



SOUND::GENDER::FEMINISM::ACTIVISM

RESEARCH EVENT 17 MAY 2012

ABSTRACTS

AMY CUNNINGHAM (UK) 'The Difference Machine'

In 1944, a young Daphne Oram, who was later to become pioneer of the BBC Radiophonic Workshop, worked at the Royal Albert Hall as a programme engineer. Her job was to ensure the continuity of the broadcast in the event of an air raid by synchronising gramophone recordings with the live music. This oscillation between engineer and composer, automated action and intuitive decision-making, was the starting point for 'On Standby' a work for voice and video. This work premiered at 'They Clapped Until She Bowed Once More' a concert on women composers held at St James's Piccadilly London, 2011. Shifting between recorded material and live voice, the work uses imagery and sound appropriated from contemporary mobile phone advertising to reframe the original consumerist narratives as a critical dialogue with the limitations and possibilities of mobile communication technology. In this context the singing voice functions both as an alluring presence and as a critical tool.

'On Standby' is part of 'The Difference Machine' a series of works for voice and video, which investigates the roles and cultural representations of women in the assimilation of technologies into culture. This presentation considers extracts from this series and explores how the singing voice in the context of visual art might be a vehicle to reveal, contradict or affirm some of the roles and representations of women composers, engineers, aviators and performers from Daphne Oram and Clara Rockmore to Amy Johnson and Laurie Anderson.

ANAT BEN-DAVID (UK) Politix Of Sound

The double status of the artist's presence and the recorded/effected voice, a visual speech, verbal text meeting the sound object, words and utterances played by the instrument; which is the human body-effected, creating a disturbance of voice from its origin, this is the haunted, it is the vocal- independent, gone astray, without a home, as the voice is released from the body origin, its infected- effected/recorded/ it becomes ethereal.

There is melodic, rhythmical and visual information; as well as, political potential, within the terrain of word delivered by sound. Politix Of Sound is exploring that, as well as, delivering main concepts behind my research.



Text for performance or Words for opera, form the basis of my activity and guide the writing of an opera; sounds, music, visuals and actions, will follow the functionality of the physical text – its utterance.

I write these texts intuitively, using collage writing - a technic often related to writing of lyrics and some forms of poetry led by sound- rhythm (meter) or melody. I edit the text and learn it by heart, make it audible and work until the meaning of the words become secondary to their sound, I then, perform the text.

ANDRA MCARTNEY & SANDRA GABRIELE (CAN) 'Soundwalking at Night'

Sandra Gabriele and Andra McCartney did a series of soundwalks at night as part of the Journées Sonores, canal de Lachine soundscape research project. We went into the urban areas surrounding this former industrial canal, locations that were being transformed into recreational spaces such as bike paths and linear parks. We took sound recording equipment, and walked through these areas repeatedly, listening and documenting, writing about our experiences, in order to register changes in the sonic ambiances of these places during a time of urban transformation. For McCartney, soundwalks have been the main focus of a research and artistic practice for the last two decades. This particular series of soundwalks returns to mind repeatedly since it brought into sharp focus the sense of agency one can feel as a recordist using sound technologies, as well as how in certain situations—often in soundwalks at night—that sense can be fleeting or disrupted, and perhaps later reinstated. It is these shifts in recordist agency that are the focus of our discussion: through doing soundwalks at night and thinking about our experiences, we explore the dimensions of that feeling of authority, as well as its fractures and fissures, in relation to gender. In our analysis of this experience, we focus particularly on a recording that Sandra had made, and that includes an encounter where gendered practices operate at many levels. Unable to attend the conference, we submit a 10 minute sound piece that includes the recording in question, a framing of the issues that arise from this study in relation to sonic work in public space, and further reflections on the experience from a present-day conversation.

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ANJA KANNGIESER (AUST/UK) "Towards a Careful Listening"

'The capacity of listening and empathy' write the Colectivo Situaciones is 'just as associated with models of femininity [as] the concrete activities historically reserved for women'. The ways we listen and speak to one another, how we relate to one another's experiences and struggles, are saturated with gendered stereotypes and behaviours. Feminised listening might be associated with care and attention, sympathy and affection. While these aspects get thematised in terms of care labour and service work, a gap appears



in much discourse when it comes to our own daily ways of being and relating. Within capitalist critical contexts that seek to challenge gender normativity – within those collectives, social centres, meetings and collaborations – how we listen and speak to one another (the sonic qualities of our speech as well as the words spoken) articulate gender expectations. Unlike many other activities however, these expectations in speech and listening often go unnoticed or are silenced.

