

Listening to listeners: Embodied music cognition and intersectional practices

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Disciplinary background A. Systematic musicology is an interdisciplinary field that uses neurological, psychological, and physical science frameworks, among others, to analyze the physical and cognitive elements of musical experience. This field is often considered a branch of the so-called hard sciences, and uses music as a medium for analyzing concepts in the cognitive, biological, and physical sciences.

Disciplinary background B. Ethnomusicology is a branch of music research that considers the cultural, personal, and social structures and implications of music. This type of research utilizes methods in the social sciences along with musicological analysis to consider music in community. Ethnomusicologists regularly engage with methodologies that pull from feminist studies, queer studies, critical race theory, and other intersectional frameworks.

Disciplinary background C. Intersectional feminist studies are transdisciplinary in nature, and consider the effects of gender, race, class, sexuality, and various other factors as determinants of the analytical process. Scholars in this field question the applications and analytical frameworks of the academy, and invites critical engagement with their own social and cultural contexts when engaging in academic discourse.

Abstract

This presentation asks music scholars to consider embodied musical experiences in order to imagine new ways of inviting participation into their research. By considering the embodied experiences of music listeners through a research framework that privileges open observation and listening over asking, this participatory framework allows music scholars to engage with listeners, and with listening, in a mutual process of learning that complicates the often unexamined binary of the researcher and the researched in music scholarship. This presentation's applied example synthesizes ideas from systematic musicology, ethnomusicology, and intersectional feminist theory to invite participants to engage with listening through these interconnected lenses.

Systematic musicologist Marc Leman's Embodied Music Cognition uses mediation technologies to analyze corporeal responses to music listening. Leman's work foregrounds the listener's embodied participation in the process of music through corporeal articulation. This presentation engages critically with Leman's text while putting its more generative methodological and theoretical assertions into conversation with perspectives on embodied participation from the fields of ethnomusicology and intersectional feminist theory.

Ethnomusicologist Tomie Hahn considers embodied knowledge expressed through performance. Hahn's ethnographic focus invites analysis through open observation, allowing the observation process to guide her conclusions. Both Hahn and Leman engage with intentionality and with the embodied experiences of musical participants, though Hahn's works focus on the embodied experience of the performer.

Intersectional feminist scholars Audre Lorde and Robin Wall Kimmerer engage with embodiment through the intersecting lenses of gender, race, sexuality, and biology to consider ways of engaging with these topics through the articulations of the body. Lorde invites readers to center her conception of the Erotic, the depth of satisfaction and feeling, as an important source of power in scholarship and

in life. Kimmerer explores the connectedness of all beings on the earth through Indigenous ways of knowing and biology. She urges scholars to focus on listening, rather than relying on the entitlement of asking questions, to guide their scholarship.

This interactive presentation invites participants to engage with a modified version of one of Leman's applied experiments, to be considered through intersecting lenses put forth by Hahn, Lorde, and Kimmerer. This presentation invites participants to be fully engaged and involved in nearly every step of the research, including formulating their own research questions. This presentation expands the participatory capacity of the music listener beyond interlocution and into the research and analysis itself.

Beyond engaging with the theoretical and disciplinary frameworks which inform the corporeal experience of the music listener and the potentials of their participation, this presentation invites listeners to participate in an applied exercise in which they engage with their own embodied interlocution while releasing the need to ask questions to structure their work. After first asking participants to draw a contour along with a listening example, I invite participants to reflect on the physical space they are in and on the sensations they are feeling. Following this reflective moment, I share my analysis of the theoretical perspectives that this research synthesizes, considering Hahn's engagement with embodied knowledge and open observation while following Leman's foregrounding of the listener, and looking to Kimmerer and Lorde to release the inclination to ask questions in order to foreground the listener's participation and the deep satisfaction of an embodied musical experience. Finally, participants are invited to work in small groups to reflect on their experiences. The presentation concludes with a discussion among all participants in which they are encouraged to share their reflections.

Interdisciplinary implications. In applying principles and experimental practices of embodied music cognition through the lenses of other interdisciplinary music scholarship, this presentation considers ways that ethnomusicology, systematic musicology, and intersectional feminist theory can enrich each other through inviting musical interlocutors into full participation. Implications for future work could involve more deeply considering the listener as a participant in interdisciplinary studies of music. Engaging with open observation, deep listening, and the Erotic invites more complete participation from the listening interlocutor, which can expand research in each of the explored disciplines. Because these works intersect with each other, future research in any of these fields could be enriched by this interdisciplinary inquiry.

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