

---

## Introduction

*Inaugural Words from the Co-Founding Editors*

---

As founding editors, we are pleased to introduce the first issue of *Resonance: The Journal of Sound and Culture*. For both of us, our journey to develop this journal builds on our careers as we have created numerous exhibitions, published books and journals, collaborated with inspiring colleagues, and presented on sound across the world for more than 20 years. One of our collective goals for this journal is to present how the study and practice of sound connects across multiple fields of inquiry and to increase our understanding of the creative capacity of sound as an art form. We hope that *Resonance* may serve as a gathering place and a new forum, a publication that celebrates scholars and artists whose interests may blend and bend disciplines on their journey to create new knowledge. The journal's purview is also centered on a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion. Sound by its very nature is social, physical, and environmental; resonance, by definition, is a form of amplification and is an apt metaphor for our roles as the stewards of this new academic endeavor.

As the field of sound studies expanded from media and cultural studies over the past two decades, writers and editors found value in connecting important aspects related to sound practices, histories, and the technologies and perceptions that made them so fascinating and important to examine. We envision sound as a powerful cultural force; for too long, the cultural aspect of sound has played a minor role in established journals. *Resonance* wants to challenge its contributors and audience to move forward with analysis and action and to conceive of sound studies and practice as dynamic, political, and fluid.

Finally, *Resonance* is a platform for artists, cultural producers, musicians, sound artists, and sound-based practitioners who create across a spectrum that includes new and traditional forms of radio, music, performance, installation/sculpture, and immersive realities as well as emerging areas. We are interested in expressions of arts research that engage in critical examination, historical framing, and discussions of aesthetic analysis across a wide range of disciplines to progress beyond artificial distinctions of theory and practice.

Additionally, we are interested in models such as practice-based research and hybrid approaches to communicating what is essential about the creation of art through sound.

Our two invited essays are a telling representation of the diversity of ideas, approaches, and subject matter that we attend to in this journal. Both essays connect and catechize

---

*Resonance: The Journal of Sound and Culture*, Vol. 1, Number 1, pp. 1–5. Electronic ISSN: 2688-867X © 2020 by The Regents of the University of California. All rights reserved. Please direct all requests for permission to photocopy or reproduce article content through the University of California Press's Reprints and Permissions web page, <https://online.ucpress.edu/res>. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/res.2020.1.1.1>

radio and spirituality through a philosophical and personal investigation into the performance of sound at its cultural core.

In our first invited essay, we are pleased to include Allen Weiss's "Radically Recalcitrant Radio," in which he underscores one of our primary goals in this journal—to defy and dissolve conventional barriers that limit expression and reinforce societal convention. Weiss's lucid telling of the last works of Antonin Artaud illustrates this point with great depth and insight.

In the essay, Weiss is our guide on an anfractuous journey that leads to a locus of spiritual nihilism and vast radiophonic potential. His unique framing of moments in the history of radio aligns with the interests of *Resonance* as he shares analysis on perhaps one of the avant-garde's most celebrated and also formally squelched works, *To Have Done With the Judgment of God*, described provocatively by Weiss as:

... a radiophonic broadcast specifically crafted as a countershock against the society that suicided him. For radio, like the plague, directly attacks the nervous system of the body politic. Private cure, public shock. This work—besides being an instantiation of the theater of cruelty as well as a new form of poetry, performance, and radio—was also a form of apotropaic magic.

Artaud considered his own attempts at conjoining the planes of radio and spirituality as a failure, and the article also recounts the multiple psychic disasters that plagued him. For Weiss, Artaud's renunciation of his own body (without organs) is an important marker on the art historical timeline and one that helped to push the limits of modernist poetry, theater, performance, and radio, thus setting or unsettling the stage for the works of Samuel Beckett, Allen Ginsberg, and Jean Genet—and later Jerzy Grotowski, Peter Brook, Karen Finlay, Diamanda Galas, Gregory Whitehead, and Christof Migone, among others. Weiss also outlines Artaud's ultimate form of self-erasure and eternalization that, according to Weiss, would happen on the radio and in the "disquietude created by the recorded voice." In this piece, Weiss is a keen steward of an immensely personal, influential, and layered history and also one in which the author re-complicates our relationship in the present, as a fitting apologue about our own creative intensions.

Our second invited essay, "Wade in the Water," is a personal narrative from Sonja D. Williams on her involvement in the making of a groundbreaking radio documentary series. She points out the significance of understanding gospel music as cultural tradition and how it simultaneously inspires an appreciation for sonic diversity. She recounts firsthand experience with one of the most ambitious projects of her career. This radio documentary, remarkably, is still one of the most listened-to series on National Public Radio; it examines the spirituality of the African American culture through an exploration of gospel music. The series remains iconic and documents the historical significance of the African American cultural impact on the spiritual foundation of the nation and the world. Even the series title *Wade in the Water* reflects the birth of a new America. The documentary is the first to archive a deep, rich history that still resonates today through every aspect of American life. Mark Burford illustrates the power of song in his biography

of Mahalia Jackson, *Mahalia Jackson and the Black Gospel Field*, published in 2019 by Oxford University Press; by doing so he shares much of the story and people instrumental to the rise of black gospel music as a powerful cultural force in America and throughout the world. However, before this book, *Wade in the Water* had shared the impact of many such influentials as Mahalia Jackson in what became a landmark documentary series. Jackson was featured in episodes 1, “Songs and Singing as Church”; episode 22, “Jazz and the Wider World of the Sacred and Episode”; and episode 24 “The Story of the California Gospel Movement”—all of which National Public Radio made available and aired again in June 2019. It is through the featured poetic hearts that America is shown to rise to new heights, creating a passionate sound emblematic of a new land that has thrived best through its diversity. Now, 30 years later, we have asked Peabody Award-winning producer Sonja Williams to reflect on the monumental undertaking, which is still impressive in the scope and depth of its overview on the social, political, and economic influence of gospel music.