Drawing from reflections with feminist-identifying people involved in self-organised political practices, this audio text will look at how our perceptions of one another are influenced by the sonic qualities of the voice – tone, pitch, rhythm, silence, volume, and accent. It will ask: What is being articulated through these qualities of voice? How do we understand them and take care of what we hear? How do these qualities crucially affect our capacities to listen and respond in generous ways? What might we hope for when we speak and listen? In asking such questions what unfolds are on the one hand multilayered stories that help us to see relational topographies, and on the other, explorations of diversions and practices that invite us to imagine what mindful communications may entail.

ANNA RAIMONDO & CAMILA MELO (UK/ BRAZIL) 'Untitled (silences and hesitations)'

Video documenting sound performances in public spaces.

During the time I presented "La regla de la música", a radio show examining music and feminism(s), I conducted over 30 interviews with female composers and musicians. Often, when asked about female influences, these women would hesitate to answer and a brief moment of silence would occur. I used some of these silences and hesitations as the source material for a 1 minute piece.

Silence, over the language and its structure, could question or resist the dualism between genders. These particular silences in my work musically empower the other sounds in the piece (and of the environment) and conceptually emphasise the hesitations of the official historiography to include women in musical canons. I took this sound work, rendered on cassette-tape, and played it back to people in varying public spaces, as a noisy piece to make audible those loaded silences and hesitations. Through this listening, the public space has shifted into possible agora, a collective time, where some questions on the matter have sometimes resonated.

Performance by Anna Raimondo with the collaboration of Camila Mello (Video and editing) and Andrej Bako (Sound recording and mixing)

ANNIE GOH (GER) 'Aural Narcissism – Reconstructing Echo'



Performative Lecture

"Echo is an automatic, dehumanized response, which breaks any relation...The interpretation that is given, presents echo as a punishment, a conviction which, through speech reaches the true essence of human beings, making it meaningless. Elusive, inaccessible, Echo is everywhere, it haunts us."

Edith Lecourt

Where Narcissus' fate became a cautionary tale of a dangerous amount of self-love, the myth of Echo, was never bestowed such a clearly defined role within modern social relations. The myth of Narcissus, via mirror-stage theory and its corresponding extrapolations in media theory has obtained a general familiarity, however that of Echo, as natural and artificial auditive reverberations remains characteristically diffuser.

Positioning Narcissus' visual self-love against Echo's auditive self-love, this performative lecture explores these visual and auditive reflective phenomena. It begins with the respective myths as male and female counterpoints and draws upon various theoretical perspectives, for example the hierarchy of the senses and media archaeology to open up questions about the meanings of these roles. By using rudimentary live-coding to demonstrate and explore these visual and auditive reflections, the media-archaeological scope ranges from approximately AD 8, when Ovid's *Metamorphoses* was written (the most influential version of the myth of Narcissus and Echo), to the relatively powerful domestic computer technology of today. The format of the presentation is intended to sit between theory and practice, and create a ground for experimentation upon which sound and gender can be re-examined.

BONNIE JONES (USA) 'We've'

"We've" is a text video that explores writing and language as "acoustic", "aural" phenomena. The idea behind much of this work is how we might be able to perceive of language in the way that we perceive of music. How language might become porous, fluid, environmental in its delivery and reception. Can a poem function like a field recording? In that the recognizable is shifted in meaning and context and re-purposed in other ways? Can we "listen" to visual text and visual media?

For CRiSAP I will be presenting a portion of "We've", a modular art project that includes sound, visual text videos, performance, and writing. The project is designed to appear in many different formats and conditions and each instance of presentation takes the name "We've."

The "module" presented for CRiSAP will be an improvised writing text video that will be created specifically for the conference using text largely drawn from a longer prose poetry project by the same title. The original



source text, written by me, explores contemporary, Asian, urban identity as a set of shifting and interlaced areas of perception linking history, memory, and the present in a non-linear experience. The video frames the writing of this prose poem as a performance and explores the specific themes of sound, body and language that occur throughout the text. The writing on these subjects was inspired by my studies of the Korean alphabet *hangul* whose consonants are meant to visually represent the shape of the sound in the mouth and throat.

CARO CHURCHILL (UK) 'Feminist Perspectives On Sound Engineering: Challenging Trends In The Production And Engineering Of The Female Vocal In Pop Music.'

A practical presentation looking at how the female vocal is often treated in pop music by (largely male) studio engineers. Recent examples of Bjork and Kelly Clarkson demanding less compression on their voices (sonicscoop.com & Metro UK) so they 'sound more like them' are interesting examples of potential challenges to the standard treatment of a female pop lead vocal.

Pop vocals are nearly always heavily compressed (to the extent of changing the voice quality) reducing dynamics (the difference between quiet and louder moments). Whilst heavy compression can be a desired creative effect, it is mostly employed as a pre-set way of mixing music.

