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Listening(s) Past: History and the Mediatic Musicology

I WAS LISTENING TO AN old recording of Beethoven's Sixth recently. To be more precise, I was listening (via headphones and a MacBook) to a digital transfer (uploaded to YouTube in 2016) of an early electric recording of a performance by Felix Weingartner and the group of musicians then called the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, released as a series of ten 78s by Columbia in 1927 (you can hear the transduction of needle scratches, the breaks to change sides, and so on).[1] The usual thing happened, which many people will recognize. To begin with, I heard a lot of "interference"—*hiss*, *crackle*, *wobble*, *pop*—and then, after a while, I was "listening past" all the noise, and hearing . . . —well, that's where the trouble begins.

What I am calling "listening past" is a longstanding and tenacious audile technique.[2] Here, it refers to a certain kind of discrimination: the capacity to pick out a piece of music—or a musical genre, a past performance, or perhaps just "music"—from a wider range of sounds, and to conceptualize this as something separate from the materials that mediate it. To begin with a scenario involving Beethoven is, then, to load the dice. For the technique of bypassing supposed interference has been one of the signal features of Beethoven reception at least since the mid-nineteenth century, whether in

ABSTRACT This essay is about the long-standing and tenacious audile technique of *listening past*—that is, the discrimination of music, musical performances, and even sound amid the ostensibly broader range of vibrations conveyed by any media form. For some time, an assortment of musicians, sound artists, and theoreticians have lined up to maintain that this cognitive-discursive technique, which suppresses or diminishes the processes of mediation, is in some sense ideological: illusory, contingent, and even exclusionary. Cagean theories of sound, feminist valorizations of embodiment and presence, ecological ethics of the soundscape, tech-focused philosophies of mediation, ethnographic conceptions of aurality, and Deleuzian vibrational ontologies—all are united in their foundational skepticism. Centered on digital transfer of an early electric recording of a performance of Beethoven's Sixth from 1927 conducted by Felix Weingartner, this essay seeks to reevaluate the political implications of *listening past* by drawing out its submerged relationships to the traditional historicist project of recovering what I call *past listenings*—lost modes of listening that are supposedly indivisible from particular spaces, historical moments, and radically situated subjectivities. REPRESENTATIONS 154. 2021 © The Regents of the University of California. ISSN 0734-6018, electronic ISSN 1533-855X, pages 143–55. All rights reserved. Direct requests for permission to photocopy or reproduce article content to the University of California Press at https://www.ucpress.edu/journals/reprints-permissions. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1525/rep.2021.154.11.143.

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pursuit of *Werktreue*, the authorial voice, or the spotless semiotic hygiene of the urtext edition.

Long before the ascent of media studies, an assortment of scholars, artists, and aestheticians had already raised a host of objections to the cognitive-discursive technique of listening past. Their motivations varied widely. First came the old subversions of musical experimentalism, which strategically eroded conceptual barriers between musical and nonmusical sounds—John Cage's contention that music is just "sounds heard around us" or Edgard Varèse's conception of "open rather than bounded" musical space.[3] Later on, there was the conservationist ethic of R. Murray Schafer and his circle, and their now ubiquitous soundscape concept, which deplored the so-called schizophonia supposedly enabled by twentieth-century sound reproduction technologies: the radical division of sound from source.[4] Schafer's outlook both informed and borrowed from a generation of sound-focused ethnographies, which asserted the necessity of conceiving of sound as situated in, and constitutive of, particular (usually non-European) locations.[5] This places the very category of music in question, since "music" potentially "shares blurry boundaries," to use Aaron Fox's phrase, with everything from ambient noise to dance and architecture.[6] This ethos of blurry boundaries, although not always with the accompanying sense of decolonizing or ecological mission, has informed the now widespread suspicion of acousmatic sound once theorized by Pierre Schaeffer—pure sound being conceivable, he argues, only once the resonating source has been veiled.[7] Interwoven with these trends is a collection of broadly Marxist perspectives, which had long sought to reveal the laboring bodies involved in the production of apparently autarchic musical objects—to acknowledge unrecognized and underrewarded workers, whose contributions had been occluded by phantasmagoric forms of listening. This Marxist starting point was to inform the many varieties of feminist criticism and queer theory committed to recovering the traces of performing bodies in music, and especially in singing voices.[8] Body and flesh have also been central in analyses of music and race, of course—and especially music and Blackness: the relation of sound to bodily labor, the ways in which racial epidermal schemas have been projected onto and into music and voice, and the ways racial categories have been produced, complicated, or subverted by musical practices.[9] And while it might seem inevitable that closer attention to the performing body would involve concomitant attention to categories such as gender and race, scholars who have aimed to unsettle the political and historical legibility of music have been no less emphatic about the centrality of bodily presence—as when Carolyn Abbate questioned the value of any musical knowing predicated on "abstractions to be scrutinized for supra-audible meanings" and asked

