

## Introduction

*Words from the Co-Founding Editors*

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This issue of *Resonance* draws our readers toward considerations of sound through manifold vectors of politics and history. We feature works on the politics of sound relating to flow, migration, and borders; the political economy of early radio in the United States; ventriloquism and cinema; the American propaganda radio station RIAS Berlin; and noise abatement in Japan during the 1920s and '30s. These invited and original contributions offer a compelling assembly of works about sound and culture that expand our understanding of the forces that effect code flows in sound, work to reframe the relationships between public policy and the origins of public radio, present new insights on radio propaganda, and help contextualize the connections between industry and noise.

### INVITED ESSAYS

Christoph Cox in “The Politics of Sound: Flows, Codes, and Capture” presents a series of important aesthetic and political considerations that help frame the concept that all sound is political. In Cox’s study, sound’s distinct relationships to politics are best described through

the local and global circulation of sound, its flow, capture, and blockage, the forces (technological, legal, economic, cultural, social, moral, linguistic, racial, gendered, etc.) that accelerate, decelerate, and otherwise inflect it. It would ask: What are the forces that generate sonic flows and propel their movement and circulation? What are the forces that constrain this sonic flux sufficiently to enable it to congeal into languages, musical styles, or scenes? And what are the forces that block, annul, or cancel these sonic flows?

Cox cites Jordanian-British artist Lawrence Abu Hamdan’s 2012 installation, *Conflicted Phonemes*, as a work that illustrates how language is surveilled and coded across borders. In this context, Abu Hamdan’s art serves as an ideal referent, one that lays bare the tools of codes and capture that are used to track the sounds of speech. Cox also skillfully reveals how sonic examples of flows, codes, and capture have been formalized, through trans-Saharan trading hubs in northern Mali, to forms of “post-economic music,” as evidenced by cultural theorists Diedrich Diederichsen and Björn Gottstein and the musician Ekkehard Ehlers.

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Josh Shepperd's "The Political Economic Structure of Early Media Reform Before and After the Communications Act of 1934" engages with one of the oldest questions in media history research: How might American radio and consequent mass media ownership have been differently organized than the corporate model? Shepperd examines the early archival history of media reform strategy and conducts a revisionist history that follows how noncommercial media advocates responded to and interpreted the effects of early communications policy. His study reveals that alternatives to commercial media have not only been present since the first days of broadcasting but that its proponents also innovated the scaffolding for public broadcasting in the United States as early as two years after the Communications Act of 1934. Shepperd's research is especially valuable now as an analogue and parable to online education and the sometimes fraught relationship between university systems and emerging technologies.

The Office of Education noticed that university radio experiments little resembled the curricular progress expected of their counterparts in public schools. In a 1931 letter, the Office of Education implored universities to train speakers for broadcast instruction and prepare adult learners to engage with live lectures from classrooms.

Shepperd's case study helps to outline two paths for media history research, one based on what is emphasized in the relationship between media activism and advocacy and the second based on alternative articulations of media institutions. Ultimately, Shepperd calls for greater understanding about institutional discourses because they have a direct impact on equal access to education.

In "Will the Real Devil Speak Up?" author Müge Turan explores the disembodied voice in cinema through an extension of the concept of ventriloquism shared between modes of sound and vision. Turan uses the 1973 William Friedkin film *The Exorcist* as a case study to examine ideas of disembodiment and voice and describes actress Mercedes McCambridge's performances thus:

Inhabiting a liminal space between male and female, the demon's voice suggests a transgression of gender boundaries. However, this reading is complicated when considering which actress provided the devil's voice. McCambridge is known for her butch characters who reflected her own "deviant female persona." In that sense, *The Exorcist* might be considered to posit lesbianism as deviant, since the devil's voice that resides within the body of a teenage girl induces her to act in a sexual way toward those around her.

For Turan, the horror film has cast a specific kind of cultural spell on viewers and listeners as we "have become habituated to the strangeness of the disembodied voice. Sound recording domesticated the ventriloquial feats of voice-throwing and necromancy—we summon the dead daily on our earbuds."

## ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Author Joan L. Clinefelter examines the crafting of radio propaganda programming that was broadcast over RIAS Berlin in the 1950s. Her particular focus is the program *Can*

*You Spare 5 Minutes?* (*Haben Sie 5 Minuten Zeit?*), a show that targeted women in East Germany, featuring topics related to “women” such as household management, childcare, and marriage—all designed to imprint messages of democracy and to subvert the German communist regime. Clinefelter retraces the history of RIAS and the origins of women’s radio that began during the Weimar Republic and outlines the strategies that were later adopted by RIAS that

invited listeners to evaluate their states’ relative success or failure on the basis of their ability to provide women with access to food for nutritious and varied meals. Recipes included ingredients readily available in West Berlin but in short supply in the East, leaving the Eastern audience to wonder why they faced shortages their Western counterparts did not. Programs that discussed the growing need for (West) Germans to diet reinforced the image of Western plenty and Eastern scarcity.

Clinefelter builds on the important scholarship of Kate Lacey, Inge Marssolek, Adelheid von Saldern, and Annegret Braun, all of whom have demonstrated how scripts can be analyzed for their relation to hegemony, media, and the everyday. For Clinefelter, the “gendered soundscape” (Ehrick) of *Can You Spare 5 Minutes?* offers an opportunity to scrutinize the archive for both the messages and the tactics associated with culturally nuanced radio propaganda.

Shuhei Hosokawa explores the political and cultural ramifications of noise regulation in his article, “The Noise Abatement Campaign in Industrializing Japan, 1923–37.” Hosokawa presents a comprehensive cultural study of how noise came to be defined during Japan’s industrial rise; his premise is informed by Karin Bijsterveld’s definition of noise as ownership as well as Emily Thompson’s writings on sound and modernity. For Hosokawa, it was the Great Kantô Earthquake of 1923 that served as a marker for Japan’s entrance into the jazz era, coupled with the din during the reconstruction of “great Tokyo”:

As Tokyo recovered its economic and commercial status from scratch after the earthquake, new commodities and sensory products flowed into metropolitan life from abroad, ranging from automobiles and films to swing records, perfumes, and chocolates. The major group that could afford these items was the middle class, and they classified mechanical sound borne from the technological goods they consumed; once it was deemed “noise,” they had to agree with its abatement.

Painstakingly researched, largely through newspaper articles, Hosokawa’s inquiry demonstrates that the very nature of noise is culturally contested and has a direct effect on the perceived value of urbanization.

## BOOK REVIEWS

Kris Rodriguez’s review of *Listening to the Other* is an examination of author Stefan Östersjö’s travels in Southeast Asia, the United States, and Europe. The premise of the book is based on Östersjö’s observations that a musician’s ability to listen is largely shaped by their knowledge of musical instruments. The book is also a record of artistic

collaborations, and as Rodriguez notes, “it explores themes that resonate beyond music production to capture a quiet snapshot of human behavior.”

Lou Mallozzi reviewed *Radio Revolten, 30 days of Radio Art*, a volume edited by Knut Aufermann, Helen Hahmann, Sarah Washington, and Ralf Wendt. The text is an impressive documentation of the Radio Revolten Festival in Halle, Germany in 2016, in which 720 hours of radio art were presented by 76 artists and additional contributors over radio Corax, Halle’s community radio station. Mallozzi’s review is full of distinct analysis and critical acuity that helps to frame the impacts of this important radio art festival.

We would like to thank the authors and reviewers, and we are proud to share their insightful research here in our third issue. Additionally, we want to thank the following people for their support, hard work, and guidance in the development of this journal: David Famiano, Cheryl Owen, Laura Kenney, and Honna Veerkamp. Our continued thanks go out to the members of our talented editorial board for their hard work, insights, and guidance.

#### A NOTE ON THE NEXT ISSUE

Issue 4 of the first volume of *Resonance: The Journal of Sound and Culture* will be a special issue on soundwork and media activism. It explores the role of nonmusical sound in political processes. Working from pluralistic, humanistic methodologies, an interdisciplinary team of guest editors from the fields of history, performance studies, anthropology, and media studies has completed a review of papers and is developing an innovative issue that examines the ways nontheatrical sound is produced, coded, received, heard, and institutionalized within cultural and social engagement. Though the call for papers was issued in November 2019, recent protests and activism have accentuated the need to study the holistic phenomenon of activism, including its subtle, visceral, and incidental qualities, for which sound and listening play a part. ■

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