With EQ settings, it is most commonly recommended to cut off the lower frequencies and enhance the hi mid/presence frequencies with a female voice. Sometimes this is suggested to avoid its lower frequencies 'getting in the way' of the rest of the mix. Yet I believe the lower tones carry much of the warmth, depth and emotion of an authentic voice. The fundamental tones of the vocal are indeed fundamental – and to discard them can render the female voice less rich.

Examples of a female vocal will be played to demonstrate how standard EQ (frequency) and compression (dynamic control) settings can alter the sound, expression and depth of the original vocal. I believe this standard approach undermines the female voice and I am encouraged by these musicians wanting and having some say in how their voice is treated – especially in the popular music industry chain of power and commands.

DIANA McCARTY (GER) "A Sound of Her Own: Feminist Radio"

An acoustic case study of a feminist editorial model that is participatory and socially engaged with a focus on the gender specific programming. As an artist run radio, reboot.fm has a base of 100+ people that actively participate in productions that explore art, discourse and electronic music. Over 50% of regular



radio makers are women, unique in free/community radios around the world. And, yes, it sounds different. The presentation would explain how the feminist model works and with audio samples of Ladyland (Diana Weiss & Nadine Hartman) a pop/theory talk show and Asozial Engagierte (The Totencrackhuren im Kofferraum/ The Dead Crackwhores in the Trunk) a trashy pop band that deals with gender issues.

GAYATHRI KHEMADASA (SRI LANKA / USA) "Phoolan Devi Opera"

Born around 1962 to a poor family in Uttar Pradesh, Phoolan Devi rose to fame as the "Bandit Queen of India" in the early 1980's. She was celebrated as the incarnation of two Hindu goddesses, Durga and Kali, both experts at slaying demons. As a teenager, Devi was kidnapped by bandits hired by her village to punish her resistance to repeated rapes and land theft; she soon made herself leader of these bandits.

Gayathri Khemadasa was inspired to write an opera on Phoolan Devi's life after reading her haunting autobiography in 2008. Jeff Hush, a Shakespeare scholar from UC Berkeley and the University of Chicago, is writing the libretto. They met in Prague. Gayathri is currently a Fulbright scholar at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut; she and Jeff are producing the opera along with a small supporting team from around the world.

The opera aims not only to highlight the refusal of a woman to accept injustice, but also how one woman overcame her victimhood by fighting back against her tormentors—relatives, the police, leaders of her village, and her community, which pushed poor women to silence themselves. Phoolan Devi's story shouts of the dangers that many women face around the world today. The opera is not agit-prop; Gayathri's music is a beautiful fusion of Eastern and Western traditions, and the story brings in many of the poetic details about nature in Devi's autobiography.

An instrumental version of the opera has already been composed and performed by an ensemble at Dartmouth College and California State University, Long Beach as well as other venues in the US. A first performance of the opera takes place on May 12 at South Church in Middletown, CT.

HELENA LOPES BRAGA (PORTUGAL) Francine Benoît, Or The Story Of A Communist, Feminist Homosexual In Portugal During The Dictatorship

Francine Benoît (1894-1990) was a Portuguese composer who worked as a music teacher and music critic for the major national newspapers while being a woman, a communist, a feminist and a lesbian. She was a forerunner of the music sociology, an advocate of modern music, believed music should be taught to every child from an early age, and an accurate musicologist, acquainted with the latest knowledge from across Europe.



Benoît's greatest passion was composition, yet her work has remained largely unknown. Above all, she was a communist and an active feminist who struggled for the rights of women. She was also a lesbian. We will see how she was moderately successful, thanks to her social networks, not only on the music scene, but also from a feminist and communist perspective. We will also see how she was often insulted while alive or simply forgotten afterwards and how no one ever mentions her homosexuality, in what Terry Castle calls "the work of ghosting" (1993). We will analyze how people identify within a group of friends with whom they share some characteristics and how they find their individuality.

One of the aims of this research is to study how our networks affect our work and personal success as well as the disappearance of lesbians in the Portuguese cultural context.

HOLLY INGLETON (UK) 'Her Noise: Identifying Feminist Strategies'

Her Noise co-curator, Lina Dzuverovic has maintained that for her the feminist politics of *Her Noise* were so at the core of the project that they could and should remain implicit so that other issues in the project could gain equal recognition. Yet the complexity and scope of the different voices gathered in the *Her Noise Archive* presents me with a problem of articulation. The space of *Her Noise* combines practitioners from various backgrounds, none of whom slot easily into any prefabricated notions of what it may mean to be an egalitarian or gender feminist, or a difference feminist, or even a feminist at all. And if, as Dzuverovic has steadfastly maintained, the feminist politics are so implicit in the project, what is it specifically about the project that makes it feminist? Resultantly, my question is, if the feminist politics of the project are so implicit, in what ways is it possible to put into words implied understandings that operate as "the unspoken and often unspeakable frameworks of our propositional, claim making activity" (Shotwell 2011: xv)? And perhaps more importantly, where do these politics come from, what are their alignments, feminist positions and own implications?

