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Contemporary audiovisualities, intermediality and remediation: interview with Holly Rogers



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ISSN: 2175-8689

Holly Rogers is a professor in the Department of Music at Goldsmiths, University of London. Her interests as a researcher involve the interactions of music and sound with images and spatiality in experimental films, documentaries, videoarts, music videos, games, contemporary visual arts and interactive installations, including the fields of architecture and literature. An important part of her research and teaching focuses on the realms of intermediality, performance, sound immersiveness and new media and digital platforms. In recent years, she has released important works to understand the history and theory of sound and music in the 20th century and contemporaneity. Special attention can be given to the books *Sounding the Gallery: Video and the Rise of Art-Music* (2013), *Music and Sound in Documentary Film* (2014), *The Sound and Music of Experimental Film* (2017), *Transmedia Directors: Artistry, Industry and New Audiovisual Aesthetics* (2019) and *Cybermedia: Explorations in Science, Sound and Vision* (2021); and to the articles *The Musical Script: Norman McLaren, Animated Sound and Audiovisuality* (2014), *Audiovisual Dissonance in Found-Footage Film* (2017) and *Sonic Elongation and Sonic Aporia: Two Modes of Disrupted Listening in Film* (2021). She is the founding director of the journal *Sonic Scope: New Approaches to Audiovisual Culture* and editor of the Bloomsbury series *New Approaches to Sound, Music, and Media* – which, among other topics, has published works that deal with contemporary questions regarding sound and music in new media and audiovisual formats. His academic output can be checked at <https://goldsmiths.academia.edu/HollyRogers>.

Holly Rogers is one of the greatest researchers in the area of sound and music in contemporary audiovisual culture, and the interview that follows – carried out especially for this dossier –, besides presenting an important theoretical and historical overview of the field, points to a range of riveting research topics. This way, her answers not only contribute directly through their content, but also indicating new directions that investigations on sound in contemporary audiovisual works should or could face.

Before the interview itself, we would like to mention that the contact between the two of us (Renan and Luíza) with Holly was initially through her book *Music and Sound in Documentary Film*. A few years later – and already knowing several of her

other texts –, Renan Chaves met her in person at the University of Huddersfield, at the Sound and Music in Documentary Film International Symposium, in 2017, and Luíza Alvim – virtually – at the *Audiovisual Noise in Transmedial Culture* Conference (at the XIII Simposio Internacional *La Creación Musical en la Banda Sonora*, organized by the Universidad de Oviedo), in 2021. Her texts have been an important influence on our recent production.

It is also worth mentioning that Holly promptly accepted our invitation and was extremely generous throughout the entire process, from the interview itself to its publication. So it was really a pleasure to interview her. We hope that the readers of the dossier will enjoy her insights as much as we have.

Writings on music and sound in audiovisual arts have been mostly produced by researchers and artists who have a background in the music field.¹ Is that also your perception? What's your academic/artistic background? We would love to hear you about your trajectory and the reasons that led you to research sound and music in audiovisual works.

Holly Rogers: I'm also a musician! I had a really traditional education—8 years as a performer at a music school, then musicology degrees from Oxford, King's College London and Cambridge, learning all about Medieval music and Beethoven! I played in lots of orchestras and bands and wrote a great deal of music for theatre; and at Cambridge I got involved with the film soc and started writing music for their experimental films. Suddenly everything clicked into place. I have always been really interested in the visual arts. My dad's a painter so I grew up in a visual arts household and had been looking for interesting ways to combine music with visual media for years. Big budget orchestral scores never really interested me so when I discovered the sonic liberation afforded by experimental film and video art-music² I jumped at it. I later discovered that lots of experimental filmmakers and video

¹ In Brazil, a big part of the researchers also have a background in the musical field, but, as Cinema in Brazil was/is part of the field of Communication, there are also researchers with degrees in Communication of Cinema, but not in Music.(N.E.)

² Rogers uses the expression "*video art-music*", attaching the word "*music*" to emphasize that videoart generally includes music (and sound), and was often experimented by musicians, like Nam June Paik. We evoke this aspect in the next question.(N.E.)

artists, like Nam June Paik and Steina Vasulka, were musicians first, so the extension from sound to visual media seems to be quite a natural one for lots of musicians. In the end, my lecturing jobs took me down the theory route, but I still like to compose and play for moving images whenever I can.

