

ballade, som i modsætning til ambientmusikkens spændingsskabende lydcollager består af længere melodiske forløb og bæres af et akustisk klingende melodibærende instrument. Der kan ikke konkluderes nogen sammenhæng mellem udsendelsernes tema og musikalsk genre, og Have er bogen igennem meget påpasselig med at drage generaliserende konklusioner. En af dem er, at de afrundede musikalske forløb med melodisk drive påkalder sig mere bevidst opmærksomhed end ambientmusikkens klangflader og suspense-effekter. En anden interessant betragtning er TV2s foretrukne brug af lydcollager overfor DRs hyppige brug af melodisk, harmonisk musik, en forskel som kan skyldes DRs tradition for at benytte 'rigtige' komponister, i modsætning til TV2s brug af en fast lydtekniker. I forlængelse heraf kunne man godt ønske sig en perspektivering til lyden af f.eks. engelske tv-dokumentarer, men det er ikke bogens ærinde, ligesom et tv-historisk blik heller ikke er det.

Lyt til tv er en velskrevet bog, som kan tilfredsstille mange forskelligartede interesser. Dels udfolder den et teoriapparat, som danner grundlag for at tale om sansning og oplevelse, som er sjældent behandlede størrelser i musikforskningen, dels udfordrer den på et konkret sprogligt plan måden, hvorpå vi kan tale om og beskrive musik. Sidst men ikke mindst er *Lyt til tv* interessant læsning, fordi den kvalificerer vores forståelse af musikalsk betydningsdannelse i en af de mange kontekster, vi møder musik i til hverdag. Og mon ikke de fleste læsere vil tænde for tv med fornyet interesse og med hørebrillerne på? Det vil jeg i hvert fald!

Anja Mølle Lindelof



Jacob Smith [1]

Vocal Tracks. Performance and Sound Media

Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2008

304 pp., illus.

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This is indeed a very good book which synthesizes the research fields of media, music and sound, and it should be read by all academics in the fields of (at least) musicology, cultural history and cultural studies, media science, performance studies etc. This being said there are of course some weaknesses and shortcomings in the book, but for the moment I leave them behind and only return to them at the end of the review.

My first and general argument for the overall very positive assessment is the fact that this book is the first thorough and original work which deals with both the cultural history of sound media, different sound media genres, the sounding voice itself and the listener/the audience and their framing – that is how the sound of voice works, its effects and means and what kind of signifying play and production of signification the sound may facilitate.

The bibliography of the book testifies that the author through his scholarship has achieved a profound and broad knowledge in the different cross disciplinary research areas needed for this kind of study. That goes for the media history and theory, voice theory, music and cultural studies, performance theory etc. But most important: the high level of knowledge can be read out of the text and no less out of the many and highly informative notes, where a lot of 'extras' are hidden: information, discussions and further perspectives.

In the following I describe how this study is structured and organized through certain aspects and motives in the field of voice and sound recording, concluding with a description of the outcome and findings of this historical, theoretical and analytical study in 'the ways in which performance has developed in an era of sound media technologies' (p. 243).

[1 An earlier version of this review was published in *Mediekultur* 46 (139-41).]

The book is structured around three aspects: part one: ‘Flooding Out’, part two: ‘A Finer Grain of the Voice’ (which is the increased significance of timbre and inflection of the voice), and part three: ‘Bugging the Backstage’, which deals with the use of secret recording. Each part again consists of two chapters, which focus on central analyses of composite phenomena like ‘Recorded Laughter and the Performance of Authenticity’ and ‘Erotic Performance on Record’; ‘The Nearness of You (or The Voice of Melodrama and Rough Mix)’; ‘The Act of Being Yourself’ and ‘Phony Performances’. These chapter headings very precisely cover the substance and overall aim of the book: ‘to provide a close analysis of audible structures of pleasure in a range of sound media genres’ (p. 8), ‘... drawing the reader’s attention to the often unnoticed but insistent and all too-human sounds of the mediated voice’ (p. 11). I find that the last formulation of purpose is what is best succeeded. I will return to that when I reach the critique in a moment.

It is one of the many strengths of this book about recorded voice sound that the reader is addressed as a listener, such as in the opening of the book: ‘Imagine that you are the audience for a phonograph record in the first decade of the twentieth century. You might be listening through ear tubes at a public phonograph parlour in an urban shopping area, or at home with your ear cocked to a large amplifying horn. The first sound you hear is a voice, which speaks the following words in a stentorian tone: “The Laughing Spectator, by Steve Porter, Edison Records”’ (p. 1). This staging of the reader as a listener is quite often and consistently explicit in the text, combined with the descriptions or paraphrases of the sound phenomena being described. This is only one token of the author’s high awareness of the many difficulties in studying and writing about the subject. He also cites Roland Barthes for saying ‘... there is no science that can exhaust the voice’ (p. 249) and on the last page in his own final words he says: ‘The modern media have offered texts that need to be heard from these multiple positions, since the voice is always saying so many things at once – speaking of culture, identity, technology, and performance with the same fragile, complex, and beautiful tones’ (p. 249).