Interpreting the curatorial process of the Her Noise Project through a methodology suggested by Elizabeth Grosz for distinguishing the sexual signature of a text offers a set of analytical tools to provide a methodology with which the gendered and feminist politics of the space of Her Noise may be further articulated.

HOLLY PESTER (UK) 'Poetics of Disembodied Feminine Noise'

A presentation on the 'poetics of disembodied feminine noise', investigating the intermediated female voice in relation to Sound Poetry.



As a sound poet working in the materiality of speech my presentation will talk through a sound poem I devised based on the ageing voice of the Star Trek computer. The piece investigates the female voice mediated by machine, conceptualising the audio effects of effort, expenditure, artificial/synthesised voices and the detached body.

I take as my starting point Theodor Adorno's remark in the 'Curve of the Needle' that a recorded woman's voice, when played on a gramophone, sounds "incomplete and needy". From this I will ask what has been seen to be distinguishable in the disembodied, mediated female voice. Can this supposed 'incomplete' and 'neediness' be related back to the original wanting female voice of Echo, and is this reproach part of an entrenched listening that coheres noise and the female voice? I will argue that Adorno's specific linking of the flaws of a woman's singing voice to analogue media, is a conceptualising of types of audio distortion that places the female in a poetics of noise and unformed sound. Where the voice is exhausted out of the body, into the machine, what transpositions occur, and how can we harness its materiality?

IRENE NOY (UK) Listen To *His Master's Voice*: Authoritative Acousmatic Voices in an Audio Piece by Hildegard Westerkamp

The Western metaphysics of the voice, which identified speech with presence was challenged by scholars such as Kaja Silvermann and Mladen Dolar who pointed out the voice's intrinsic in-between-ness. Relying on the Lacanian *extimicy*, the voice is then positioned in the overlap between *logos*, that is meaning and its senseless materiality. The voice's inherent lack of *logos* does not effect, according to Silverman, the disembodied male voice in cinema, which is protected from this 'subjective division'. This position of superior knowledge is not extended to what Michel Chion calls *radio-acousmetre*, as, in that case, all voices are "acousmatized". However, the authority of such voices can be examined in an audio piece such as *His Master's Voice* from 1985 by Hildegard Westerkamp. I argue that *His Master's Voice* potentially complicates this idea via its allusion to the visual source of the voice. In that respect, I propose to compare Westerkamp's subversion of the voices juxtaposed in, what can be referred to as a sound montage, to Hannah Höch's usage of the photomontage in the early twentieth-century in Germany. Despite the distinctive techniques and their implementations by the two artists, this comparison examines how sound recording can become relevant in connection to art historical attention to gender issues.

IRIS GARRELF'S (UK) 'Escaping Gender Through Technology: Sonic Freedom And The Machine'

Taking personal biography as a starting point, Iris Garrelfs considers how digital technology can offer the possibility to escape gender stereotypes, rather than confirming them, thereby providing freedom to explore alternate sonic universes.



JANE DICKSON (UK) 'Virtuosity, Gender And New Music'

In 2011 ICMC, a leading new music conference, called for virtuosic performances which “showcase new interfaces in action! In the tradition of Paganini on the violin, or Steve Vai on the guitar, the stage action should be something to see!”. This is indicative of a common understanding of virtuosity which has maintained itself since the nineteenth-century, linked to the commodification of music and the culture industry, which arguably advocates a “masculine” approach to performance. It encourages performances in a very specific model at the expense of a more neutral and potentially interesting exploration of virtuosity and does little to be inclusive of women in a male dominated field. Originally used to describe someone who “possesses the inventive genius proper to the art” [Pincherle], we now commonly use the term virtuosity to describe a performer’s technical control and the “gladiatorial” elements of performance [Gould]. Steve Vai and Paganini offer the public a virtuosity that is easily understood – spectacle, physical control, speed and dexterity. Pincherle’s “genius” is arguably rarer and harder to locate and process. Technical mastery and flexibility are essential tools for musical expression; listening and an awareness of a sociopolitical dynamic seem equally important. It will be argued that in the field of new music, a new definition of virtuosity or a pluralistic understanding of the term is important for the inclusion of female performers and composers and anyone - male or female - with a different understanding of virtuosity or music making.