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what one might possibly say in the face of the drastic force of a musical event.[10]

In their details, not to mention political orientations, this is a collection of barely compatible positions. Yet cumulatively they constitute the discursive background against which the preoccupations of a more recent wave of materialist, network- and mediation-oriented scholarship seem self-evident, perhaps even politically necessary. Following Kyle Devine, we can call this scholarship "mediatic musicology": the political ecologies and technological studies that concern themselves above all with the "variety of distributed and ostensibly nonmusical people, things, and conditions" that constitute music and make it possible.[11]

Even so, the relation of mediatic musicology to the political concerns of previous generations is not always clear. The methodological language of mediation and networks is by and large traceable to thinkers who advise caution about the allegedly overweening aspirations and almost conspiracist politics of earlier generations of sociological theory. The most prominent of these is Bruno Latour, who in principle recognizes things that he calls "intermediaries"—entities that "transport meaning or force without transformation"—yet in practice enjoins sociologists to treat more or less everything as "mediators": objects, people, and relationships that "transform, translate, distort, and modify the meanings or the elements they are supposed to carry" as they performatively produce and reproduce the social world.[12] As Andrew Barry and Georgina Born have observed, Latour, across his oeuvre, is equivocal about whether his methodological prescriptions are normative or descriptive—that is, whether there is an urgent ethical need to accept his vision of mediation and society, or whether his methods simply do a better job of revealing how things really are.[13] As we shall see, music studies has inherited something of this equivocation. Its political ambience, especially as it has turned into a disciplinary vernacular, is a brand of materialist diversity and inclusion: there are few problems that cannot be addressed by incorporating more actors into a description. Indeed, there is a certain relentlessness with which, over the past few years, mediatic musicological method has unspooled every object of knowledge—as if with a tap of the Latourian wand—into a gathering of materials and agents (a method well suited to the paratactic and networked logic of the digital interfaces from which researchers derive so much of their information nowadays).

Such methodological unspooling is undoubtedly productive and revealing. Consider the vast web of entangled technologies and infrastructures that enable a musicologist to interpret the YouTube upload of the digital transfer of the Weingartner recording of Beethoven's Sixth. Among them, we could choose to hear the labor of the brief association of musicians who,

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calling themselves the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, were not yet precisely the later institution of that name.[14] Or the acoustic space of the Scala Theatre—a theater, then a cinema, then a theater again (now the site of central London luxury apartments)—in which the performance was recorded over a two-day period.[15] Beside shellac, microphones, and cables, violins and timpani, one might place technologies that have since more or less vanished as mediators, such as Weingartner's baton—a tool that was itself barely a century old in 1927—which supposedly communicated the sorts of actions prescribed in the conductor's blow-by-blow essay *On The Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies*, a compendium of Weingartnerian interference that is conventionally called "musical interpretation" ("Bar 4. No pause to be made after the *fermata*," he writes of the Sixth; I strain my ears to hear the absence of a silence, a trace, perhaps, of the chivvying agency of a stick.)[16] The mediatic musicologist can now claim to discern all these synchronously jostling pasts, which disrupt the linearity and causality of a conventional music history—called up from the distant servers of Google to an interface designed by Apple and compressed into the eternal present of a media form before us. Less clear is what musicologists are to do with this sublime excess of knowledge, or whether simply expositing it is politics enough.

