


EDITORIAL

## Editorial: New Sound Ecologies

William Teixeira 

Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul, Faculty of Arts, Letters and Communication | Campo Grande, Brazil

Jacek Smolicki 

Uppsala University, Department of Informatics and Media | Uppsala, Sweden

\* \* \*

In the times of growing uncertainties, shifts and transformations, the expanding field of sound studies seems to offer a particularly fertile and inspiring ground to explore the intersections between environment, society, and technology. The increase in awareness of ecological and social issues, combined with technological advances, has opened up new ways of listening, composing with, and interpreting the world around us. Opening our senses and cognition to new sound ecologies, these practices simultaneously yield questions concerning responsibilities and actions that our expanded understanding of the world requires. This dossier, dedicated to “New Sound Ecologies,” proposes an interdisciplinary dialogue between artistic, philosophical, scientific, and community practices that perceive sound and listening as transformative forces

Inspired by approaches such as Murray Schafer's pioneering work on soundscapes and the critical perspective of contemporary authors like Brandon LaBelle in *Acoustic Justice*, this volume examines the role of sound in constructing cultural identities and shaping how we inhabit social spaces. Recent works such as *Hungry Listening* by Dylan Robinson offer reflections on how an ecological approach to sound can present alternatives to colonial listening perspectives, enhancing the ethical and aesthetic potential of sound in community practices, as proposed by Woodland and Vachon (2023). Witnessing this transforming trajectory of sound scholarship and art, in this issue we are curious to explore how the well-established field of acoustic ecology, particularly in its interaction with music and sound arts, is undergoing renewal in light of new technologies,

including artificial intelligence systems, new paradigms of mobility, and the expanding range of listening practices that includes more-than-human actors.

The relationship between sound and the environment is central to this dossier. Guided by texts such as *The Sounds of Life* by Karen Bakker and *An Ecology of Time Traces* by Liza Lim, there is a convergence in works showing how sound can act as a tangible link between humans and the natural world. Or put differently, how sound can remind us that humans are not separate from the natural world, but have always been an integral part of it, with positive and negative consequences. Additionally, we highlight the technological dimension of sound and listening, including elements of urban infrastructures, as exemplified by Shannon Mattern in *Ear to the Wire*, who demonstrates how careful and critical listening can help us navigate not only our present moments, but also detect in them the resonances of the past. Similarly, Makis Solomos, who, draws on Félix Guattari's three ecologies, analyzes the environmental, social, and mental ecologies of contemporary music and sound arts in their capacity for political advocacy and raising environmental awareness. These perspectives emphasize sound's potential to not only transcend disciplinary boundaries but also to find connections between historical and contemporary acoustic landscapes.

Finally, the organization of this dossier is anchored by two significant events for the field that took place. First, the realization of the *Pantanal Sounds* project, an interdisciplinary residency promoted by the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard University at the Pantanal Studies Base of the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul. This pioneering project enabled an artistic residency in this unique and threatened biome. Secondly, the *Beyond Listening* symposium, promoted by the Central European Network for Sonic Ecologies and held in Budapest in 2023, generated some of the reflections and discussion that are presented here. Additionally, we propose this space as a point of encounter for the field of sound ecology in Brazil, acknowledging the work of pioneers such as Rodolfo Caesar and José Augusto Mannis, among others, who established this field as an indispensable avenue for studying sound arts in the country.

The dossier begins with an article exemplifying the multidisciplinary nature of the field. In “Etymology as Sound Analysis: A Study of Terminological Variation of Pantanal Birds,” Thierry Delmond, William Teixeira, and Maristela Benites employ theoretical tools from linguistics, ornithology, and music to consider how the naming of birds within the Pantanal's biodiversity

stems largely from how different communities perceive the sounds emitted by these animals. Thus, beyond simple onomatopoeia, this terminology constitutes an analytical treasure trove of the types of sound perception associated with the Pantanal.

In “Performative Listening with Trees in Sonic Ecology of Forests,” Suna Başlantı proposes a reconsideration of human activity mediated by sound, especially highlighting the performative role of listening in placing oneself in the position of the other, including non-human entities. Presenting a clear methodology for undertaking such an artistic process, the author uses a seemingly inanimate agent, like a tree, as a case study to explore possible connections through sound.

The article “From Nature to Instrument: Mimetic Realism in Two Works by Carola Bauckholt” by Thiago Diniz and Igor Leão Maia presents the thesis that the relationship with natural sounds, specifically bird sounds, plays a role beyond mere representation, influencing the listening configurations of the pieces and the affective flow they construct from associations with bird behavior, unfolding into technical devices in the composer’s writing.

In “Post-Immersive Listening: Perspectives on the Mediation of Sonic Environments,” artist and researcher Budhaditya Chattopadhyay discusses how artistic processes and academic research relate to his concept of “post-immersive” listening, where interaction with the listening space and subjective formation become defining elements of the listening object itself.

In their article, “A Market of Noises and Sounds for Wellbeing,” Vinícius Andrade Pereira and Cássio de Borba Lucas examine how sound has become a commodity on platforms selling it for therapeutic purposes, even with insufficient scientific evidence of efficacy. This leads to reflections on how this dimension may also be present in more established listening modes, prompting us to rethink the configurations of markets aimed at art consumption.

The essay “The Critical Ear” by sound designer Sara Pinheiro compiles reflections from a workshop conducted in the Czech Republic on the possibility of objectively shaping listening and how this sensitization inherently carries a critical component that extends beyond sound itself. Through ear-cleaning exercises inspired by Murray Schafer, the article explores the social and political implications of such listening practices.

