

Abstracts

Tomasz Misiak, The Contexts and Questions of Research on Sound in Contemporary Culture. An Introduction

The paper is an attempt to identify the wide array of contexts and problems associated with the presence of sound in contemporary culture. These contexts are described using the most significant questions in given problematic fields. The main objective is to draw a map delineating the varied field of research on sound. In the paper, questions coexist related to philosophy, aesthetics, musicology, anthropology, acoustics, ecology and architecture.

Renata Tańczuk, *Soundscape* as a Research Concept in Experiencing the City

The concept of soundscape put forward by Raymond Murray Schafer and modified in various forms by other researchers offers a very interesting perspective for the reflection on the specificity of the modes of experiencing the city, establishing relationships with it, developing a sense of putting down roots and recognizing its identity. This article presents Robert Losiak's interpretation of *soundscape* and demonstrates its value for urban research.

Ewelina Grygier, Music of the City or Music in the City? Folklore and Ethnic Music on the Streets of Wrocław and Poznań

The article inquires about the musical urban folklore in the repertoire of today's street musicians in Wrocław and Poznań (Poland). Considering the lack of literature on urban folklore in the discussed cities, the author utilizes primarily self-produced sources. The material gathered during fieldwork in both cities (participant observation, data collection, interviews, photographs and recordings) is subsequently analyzed. To obtain a broader context, the article

contains additional information about the folklore of Lviv (presentation based on literary works), Warsaw and Vienna (ethnographic fieldwork data). The article contains quotes from interviews with buskers.

**Maciej Janicki, “Microscope for Ears”.
On the 19th-Century Act of Listening to Chopin**

In Paris in the first half of the 19th century, the social and urban changes were accompanied by the development of two basic sonic strategies: the first (represented by Berlioz, Musard, Liszt and others, who conquered the mass public in large concert halls) was aimed at competing with the ever more aggressive, modern city soundscape, while the second (represented among others by Chopin) relied on an intimate contact between the artist and listeners gathered in a modestly-sized salon. The salon becomes a ‘microscope for ears’, and Chopin’s improvisations may be read as a stream of consciousness. Listening to those improvisations in half-darkness, receiving the sound with the entire body, and ascribing to the music a mission from ‘ideal’ worlds is testimony to certain ways of musical listening being maintained, and simultaneously a change in music’s position within the hierarchy of arts, as well as a crystallization of a modern social distinction that perspired in the disciplining of the listener’s body and constructing his or her class and environmental ‘sonic identity’.

Zdzisław Strumiłło, What’s the Price of Silence?

What is important for humans can also be noticed and utilized by today’s marketing industry. Capitalist economy seduces its customers, i.e. consumers, with increasing sophistication, offering ever newer or freshly presented products and services. Contemporary, holistic marketing employs knowledge about humans, whose need to value everything they perceive is an inherent feature. One way to persuade customers of a given offer’s uniqueness is to refer to a particular customer group’s system of values. Silence, although physically experienced, is primarily a cultural construct with strong references to axiology. As such, it can become a widely shared carrier for aesthetic or vital values. Along with such references to cultural values, it is sometimes used to build the economic value of a product or service. The article attempts to show these dependencies and explain how the sale of such a completely immaterial and difficult to normally describe phenomenon as silence might work.

Peter McMurray, **Urban Heterophony and the Mediation of Place**

This paper explores a variety of methodologies that offer ethnographic access to the kinds of “humanly organized sound” that typify urban acoustic spaces. The case studies draw from ongoing research on Sufi Muslim rituals in the Western Balkans (especially Kosovo), exploring ways in which sound articulates difference in cities (urban heterophony) and in so doing mediates notions of place. Three methodologies are put forward here: first, documentary sound studies, an attempt to bring together the kinds of media-rich practices of visual anthropology, acknowledging that academic prose has inherent limits in its ability to represent; second, media archaeology, a critical reappraisal of media archives (whether intentionally designated as archives or not) as repositories for audio and other materials—both physical and virtual—which simultaneously reflect and shape the priorities of the archive and its discursive practices; and finally, aural *flânerie*, emphasizing passage through city spaces as a way of interrogating the boundaries and marginal spaces comprising the city. These ethnographic approaches offer a set of tools particularly suited to the socially enmeshed, collaborative realm of urban ethnomusicology, all the more so as technological developments raise questions about many of the basic premises of what constitutes fieldwork and ethnography in the past.

Krzysztof Łukasiewicz, **“Towards forms of Life of Sound and Cultures of Hearing”**

Kultur. Von den Cultural Studies bis zu den Visual Studies (Bielefeld 2012), a propaedeutic and synthetic book edited by Stephan Moebius, contains a chapter on sound studies, which was written by Holger Schulze. Arguing that no model of a homogeneous science of sound can be maintained, Schulze advocates studies that retain processuality, performativity, heterogeneity and hybridity of the cognitive process. Subsequently, when he was presenting the development of sound studies, he was able to take into account the experiences of the musical avant-garde, the development of theoretical research on sound, and various practical consequences and transformations of ethnomusicology. Schulze devoted the most attention to what it meant, means and will mean to study the world of sound, i.e. the world of sounds and the sounding world.