The old disciplinary habits of music history stand in oblique relation to the ideologies and techniques of listening past. For decades, musicologists were concerned with "contextualizing" music (a receptacle-like term that is more or less verboten in the age of performative social networks) and, since the 1990s, in reconstructing historical listening practices—what one could call, neatly enough, *past listenings*. Once, to write of these past listenings was precisely to resist the specious audile technique of listening past—by transporting readers to strange, lost performances, with their various dispositions of musicians and listeners, instruments and rooms and lighting and ambience, as well as heterogeneous and fraught protocols of attention and inattention, "the physical and psychological atmosphere of the hall from the spectator's point of view," that James Johnson once promised his readers.[17] Scholarship in this tradition appears in one sense to reject the strict division of sound from source on historicist grounds. Beethoven's Sixth, one could claim, was once indivisible from the experience of (say) the musician and writer Johann Friedrich Reichardt, who witnessed its premiere at the start of Beethoven's grand concert during Advent 1808 in the cavernous Theater an der Wien, including an unheated hall, Beethoven's declining piano playing, and musicians underprepared and in near open revolt onstage. "There we continued, in the bitterest cold, too, from half past six to half past ten, and experienced the truth that one can easily have too much of a good thing,"

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Reichardt recalled in his travel journal.[18] Yet, as the literary scholar Rita Felski has observed, an excessive preoccupation with such appealing reality effects—the attractive redundancies that have so often served to conjure historical situatedness—tends in equal measure to occlude the countless transhistorical mediations that have transported the objects of scholars' historicizing impulses to their door to begin with. "We sorely need alternatives to seeing [artworks] as transcendentally timeless on the one hand and imprisoned in their moment of origin on the other," she writes.[19] It is hard to survey the intellectual debris of older musicological debates and not to appreciate her point, however bluntly put. Despite their theoretical sophistication, the Geertzian thick descriptions valorized within musicology's versions of New Historicist criticism typically involved reuniting (usually canonical) works with sources from which they had always already been (unfortunately) divided.[20] Rather than refusing to listen past all the alleged interference, music historians were picking out the kinds of interference—that is, the kinds of perceptible mediacy—best suited for the purpose of delightful estrangement. In a Derridean vein, one could say that listening past was thus at once the opposite and the very condition for these reconstructed past listenings.

The musicological turn against the fallacies of listening past is, to an extent, only the latest battle—although perhaps now a decisive one—in a much longer-running series of attacks on German idealism and musical Romanticism more generally. Again, Beethoven and his reception have long represented the adversary. Reichardt may have been bored and shivering at the 1808 premiere of Beethoven's Sixth, but a performance in Munich only three years later prompted the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* to report that Beethoven "raises us above the everyday" into the "realm of imagination."[21] A familiar foe comes into view: the discourse of transcendence, authorial control, masterpieces, and so forth that Lydia Goehr long ago theorized as part of the tangle of institutional practices and aesthetic claims that she called the Beethoven Paradigm.[22] Though no less present at the sonic source than Reichardt had been, the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* reporter chose to look away from the material conditions of the Munich performance. And, according to several recent studies, this willful averting of the gaze would eventually become enshrined in generations of dubiously aestheticizing media denial—especially in the protocinematic concealments of Wagnerian performance and its emblematic architectural technologies, such as the buried orchestral machinery in the Festspielhaus in Bayreuth.[23] Gundula Kreuzer's study of these Wagnerian technologies is, she writes, an effort "to unpack the carefully concealed machineries behind those illusionist stagings nineteenth-century composers desired."[24] In the context of present-day scholarship, the musical work thus becomes the inverse of

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Bismarck's proverbial sausage—nobody talks about liking it, but everyone wants to see how it was made.