JOHAN LANDGREN (SWE) 'a semblance of order (on a motet possibly by Josquin des Prez)'

Imagine a world where identity is a shifting, shimmering thing.

Imagine a world without the express purpose of being understood.

The title of my work comes from a quote by anthropologist Mary Douglas:

"For I believe that ideas about separating, purifying, demarcating and punishing transgressions have as their main function to impose system on an inherently untidy experience. It is only by exaggerating the difference between within and without, above and below, male and female, with and against, that a semblance of order is created." (Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger*)

Imagine a world where we can access the musical treasures of the past without the burdensome teleology of Music History.



Imagine a world where the voice is not neatly organized into categories, by gender and by musical role (soprano, alto, tenor, bass).

I found such a world in Renaissance vocal polyphony. This work is based on a motet by 15th century composer Josquin des Prez. Musicologist Susan McClary opened my eyes to the potential of polyphonic music to portray multiple simultaneous identities, combining into one complex meta-identity.

Imagine a world were Music Conservatoires become Music Progressivists.

Imagine a world where oral cavity, tongue, microphone, lungs, digital software, vocal folds, teeth, saliva conspire to create new forms, other sounds, impure identities.

JOHNNY PAVLATOS (UK) 'Radio, The Body, Meaning, and Context: A Reconsideration'

“In a performance of radical passivity we witness the willingness of the subject to actually come undone, to dramatize unbecoming for the other so that the viewer does not have to witness unbecoming as a function of her own body.” - J. Halberstam

When I listen to the radio I sense my body is dragged closer to my habits, it grasps my body and proposes certainty, it makes me angry yet alive, it shakes my identity with a sense of failure, rather than a confident being' - *my radiophonic response to Halberstam's notion of radical passivity.*

The stagnation of radio in response to social and sexual urgency has been the significant identifiable shift in my thinking as a sound art practitioner. I therefore locate and define this event / radio sound-walk as a way of re-examining the function of radio and its relation to our bodies. With this radiophonic sound walk, I wish to locate and articulate what I perceive to be gender differentiation in radiophonic art practices and its gender politics. I situate my research in the field of the **radiophonic arts** and I use this term to define the sonic art context of my practice as an artist working with the medium of radio.

The theoretical context of my research and this proposed sound walk is informed by the frameworks of queer theory, gender studies and feminism, and develops from a investigation of Judith Halberstam's and Judith Butler's research and its effects on the radiophonic subject. As a researcher in 'Radiophonic Art and Gender' I am currently very interested in Halberstam's '*Queer Art of Failure*' as it offers a fascinating alternative to the more capitalist success driven gender analysis models which seem to affirm a becoming of gendered categories in lieu of a more [capitalist] realist result.



Halberstam's and Judith Butler's theories seem to me to not assume that there are 'just queers and straights, men and women', but rather forces me to ask what is the history of my body as a subject and how does my existence rely on repeated performances, performances that like those projected by bodies on the radio, seem to be subject to failure.

KERSTIN SCHROEDINGER (UK) 'Material Interventions (II)'

Along changes in the history of labour from Taylorism to Post-Fordism the role and contribution of women workers has also changed dramatically. In my presentation, I will look at women labourers in the production of (sound)media throughout the 20th century. I will present in image and sound a short counter narrative of hegemonic structures of production and reproduction. My aim is to reconstruct the impact and influence that women labourers actually have had in these transformation processes. The focus lies in media-related industries, in this case industries that produce sound gear and instruments that shape our acoustic environments, such as telephones, gramophones, stereos, etc.

The story begins with the invention of the telephone. The people operating early telephone systems where women and their voices were the border post between caller and receiver. With WW2 all kinds of work became possible for women at the home front. Some of them became engineers. They had careers in cryptology and where involved in invention such as the first vocoder systems. When a classical concept of labour became more and more transformed, women again moved to the forefront of worker's protests against a Fordist model of production.

A critical review of the history of worker movements in the mid 20th century aims to both challenge our responsibilities for the past and strengthens confidence in our involvements in struggles of today. The presentation will perform a conflict between invisibility of women's labour and the audible and oral contributions of women in media production from the early 20th century until ca. 1968.

LAURA SEDDON (UK) 'They Clapped Until She Bowed Once More'

This presentation is structured around a series of sound clips from the musical event 'They Clapped Until She Bowed Once More', curated for Contemporary Connections in 2011. This event marked the centenary of the formation of the Society of Women Musicians who, in 1911, were at the forefront of the promotion of a 'feminist' aesthetic in music. 'They Clapped Until She Bowed Once More' explored representations of gender in historical women's works, which had been promoted by the Society, and the responses of three contemporary practitioners. This included works by Imogen Holst, Daphne Oram, Ethel Smyth and Ruth Gipps as well as new commissions in response from Rhian Samuel, Lynne Plowman and Amy Cunningham.