You're right to point out that audiovisual scholarship has, until recently, been largely the remit of musicians and musicologists. The amount of books on media and film that closely analyse whole films without taking note of the 90-piece orchestra playing all the way through is still astonishing to me. Thankfully now media scholars are taking sound into account more and more, but I also understand the limitations. Music comes with its own specialized vocabularies which can be exclusionary, although pop musicology has made great strides showing how we can talk about music as sound, rather than referring to crotchets and quavers. Of course, the struggle also goes the other way: as a musicologist, I have found it challenging to use specific film and media terms in appropriate ways. It's a challenge to write about audiovisual culture without recourse to specialized musical vocabulary but it's so important to be accessible and carve out an interdisciplinary space for scholarship. This is one of the struggles but also the pleasures of interdisciplinary research, but in the age of convergence, it doesn't make sense to cipher off into discrete disciplines anymore. There's a wave of really exciting audiovisual scholarship coming from people from other disciplinary backgrounds at the moment, like Lisa Perrott writing on music video from a film studies department, Justin Remes' working on experimental film sound from English, Paul Hegarty working on video art and noise music from French Studies, Lutz Koepnick writing about expanded video art from German Studies, Julian Henriques thinking about documentary and sound systems from Media and Communications and Atau Tanaka writing about the visual sonic arts from his position as Professor of the Computing arts.

In recent years you have edited important collections. *Music and Sound in Documentary Film* and *The Music and Sound of Experimental Film* are two of them. They are the first works of international comprehensiveness in English in their respective fields. Especially in the case of the experimental film field, in which approaches usually focus on visuals – by the way, we find the

expression “video art-music” (instead of “video art”), which you propose, particularly important for the field. How do you perceive the formation of research fields specifically dedicated to sound and music in experimental and documentary film? Has there been a notable advance?

H.R.: For sure. There’s a wonderful and emerging body of work in this area, even if it is still quite small. It wasn’t hard at all to find people willing to write on these subjects for these two books. For so long film musicology has been fixated on mainstream film textures, which are super exciting and there’s a lot to explore, but more and more scholars are now looking beyond these regulated forms into site-specific, expanded and open forms of audiovisual media. I particularly love Aimee Mollaghan’s work on visual music, Justin Remes’ work on slow cinema, Danijela Kulezic-Wilson’s work on art film peripheries, Richard H. Brown’s analysis of John Cage and avant-garde film and Rachel Garfield’s recent book *Experimental Filmmaking and Punk: Feminist Audio Visual*. I’ve recently become completely immersed in sound art and soundscape studies too. As so many experimental films either use pre-existent music in disjunctive ways, or include original and often noisy sounds, I’ve found it inspiring to dig into the work on noise and its disruptive potential. Greg Hainge and Paul Hegarty approach experimental film from the fields of sound art and noise music, which leads into some extremely weird and innovative realms. My new monograph is called *Re/Sounding Spaces: Listening Across Audiovisual Culture* and attempts to analyse different forms of audiovisual media through analytical and aesthetic techniques developed in sound art and *musique concrète* scholarship. It’s hard!

What I’ve noticed though, is that there’s a real interest in experimental and documentary film sound developing in the new generation of scholars. All 11 of my PhD students are working in these areas, often through creative research practices, so I think things are going to get really exciting.

You are one of the editors of the *New Approaches to Sound, Music, and Media* series, which has released books that show contemporary concerns regarding sound and music in new media and audiovisual formats. *Transmedia Directors*

and *Cybermedia* are two of them. Analyzing “non-traditional” audiovisual works, or works that have emerged in the last few years, requires a great theoretical effort, since the binarism of important and consolidated concepts of the field, such as diegetic and extradiegetic, synchronism and asynchronism etc. does not seem to be adequate to handle and deal with the variety of ways through which sound and music in audiovisual art have appeared— especially in transmedia works – and the renewed forms of audibility human beings have engaged in their contemporary daily lives. It seems that a theoretical revision, a renewal of old concepts, is essential. How have you seen recent efforts in this direction?