Thus the preoccupation with obsolescence and failure in studies of media and mediation: technological conditions are hardest to ignore when they no longer work.[25] Stories of failure serve the oft-repeated premise-cum-conclusion of all media archaeologies: the particular configurations of technologies we have inherited, and the protocols through which people interact with them, are contingent and fragile; other options were available; things could have turned out differently. And, granted, listening past is barely an option when the music historian confronts glitches such as the one that occurred toward the end of the 1808 concert in which the *Pastoral* was premiered: the orchestra broke down altogether, causing Beethoven to leap from his seat at the piano and yell, according to one report, "Stop! Stop! That will not do!" Contemplating such disasters, the musicologist is more or less compelled to turn from that thing called music (it was the middle of the *Choral Fantasy*, incidentally) toward the relationships, quantities of labor, and material resources involved in the business of music making.[26]

Yet mediatic musicology has a more complex relationship with the concept of transparency than is suggested by the continuing disciplinary impulse to debunk German Romanticism. The notion that an art predicated on absorptive illusion might by definition obscure the messier realities of its material mediation is baked into the reception of Richard Wagner, after all, from Friedrich Nietzsche's contemporary polemics onward. In this subdisciplinary context, the perspectives offered by media studies effortlessly take over the task formerly accomplished by ideology critique: that of revealing material relations lurking behind glittering surfaces. But, away from the canonical scenes of nineteenth-century Romanticism, mediatic musicologists tend to reject anything that smacks of suspicious reading or the unmasking of false consciousness. The materials that constitute art are "right there on the surface, hidden in plain sight, awaiting no close reading," writes Devine. The aestheticizing impulses of music criticism, which supposedly encourage us to listen past these surfaces—to regard them as mere transparent intermediaries—are, he implies, more of a distraction than a cover.[27] In this conceptual scheme, the mendacious transparency of listening past is not exposed by unveiling hidden depths, but by converting everything into surface—into the true transparency of the self-evident mediatic view.[28]

But this is a paradoxical species of self-evidence. Devine's energizing call, inspired by Benjamin Piekut and others, to pursue "musicology without music"—that is, to avoid talking about the potency or coherence of music before attending to the material networks and relational processes of which

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it is always just an effect—necessarily involves convincing scholars (and wider constituencies of musical consumers, too) that they are mistaken when they talk and behave as though "there exists a bounded domain of cultural practice called music." Music and music research are "contingent phenomena," writes Devine, and the mediatic musicologist seeks to describe both "from the outside." This perspective, in a thought that he attributes to sociologists such as Tia DeNora and Antoine Hennion, teaches us that "music does not exist."[29]

The idea that music does not exist may have strategic value when advocating for particular scholarly methodologies, but as a philosophical claim it surely sets the bar rather high. That music can be productively conceived as the effect of material networks does not mean that it does not exist, whether or not the scholar portrays a "domain of cultural practice" as bounded (boundaries and borders are axiomatically suspect in the liberal vision of freely moving people and things, yet you would have to allow that these things, too, belong to networks). Scholarship that treats "music" as a product of contingent and constantly renegotiated networks need not also rule out the idea that music can recursively shape these networks. For this very reason Felski argues that Latourian sociological method could revitalize scholarly accounts of art's (even an artwork's) agency, otherwise depleted by static and deterministic conceptions of context.[30] Devine fears that this can shade into a pious kind of musical exceptionalism: "Music is not special," he insists.[31] But it seems to me that we do not need to treat music as special in order to treat it as distinctive—in the way that it creates its effects and sustains its relationships, in the materials that it marshals, in its particular affordances as a form of collective action, ritual performance, political expression, and so forth. And neither does its power have to be overstated—though, to be sure, many would argue that the intense forms of love and attachment that music can arouse are indeed worth studying—in order to warrant explanations adequate to its particular materials and techniques: "There are many metaphysical shades between full causality and sheer inexistence," writes Latour.[32]