The paper will highlight the role of the feminist musicologist in research, curation and commissioning of sound art within a multi-genre programme. It will discuss the placement of electronic works and sound art next to acoustic works in this deliberately reconstructed historical narrative and the response of the audience to it. There will be a specific analysis of the contribution of Daphne Oram's early electronic work *Four Aspects* to this varied programme and the contemporary composer's responses to this legacy. *Four Aspects* was included in the project because this piece had been used by Oram in a series of talks for the Society Of Women Musicians in order to introduce its members to electronic music for the first time.

MAGZ HALL (UK)

BBC Radio Fours Today programme (7/3/12) broadcast a feature on female film trailer voice over artists, quoting unspecified scientific data that audiences trust a male voice more than a female voice. A male presenter said afterwards women had better things to do than voice overs. Such data is often used to explain and reaffirm why more women are not broadcast on the radio. A producer from BBC Radio One (30 male DJs to 6 women) informed my students that listeners preferred male voices. There is also gender prejudice behind digital voices (read guardian article). I would like to open up a discussion on issues of trust and authority and the female voice and record/play a new sound piece concerning these issues.

Links

http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_9703000/9703260.stm

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/the-womens-blog-with-jane-martinson/2011/oct/21/siri-apple-prejudice-behind-digital-voices>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-17355013>

<http://blogs.indiewire.com/womenandhollywood/sexism-watch-film-trailers>

<http://rspb.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/early/2012/03/06/rspb.2012.0311.full>

MARIE THOMPSON (UK) 'Gossips, Sirens, Hi-Fi Wives: Feminizing the Threat of Noise'

Aristotle tells us that 'silence is a woman's glory' but this silence is really noise abatement. Throughout the history of Western thought, women and noise have found themselves on the same side of philosophical dichotomies that have governed and legitimated their subordination. They have been condemned to the side of unreason, of madness and hysteria, of irrational non-meaning. There is, as Pythagoras tells us, a good principle that created order, light and man and a bad principle that created chaos, darkness and woman. Women's noises, their 'idle gossiping', their squeals of excitement, are cast out as abject distractions. It is her tongue that is responsible for the original sin. The destruction of man's paradise comes about from a woman's chatter: Eve who listened to the undesirable noises of the devil, coercing Adam into



eating the apple.

Part presentation, part manifesto, this paper critically examines the intimate relationship between noise and the 'feminine' that shadows the noise lineages descending from Futurism and John Cage. In order to explore this relationship, we will draw from three figures that tend to remain silent in noise discourses: the gossip, the siren and the spouses of 1950s American Hi-Fi audiophiles. Subsequently, this paper will raise questions about who has laid claims to the radical potential of noise and silence. Yet if women's noises are to be kept in silence, since they threaten (masculine) order, then do they also carry with them a subversive potential? Can 'her' noisy disruptions become strategic?

MELANIE CHILIANIS (AUST) 'The Body's Impact on Creative Sonic Practice :: Sonic Practice's Impact on the Body'

The presentation will highlight the chronically ill and epileptic gendered body and its ever-changing relationship to sonic practice and the experience of listening. As such, I will at first offer the concept of the lived body, one understood as unfinished and in process, and, importantly, as not easily separable from social and cultural experience (Blackman, 2008). However the body is theorised though, the felt body in illness can saturate a particular kind of subjectivity, while an epileptic seizure can trouble the body and mind with even more singularity. Seizures and all their variants often intensify at key points in women's menstrual cycle: ovulation, during the pre-menstrual phase and during her period. As examples, during the course of the presentation I will play brief excerpts of some of my previous compositions, drawing attention to different aspects of the epileptic body (mine) in relation to sound worlds.

The relations between discourse, the body, gender and sound are complex in any one situation. After Helene Cixous and Trinh Minh-Ha, I am looking to draw out links between female/gendered corporeality and sonic organisation (be that epileptically seized corporeality or "inter-inctal"¹ corporeality). I am looking to explore the following questions: Can corporeal writing be appropriated in order to think through questions of the body, subjectivity and sound? Can sonic practices and gendered materialities enact altered cultural formations and even social forms? What might those sonic practices be? What kinds of bodies are excluded from what kinds of sonic practices? The role this may take in social and feminist discourse is something I am looking to develop further in research and activist spheres.