The article by José Augusto Mannis, Igor Abdo Aguilar, and Amanda Chang Rodrigues portrays decades of acoustic research by the first author, expanding an interpretation of initially

unknown references, such as British sound engineer Michael Williams, to the creative perspectives new forms of immersive sound capture and diffusion can achieve. They also present the research and creative process of the authors' artistic works.

Composer Garrison Gerard presents in his article “Ecosystem [512]: Acoustic Ecology Surveys as Music” the compositional account of his piece for clarinet, written based on sounds collected in an Icelandic park. He shares methods of documentation and material selection, exposing the construction of sound layers and modes of derivation for instrumental writing and video synthesis.

In “Composing Sound Spaces: An Interview with Hans Tutschku,” Ingrid Yamazato and William Teixeira conduct an interview with composer Hans Tutschku about his compositional practice, including field recording techniques and his methods for managing and documenting archives for later use in acousmatic or mixed works. The article introduces a critical presentation of Tutschku's poetics and main features.

The article “Starling Murmurs as a Model for Sound Spatialization” by Said Bonduki and Leon Steidle introduces computational models for sound spatialization based on bird flock movements, presenting possibilities for creative use in computational patches, including applications in Jitter image synthesis.

The final article in the dossier is “Contributions of Gibson's Ecological Psychology to the Creation of Interactive Sound Installations,” where Rael Bertarelli Gimenes Toffolo presents an extensive discussion of J. J. Gibson's ecological psychology, exploring its relationships with sound and musical perception and reporting on the creative process of applying it to the sound installation *Another Place*.

Finally, we thank the dozens of reviewers from around the world who contributed to this dossier, not only ensuring its exceptional quality but also making it more relevant to the field. We hope this reading inspires new sensibilities connected to the spaces we inhabit and aspire to inhabit, offering new ideas and tools to create new and more welcoming sound ecologies.

## REFERENCES

BAKKER, Karen. **The sounds of life: how digital technology is bringing us closer to the worlds of animals and plants**. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022.

LABELLE, Brandon. **Acoustic justice: listening, performativity, and the work of reorientation**. [s.l.]: [s.n.], [s.d.].

LIM, Liza. An ecology of time traces in Extinction Events and Dawn Chorus. **Contemporary Music Review**, v. 39, n. 5, p. 544-563, 2020.

ROBINSON, Dylan. **Hungry listening: resonant theory for indigenous sound studies**. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020.

SCHAEFFER, R. Murray. **The soundscape: our sonic environment and the tuning of the world**. Vancouver: Destiny Books, 1993.

SOLOMOS, Makis. **Exploring the ecologies of music and sound: environmental, mental and social ecologies in music, sound art and activism**. London: Routledge, 2023.

WOODLAND, Sarah; VACHON, Wolfgang (org.). **Sonic engagement: the ethics and aesthetics of community engaged audio practice**. London: Routledge, 2023.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

William Teixeira is a cellist and Professor in the Music Department at the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul since 2016, where he serves as a Faculty Member in the Graduate Program in Language Studies. He has conducted research as a visiting scholar at Harvard University (Fulbright Junior Faculty 2022/2023) and at IRCAM (ERC-CONFAP-FUNDECT 2023). He holds a Bachelor's degree in Music with a specialization in Cello from UNESP (2012). He completed his graduate studies under the supervision of composer Silvio Ferraz, receiving a FAPESP scholarship, earning a Master's degree in Music from UNICAMP (2014) and a Ph.D. in Music from USP (2017), undertaking research residencies at the Paul Sacher Stiftung (Switzerland) and the Akademie der Künste, Berlin (Germany). He continued his academic training through a Postdoctoral Fellowship in Philosophy at PUC-RS, focusing on research in analytical philosophy of art, and he is currently a Senior Postdoctoral Fellow at CNPq at UNICAMP. His work is dedicated to contemporary repertoire, with an emphasis on dialogues with new technologies, and he has premiered dozens of works by Brazilian composers of various generations. As a soloist, he has performed with several ensembles, including the UNICAMP Symphony Orchestra, Rio Claro Symphony Orchestra, USP Chamber Orchestra, USP Philharmonic, and other orchestras and chamber groups. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6622-378X>. E-mail: [teixeiradasilva.william@gmail.com](mailto:teixeiradasilva.william@gmail.com)

Jacek Smolicki is a Stockholm-based cross-disciplinary artist, designer, researcher and educator. His work explores temporal, existential and technological dimensions of listening, recording and archiving practices in human and more-than-human realms.. In 2017 he completed his PhD in Media and Communications from the School of Arts and Communication at Malmö University where he was a member of Living Archives, a research project funded by the Swedish Research Council. Between 2020-2023 Smolicki pursued an international postdoctoral research funded by the Swedish Research Council. Located at Linköping University in Sweden, Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada, and Harvard, USA, his research explored the history and prospects of field recording and soundwalking practices from the perspective of arts, environmental humanities, and philosophy of technology. His edited book 'Soundwalking. Through Time, Space, and Technologies' was published by Routledge in 2023. In 2022/2023 he was a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at Harvard. He is currently a researcher at the Informatics and Media Hub for Digital Existence at Uppsala University and a member of BioMe, a research project that investigates ethical implications of AI technologies on everyday life realms. Smolicki explores sonic capture cultures and the impact of AI technologies on human and other-than-human voices. He is a co-founder of Walking Festival of Sound, a transdisciplinary and nomadic event exploring the critical and reflective role of walking through and listening to our everyday surroundings. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0902-1521>. E-mail: [jacek.smolicki@gmail.com](mailto:jacek.smolicki@gmail.com)