Without explicitly saying so, many of the mediatic musicologies thus proceed with a forceful normative proposition, which, despite the rhetoric of self-evidence, ultimately—and often because of the ways in which people continue to think and act—cannot fully eradicate the notion that deceptive (aesthetic) surfaces are produced by and conceal material realities, a process of which the theorist has an external and possibly even Olympian view. While the ethics of this proposition may seem irreproachable when the scholar is revealing the elaborate tricks of French grand opera or sleights of hand in Wagnerian stagecraft, they are much more ambiguous when it comes to differently configured sound worlds, such as those discussed by

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Ana María Ochoa Gautier—the reported vocalizations of the boat rowers of the Magdalena River in nineteenth-century Colombia and the travel writings of Alexander von Humboldt, say—where the present-day scholar is challenged to listen with, past, through, and against colonial technologies of inscription.[33] The dictum that researchers should trust their actors is an anthropological commonplace (one that Latour repeats frequently). I doubt that any anthropologist, however incredulous of the so-called ontological turn, would endorse an approach that treats even the most apparently occult notions about music and sound as mere epiphenomena of what's really happening in the swirling mediatic world.

This is why the gatherings of materials and relationships that the mediatic view takes as self-evident are nonetheless able to produce poetic alienation effects. As music unfolds into circuitous narratives of dispersed people and objects, or the quasi-surrealist lists of actors that Ian Bogost has called "Latour litanies," the aesthetic predilections of many of the new mediatic musicologies are ever more clearly discernible.[34] The sweeping "landscape view" historicized some time ago by John Murdoch, parsing and producing worlds with the resonating skein of mobile, active things: this is a global geographic imaginary that extends back at least as far as Adam Smith and his contemporaries, as they sought to describe into being a still-emerging capitalism.[35] And even when mediatic methods fragment music into myriad scattered materials, musical reverberation remains (as for Adam Smith's generation) a rather unruly master trope: the "vibrant matter" theorized in Jane Bennett's "political ecology of things," the Deleuzian "polyphonic assemblage[s]" described in Anna Tsing's ruined capitalist landscapes, the "music of the networks" that Leo Cabranes-Grant proposes by analogy with the music of the spheres.[36] An ontology becomes an aesthetic. Indeed, these foundational sonic metaphors seem to reinforce what Brian Kane, in a critique of the discourses of experimental sound art, has called "onto-aesthetics": the fallacious but appealing idea that an artistic practice might not only consist of sound but might also disclose the reality of sound itself.[37] As in Nina Sun Eidsheim's study of singing as a "vibrational practice," various experimental arts—the underwater operas of Juliana Snapper or the site-specific vocal pieces of Meredith Monk—allow an otherwise implausible and radically local claim for the metaphysical priority of vibrating bodies to be universalized. An aesthetic becomes an ontology. It is, moreover, an avant-garde aesthetic that accordingly brings with it a kind of Whig intellectual history of sound: the restrictive fictions of the musical work yield to the activity of musicking; the activity of musicking yields to the wider reality of sound; and at long last sound yields to the ultimate reality of vibration. Here is the ne plus ultra—the utopian point of total inclusiveness, free from contingency, divested of "pre-conceived categories"

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that "constrain our understanding," as Eidsheim puts it.[38] There is a familiar modernist irony in the fact that this maximally inclusive ethos should be discovered in the premises of some of the most arcane and exclusive Euro-American art practices. Yet it is here, in this wholly relational world of vibrating bodies, where even subject and object melt into each other, that the very possibility of listening past—and perhaps of any contingent audile technique at all—supposedly vanishes altogether.

To be sure, mediatic musicological methods have revealed that music historians, no matter how professedly thick their descriptions, were always selective in their choice of pleasing or disturbing interference—were always "constrained," as Eidsheim might conceive it, by the cross-section of vibrations that they have sought to describe and explain. But this very selectivity has allowed music historians to register a crucial fact: that multifarious techniques and technologies of listening past—which is to say, changing and contested ideals—constitute the story of all past listenings. By contrast, there is a strain within mediatic musicology that nurtures an old avant-garde aesthetic fantasy—one long shared by the more triumphalist and utopian brands of liberal politics: the end of history.