H.R.: You’re absolutely right. It’s so difficult! In the Bloomsbury series so far, Áine Mangaoang and Lutz Koepnick have both done a wonderful job of extending audiovisual scholarship into really new realms; Áine by looking into the cultural, social and political implications of social media and Lutz through his poetic exploration of expanded, resonant and site-specific music video installations. Then as you say, *Cybermedia* and *Transmedia Directors* jump headfirst into the theoretical minefield of radically accelerated media by including work by psychologists, theoretical physicists, cognitive scientists, linguists and computer scientists, as well as media and music theorists, directors and composers. These projects were so exciting and my co-editors—Carol Vernallis, Lisa Perrott, Selmin Kara and Jonathan Leal—and I learnt so much about different approaches to media forms, although I still don’t really understand all the science bits! But as yet there aren’t too many attempts to combine all of these things into a single field, partly, to refer to my comment above, due to the very real disciplinary specificities of all of these areas.

The diegetic / nondiegetic binary that has dominated film musicology doesn’t translate well into these new media forms, it’s true. But the rigidity of this binary has already been destabilized by scholars like Anahid Kassabian, Robynn Stilwell and Ben Winters, and people tend to use these terms warily these days. These authors often stick to traditional Hollywood forms, but the binary becomes even more nonsensical after the blurred surface style of postclassical, postmodern and new digital film. In part this is because many of the genre’s major names—like

Michel Gondry and Spike Jonze—were music video directors first and brought with them the stylistic and technological traits of visualized music; then there are people like Kahlil Joseph whose works tip over into video art, music video and more experimental textures. I really like Jeff Smith's work on the intensified aural continuity of postclassical film. Carol Vernallis' idea of the media swirl in her 2013 book *Unruly Media* is super important here too, as she locates these accelerated aesthetics within the convergence of YouTube, music video and cinema. Each of these platforms and styles encourages a different form of participation and engagement, which shakes up traditional ideas about diegetic / extradiegetic and synchronicity / a-synchronicity even further, particularly when stories are told across a variety of platforms. With transmedia, there's often an opacity of media; social media is less immersive than traditional forms, whereas gaming is often more so thanks to its interactive requirements; music videos throw their style into the foreground while DIY YouTube clips offer a personal texture unique to themselves. It's hard to follow a story across platforms because of this, although for Gen Z, the quick movement between different forms of engagement is completely normal.

To return to my earlier point about terminology, established terms become not only troubled when thinking about new cinema and transmedia, but also unnecessary. Today's converging aesthetics and rapid technological developments create a culture of precipitous speed. And yet, scholarship tends to move slowly, and this creates a friction between subject matter and theoretical reflection. For me, this is one of the biggest challenges when talking about new audiovisual forms and transmedial flow. How do we keep control of concepts and vocabularies when everything is constantly colliding and being remediated in so many different ways? I know the era of the grand theory is long gone, but it's getting to the point when we need new jargon and analytical methodologies for each different case study and that's a real challenge.

4 – On the one hand, cinema, as a medium (and the filmic narrative) has been massively reappropriated in home systems: streaming platforms and virtual festivals have demonstrated this well. Installations and video art, on the other

hand, still seem to resist to this kind of reappropriation – maybe due to their inherent characteristic of interactivity. The emerging of “metaverse” may signify the beginning of a new space-time of existence (and interactivity) to these arts. Are you familiar with this very recent idea/project called “metaverse”, the “web 3.0”? If so, how do you perceive this possibility? Are we living in a “post-medium condition”? How do you perceive the recent virtual/digital media transformations regarding sound and music of audiovisual arts?

H.R.: This is a good question. One of the issues with installation and video art-music is that they use space as a primary creative material—objects and films occupy a particular location and the work is completed by the visitors who are free to move around it. You mention interactivity as part of installation’s resistance to reappropriation and this is definitely one aspect of it, but these works are often also site-specific, react to the resonances of a particular location and feed off the transient embodied physicality that audiences bring as they move around the space: they are material, spatial forms and this makes it difficult to relocate them to virtual environments. I think that digital spaces can mimic some of these conditions, but not all. But there are definitely ways to try! I run the MA Music (Audiovisual Cultures) at Goldsmiths, which includes several modules where students respond to theoretical questions through creative research: usually we book out an old house in Peckham and they install video works, immersive sound rooms, interactive spaces, do soundwalks and performances, run interviews, radio shows, live TV channels and so on. When we were all stuck indoors during the pandemic, we had to move the projects online which created complete panic: and yet the students found super interesting ways of replicating some of the things essential to expanded audiovisual work, by curating virtual exhibitions (using ArtSteps, Art Spaces and OffSite Project) digital soundwalks using Google Maps and MaxMSP and interactive webpages (using Hotglu.me, Padlet or Gathertown). Some great influences for us at this time was Björk’s *Vulnicura* VR project, where you can walk around her music videos, and Radiohead’s *Kid A Mnesia* exhibition (<https://kida-mnesia.com/>), where you literally step into their *Kid A* album and its artwork. What’s difficult to achieve

