along the way, and, in addition to emphasizing the importance of place, all the contributions seek to bring out the critical and self-critical elements of ecocritical musicology. Together, we hope that the issues raised here encourage thoughtful scholarship in diverse areas, not only in the realm of a self-conscious ecomusicology as subfield but also as a tool in the greater musicological toolbox.

Music, Landscape, Attunement: Listening to Sibelius’s Tapiola

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Ecocriticism unfolds a complex and variegated panorama of interrelated domains of academic research, critical literature, and political activism. My own ecocritical excursions have been stimulated by the work of cultural geographers and literary scholars, and further by a series of conversations and exchanges sponsored by the Landscape and Environment Programme of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) in the U.K.¹ During such discussions, I have often felt like an outsider—an awkward and naive interloper, similar to the protagonist in E. M. Forster’s 1911 short story “The Other Side of the Hedge.” Forster’s hero is a rambler (that characteristically English mode of tourism and cultural mobility), who abandons the main highway to discover a green space beyond where he becomes bewitched by “the magic song of nightingales, and the odour of invisible hay, and stars piercing the fading sky.”² Forster’s story is about class and social convention. But the field/hedge model also offers a good starting point for understanding interdisciplinary research of the kind demanded by ecocriticism: as a geometric pattern of interlocking fields of knowledge, seemingly traversed by a network of individual paths which tempt the unwary scholar toward greener pastures on the other side of the boundaries (“hedges”) that separate disciplines.

The idea of landscape lies at the heart of ecocriticism, and hence is central to discussions about how an ecomusicology might be developed. I am acutely sensitive, however, to the ideological implications of my metaphor: the landscape of fields and hedges hymned by Forster refers to a specifically European tradition (principally English, but also the French “bocage,” whose Old French root “bosc” means “wood”). Since the eighteenth century, this tradition has conceived of landscape as an essentially visual, scopic, regime—as something seen or surveyed. It is a scene or prospect onto which historical events or characters can be projected. As part of this spectacle—the patterned

¹. See particularly the seminal collection by Leyshon et al., Place of Music; for a more recent interdisciplinary account, see Sanders, Cultural Geography of Early Modern Drama. Details of the AHRC program are available at http://www.landscape.ac.uk (accessed 25 March 2011).
play of figure and ground—music may be overheard (if it is not overlooked). Landscape here is representational—and also fundamentally constitutive. Its deceptive “second nature” (its sense of “naturalness” or “natural order”) conceals a complex narrative of power relations, domination, and ownership. A fundamental task of ecomusicology is to unpack such narratives and expose the ideological basis, through historical study and analysis, upon which such conventional ideas of music and landscape are built.

W. J. T. Mitchell and others have drawn attention strenuously to the ideological nature of landscape—the way in which it is intimately bound up with discourses of privilege, containment, and exclusion. Yet an alternative model is offered by a different etymology of the term: cultural geographer Kenneth Olwig shifts attention from the English scopic regime towards an older Scandinavian/northern European notion of landskab (“skabe” is the Danish verb “to work or create”). Landskab refers to ground that is cultivated, shaped, furrowed, or grooved (like the surface of a gramophone record). “Field” here is understood not as a “field of vision” but a zone of activity, shaped and encoded through practices of occupation—it is more properly a phenomenological category (encompassing Martin Heidegger’s mythic mode of being-in-the-world and Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of “habitus”) and a space of legal or political dominion. Music emerges as fundamentally performative—it refers to that which “takes place.” Ecomusicology’s revised task is to address the affective qualities of particular landscapes, to examine the physical and emotional responses that music induces in listeners and how they shape our view of the world (a paradigmatic example might be Stephen Feld’s influential work on songpaths in the Papua New Guinean rainforest).