The peer-reviewed essays in our inaugural journal offer new perspectives on a range of ideas that exemplify the scope of *Resonance*. We applaud the diversity of ideas and authors represented within this issue.

Judy Dunaway’s unprecedented account of the first exhibition to use the hybrid term *sound art* is a timely piece of arts scholarship that centers on under-recognized female sound artists. In “The Forgotten 1979 MoMA Sound Art Exhibition,” Dunaway recounts the early work of Maggie Payne, Connie Beckley, and Julia Heyward and the seminal program that curator Barbara London assembled featuring their work. Dunaway also notes the ways that London helped to delineate some of the main threads in the then-emerging practice of sound art—those of sound sculpture/installation, multispeaker sound installation, and performances involving multimedia. This article raises challenging questions about the genre of sound art and why so many women practitioners have been left out of the various histories that have been written.

In “Towards an Absent Music: Sound Installation After Auschwitz,” author Christian Sancto considers the artist Susan Philipsz’s *Study for Strings*, a 24-channel sound installation created for documenta 13 in 2012. Sancto’s unique mix of critical, musicological, and historical writing explores Philipsz’s reimagining of the Czech-Jewish composer Pavel Haas’s 1943 composition *Study for Strings*, which was composed while Haas was interned at the Theresienstadt concentration camp; he was later murdered at Auschwitz. Sancto’s focus is on Philipsz’s use of silence as a compositional tool, one that references the absence and loss of the many thousands who lost their lives in the camps. Philipsz’s *Study for Strings*, Sancto argues, is a spatialized composition that also works to translate Adornian “After Auschwitz” cultural practices into a combinative experience that blends media, post-memory, and musical discomposition into a piece that respectfully navigates the ethical and political issues present in contemporary art and culture today.

James Wierzbicki's "Silent Listening: The Aesthetics of Literary Sounds" explores the tactics and tenets employed by fiction writers who craft descriptions of sound as aesthetic components in their literary creations. Wierzbicki's writing reveals how readers internally sonify those parts of a narrative that evoke sound, soundscapes, and forms of traditional and unconventional music. In this way, an absence of sound works to create the emotive impact. This concept is demonstrated in what Wierzbicki describes as "simply evocations of sounds served up" by the masterful storytellers of fiction. The author uses examples from the gothic horror writer Edgar Allen Poe and modern writers such as H. P. Lovecraft, authors who employ sound in text perhaps more adroitly and artistically than later sonic reinterpretations that appear in film, television, and radio drama. Appreciating the difference is an open invitation for readers to hear what Wierzbicki calls "silent listening."

Yair Rubinstein charts a series of critical/cultural forecasts that loop back on the foundations of postmodernism to aid in the understanding of music generated through means of artificial intelligence. In "Uneasy Listening: Towards a Hauntology of AI-Generated Music," the author outlines what occurs when advanced technologies such as AIs mingle and remix the archival past in order to create a computational work of music whose aesthetic reception entangles listeners in an uncanny space of memory, commodity, and layered aestheticization. Rubinstein grounds his complex set of aesthetic and political relations in the mid-2000s micro-genre known as *sonic hauntology* and then broadens his argument by examining how AI music has been received, from the influential work in the 1980s by composer and AI programmer David Cope to the music-programming duo Dadabots. Rubenstein's writings raise important considerations about how AIs create something simulacral and familiar and about capitalism's deep investment in nostalgia.

In "Travels with Jack: ZBS's Post-Network Radio Adventure," Jacob Smith explores a turbulent but rarely studied historical era of radio's development, the post-network era of radio. As radio as a whole attempted to redefine itself, most stations did little experimentation. ZBS decidedly chose a fateful mission contrary to conventional radio, toward a communal approach. Smith also presents insight into its founder Thomas Lopez. His research investigates the untold story of the founding and mission of this unique network that sought to inspire social change by creating a theater of the mind and body, taking radio to the next level—one of a spirituality that envelops the listener into the programming, sonically crafted into thoughtful and creative storytelling and dialogue. The network is still active today and continues to thrive as a significant avenue for those who seek alternatives to the routines of traditional radio programming.

In closing, our species shares a commons of sound, an auricular collective composed of all of our voices, along with a host of other nonhuman animals. It's a resonant arrangement, and we aspire for this journal to add to the substantive and dynamic work taking place in the study and practice of sound today. We hope you enjoy *Resonance: The Journal of Sound and Culture*, Volume 1, Issue 1, and welcome your contributions in the future.

We would like to thank the authors, and we are proud to share your enlivened research here in our first edition. Additionally, we want to thank the following people for their support, hard work, and guidance in the development and launch of this journal: David Famiano, Cheryl Owen, Laura Kenney, Honna Veerkamp, and Hyo Jeong Lee. We would also like to express our sincere thanks to the members of our editorial board for helping to establish this new journal; your words and works inspire.

Jay Needham, MFA  
Professor, Radio and Audio Production  
Affiliate Faculty, Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies  
Department of Radio, Television, and Digital Media  
College of Mass Communication and Media Arts  
Southern Illinois University Carbondale  
Carbondale, IL 62901

Phylis West Johnson, PhD  
Director and Professor  
School of Journalism & Mass Communications  
One Washington Square  
San Jose State University  
San Jose, CA 95192