in all of these projects though, is that real social, interactive aspect you get from metaverse games like *Fortnite*, *Roblox*, *The Palace* and so on. I'm not a gamer, but my students have taken me into these worlds and explained how sound is used both horizontally and vertically to create reactive, immersive and social environments that go a long way towards the emergence of a Web 3.0 economy. And yet, these things are already apparent in the fan involvement, participation and the promotion of DIY, peer-produced and user-generated content on social media, which certainly sits at the heart of what Henry Jenkins has referred to as a contemporary digital world governed by a form of "convergence culture", in which media forms collide and constantly re-articulate each other. Web 2.0 is marked by such specific technological advances that allow the interoperability of platforms, participation and interactivity, and creative collaboration, things that are now completely normal for us—in fact, we're currently moving into new networked territory. And yet, when Tim O-Reilly started talking about this in the early 2000s, it was so revolutionary, particularly his points that the new forms of cybermedia were created with the possibility for "hackability" and "remixability" in mind.

But scholars were thinking about this stuff way before this. Rosalind Krauss first proposed the idea of a post-medium condition in the late 90s and its only now that digital curation, metaverse games and the possibilities afforded by AI and VR technologies to blend virtual and physical spaces are really realizing the possibilities of this. In his 2006 essay "The Post-Media Condition", Peter Weibel wrote that "no single medium is dominant any longer; instead, all of the different media influence and determine each other." If the postmedia condition occurs through both the equality and the mixing of media, though, I always wonder whether, when a world is built across platforms, each media form becomes dematerialized: or do they retain at least some of their own specificity? I can see that sound-image relations can be appropriated across various different forms, and as Vernallis shows in *Unruly Media*, previously discrete forms are converging aesthetically in all sorts of wonderful and musical ways. But at the same time, many transmedia projects really play to the strengths of each medium's specificity, and sometimes even highlight it. A really great example is Lil Nas X's *Montero* project, where a world and a narrative is constructed first through official music videos, then his own appropriations of those

on YouTube, followed by augmentations of the story that play out in text on twitter and through images on Instagram. Although the story flows beautifully across the boundaries of each platform, each nevertheless articulates sections of the story in ways unique to itself. My student Emily Thomas is writing about this for my forthcoming book *YouTube and Music* at the moment and has identified a complex network of symbolism and metaphor that helps to unfold the story in ways almost impossible via a single media channel. For me, *Montero's* narrative unfolds in very media specific ways and thus throws technological materiality into the foreground. To some extent, new convergences always do this though, and Yvonne Spielmann writes well on this in her work on intermediality; she argues that new media forms first promote their materiality before later focusing in on content. Video art is a good example, but you can also see it happening when different aesthetics converge within pre-existent formats: music video has always been full of intertextuality and remediation (as Mathias Korsgaard shows), but then you have Chris Milk's work with google maps and Chrome (with Arcade Fire) and binaural technologies (with Beck), or projects that combine augmented reality (Will.I.Apps and the Black Eyed Peas): in all these cases, the newness draws attention to itself.

5 – A substantial part of audiovisual materials circulating on TikTok, YouTube and similar platforms deals with a great amount of referentiality and intertextuality – characteristics that we can trace back to installations, videoart and experimental films from the 20th century. Do you see direct connections between the sound and music practices of these “old”(from the 20th century) and new practices? Or is it still soon and hard to think of these materials from the last few years in terms of historicity (or even in terms of historical contingency)?

