

## Dear Readers,

in recent years, scholarship has highlighted how artists (Paquet 2021; Paquet and Rouleau 2022), and particularly musicians (Adams and Donin 2022; König 2024), engage with the narratives and imaginaries of ecological transition in new and meaningful ways. The idea that arts and culture – conceptualized as the fourth pillar of sustainable development alongside economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability in the UN Agenda 21 for Culture – can support ecological, environmental, and sustainability-related causes is now well established (Ardenne 2019). Performers and composers invite audiences into forms of aesthetic mediation (Caune 2018) that prompt reflection on human activity as a key factor in transforming our living environment. Concepts such as the Anthropocene (Benner et al. 2022) and the Capitalocene (Moore 2016; Haraway 2016) permeate these artistic engagements, emphasizing human responsibility in contemporary environmental change. Ecological transition is thus increasingly understood as socio-ecological, acknowledging the role of human agency in climate disruption, ecosystem degradation, and biodiversity loss.

How do participatory and socially engaged musical practices – supported by music mediation – contribute through their “intervention strategies” (Fourcade 2014) to reflection on territorial transformation? Can they act as accelerators of socio-ecological transition? Put differently: what happens when music mediation fosters engagement with socio-environmental concerns? For this second issue of *IJMM*, and drawing on the concept of “transition” introduced by Rob Hopkins in 2008, we ask whether and how music mediation can play “a catalytic role in enabling communities to explore and imagine their own responses” (Hopkins 2014, 134) to environmental challenges.

- Simon Chioini and Myrian Boucher show how, since the 1970s, ecological thinking has inspired artists and researchers to explore the sonic dimensions of experience and our interactions with the environment. In electroacoustic music and sound art, the field of acoustic ecology has anticipated many contemporary concerns by focusing on the sonic aspects of our relationship to the world. Some artist-researchers, however, have moved beyond the preservation of natural soundscapes, coining the term *ecology of sound* and critiquing the soundscape concept for overlooking the lived experience of landscape. Their work explores the dynamic interplay of sound, environment, society, and individual perception, foregrounding sound’s multisensory and social dimensions. In this context, the article presents a methodology for sound creation and music composition—exploration, collection, assemblage – centered on site-specific practices and illustrated through the *Sound + Place* workshops.

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- Martina Fladerer’s article investigates the transformative potential of music mediation as an ethical and relational practice, drawing on Donna Haraway’s concepts of *thinking-with*, *making-with*, *sympoiesis*, and *response-ability*. Addressing the urgent need for new ways of living on a damaged planet, it emphasizes music’s capacity to foster connections across human and non-human worlds. Music mediation in “interesting times”, understood as a process of becoming-with others, invites us to revise dominant narratives and *stay with the trouble*. Framed as an act of care and co-responsibility, music mediation becomes a speculative and engaged practice of listening and responding – with and through others. Drawing on examples such as Vanessa Tomlinson’s *Sonic Dreams* and the activist orchestra *Lebenslaute*, the article demonstrates how musicking’s transformative potential can shape new forms of ecological relationality.
  - We are especially pleased that Kyle Devine has contributed an afterword to this issue. He reflects on how artistic responses to climate crisis – particularly in sound art – may end up reproducing the capitalist structures they seek to critique. Building on the idea of enemy feminisms, he introduces the concept of *enemy ecologies*: ecological forms and practices that present themselves as critical and liberating while remaining aligned with dominant economic logics. Drawing on a range of examples, he questions the presumed political efficacy of relational philosophies and affective mediation. His aim is not to reject these approaches but to develop an *immanent critique* that addresses their internal contradictions – and to ask how sound art might compose publics capable of confronting ecological crisis, rather than (unintentionally) accommodating it.

We wish you, dear readers, a thought-provoking and inspiring read.

Axel Petri-Preis, Irina Kirchberg & Irena Müller-Brozović  
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