This dynamic, phenomenologically engaged notion of landscape takes us far from the familiar homely images of the English Pastoral—the stereotypical (and misleading) image of cows leaning amiably over gates and composers rolling complacently in muddy fields. As Alexander Rehding argues in his contribution to this colloquy, a more compelling ecomusicological understanding of music’s relationship with ideas of landscape and environment is characterized by a sense of imminent crisis and danger. In the late 1960s, the Lithuanian-born Australian wilderness photographer Olegas Truchanas toured village halls and town theaters in Tasmania, campaigning against
government proposals to flood Lake Pedder, an environmentally unique inland freshwater lake bounded by a striking white quartzite beach in the south-west highlands, as part of the Gordon River Hydroelectric scheme. The campaign was ultimately unsuccessful; construction of the dam was completed in 1972, when the lake was permanently flooded. The same year, Truchanas was killed in a canoeing accident (a drama recast in Richard Flanagan’s 1997 novel Death of a River Guide). But the campaign symbolically marked the birth of the environmental movement in Australia, and the strength of political opposition led to the creation of the Truchanas Huron Pine Reserve, which protects a small stand of ancient trees previously threatened by logging. Among Truchanas’s activities to raise awareness among Tasmanian residents and politicians were slide shows of his photographs of Lake Pedder, accompanied with music by Sibelius and Delius. The choice of repertoire—principally, the finale of Sibelius’s Fifth Symphony—is significant because of Truchanas’s own Baltic/northern-European roots and the common association of Sibelius’s music with ideas of landscape. Truchanas’s slide shows offer a provocative series of readings in music and landscape: the ways in which a particular idea of landscape (the Northern European boreal forest) was exported (or, more figuratively, transplanted) to an Australian context; the ideological function of landscape and metaphors of wilderness; the role of landscape in Sibelius reception; and the significance of music and landscape in environmental activism—a process in which music frequently plays a central role.

Representations of landscape and nature are a celebrated, and profoundly problematic, characteristic of much early twentieth-century Nordic music. Commonly heard as exemplars of the picturesque, or as evocative local color, images of nature in Nordic music invite more radical interpretations that pose questions about the relationship between humans, sound, and nature. In this context, perhaps Sibelius’s final tone poem, Tapiola, might have offered a better soundtrack for Truchanas’s slide shows. Written in 1926 for Walther Damrosch and the New York Philharmonic, Tapiola has retrospectively gained a privileged position in Sibelius reception as his final large-scale orchestral work (the much-anticipated Eighth Symphony was never completed to the composer’s satisfaction and the manuscript presumably burned). The famous quatrain printed at the head of the score, which tells of “wood sprites in the gloom” weaving “magic secrets,” was most likely, as Tomi Mäkelä has argued, not penned by Sibelius himself, who strongly disliked such straightforwardly programmatic accounts of his music.8 Tapiola, according to Mäkelä, is more a Lisztian tone painting, a sound-portrait of the northern forest realm from the Finnish national epic, the Kalevala, which invokes notions of finality, blankness, and death. In this sense, the work belongs within an established cultural tradition: the idea of the forest as a mysterious twilight domain of primitive

folk custom and ritual sacrifice first promulgated in Tacitus’s classical account of the Teutowald, *Germania*.9

Sibelius’s tone poem offers a suitably bleak musical response to such patterns of representation. Opening with a characteristically Sibelian misfired cadence (an $E^7$ sonority treated locally as an augmented sixth chord), swept aside by a sudden octatonic rush like a gust of wind (mm. 21–25), the work unfolds a series of austere timbral transformations of these initial measures, brooding upon a restricted range of modal collections and elliptical thematic gestures. But the storm sequence with which the piece concludes prompts a more ambivalent ecocritical reading, a form of immersive audition in which the landscape ultimately consumes the listener.10 The storm serves as both telos, the summative return of an elementalized brass motif that underpins much of the score, and also as a point of no return, a moment of maximal dynamic and chromatic saturation.11 And in the strangely anguished outcry that prefaces its final measures (mm. 586–587), *Tapiola* directs our attention upwards, from the ground beneath our feet toward the turbulent air through which the sound itself seemingly moves. In the silence to which the storm inexorably leads, *Tapiola* obliterates its perceiving subject.