H.R.: I think you're absolutely right, there's certainly a direct connection between older and newer audiovisual practices. I really love that audiovisual gestures of remediation, detournement and audiovisual dissonances and a-synchronicities that were radical creative tools for the early avant-garde have gradually become the mainstay vocabularies for mass cultural social media utterances. In films from the

historical film avant-garde, music and image collided in an antagonistic and forceful counterpoint that forced the audience into an active and sometimes uncomfortable state of reception: as Salvador Dalí once said “always leave the audience wanting less”! When found in contemporary mainstream feature films, such audiovisual dissonance is not meant to provoke, but rather to evoke: the gestures have been normalised and now fit comfortably within a mainstream aesthetic. We have become attuned to highly complex forms of cognitive, audiovisual blending and can navigate through disjunctive audiovisual textures whilst simultaneously putting disparate pieces together in very accomplished ways. Early experimental filmmakers used collage to disorient viewers and to make them think critically about the source of each audiovisual fragment. But these days, we’re used to working across multiple screens, scrolling through playlists, watching endless streams of discrete TikToks without feeling any rupture. And, as the Lil Nas X example above shows, we’re also great at putting together stories from a range of disparate pieces scattered through cyberspace.

Above I mentioned how music video is a thoroughly intertextual form (read Korsgaard’s work on this, he explains why and how much better than I can!); and as Vernallis and I have argued in *Transmedia Directors*, we are definitely in the age of aesthetic borrowing and audiovisual convergence. But I think what’s most interesting in your question is how the distancing processes of early experimental and avant-garde film have become the very processes that get us completely addicted to the flow of versions, remediations, parodies and memes that populate TikTok and YouTube in particular. I have just discovered some research (outlined in José Van Dijck’s *The Culture of Connectivity*) that shows how the content of YouTube’s videos has found that amateur uploads have increasingly moved towards the recycling of professionally-copied content and the rise of what John Hartley calls “redactive creativity”, by which the revision, adaptation and recontextualization of pre-existent materials take centre stage: all this has been enabled by the opportunities for “hackability” and “remixability” afforded by Web 2.0 noted above. In terms of music creativity, it provides the chance for the content and tools of the internet itself to be used as compositional material, opening out an important new mode of sonic and audiovisual engagement unique to cyberculture. One

example is pure internet music, like hypnagogic pop, chillwave and hauntological sounds, which uses existing online cultural forms to craft new performative and highly-self-reflexive soundworlds. Artists like Macintosh Plus plundered, slowed down and chopped and screwed the soundworlds of lounge music, smooth jazz and elevator music into a new form—with A E S T H E T I C S—that became known as Vaporwave, for instance: as an audiovisual form, the sounds were combined with graphics taken from and imitating early internet and web culture, anime and 3D Objects. Simon Reynolds has done a fabulous analysis of musician Oneohtrix Point Never, where he shows how the musician plays with and highlights the nature of remediated content via “echo-jams” through audio and visual material. Remediating music like this is so important as it can tell us a lot about the choices made: what music is being referenced, what’s it been placed next to, and why. These things can show us what is important to a particular culture at a particular time; and also how contemporary artists think about past practice in ways that really evoke the work of early experimental filmmakers from Joseph Cornell, Arthur Lipsett and Bruce Conner to the more recent Christian Marclay and Sonia Boyce. The process, of course, goes back to the beginning of moving image media, with the advent of montage, where a story is told through juxtaposed fragments, a process first articulated theoretically by Eisenstein in his co-authored “Statement on Sound”.

The internet is full of remediated forms like this. Fanvids and user-produced mashups of previously uploaded material are an excellent example of YouTube as a more democratised space in which its easy potential for hackability provides a bank of easily-accessible content for collage, detournement, supercuts and found footage videos. This can either happen through the combination of a visual text with a musical one, as in *The Dark Side of the Rainbow*—a mashup of Pink Floyd’s *The Dark Side of the Moon* with *The Wizard of Oz*—or between musical texts, as in *The Grey Album*, Dangermouse’s 2004 fusion of Jay-Z’s *The Black Album* with The Beatles’ *The White Album* and its subsequent mashup visualisation by Ramon & Pedro. Fanvid mashups, literal videos (by favourite is the one for Aha’s 1985 classic “Take on Me”), bad lip-syncing, lyric videos, reaction videos...they all ask us to re-see and re-hear the originals in a new light, just as early experimental collage films do. But now, we

are used to cross-navigating screens and have become adept at interacting with several things at once.

To return to your question, is it too soon to start historicizing these things, I think, in light of our accelerated aesthetics and the fact that things are remediated instantly into memes and parodies, and cultural forms change faster than we can track, it's necessary to react with similar speed. Simon Reynolds once likened YouTube to a crowded attic, where it's hard to find things, and social media's long tail is at once an amazing resource and depository, but things risk getting lost forever in the chaos; or being taken down and vanishing into the digital air. Talking about things in a historically-minded way can help to preserve these important textures.