In practice, of course, scholars do not have to choose between these two mutually exclusive fantasies of full transparency: the aestheticizing media obliviousness of listening past or the wised-up hypervigilance of mediatic immersion. For all the focus on technological failure, and the ways in which this failure renders infrastructure suddenly visible, anyone who has faltered through a favorite song from a grubby fake book or followed a sporting event via an unreliable phone feed knows that infrastructure does not have to remain unseen in order to work just well enough.[39] Even barely adequate infrastructure can achieve a great deal. "Many a failure in the performance vexed our patience," recalled Reichardt, wincing at the creaking infrastructure during Beethoven's Sixth.[40] As Jonathan Sterne has argued, machines stand in need of all kinds of cooperative social behaviors in order that they can be said to "work," however badly.[41] Thus Reichardt worked with this halting orchestral machinery in pursuit of what only three years earlier he had called the "pure, perfected works" of his most vaunted musical contemporaries, including Beethoven.[42] He did not occlude or mystify the infrastructural investments required to sustain such a lofty ethic. Over his career, he had himself started (and ended) several art journals and public concert series. Of all people, Reichardt would have understood that it was with, not in spite of, such infrastructure that one could harness the potential that, as Gary Tomlinson has proposed, might even be primordially bound up with the very tools and techniques of music making: the capacity "to imagine

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things not present to the senses"—to intimate "other worlds," however rudimentarily.[43]

These other worlds have presented one of the greatest challenges to the sociological methods that inspire the mediatic musicology. As many scholars have observed—not least from feminist and postcolonial perspectives—while these methods have provided transformative ways of describing how things are, they have been much less successful at renewing core political concepts and, in particular, at characterizing agents of political change.[44] To privilege one actor over any other in the nearly autotelic networks of Latourian sociology is almost always to distort a more dispersed, collaborative truth. Where do the energies required for change come from? Is historical change itself—especially when conceived as revolutionary rupture—merely a crude plot device, always concealing the reality of continuities and attachments, the materials that are always already there? It is partly in response to these kinds of challenges that, following the weapons-grade commonsense that makes up the bulk of *Reassembling the Social*, Latour posits the existence of nonsocial "plasma" from which the social world draws its latent capacity for change. And he turns to a surprisingly banal depiction of the inspired artist—a "stale academic musician" who is suddenly "seized by the most daring rhythms" (!)—to illustrate how plasma might do its work.[45] The wholly visible surfaces of actor-networks thus reacquire an invisible, inchoate supplement. All that methodological work, and we end up back at unknowable creative sources.

In the face of the metaphysical swerves and undisclosed aesthetics that are required to secure the self-evidence of mediatic study, I tend to share James Currie's wariness of what he portrays as the (neo)liberal celebration of visible surfaces. The eclecticism of postmodern musical aesthetics, the pluralist ethos of music-analytical approaches such as topic theory, the historicist fetish for the musically conventional and ordinary: all these things, he argues, risk not only obscuring the kinds of exploitation that are (still) realistically conceived as systematically hidden, but also ignoring that cultural practices are never reducible to the configuration of material things as they are—that they can also reshape this configuration, might even portend new worlds.[46]

Knowing the infrastructural conditions of our values and practices may reveal (yet again) their contingency, but it seems to me that it demonstrates something still more important: what people are prepared to build in order to bring about new worlds. With a click, Google mediates several musical remnants of these past aspirations: a YouTube upload of a digital transfer of a Weingartner-led recording of an old performance of Beethoven's Sixth in a drafty London theater back in 1927. And even in the absence of modern technologies of sound reproduction, one can call up, too, remnants of the

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past listenings of Reichardt and the crowd assembled in the Theater an der Wien in 1808. The concert begins—a "recollection of country life," on a freezing winter's evening in the city of Vienna, in the midst of preparations for a dreadful period of war. An opening drone sounds in the strings, birds chirp in the woodwind—things harvested from other sonic worlds and reformatted in order to serve an old metropolitan fantasy of bucolic repose and retreat. To listen is always to do so via an immense web of mediators, of course—but it is also always to listen past.

