounter can be sensed with its power to “affect.” Indeed, *affect* is one of the key concepts that interweave with *becoming* in Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophical work. This conceptualization of affect, which describes the basic dimension of encounters between two or more entities, is critically introduced by the editors of *Musical Encounters with Deleuze and Guattari*: “to influence each other’s states of being” while affect also means the entities’ attendant “transitions from one state and capacity of being to another” (12).

This expansive concept is principally characterized in all its complexities in Deleuze and Guattari’s perhaps most widely resonant book, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (trans. B. Massumi, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), which is mentioned numerous times throughout the book’s chapters. The chapters elaborate on the transition and altered state Deleuze and Guattari associate with affect by exploring what different entities undergo, and in what ways, as a result of musical and sonic encounters. In most essays, this component is the prevailing melodious subject of the contributing authors.

What is described through the perspective of affect—that is, all the phenomena, forces, intensities and materialities that are constantly formed and reformed as music and musical experience within their mutual encounters and relations—is fundamental to this book because it gives the reader an abundant source of understanding exploratory new sensations, experiences, ideas and modes of being in particular musical encounters or musical and sounding processes that are intersected with Deleuze and Guattari’s thinking. For example, in Chapter (9), author, Michelle Duffy proposes that it is not what participants can tell us about sound collections that are important, “it is the affective, bodily and intuitive processes that constitute self and place” and allow us “our varied and multiple entries into the sound world” (200).

Author of Chapter (10), Hanna Väätäinen, partners with Anneli Tiilikainen, a dance enthusiast who has a visual impairment. Väätäinen explores how to use movement as an analytical tool in music and dance research by observing the forms, colours, temperatures and sounds of the materials in the given space. The collaborative dancing of Väätäinen and Tiilikainen

concentrated on the characteristics of space through the movements and sounds they discovered in their fieldwork to develop a way of creating concepts by using movement improvisation, a form of contemporary dance. In the chapter, this form of dance is approached as an ethnographic and Spinozan-Deleuzian method of forming common notions. For Väätäinen, common notions are influential as not necessarily words but ways of moving and conceiving in relation to something else: a piece of music, a research subject or a material and social space and especially dancing bodies. Väätäinen extends her material thinking in relation to Baruch Spinoza's book on "Ethics" and later, Deleuzian concepts in relation to adequate ideas posited in the book *Ethics* (Spinoza II/P.40 Schol. 2, P.43 Schol. 1677).

Whether singular or collaborative, new ways of thinking about contemporary creative practices are explained in the chapters across many forms of existence, oftentimes through the Deleuzian approach to "becomings" in the form of an "assemblage" which signals the potential a particular entity or material can come to have or enact when intra-connected with temporal-space-time connections and entangled with sociocultural forces at work. Ultimately, the concept of becoming saturates the whole ontological approach of this book and its openness to process and difference, that is, to becoming with each musical encounter. In the authors' transcripts, there will always be something new emerging, reconfiguring, diffracting from these musical elements which come together and vibrate for just that moment, providing increasing attention to all the differences and unpredictability that are noticed in a musical event and the active agency of matter (human and non-human) or entities of matter as forces intra-acting (a new materialist approach) together. In chapter (3), Jay Hammond singles out Deleuze's concept of the rhizome in order to understand the temporal dimension of race through an ethnography of jazz culture in the USA. Like the "Black Lives Matter" movement, Hammond asks us to think of race as both embodied and historical. 'To be black in America' is to live under a conception of time that is not your own.

In addition, many of the contributing authors emphasize the Dutch philosopher and mystic, Baruch Spinoza as previously mentioned, in relation to the *mind-body* relationship and Spinoza's respective notions of affect and affection. Author, Marie Thompson, in Chapter (7), highlights that much of Deleuze's work, including that with Guattari, is underpinned by a Spinozan metaphysics. Most of the authors, including Thompson, propose extended understandings of what music is by paying attention to musical events' multisensory, more than aural, not yet actualized (in Deleuze and Guattari's terms virtual), and vibratory beyond the human characteristics.

Taru Leppänen's Chapter (1) on the Deaf Finnish rap artist Signmark (Marko Vuoriheimo), whose album *Signmark* (2006) was the world's first rap album by a Deaf musician, opens with Signmark's childhood memory that invokes important questions about the notions of listening, music and their intra-relation. Someone who is totally deaf and blind can still hear and/or feel sounds. Therefore, Leppänen argues that Signmark's performances can be apprehended as *haptic* engagements with music as he describes his performances in terms of bodily vibrations. Audism, discrimination on the basis of the (in)ability to hear, is implicated in Signmark's musical memories. According to Leppänen, it is also discernible in much of music research, while a haptic and vibratory approach inspired by Deleuze and Guattari may help researchers to overcome this limiting and discriminatory perspective.