Here, at last, the weaknesses or shortcomings of the book draw near. Although it is the intention of the author to provide a close analysis of audible structures of pleasure in a range of sound media genres, he has too many other agendas along the ‘many things’ that the voice is ‘speaking of’, for instance in chapter 5 (‘The Act of Being Yourself’) on Allen Funt’s ‘Candid Microphone’ and ‘Candid Camera’, which leads him into a long and more speculative digression about secret recording and the problems about surveillance to-day. It seems somewhat out of the main focus of the book. But furthermore it is an example of the priority of writing about political correct themes such as societal power, gender and race issues instead of providing that earlier promised ‘close analysis of audible structures of pleasure’ – especially the aesthetic aspects thereof; what I would call the ‘sound for pleasure’ or ‘sound for nothing’ are missing or only weakly prioritized.

I think that these skewed priorities may be explained by the fact, that literature on modern aesthetic theory and aesthetization is somewhat under-represented in the grounding theories of the book. Thus the analyses sometimes evade ‘poetics’, aesthetics and pleasure and end in the trap of focusing on sound for ‘purpose’ or strictly intended communication. For instance, we never get to know what the historical attraction or audible structures behind the recorded early *bel canto* voice of Enrico Caruso are. Though he is presented as one of the two voice icons which the author sets up as a dichotomy pair – Louis Armstrong as the ‘rasp’ and Caruso as the *bel canto* voice – we only get the analysis of the voice of Louis Armstrong. The expected analysis of Caruso is forgotten or simply left behind.

That being said it must be underlined, that the focused voice analysis of Louis Armstrong is really good. And though it would have strengthened the book if the analyst had also had some more aesthetic sensibility, he comes a long way with his project as it is.

The book is written and composed in a clear and fine flow: it is essayistic in its form, but very concise in its substance. It is the most thorough and innovative input about sound and voice in the history of recorded sound hitherto. It is a must for anyone who seeks knowledge and perspective in interacting and working with voice sound in the media. Being positioned at the intersection of the voice, sound media technologies and performance I recommend it also to those, who are interested in notions and concepts such as authenticity (also as an aesthetic project) and identity in modern sound and media culture. In our search for signs of authentic human presence and in the construction of vocal ‘authenticity’ we must – the book concludes – accept, that ‘... the voice in particular emerges as an instrument of performance with a particularly subtle give-and-take between expressing the individual and the type: another reflection of the voice’s double nature as both “the intimate kernel of subjectivity” and “the axis of our social bonds”’ (p. 247).

Ansa Lønstrup



Benjamin D. Koen (ed.), with Jacqueline Lloyd, Gregory Barz, and Karen Brummel-Smith (co-eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Medical Ethnomusicology* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008
556 pp., illus., music exx.
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What is medical ethnomusicology? Given the compound nature of the field there is no simple answer: It is, in part, the study of healing practices, sounds, technologies, and performances in their socio-historical contexts; it is also the biomedical, cognitive, and psychological experimentation and construction of viable data on bodily reactions to various music; it is also individual experiences with music and healing put into writing; it is also a kind of social activism that aims at exploring how music and knowledge about musical healing practices might be applied (adhering to the general notion of ‘applied ethnomusicology’) in various academic fields, and in therapeutic, clinical, and public contexts. And the list is not conclusive.

The Oxford Handbook of Medical Ethnomusicology aims at creating a constructive cross-disciplinary dialogue between different kinds of knowledge of music, healing, and health positioned in different, often conflicting disciplines and areas: from musicology and ethnomusicology, the health sciences, the integrative, complementary and alternative medicine (ICAM), the physical and social sciences, the medical humanities, and what is referred to as ‘the healing arts’ (p. 3) – that is non-academic practitioners. Thus medical ethnomusicology is mapped out as a multi-methodological and paradigm-pluralistic field.

It counts to the handbook’s strengths that it allows different voices, which claim musical knowledge and knowledge about music, to participate in the dialogue about the benefits of music in relation to health and healing. That the volume does not aim at forcing these different approaches into shared conceptualizations and terminology of health and music (which they on a fundamental level do not share at the outset anyway) is a wise decision.

However, this dialogical democracy also poses some problems. First, it seems clear that the nature of the intended dialogue is not a straight forward matter. Second, it poses a challenge to the field of ethnomusicology (and other kinds of musicology) by including modalities of knowledge that are not produced within the conventional academic disciplines of ethnomusicology or anthropology, but within other areas of expertise and experience. There is a world of difference between, say, understanding music in terms of isolating independ-