¹ Between seizure



MIKHAIL KARIKIS (UK) 'The Vanishing Sounds Of Seawomen'

Over the past twelve months, Mikhail Karikis has been traveling to the Pacific island of Jeju to record and engage in the activities of the last and vanishing community of female sea-workers. Known as the 'haenyeo', this ancient community now consists of women between 60-90 y/o, who free-dive for seafood and pearls. Karikis's new body of work centers on the ancient vocal practices of this community and branches out to reflect on their cultural and socio-political significance. The presentation demonstrates sound recordings of the haenyeo's traditional breathing technique which allows the women to dive to extreme depths with no oxygen supply, as well as samples of work songs and political debates recorded in the women's work camps. Further, the paper contextualises the role of the haenyeo in establishing a unique egalitarian and matriarchal system promoting a form of eco-feminism against the current of modernisation in the region; it discusses the significance of the diving women's subculture reflected in their model of collective economics, consensual democracy, self-sufficiency, aquatic wisdom and sense of purpose in later age; and reflects on the endangered status of their profession and community.

NORAH LORWAY (UK) 'From Riot Grrrl To Girrlsound: Promoting A Meaningful Awareness For Women Working In Sonic Arts.'

Women working in digital media and sonic arts have been oftentimes overlooked for their male counterparts. The representation of women in many sonic arts academic programs and associated conferences seems to be drastically less than that of their male colleagues. I will offer a short presentation on the recent trends regarding women in these fields, and how one can promote a more meaningful awareness of the issues arising from this gender gap. With a brief discussion of movements such as the underground Seattle based Punk rock RiotGrrrl movement, and the international sonic arts collective GirrlSound, I will also discuss possible ways of promoting and encouraging young women to participate in sonic arts and ways in which gender equality can be promoted in both an academic and non academic environment.

PARK MCARTHUR (USA) 'Epistle' (00:08:20)

Engaging the private and published correspondence of cultural workers and social organizers from the 1780s-present, Epistle foregrounds the letter as an exceptional vessel of personal and historical material. This investigation into the sound of correspondence records, compiles, and mixes a selection of letters that draws out the different tones and textures of spatial and temporal grounds. Epistle's different voices (Mary Wollstonecraft, Martin Luther King Jr, Yayoi Kusama, Raden Adjeng Karini, among other) invite affective readings around questions of gender, social struggle, conflicts of representation, and personal authorship and agency.



SARAH HARDIE (UK) 'I'm Calling'

(Video - Documentation of her sound installation shown at the Royal Scottish Academy 'New Contemporaries', 2012, followed by documentation of a rehearsal for the live performance given on the opening night)

Sarah Hardie's practice acknowledges aspects of human experience which are always present, but rarely remarked upon. Within her work she considers loss and retrieval, and the actions of seeking and finding: imagining each individual as a lost star, singing through the dark.

The body of work (sound installation and performance) she made for Royal Scottish Academy 'New Contemporaries', 2012 (the documentation of which is shown here) is a discourse on the concept of the call and the related dichotomy of the im/possibility of intimacy with the other.

Her practice has been profoundly affected by her history of art research. She is currently reading for her postgraduate degree, focusing on Art and Psychoanalysis (looking particularly at contemporary art which explores issues of gender and war) under Juliet Mitchell and Mignon Nixon at the Courtauld Institute of Art. Seeing Mike Bartlett's Play, '13', performed recently (the final monologue from which is included in her work) she was struck by how this text seemed to unite both the huge issues she was grappling with theoretically and the ideas of calling and being lost she had been exploring through her artistic practice. They suddenly all came together here in this powerful and moving text.

She has written, directed, performed and quoted texts for this body of work, in which she sought to explore these issues further: uniting the personal with the political; the internal with the external; the individual with the collective; the lost star in a multitude of stars, calling out to be heard, against the drift of the universe.

SHARON GAL (UK) 'Gals with Guitars - collaborative composition and creative exchange in an all-female group.'

'Gals with Guitars' is a composition and performance for a group of female guitar players. It is based on a search for a collective sound, a group presence, and invites participation from women and girls with any playing abilities. The piece is part of a series of compositions exploring collaborative praxis and using an "open call".

In contrary to my other pieces, GwG is gender-specific, and grew out of my need for, and curiosity about, female companionship. I had not worked with a female-only group before, and was wondering about the difference in psycho-dynamics in comparison with mixed gender groups. I also wanted to examine my own



role as a composer/leader and facilitator.

The composition is developed using simple instructions. Its complexity evolves through the different interpretations by the players. The process encourages individuals to immerse themselves within the sound while also emphasising their unique contribution to the group. The ensemble supports the players as they create their own parts. The performance itself crystallises the process and finalises it.

GwG was originally conceived for electric guitars, with a development stage taking eight hours. Four performances have taken place so far, both electric and acoustic, with different groups, and some players have taken part more than once. In particular, Sophie Cooper and Andie Brown have become permanent collaborators.

The piece reclaims and presents the guitar via a female perspective. The instrument becomes a metaphor for self empowerment - a symbol of transition and change.