Digital technologies have facilitated both the manipulation of world's visual and sonic materiality and the creation of realities that never existed in the historical world – but verisimilar to it. There seems to be, though, differences between the way filmmakers and spectators face visual and sound materialities: it seems there is a greater rigor (or even greater concern) when one is dealing with and questioning the possible authenticity of images, especially when documentary and journalistic and informative works are at stake; whereas sound seems to be able to walk more freely between reality, invention and authenticity without causing big ethical concerns. How do you perceive the notion of authenticity in recent non-fiction production? Thinking of sound, could we say that the notion of authenticity has been increasingly penetrating cognitive realms that go beyond seeing-hearing, seeking representation of realities in more sensitive and less objective ways, less logic/linguistic/semantic (or even escaping from the realm of representation/reproduction)?

H.R.: That's always been the case: our world, and the vocabularies of film, are very ocular-centric. There's a lot written about the privileging of sight over sound: of sight as something trustworthy, objective, informative, reproductive, unlike music which has traditionally been considered too emotional, flamboyant and subjective

for the authorial impartiality of documentary filmmaking! While I think we need to be mindful of what Jonathan Sterne calls the “audiovisual litany” (which, he says), “idealizes hearing (and, by extension, speech) as manifesting a kind of pure interiority. It alternately denigrates and elevates vision: as a fallen sense, vision takes us out of the world”, it’s so important to elevate the use of music in both practice and in the ways in which we discuss nonfiction film traditions.

In terms of authenticity in recent nonfiction production, I think this idea has really started to disintegrate in recent years, in both the visual- and sound-tracks. Filmmakers are definitely inserting themselves into their work in more obvious and poetic ways and using all manner of sonic techniques to disturb what we would traditionally think of as a plausible or at least recognizable audiovisual realism. I love Werner Herzog’s reading of documentary film: he says that it shouldn’t offer us an objective truth (there’s no such thing anyway) and seek simply to reproduce reality, but should instead reach for a “poetic, ecstatic truth” that is ephemeral, individual. You get this by fabricating and augmenting rather than simply showing. Music takes on great importance here because it does occupy such a profoundly sensorial space; and when you de-synchronise it from its corresponding image it can make us feel quite unsettled. I really like how you phrase this in the question: “the notion of authenticity has been increasingly penetrating cognitive realms that go beyond seeing-hearing”. Absolutely. Documentary film is, at best, about interrogation, not only of demonstratable fact but also of cultural and social reflection and response.

Again though, I don’t think the elevation of music and transfigured sound in nonfiction practice is simply an aesthetic shift: I think, to hark back to my earlier answers, that it is one enabled—or driven—by our fluidity with computer interfaces, social media forms, and the post- and transmedial condition. It’s also to do with mobile media. We increasingly sound our worlds as we travel through different spaces with headphones, personalized playlists, and through computer games like *Grand-Theft Auto*, where you can create your own radio station playlists. So musical choices and different audiovisual textures have become normalized: we used to our worlds being soundtracked in all manner of random ways that are incongruent or inappropriate emotionally or historically, with the world that we are

walking through. Maybe this makes us feel differently about the idea of authenticity....maybe loudly sounding documentaries are actually a pretty authentic and faithful representation of our current worlds?

Still regarding digital technologies and verisimilitude... You and other authors have addressed the blurring of boundaries between music and sound in contemporary audiovisual works. You,for example, in some of your texts,address the theme through your very important concepts“sonic elongation” and “aporia”.You demonstrate that this aspect is not exactly new, being possible to trace it back to films from the beginning of the 20th century - even though it has become more frequent since the emerging of the digital era. At the same time, the current technology is more capable to capture the world than ever before – and many contemporary audiovisual works do explore this technological power in a “naturalistic” way. It seems, however, the first trend has been predominant in last few years, especially in mainstream films and series. In other words, it is rare to watch a contemporary mainstream audiovisual work which does not deal with sounds in a, let’s say, “musical” way or “organized” way (to borrow Varèse’s definition of his own work). Does it sound interesting (or curious) to you this growing tendency in a period in which we have technologies very capable to register real-world sounds with high-fidelity and to make their use possible in a “naturalistic” way?