Notes

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1. "Beethoven: Symphony #6—'Pastoral' Felix Weingartner & Royal Philharmonic Orchestra," YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch? v=hzVHI LGsWaI.
2. This is Jonathan Sterne's Maussian jargon for a way of listening acquired in formal and informal learning situations. See Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: The Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham, NC, 2003), 23, and passim.
3. John Cage quoted in R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (1977; reprint, Rochester, VT, 1994), 4. Edgard Varèse quoted in Chou Wen-Chung, "Open Rather than Bounded," *Perspectives of New Music* 5 (1966): 1.
4. Schafer, *The Soundscape*.
5. For example, Steven Feld, *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression* (Philadelphia, 1982).
6. Aaron Fox, "Divesting from Ethnomusicology," *Journal of Musicology* 37, no. 1 (2020): 36.
7. Pierre Schaeffer, *Traités des objets musicaux* (Paris, 1966). See also Brian Kane, *Sound Unseen: Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice* (New York, 2014), chap. 1.
8. See the concise disciplinary history in Martha Feldman, "The Interstitial Voice: An Opening," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 68, no. 3 (2015): 655.
9. See, inter alia, Lindon Barrett, *Blackness and Value: Seeing Double* (New York, 1999); Daphne Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850–1910* (Durham, NC, 2006); Nina Sun Eidsheim, *The Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre, and Vocality in African American Music* (Durham, NC, 2019); Matthew Morrison, "Race, Blacksound, and the (Re)Making of Musicological Discourse," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 72, no. 3 (2019): 781–823; Ronald Radano, "Black Music Labor and the Animated Properties of Slave Sound," *boundary 2* 43, no. 1 (2016): 173–208.
10. Carolyn Abbate, "Music: Drastic or Gnostic?," *Critical Inquiry* 30, no. 3 (2004): 509.
11. Kyle Devine, *Decomposed: The Political Ecology of Music* (Cambridge, MA, 2019), 21.
12. Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (New York, 2005), 39.

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13. Andrew Barry and Georgina Born, "Introduction: Music, Mediation Theories, and Actor-Network Theory," *Contemporary Music Review* 37, no. 5–6 (2018): 461–65.
14. Christopher Dyment, *Felix Weingartner: Recollections and Recordings* (Rickmansworth, UK, 1976), 63.
15. See "The Scala Theatre, 58 Charlotte Street and Tottenham Street," Arthur Lloyd's Music Hall and Theatre Website, http://www.arthurlloyd.co.uk/Scala.htm.
16. Felix Weingartner, *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies and Other Essays*, trans. Jessie Crosland (New York, 1969), 141.
17. James Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley, 1995), 4. Among other contemporaneous studies of historically situated listening was Gretchen Wheelock, *Haydn's "Ingenious Jesting with Art": Contexts of Musical Wit and Humor* (New York, 1992). A more recent scholarly vision of historically reconstructed listening—arguably a reductio ad absurdum of its premise of radical situatedness—is Melanie Lowe, *Pleasure and Meaning in the Classical Symphony* (Bloomington, 2007), esp. chap. 3.
18. Johann Friedrich Reichardt cited and trans. in Alexander Wheelock Thayer, *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, ed. and rev. Elliot Forbes (Princeton, 1967), 448.
19. Rita Felski, *The Limits of Critique* (Chicago, 2015), 154.
20. In the case of Beethoven's Sixth, the most brilliant example remains James Q. Davies, "Dancing the Symphonic: Beethoven-Bochsa's *Symphonie Pastorale*, 1829," *Nineteenth-Century Music* 27, no. 1 (2003): 25–47. Clifford Geertz entered into music history with most fanfare in the widely read intervention by Gary Tomlinson, "The Web of Culture: A Context for Musicology," *Nineteenth-Century Music* 7, no. 3 (1984): 350–62.
21. "Nachrichten," *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 8, February 19, 1812, 126.
22. Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (Oxford, 1992), chap. 8.
23. For example, Kane, *Sound Unseen*, 101–8.
24. Gundula Kreuzer, *Curtain, Gong, Steam: Wagnerian Technologies of Nineteenth-Century Opera* (Oakland, 2018), 5.
25. On music, mediation, and failure, see Gavin Steingo, "Actors and Accidents in South African Electronic Music: An Essay on Multiple Ontologies," *Contemporary Music Review* 37, no. 5–6 (2018): 559–61.
26. Thayer-Forbes, *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, 448.
27. Devine, *Decomposed*, 43. For Devine's conception of the position of the theorist, derived in part from Howard Becker, see 194–95.
28. The most important scholarly intervention into the politics and practice of surface and depth reading remains Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus, "Surface Reading: An Introduction," *Representations* 108 (2009): 1–21. The connection between surface (reading) and the media forms of the internet is theorized and made explicit by Damon Young in his "Ironies of Web 2.0," *Post45* 2 (2019), https://post45.org/2019/05/ironies-of-web-2-0/.
29. Devine, *Decomposed*, 179, 181. See Tia DeNora, *After Adorno: Rethinking Music Sociology* (Cambridge, 2003), and Antoine Hennion, "Rewriting History from the Losers' Point of View: French Grand Opera and Modernity," in *Opera and Society in Italy and France from Monteverdi to Bourdieu*, ed. Thomas Ertman, Jane Fulcher, and Victoria Johnson (Cambridge, 2007), 330–50.
30. Felski, *Limits of Critique*, 162–72.
31. Devine, *Decomposed*, 181.
32. Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 72.