It is this model of a radically decentered subject position within the landscape that has attracted ethnologist Tim Ingold. As Ingold argues, the act of listening is essentially a sign of presence, a mode of being-in-the-world: “No more with sound than with light does the physical impulse—in this case comprising vibrations in the medium—get inside the head. For sound, too, is a phenomenon of experience, another way of saying ‘I can hear.’ ”12 For Ingold, it is precisely the intensity of this experience that is compelling: “The weather is dynamic, always unfolding, ever changing in its moods, currents, qualities of light and shade, and colours, alternately damp or dry, warm or cold, and so on.” Listening, for Ingold, becomes a process of flux, one in which any sense of permanence, of a stable subject-object distinction, is dissolved: “Sensed as the generative current of a world-in-formation, weather engulfs landscape, as the sight of things is overwhelmed by the experience of light.”13 Ingold thus proposes the idea of enwindment—the experience of being-in-the-weather, of the air passing over, around, and through the body—as a more meaningful mode of environmental response. By extension, it is the...


10. The composition of *Tapiola* is contemporary with the publication of Granö’s seminal study of the Finnish landscape, *Reine Geographie* (1929). Granö’s development of “proximics” (the geographical study of the immediate environment) includes one of the earliest systematic auditory accounts of a particular locality, a soundscape study of Valosaari in eastern Finland.

11. I have explored this idea further in my essay “Storms, Symphonies, Silence.”

12. Ingold, “Eye of the Storm,” 100. Later on this page, Ingold asks: “Is weather a part of the landscape or is it not? If it is not, does it swirl around above the landscape, or does it actually encompass the landscape, as the earth is encompassed by the great sphere of the sky?”

13. Ibid., 103.
notion of ensoundment, or attunement, which is a corresponding model for understanding our relationship with the auditory world around us. It is in its particular sensitivity to this process of attunement that *Tapiola* engages our sense of being-in-place. And in its underlying sense of unease and anxiety, Sibelius’s music becomes an eloquent acoustic testimony for our current environmental concerns: the human degradation of the natural world once mourned by Truchanas in Tasmania. *Tapiola* can hence be heard as a landscape of failed territorial conquest and ambition, and, more powerfully, as a landscape of abstraction: as white noise. The tone poem can productively be imagined as a Schaefferian soundscape, and its rustling, scraping, roaring, and whistling simultaneously suggests a more disturbing acoustic vision: the now-familiar narrative of climate change. Yet the need to maintain a skeptical, questioning mode of response remains central in any account of the work. Subscribing uncritically to Ingold’s more passive model of perceptual immersion risks downplaying our individual and collective sense of agency.14 The concluding storm is not simply transformative; we actively shape the weather around us just as it buffets and ultimately erases us. The idea of nature is always, in fundamental ways, an act of representation (both political and aesthetic): it is as much an epistemology, a critical practice or way of knowing, as the origin of a particular ecology or environment. Hence, ecomusicology must constantly struggle to negotiate and maintain a fragile balance. As Sibelius’s tone poem vividly reveals, attuning our ears more closely to the often dissonant, unharmonizing sounds of the acoustic environment around us is a risky process, one that renders us vulnerable and that points unerringly to our own contingency, our transient and fleeting presence in the world. Yet resisting this process, turning our “auditory gaze” inwards away from landscape in search of a deceptive autonomy of enquiry, perception, or the musical work, is a far greater irresponsibility.

14. Ingold himself recognizes the dangers of this position. In a more recent article (“Earth, Sky, Wind, and Weather,” S28), he has written: “[. . .] the open world that people inhabit is not prepared for them in advance. It is continually coming into being around them. It is world, that is, of formative and transformative processes. If such processes are of the essence of perception, then they are also of the essence of what is perceived. To understand how people can inhabit this world means attending to the dynamic processes of world-formation in which both perceivers and the phenomena they perceive are necessarily immersed.” (My emphasis in the last sentence only.)