H.R.: That’s a good observation. I wonder if we can trace this back to the postmedia condition: early on, Krauss noted that once a media form became obsolete, it became something that could be explored for its aesthetic and creative possibilities. Perhaps, then, once technology becomes so good at audiovisual fidelity, it can start to re-establish its traditional formations: in this case, synchronicity. I think it’s particularly interesting that you point out that the musicalisation of sound is not just happening in film but also in big-budget series. One of the best examples is Hildur Guðnadóttir’s soundtrack for HBO’s *Chernobyl*; she recorded the sounds in a disused power station then manipulated them into compositional material. It’s utterly

haunting. But it's interesting that, as you say, certainly since postclassical film in the 1990s, sonically-elongated sounds flow across the cinematic landscape and have now entered the domestic television landscape. We can also relate this to your excellent observation above: that perhaps, once images can be rendered in such high fidelity—even in 3D—sounds can be released into a new role. They no longer need to flesh-out the images, or make them seem real and fully-dimensional; they can take on a more liminal role somewhere between representation and interpretation. The interesting thing about sonic elongation (that is diegetic or pro-filmic sounds that start off synched with their corresponding image but gradually dislocates from them, becoming compositional material in a way similar to the processes of *musique concrète*) is that it maps this process really clearly. First an object sounds as we would expect it to; but gradually the sounds become more autonomous and end up resonating around the images in interesting ways. Your questions are really great as they show how interrelated all this stuff is. Postmedia, asynchronicity, representation, remediation, even authenticity. Sonic elongation is a useful example of all these things.

Could you speak a little bit about your next book - YouTube and Music: Remix, Mashup and Remediation? Some of the transformations (either social/political or artistic) caused by YouTube have been called YouTubification. Has YouTubification been changing the notion of what music is and how we produce and listen to it? Still about YouTubification, do you see auteur and experimental film going through analogous processes?

H.R.: YouTubification is such an interesting concept. What social media does, and YouTube in particular, is provide a space for a more democratized, decentralized notion of authorship. Henry Jenkins, ShzrEe and several others have tempered this digital optimism in important ways, but nevertheless, the easy access, free and easy to use software and the interactive possibilities of YouTube are super important. When the platform launched in 2005, it changed everything: the music industry was completely shaken up as new artists can be discovered on the platform and established ones can self-promote and interact with fans in refreshed ways. Music

videos aren't accessed in terms of sales but through comments, likes and shares; algorithms determine visibility and AI playlists and recommendations. Then there's all the fandom work we mentioned above—memes, parodies, mashups, literal videos and so on that forge new musical textures and remediate past ones. The long tail and echo chambers give unrivalled access to past musics, b-sides, live versions, bootlegs. Then there's the whole sphere of music pedagogy: you can learn an instrument, how to produce your own music, how to analyse existing music and all about various compositional techniques—teachers can be professional or amateur. For me, YouTube has become an important part of music historiography: who listens to what, what songs and genres are most viewed, what people choose to remediate or mashup and how, what is available and what comments people leave. It's a profoundly important source of citizen journalism that can shine a light on what music means to our contemporary society, how it's used, what is discarded and what remains visible. So absolutely, YouTubification has fundamentally changed the notion of what music is, how we produce and distribute it, and how we listen to it. It's also impacted experimental filmmaking and there are great examples of social media and zoom being used as part of an expanded film project—like Natasha Themiso Ruwona's work. This forthcoming book, *YouTube and Music*, is an edited collection—with Joana Freitas and João Francisco Porfírio—and tackles lots of these issues. I'm really excited about it, we've got some incredible authors in the gang.

Would you recommend any text or audiovisual work that would help us to think about sound and music in contemporary audiovisual production?

H.R.: I think the most exciting takes on audiovisual production at the moment can be found in creative research. I got obsessed with video essays during lockdown: they are such an amazing way to include sound in your research, to reduce the need for description and to enable multiple simultaneous arguments to coexist through sound-image combines, collage, multiple screens, text, voice over and so on. Video essays can be really performative. *In Transition* is SCMS's video essay journal, the work there is so inspiring, experimental, weird and completely compelling. Some of

the essays have no words and convey all their information through sound, image and editing: some are nebulous and ethereal; others are more like traditional documentaries with voice over and examples. I recommend all of them! Also check out *Sonic Scope*, an open-access online journal that showcases student scholarship on audiovisual. There are essays, but also ethnographic films, curated events, video essays and performances, all dealing with some aspect of contemporary audiovisual culture.

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