THERESA BEYER (CH) 'Asking For Gender In Female Hip Hop'

21st-century feminism has become more and more differentiated: Gender and Queer Studies offer widespread theories from the deconstruction of Gender to the call for diversity and the incorporation of intersectionalities. But where do these models overlap with practice?

As part of my ethnomusicological research I have conducted various qualitative interviews, focusing on women in Hip Hop. Since this genre is a highly male-dominated performing art, gender can become an important structural feature. However, the musician's need to address this – thoroughly political – topic is not equally high: a self-proclaimed queer feminist rap-activist like Sookee (Berlin), makes different artistic decisions from Steff La Cheffe (Bern) or Speech DeBelle (London), who both prefer the self-concept of being a «normal rapper» and who are not interested in participating actively on the debate about feminism. Yet, this do not lead to the simple conclusion that we arrived in a post-gender reality, and in the meshwork of discourses the unexpressed may also be meaningful.

In my presentation, I argue that the general approach and the intention of a qualitative interview risks to create gender-problems solely out of the fact that there is a rapping woman. By using the example of female Hip Hop, I will therefore point out methodological considerations in which I suggest respectful ways to conduct interviews, without forcing gender issues or imposing ones own concepts on feminism.



THERESA SCHUBERT-MINSKY (AUS) 'Female sound practices since the 1990s: thin voices occupying space.'

The history of music has always been dominated by male composers. Only since the last century female composers and sound artists have become more common. Against this background, this paper discusses sound installations that have been produced by female artists and presented at the Ars Electronica Festival in Linz. The focus lies on spatial and site-specific works that use live inputs from the world outside such as movements, natural and physical phenomena, or generative data. It is also examining how topics and methods have changes over the last 20 years (or not) and what influence the development and improvement of technologies used may have had on the outcome.

The presented artworks are based on original research within the Ars Electronica Archive and cover the time span from the early 1990s until now. Examples include installations/interventions in public space, sonification, field-recordings and algorithmic composition. The format of the presentation will be an informal academic paper, spiced with audiovisual material from the Ars Electronica archive.

TRIPTA CHANDOLA (AUST/INDIA) 'An 'Obscene' Calling'

In the slums of Govindpuri, Delhi, India's capital city, it is the feminine body on which the *otherness* is doubly inscribed, both of the structural and everyday violence. One of the ways in which this *otherness* is reiterated, by the men of the community, by limiting the spaces available to these bodies to sonically perform themselves. Here, I will present how certain group of women challenge subvert and circumvent these hierarchies by claiming the sonic space through 'abuses'. These abuses, sexually explicit and violent towards the female body, are traditionally reckoned to be the classic masculine expression to reiterate the hierarchy. By implicating themselves in the violence directed towards the 'real' and 'imagined' body of self, the women create a disruptive and volatile space where gendered spaces, roles and identities necessitate re-framing.

I will complicate these reckonings by presenting the narratives of Baby, 40, and Bitiya, 25, two women from Govindpuri, who have been at different times jilted by their lovers, who also refused to return the money they owed them. Their status as uneducated, slum-dwellers makes them hesitant to approach the authorities, namely the police. Thus they took matters in their own hands. Along with a few other women they congregated in front of their lover's residence and office. Once there they sonically disrupted and disturbed the space(s) – moral and social – by performing sexually explicit and violent abuses. It brought much 'shame' to the men, and subsequently they agreed to negotiations.

The idea I want to take forth in this presentation is that by claiming the violence traditionally directed at



them, women do not assume a masculine persona but instead take charge of the *violence*. And the ability to make this claim sonically opens spaces to exert their identity otherwise restricted.

VAL PHOENIX (UK) 'Sounds And Visions: Women Using Creativity As A Strategy Of Self-Defence'

Over the last 21 years I have conducted interviews with women musicians, filmmakers and artists, asking a wide range of questions, but always coming back to the idea of: "What makes you do what you do?" Often the answer has been that, growing up as girls, they were silenced, abused or neglected and that they needed to find their voices as adults. Picking up a guitar, a mic or a pen allowed them to discover who they were and what they wanted to do.

The research stems from my long-term project, begun in San Francisco in 1993 and continuing until today, looking at an alternative canon of women's underground culture that encompasses music, art, writing and film. I was interested to note in the 1990s how the US Riot Grrrl scene looked to the 1970s UK punk scene for inspiration and since I have lived in London, since 1995, I have noted how the current alternative women's scene looks back both to the early punk scene and the Riot Grrrl movement in a never-ending chain of inspiration and evolution that has never been properly recognised by mainstream media. The [interviews](#), running from 1990, when I started writing, up through 2012, number over 300.