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33. Ana María Ochoa Gautier, *Aurality: Listening and Knowledge in Nineteenth-Century Colombia* (Durham, NC, 2014). In this respect, Ochoa takes up the challenge of Gary Tomlinson's more explicitly Derridean *The Singing of the New World: Indigenous Voice in the Era of European Contact* (Cambridge, 2007).
34. Ian Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology, or What It's Like to Be a Thing* (Minneapolis, 2012), 49, and passim.
35. John Murdoch, "The Landscape of Labor: Transformations of the Georgic," in *Romantic Revolutions: Criticism and Theory*, ed. Kenneth R. Johnston et al. (Bloomington, 1990), 176–93.
36. Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC, 2010), 23; Anna Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton, 2015), 24; Leo Cabranes-Grant, *From Scenarios to Networks: Performing the Intercultural in Colonial Mexico* (Evanston, 2016), 31.
37. Brian Kane, "Sound Studies without Auditory Culture: A Critique of the Ontological Turn," *Sound Studies* 1, no. 1 (2015): 2–21.
38. Nina Sun Eidsheim, *Sensing Sound: Singing and Listening as Vibrational Practice* (Durham, NC, 2015), 10.
39. This point has been made by anthropologists of infrastructure such as Brian Larkin—see his "The Poetics and Politics of Infrastructure," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 42 (2013): 327–43.
40. Thayer-Forbes, *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, 448.
41. Sterne, *The Audible Past*, 246–61.
42. Johann Friedrich Reichardt, "Nekrolog," *Berlinische musikalische Zeitung* 1 (1805): 252.
43. Gary Tomlinson, *A Million Years of Music: The Emergence of Human Modernity* (New York, 2015), 50.
44. For example, Sarah Harding, *Sciences from Below: Feminisms, Postcolonialities, Modernities* (Durham, NC, 2008).
45. Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 245.
46. See in particular James Currie, *Music and the Politics of Negation* (Bloomington, 2012), 5–7, and passim. Also see, most recently, his review of Richard Kramer's *Cherubino's Leap* in *Eighteenth-Century Music* 15, no. 1 (2018): 66–69. On the increased gulf between appealing surfaces and knowable media infrastructures in recent online environments—and the possible imperative to return to a radically suspicious reading—see Young, "Ironies of Web 2.0."

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