Active listening bodies have become a central theme in cultural and feminist musicology of recent decades, and Spinoza and Deleuze's non-anthropocentric notion of the body allows the reader to understand how an experimental music praxis affects and is affected by sound making, by encouraging a move beyond the binary between active musicking subjects and passive musical objects. Author, Elizabeth Gould, in Chapter (5) addresses this question in queer and pop music as forms of becoming in terms of creative acts of difference, by referencing a Deleuzian sense of constant positive difference that provides the ground on which identities are founded. Author, Pirkko Moisala's study in Chapter (6) emphasizes music as a communal activity in ways that build upon the ethnomusicological study of musical performance. In Moisala's approach, performances are not about an already existing people but "a people to come," in that site-specific musical encounters between human participants and their social relations, physical environments, the artefacts involved in the performance, are moulding the future and what it might be like for the community in question. Thus, musical encounters can change and transform a people's becoming, and vice versa.

In general, the essays of this volume may most appeal to practicing musicologists, performance-based researchers and experimental sound artists whose topics of study and audiovisual artworks intersect resonantly with aspects of the musical practices explored in the book, and with the current discourses of musicology, performance (art) studies and sonic improvisation. This is especially relevant in relation to strands of process philosophy, new materialism, and post-humanism; as *becoming* is an intra-active modality permeating musical events and meaning. The overarching question that the contributors invite us to contemplate is this: What can Deleuze and Guattari do for (or to) music encounters?

Thus, what is particularly of interest in this book is the exploration of the principle boundaries of Deleuze and Guattari-inspired music studies and the assimilation of sonic material that is traditionally rejected as “noise,” as well as reflection on the extent to which Deleuze and Guattari’s ideas apply to all music or, alternatively, evade some genres. For example, attention to the body of work by American musician and music theorist, John Cage, is particularly relevant in this respect. Author, Janne Vanhanen in Chapter (8) writes about the significance of listening, as creating a sonorous body, relational to Deleuzian philosophy where the author takes into consideration the auditory realm that emphasizes indeterminacy, improvisation or process, materiality of the sonic medium and goes beyond listening to traditional music forms. Vanhanen proposes: “To learn is to experiment. This is a most relevant point of view when thinking about the meaning and possible importance of experimental music” (184).

This model of expanded listening questions both the musical “object” and the practice, the *what* and *how* of listening. Can you listen to an idea? To a process unfolding? To sound as pure vibration? Vanhanen opens ways of constructing what he puts forward as ‘the Inorganized Ear’—a sonorous body without organs, a Deleuzian situation, where experience is not essentially categorized or organized but is encountered as a flow of intensities between bodies organic and inorganic out of which the experience of listening occurs.

Adding to the conceptual relations of new materialist and posthuman(ist) thinking in reading this book, one envisions a sense of intra-connection between self and others and a process of redefining one’s sense of attachment to a shared interconnected world. Author, Sally Macarthur in Chapter (2) is drawn to the idea of pursuing difference-in-itself, for such a feminist new materialist concept has the potential to transform real-world problems in music, since the Deleuzian micropolitics of becoming influences the ways in which music performs cultural work through its connections. For Macarthur, musical practices are culturally embedded, shaped by a multiplicity of conditions and interests.

This is something that is quite profound in today’s feminist materialist thinking, and it is highlighted by our current existence in a world undergoing a pandemic. It is particularly significant in relation to magnifying our relationship with nature, the sixth extinction and in ethnomusicological terms—the role of the sounds of our ecological surroundings in future musical encounters.

Author Milla Tiainen's primary aim in Chapter (4) is to explain how the concept of assemblage may also enhance our understanding of the currently changing material and social functions of artistic, including musical, performances in relation to environmental crises and the surge of non-human centric thinking. Tiainen elaborates on the interdisciplinary art project and immersive musical encounter, "The Algae Opera," by London-based designers and conceptual artists, Michael Burton and Michiko Nitta that comprises material and semiotic flows and connections. According to Tiainen, this art project is at once a machinic assemblage of material elements or processes and a semiotic system: a collective assemblage of enunciations. In addition to the concept of assemblage applied and expanded in the book, this suggestion is tied very much to the *Three Ecologies* by Félix Guattari (2000). In Guattari's view, the intra-relations across all the three levels—the environmental, the social, and the individual—need to be transformed in order to try and solve the current ecological crises. In her analysis of "The Algae Opera", Tiainen points to a potential future re-designing of our bodies which will enable us to live differently and acquire novel sensory experiences in connection with more sustainable food production practices and eating rituals which hopefully involve mutually beneficial interactions with bacteria, algae and other non-human biological systems of this world.

Finally, this book draws serious attention to the generative potential of the socio-cultural, material, non-human, and metaphysical dimensions of many kinds of experimental music through its topics. The multiplicity of musical practices and approaches is deeply revealed through these different assemblages that in turn affect the ways Deleuze and Guattari's thinking can be understood through and with musical encounters, since all concepts involve complexity and a search for a way to textually respond and amplify their dynamic intra-relations.